

Kent County
Family & Children's
Coordinating Council



KCFCCC Meeting Minutes
September 3, 2013, 12:00pm – 1:35pm
MSU Extension Offices – **Room A & B**
775 Ball Avenue, NE

- Members/Alternates Present:** Nadia Brigham, Wayman Britt, Candace Cowling, Lynne Ferrell, Scott Gilman, Jack Greenfield, Lynn Heemstra, Joanne Hoganson (for Adam London), Ron Koehler (for Kevin Konarska), Randy Koekkoek (for Nancy Marshall), Gary Lemke, Sharon Loughridge, Jacob Maas, Julie Ridenour, Diana Sieger, Matthew VanZetten, Patti Warmington.
- Members Absent:** William Forsyth, Judge Patti Gardner, Cynthia Gladyness, Sandra Ghosten-Jones, Kevin Konarska, Adam London, Nancy Marshall, Savator Selden-Johnson, Christopher Smith, Justin Swan.
- Guests:** C. Kelli Arrendondo, Rebekah Fennell, Kathy Freberg, Kristen Gietzen, Maureen Noe, Shannon Gardner, Cris Kutzli, Joanne Nickolson, Carol Paine-McGovern, Jessica Ellenbaas, Rich Liberatore, Jodi Petersen, Nancy Teat, Rachael Way.

1. Welcome & Call to Order

Lynne Ferrell opened the meeting with a welcome and introductions were done. The agenda was reviewed and accepted.

Diana Sieger made a motion to accept the minutes from the June meeting as submitted, supported by Sharon Loughridge

Lynn Heemstra subsequently stated that the first sentence under #3 of the June 4, 2013 meeting minutes should read “Matthew VanZetten shared that he had seen a presentation at an *Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELO) Network meeting...*” The motion was amended to accept the minutes with recommended changes – UNANIMOUS

2. Public Comment

None.

Challenge Scholars Presentation

Diana Sieger provided background information prior to introducing Cris Kutzli, co-director of Challenge Scholars. Diana stated that from 1999 – 2008, the Steelcase, Frey, and Grand Rapids Community Foundations (GRCF) worked together on the Education Reform Initiative. It was a learning process, with all agreeing that quality education was desired. After closing the Education Reform Initiative in 2008, Meijer Good Schools began which provided positive results, and Kent School Services Network (KSSN) was also a side result from the initial efforts. Diana stated that starting in 2011, extensive research and creative effort went into the development of Challenge Scholars.

Cris then made her presentation on Challenge Scholars which is “designed to increase the number of low-income, first-generation college-goers who successfully earn a degree or vocational certificate.” The key components are:

- College-going Culture & Parent Engagement
- Academic Supports
- Health and Human Services
- Out-of-school Enrichment
- Scholarship for College or Vocational Training

The first area of focus in the city is the near West side; the first group of students to be part of the official program are this year’s 180 6th graders at Harrison Park School; West Side Middle and Union High will be part of the pipeline for the initial focus. As such, GRCF has partnered with Grand Rapids Public Schools, and has garnered the support of many donors, community leaders and service providers. Students who choose to participate in the program will be required to sign a commitment to complete homework, meet attendance requirements, stay out of trouble, and be involved in school activities, among other things. Preliminary efforts, including a test launch initiated two years ago at Harrison, have seen very positive results, with students becoming much more aware of the importance of academic achievement and college as an option, and becoming familiar with FAFSA and college applications. Part of the effort involves engaging parents, including encouraging college campus visits, and getting the parents to support their students’ efforts.

Successful completion of the program will result in the assurance that any eligible student will have the financial resources to attend the desired post-secondary education – a ‘promise’ component that removes the affordability barrier. Pursuing all funding options, i.e. through FAFSA, will be required, and the Challenge Scholars will provide the ‘last dollars’ for tuition, fees, and/or housing; it is, however, exclusive of loans.

Tours at Harrison Park are available on Tuesdays at 10:30 am – everyone is invited to attend and experience first-hand everything that is happening in that school and with the program.

FSG will be engaged to develop an evaluation process for Challenge Scholars to determine what’s working and what is driving success.

Diana stated that Challenge Scholars is the largest undertaking ever by GRCF. A campaign, chaired by several leading community funders, will be launched in the near future but is not yet public.

Maureen Noe of United Way praised the work of GRCF in this effort and in the community.

3. Prevention Initiative Evaluation – Action Requested

Matthew reviewed the memo dated August 26, 2013 that he previously provided to the KCFCCC Executive Committee, highlighting the need to move to the next level with the initiative. The Prevention Initiative program evaluation committee has not met on a regular basis, primarily due to Matthew's health challenges as well as the inability to gain access to DHS data which was needed to complete the FY2011 evaluation. Since then KConnect was established, involved parties began looking at creating system-wide evaluation program, to include all community-based early childhood prevention work.

The recommendation for the next iteration of the Prevention Initiative Evaluation is to contract with First Steps Kent (First Steps) and establish a broad-based evaluation committee – parents, programs, First Steps Commissioners and KSSN committee members, etc. It is believed that First Steps can incorporate the necessary program evaluations for Healthy Start and Bright Beginnings(BB) into its early childhood system evaluation. This would include looking at Welcome Home Baby (WHB), Healthy Start (HS), and BB with the goal of adding evaluations of Connections, MIHP, MOMs, Early Head Start, etc. at a date to be determined. Further, as the system evaluation is built it could then be informed by parenting education programs like Baby Scholars, Early Learning Communities, ELNC as well as other early learning programs. The group is confident that KCFCCC can transfer the evaluation to First Steps without losing the existing evaluation work that has occurred to date. Better coordination is expected although no immediate cost savings is likely to be realized. The timeline likely be a three-year contract, then this group would subsequently evaluate the status and future of the effort.

Joanne Hogenson mentioned that it would be good to tie back services received to the 180th graders referenced in the Challenge Scholars presentation, for instance, to be able to access the impact of earlier services accessed.

Candace Cowling cautioned us to remain mindful of potential conflicts of interest that may present themselves and the process evolves.

Gary Lemke made the motion to move forward with presenting the proposed changes to the Kent County Board of Commissioners Finance Committee, and align evaluation responsibilities with community changes. Supported by Ron Koehler – UNANIMOUS; Candace Cowling abstained.

4. Section 515/100% Purchase of Service Plan

Joanne Nickolson and Kelli Arrendondo from the Department of Human Services shared an update on the status of 100% purchase of services plan for the privatization of foster care which is expected to be completed by October 2014. The scope of the project was as follows: “The department, in conjunction with court and county personnel and representatives of the private child welfare agencies operating in Kent County, shall conduct a work group that will identify a plan for implementing a pilot program to privatize all foster care and adoption services, except for child protective services, in Kent County by September 30, 2013.” Adoption is already privatized; 85% of all services are already privatized. Currently there are 170 direct DHS cases; there needs to be a way to ensure that the private agencies get paid to take care of those cases when transferred.

A plan was created and submitted by the work group to the DHS central office in July and is under review; a lot of things in the plan will work to improve practice and services to our families. Things considered in the plan were to create efficient processes, formalize assignment criteria to provide best possible placement, and allow/encourage ownership for remedying problems that occur. The workgroup identified current system gaps and worked to establish deliverables; Phase one involves strengthening purchase of services, Phase two involves enhancing and extending purchase of services. DHS will take on more of a monitoring and outcome assessment role.

Matthew stated that DHS, private agencies, Network180 and the Courts have all worked together with the County evaluating and talking about fundamental changes such as how kids enter foster care, legal changes, how services are funded and more. Matthew stated that this project is about 50% complete and he expects to have a broader presentation at the next meeting. He thanked Kelli and Joanne for attending this meeting and stated that DHS has provided essential leadership through this process.

5. KConnect (Collective Impact)

Lynne Ferrell stated that Beth Kelly of HR Collaborative was hired to recruit leadership for KConnect; 48 resumes were received and interview times have been set up for later in the month. The group has been working on Bylaws, the IRS nonprofit application, securing office space, the website, and communication activities; Steelcase and Frey have committed to fund the startup over next three years. Initially two strategy workgroups will be launched, focusing first on equity and the data piece, which has been a topic of concern to involved parties.

The next KConnect meeting will discuss theory of change; Nadia Brigham will assist that discussion. Lynne stated that they expect to be up and running by end of year.

(Maureen Noe assumed the Chair of the meeting)

6. College Readiness (National League of Cities/Lumina Foundation)

Lynn Heemstra stated that the City of Grand Rapids received an invitation from the National League of Cities and the Lumina Foundation to look at post-secondary success. This is an opportunity for us to come together as a community to look at City, County, and regional data, to assess who is doing what from high school to college and through college. Involved groups are Talent 2025, the Community Foundation/Challenge Scholars, GRPS, KCCAN, as well as the City, which is looking at initiatives around economic development. They are establishing a workgroup to look at the high school to career subject, would like it to be aligned with KConnect, but targeting the City of Grand Rapids, and are looking for interested group members.

7. Kent School Services Network Governance Update

Wayman touched on the KSSN Sustainability and Structure Task Force Recommendations information provided; these recommendations came out of the workgroup chaired by Wayman and Teresa Neal from GRPS and include incorporating as a 501(c)3 nonprofit, developing a board and membership, changing CSCs to be employees of KSSN, increasing administrative capacity, and creating a transition and sustainability plan.

8. Other Business

Joanne Hoganson shared that a presentation by the Manessah Project of Wedgewood on sexual exploitation would be held at the Health Department on Thursday morning, September 5, 8:15 to 10 am.

Gary shared that Family Network of Wyoming is looking for a part-time development person; info available on their website.

Maureen stated that United Way kicked off its campaign that morning with a goal of \$12.5 million. The Steelcase Foundation gave a match contribution in the amount of \$100,000 for donors giving \$10,000 or more to this campaign.

9. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 1:35 p.m.

Next Council meeting: November 5, 2013 12:00pm – 1:30pm
MSU Extension Room A & B