

**School Readiness Council
Hamden
Meeting Minutes
December 12, 2006**

Members present: Portia Bonner, Louise Brundage, Arlene Cassello, Rebecca Cuevas, LuAnn Gallicchio, Carrie Gazda, Yvonne Jones, Judy Lhamon, Mary Marrantino, Sally Natcher, Edie Reichard, Susan Rubino, Ellen Thompson, Alice Torres, Virginia Wright-Younger, Catherine Bradshaw, and Karen Piedescalzo, coordinator

1. **Hamden School Readiness Council Update** - decided to change the name of their group to Hamden's Partnership for Young Children...*Because Early Years Matter*
2. **Technical Assistance** – Laura Downs from the Graustein Memorial Fund facilitated a technical assistance session for the School Readiness Council.

What would it look like to be focused on system change?

- Changes that show growth
- Changing the culture of the community
- More investment in the changing demographics
- Academic needs – creating environment that allows kids to enter school ready
- Reflecting values in your practices
- All of the systems are supporting and responding to changing demographics
- Get school system past just thinking about money
- Herald/emphasize our good work with existing resources – the use of
- Build off of existing effective programs (PACK) to take it to a system-wide level
- Think about ways to use the funds with more leverage – incentives for partnering, for engaging parents
- Education of parents is key
- Clear picture of what's in place, interrelationships and what they can do
- Relationships are sustainable
- Strong communication system
- All players understand their role

Public will building campaign

- Collect/organize data into a "community report card"
- Partner with groups that already have a focus on and interest in EC&E
- Develop a marketing strategy
- Create a buzz about it in multiple places
- Be a strong force in the community
- Be a unified front, representing kids and bringing our institutions with us – everybody talking about our youngest children
- Changing parents' view – the importance of EC&E
- Common set of messages and of understanding at a high level of all involved organizations

Have a clear strategy for engaging the power brokers and disenfranchised

- Get top folks invested
 - Campaign of direct communication – help them see what they can do, how they benefit – linkage with their goals – have parents be engaged in this
 - Engage people who don't have kids in the school system
 - Engage the disenfranchised, marginalized groups throughout Hamden
 - Engage elected officials who are working for the values of EC&E
 - Identify "champions" to move messages forward
 - Be willing to take input from broader constituents – parents, etc.
 - Parents are actively engaged in policy decisions
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- Give the mayor and superintendent the tools they need to move the agenda forward
 - Scott Jackson – Mayor's Assistant
 - "Here we come and we want you out front as a champion"
 - Tie our agenda to the Mayor's platform

Technical Assistance possibilities for 2007:

- Connecticut Voices for Children – to help create a "Community Report Card"
- Communications Consultant
- Connecticut Parent Power – Listening Campaign through One-On-One interviews

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 16, 2007, from 9:00 A.M. to 11:00 A.M. at Alice Peck School.