

Kent County
Family & Children's
Coordinating Council



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DRAFT KCFCCC Meeting Minutes

April 6, 2004, 12:00pm – 1:30pm

MSU Extension Offices, 775 Ball Avenue, NE

Members/alternates present: Donna Abbott (for Marvin McKenzie), Laura Clifton (for William Forsyth), Candace Cowling, Sandra Davis (for Tom Czerwinski), Debra Holmes-Garrison (and Barbara Terry), Nadine Klein, Patti Nussbaum (and Sharon Loughridge), Christine Nelson (for Susan Broman), Carol Paine-McGovern, Diana Sieger (and Wendy Jackson), Mary Alice Williams, Andrew Zylstra

Members absent (with no alternate present): Nanaruth Carpenter, Paul Cartwright, Beverly Drake, Lynne Ferrell, Paul Ippel, Cathy Raevsky, Mike Weiler

Others present: Bethanie Archbold, Wayman Britt (staff); Janelle Burden, Janay Jorgensen, Jane Konyndyk, Richard Libertore, Susan Morales-Barius, Jack Roedema, Michelle Seigo

I. Welcome and Call to Order

Diana Sieger opened the meeting and welcomed the participants. She reported that Cathy Raevsky would not be able to attend to provide the presentation on the Kent County Prevention Initiative evaluation plan. Mary Alice Williams moved to approve the minutes from the previous Council meeting. Debra Holmes Garrison supported. Motion carried. There were no changes to the agenda.

II. Draft KCFCCC 2004-2006 Action Plan

Bethanie Archbold presented the Draft KCFCCC 2004-2006 Action Plan for the Council's action. She stated that the plan was developed by each of the committees, under the oversight of the plan development committee. The plan outlines the Council's priorities for action over the next three years, and is meant to be a working document, to be modified and revised annually as Council priorities change. The document will be presented to the Kent County Board of Commissioners in May.

Mary Alice Williams asked how membership to the Elementary School Years Committee would be decided. Chris Nelson asked what the process was for determining that committee's area of focus as there was not yet a committee.

Wendy Jackson provided background information on the Grand Rapids Education Reform Initiative (ERI), which developed a series of recommendations regarding how to strengthen the Grand Rapids Public Schools. ERI asked the County's support in aligning County health and human services to the schools to remove barriers to education and support student achievement. The County suggested that the KCFCCC, as the appointed body for service coordination, would be an effective body to facilitate coordination, and that the discussion should include services countywide (i.e., not just Grand Rapids).

Ms. Archbold reported that as the old Elementary School Years Committee members had transitioned to the Emergency Needs Food Task Force food group, that committee was open for a new role and new membership. Also, because Ms. Jackson is chair of the committee, there would be better consistency and communication between ERI and the committee. Staff worked with Ms. Jackson to develop an initial plan for the committee, and brought the discussion back to the Executive Committee throughout the process. The action plan is now coming before the Council as the Executive Committee's recommendation. Once the action plan has been approved, the Chair will make committee appointments, which per the bylaws, will come back to the Council for approval.

Andrew Zylstra expressed his interest in participating on the committee. He stated that it would also be important to have representation from the KCHD and CMHSA. Jan Konyndyk agreed.

Ms. Williams suggested that there also be representatives from the school. Ms. Williams and Ms. Nelson stated that there should be broad representation.

Sharon Loughridge suggested that Kent ISD, school social workers, and curriculum developers be included. She noted that all of these groups have been directed to look at how their work affects MEAP score per the No Child Left Behind Act.

Ms. Jackson stated that the ERI believes that aligning health and human services with the schools to remove barriers to learning will positively impact MEAP scores in the long run.

Diana Sieger stated that her primary concern is that any alignment be strategic and across multiple departments. She stated that there is a potential for overlap and confusion, and deploying resources to schools could be a mess if they overwhelm the schools. She stated that developing a strategy will require cooperation from all County and State service providers, such as FIA, CMHSA, KCHD, and the Court.

Ms. Williams stated that private providers that deliver services should also be present to share what actually works and what doesn't from their experience.

Chris Nelson stated that another concern is that if the roles of the main County and State service providers are articulated, they may be used as an excuse for removing other resources, such as school social workers.

Mr. Zylstra stated that the success of any venture comes down to relationships. He stated that the model may not be to locate all resources in a school. Instead, schools need someone that they know and trust. Access is based on the relationship rather than the site. He asked that if all of these resources are brought together, who will coordinate them? He stated that the role of the principal should be to focus on education, while the human services professionals focus on resources.

Candace Cowling stated that there is also a need to consider the system. A good person can make a poor system work. A well designed system should function even without an exception person.

Sandra Davis moved to approve the action plan. Carol Paine McGovern supported. Motion carried.

III. Committee Updates

The majority of committee updates were provided in the annotated agenda. Jim Madole reported that the Middle & High School Years Committee officially kicked off the Mentoring Collaborative, which will be meeting monthly. He reported that the committee had received word that its request for two Mentor Michigan VISTA had been approved. The VISTA will be headquartered at United Way and working closely with the Mentoring Collaborative. The Collaborative will use the VISTA workplan as its workplan.

Ms. Archbold asked that the Council add Nadine Klein as a member of the Ongoing Family Support Committee. Debra Holmes Garrison moved that she be added. Sandra Davis supported. Motion carried.

IV. Kent County Prevention Initiative

Prevention Initiative updates were included in the annotated agenda, and copies of the program descriptions and goals of the Healthy Start and Bright Beginnings programs were included in the meeting packet.

Ms. Archbold distributed the Accountability and Oversight Process Outline, which outlined the multiple layers of oversight over the Prevention Initiative. She reported that the KCFCCC serves as a community-level review of service coordination and systems integration. Per the outline, a biannual KCFCCC Prevention Advisory Committee will review service trends, progress on service coordination issues identified by the initial review committee, and evaluation reports, and will provide peer feedback to one another and recommendation to the Council and County staff. The committee will provide annual reports back to the Council.

Ms. Konyndyk asked whether the committee would be a duplication of the KCFCCC and Human Services Committees?

Diana Sieger responded that the committee is not meant to be a layer of bureaucracy, but instead an ongoing feedback loop between the contractors and funding organizations, allowing them to discuss service coordination issues and review evaluation data. It also sends the message that the KCFCCC is part of this process for the long haul. The Human Services Committee is meant to provide information to the Board Chair.

Ms. Williams suggested that service providers have the opportunity to provide input.

V. Other Community Information and Updates

Ms. Jackson reported that the Grand Rapids Community Foundation is working with FIA to develop a plan to have foster care kids “connected by 25,” i.e., transitioning foster care children into adulthood. She stated that she would provide an update in the fall.

Ms. Holmes Garrison reported that Senator Stabenow would be at United Way on June 14.

Ms. Williams reported that American Eagle Outfitters was collecting gently used clothes to earn money for the Bridge. She stated that donations are tax deductible, and will earn you 15% off at

DRAFT KCFCCC Meeting Minutes

April 6, 2004

AEO. Mr. Zylstra asked where the store was, and was teased heartily for not being Gen-X/Y savvy.

VI. Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned. **The next Kent County Family and Children's Coordinating Council meeting will be June 8, 2003, from 12:00pm – 1:30pm at Kent/MSU Cooperative Extension, 775 Ball Avenue, NE.**