

Kent County
Family & Children's
Coordinating Council



KCFCCC Meeting Minutes
November 5, 2013, 12:00pm – 1:30pm
MSU Extension Offices – **Room A & B**
775 Ball Avenue, NE

Members/Alternates

Present:

Wayman Britt, Candace Cowling, Lynne Ferrell, Scott Gilman, Jack Greenfield, Lynn Heemstra, Joanne Hoganson, Ron Koehler (for Kevin Konarska), Joanne Nicholson (for Nancy Marshall), Gary Lemke, Sharon Loughridge, Jacob Maas, Maureen Noe, Julie Ridenour, Diana Sieger, Patti Warmington.

Members Absent:

Nadia Brigham, William Forsyth, Judge Patti Gardner, Cynthia Gladyness, Sandra Ghosten-Jones, Kevin Konarska, Adam London, Nancy Marshall, Savator Selden-Johnson, Christopher Smith, Justin Swan

Guests:

Kelli Arrendondo, Rebekah Fennell, Kathy Freberg, Kristen Gietzen, Jessica Hoogerhyde, Rich Liberatore, George Tyndall, Susan Verwys, Carla Waite, Jen Wolters.

1. Welcome & Call to Order

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

Lynn Heemstra made a motion to accept the minutes from the September meeting as submitted, supported by Julie Ridenour. **UNANIMOUS.**

2. Public Comment

Candace Cowling mentioned that at the Great Start Collaborative meeting recently, Susan Verwys did a presentation on Toxic Stress, which was very well received. It is being videotaped at this meeting so it can be broadcast on K12 and GRCC's college channel. Candace thanked the group for allowing the videotaping.

3. Toxic Stress/Poverty

Susan Verwys introduced herself. She is a professor of education at Calvin College and specializes in Early Childhood. Susan also introduced her associate, Jessica Hoogerhyde, who assisted with the presentation.

Jessica outlined three types of stress, Positive, Tolerable and Toxic, noting that Toxic Stress effects can last long into adulthood. A video from the Center of the Developing Child at Harvard was shown that further introduced the topic of Toxic Stress.

A study called Neurons to Neighborhoods concludes that toxic stress changes the brain's architecture. Susan went on to explain what happens in the brain during periods of stress. She added that toxic stress can cause memory impairment and learning issues along with behavioral problems and poor decision-making. It can also cause the size of the brain to be altered.

The effects of toxic stress for an adult can range from extreme anxiety and depression, impulsivity, risk-taking behaviors, promiscuity, school failure and unhealthy lifestyles. Unhealthy lifestyles might lead to loss of employment, homelessness, the inability to help one's child deal with stress.

Research shows some damage to children's brains can be reversed with appropriate assistance. This would include high-quality early childhood programs and comprehensive services for the family, such as medical services.

Susan outlined how various stresses caused by standardized testing and early push to teach young children academics. The Neurons to Neighborhood study points out that play in kindergarten should be restored because the early academic push is literally stressing out young children.

Next, a video was shown that demonstrated how a community can provide support for the family to help build healthier families and children.

Susan stressed how the research all points to the importance of relationship building to alleviate the formation and consequences of toxic stress. She mentioned this is a group that could work together to get the conversations started about the challenge that toxic stress poses in the future.

4. Kent School Services Network Governance/Sustainability

Wayman Britt spoke to a handout that outlines communications among the KSSN Leadership Committee and KCFCCC Executive Committee. He briefly explained that it outlines their plan to create a nine-member board to transition KSSN from the Kent ISD to a new entity.

An application for non-profit status has been submitted to the IRS. The KSSN office is being established at the former Home Builders Association Building on the East Beltline with assistance from the Kent ISD who owns the building. Also, a Program Assistant is being hired.

Recently, the CS Mott Foundation invited KSSN to compete in a grant for the Pathways to Potential schools on the East side of the state. KSSN was awarded the grant along with the Children's Aid Society. KSSN will be the subcontractor to the grant, providing training and

development to schools on the East side of the state.

It is anticipated that the school coordinators will begin as KSSN employees by February 1. Currently, there are currently 28 schools participating in the KSSN, with more likely to come on board. The first KSSN Board Meeting is scheduled to occur soon to discuss governance, finances and next steps. Wayman Britt and Teresa Neal will act as president and vice president of the KSSN Board the first year, with an election to take place beginning the second year.

Wayman thanked Ron Koehler and Kevin Konarska for their ongoing support of KSSN during this transition period.

5. KConnect Update

Lynne Ferrell provided the update, saying KConnect is now officially a non-profit and will work toward tax-exempt status. Steelcase Foundation and Frey Foundation are early investors in this round of the work. Grand Rapids Community Foundation and DeVos Foundations have asked for proposals. The Kellogg Foundation is expected to do the same.

Lynne said Bob Tobin is helping with the communication piece of this effort. The new executive director, Pam Parriott will begin November 18. She comes from a CEO position at Choice Schools Association. She will be meeting with a number of the KCFCCC members to get up to speed. Shortly thereafter, populating the strategic work groups will begin.

Wayman added that KConnect will be located the same place as KSSN, on the East Beltline.

6. Miscellaneous

- Gary Lemke mentioned Essential Needs Task Force (ENTF) was working to formalize the organization. He asked if it could also become a 501(c)3.

Maureen Noe said Matthew VanZetten is chairing the ENTF, with Rich Liberatore taking the lead. David Schroeder worked as a consultant leading the effort in the last ten years, but has now retired. Jim Talen has been hired to be the HMIS System Administrator. Jessica Vail is the Coalition to End Homelessness Coordinator. Efforts are underway to hire a director over ENTF. Being a 501(c)3 is always an option, but adds a layer of funding and volunteer effort. At this time, United Way is taking on the role to be the employer of record and the fiduciary to keep the costs down.

Maureen said the structure has been fully explored, and this is the structure they came up with. Wayman added that the funding received from the County and United Way is not at the preferred levels, but didn't feel it was necessary to form a 501(c)3 to fund it. The Housing Continuum of Care comes mostly from the Federal Government. It may be an option in the future.

- Candace Cowling shared that the State enacted a policy in which kids in foster care will need to have developmental screening done. The idea behind this is to share the information among those involved in the child's life so issues can be addressed early. DA Blodgett agreed to be an early adopter and explore a partnership. The process is being worked through now.

Also, Candace mentioned that Sharon Loughridge was being recognized at Tribute for her work.

- Jack Greenfield shared that Arbor Circle's Bridge program is having an open house on November 20 to recognize the runaway and homeless youth issues in our community. The program will begin at 5:30 PM.

7. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 1:07 p.m.

Next Council meeting: January 7, 2014 12:00pm – 1:30pm
MSU Extension Room A & B