

Hampton and Scotland School Readiness Council

Tuesday, Jan 31, 2023

Zoom Meeting Minutes

Zoom Recording:

https://us06web.zoom.us/rec/share/MJBmG9StFPFFIenPkbcl6hplwXGajRZUGKoxRdT968nT8isyHR2KE3usKFLJa2GQ.cuyUj6djQUqLG_-3?startTime=1675208007000

Passcode: !nnyay6G

Attendance: Scott Sears, Joy Becker, Mary Geragotelis, Geri White, Ann Knowles, Sam Roberson, Tristyn Warren, Brittany Santiago, Terry Surprenant

- 1) **Call to order:** Scott called the meeting to order at 6:33 pm.
- 2) **Audience for citizens:** None
- 3) **Adjustments to agenda:** None
- 4) **Approval of November 29, 2022 meeting minutes:** Mary moved to approve the minutes. Geri seconded the motion. No discussion. Scott abstained because he wasn't present. Motion passed.
- 5) **Acceptance of financial reports**
 - a. **Hampton:** No report submitted. (Will submit 2 reports next month.)
 - b. **Scotland;** Geri moved to accept Scotland's financial report. Joy seconded the motion.
Discussion: Ann was asked to ensure that Scotland's name get added to reports so it's easier for members know which one they are looking at when printed. Jeri noted that only 40% of the budget has been spent and asked if that was correct. Ann said that looks right but she can check with Tim and report on that next time. Motion passed.
- 6) **Program updates:**

Classroom updates were shared within the shared drive before the meeting for members to view.

Hampton – There was no discussion about this program.

Scotland – Ann K commented that they've been able to do more family events. Have recently invited parents to do activities in classrooms, movie night, and a winter concert. Include preschool in all events and families of preschoolers have had good attendance.
- 7) **SR Liaison report**
 - a) **OEC updates**
 - i) **Enrollment-based Grant** – Administrators have submitted applications for the 2nd quarter. This provides an additional \$64 per enrolled child per month. Programs have received funds for Sept – Dec. This money can be spent in the same manner as the SR grant.
 - b) **Monitoring**– Terry completed the second site visit in Hampton on January 11th. She did a file review, observed in the classroom and met with the preschool teacher. An attempt was made to assist Sam with the monthly report but ECE Reporter was offline and so she returned last

week to teach the new administrative assistant how to complete. Terry will be going to Scotland for monitoring on February 23rd.

8) New Business: None

9) Old Business:

a) Family Engagement

The council welcomed Brittany Santiago, new Scotland BOE member and parent. Ann K. agreed to contact the Scotland First Selectman to ask for a letter of appointment. There was some discussion about engaging additional parents to participate. Terry reiterated a willingness to attend upcoming family events at each school to promote family involvement in the council.

b) Updates to SRC Policies

On the issue of whether or not it's permissible to charge family fees when a child has an IEP, Terry reached out to the OEC managers for additional guidance. She reminded the council that she can only represent the OEC and their policies, and provided the following updates:

- According to the OEC, for the School Readiness grant, a fee is to be calculated for every family based on the fee schedule.
- Preschool is not a required grade; School Readiness is an optional program.
- The OEC's policies are not prescriptive by design – to allow flexibility so communities have local control over how to manage their services to best meet each child's needs. If the council members choose, they can send specific questions to the OEC managers or invite them to join a meeting. If there are concerns about the OEC policies and the council has recommendations for improvement, they can submit them for consideration.
- No family should be charged additionally for special education services, per IDEA law.
- Based on information that Terry received:
 - If a child's IEP describes that an ECE program is a required service, then the family shouldn't be charged anything.
 - If the child only requires speech or OT/PT services of a limited duration, the program may charge a pro-rated fee.
- For additional information about special education requirements, CT SDE is the appropriate agency from which to seek guidance.
- If there are questions about the way IEPs are being written, the council can work together with the district administrators.

There was some discussion about FAPE and whether or not children are pulled-out for services or if services are provided within the SR classroom. The point was also made that each of the classroom teachers are certified as special education and provide additional supports throughout the day. Geri suggested that additional language be added to the council policies to allow programs to waive fees at the council's discretion, especially for families with IEPs. There was some concern about vague language that might allow those decisions to be made subjectively. Ann K explained that when fees are prorated in Scotland there is a formula used to ensure it's fair.

Programs do currently have the leeway to reduce family fees for a variety of reasons including financial hardship. When fees are reduced or waived there should be an accounting for how those decisions impact the fiscal needs of the program.

If a school district wants to not charge fees for preschoolers with IEPs, other options exist:

- see if there are local funds to cover the cost of care for these spaces and reduce the number of SR slots
- convert some school day to part day spaces (aren't required to charge for part day in SR)

The council policies don't have to spell out the exact family fee procedures, just that each school must have a policy that is available to families and the council and must include all of the requirements as spelled out in the OEC regulations (as described in the current draft of the HSSRC policies.) Terry offered to work with each program to assist them to pull together what they currently have and suggested that action plans could be created to bring them up to the required standards over the next several months.

10) Audience for citizens: None

11) Next Agenda Development:

- New Business: Terry requested to add School Readiness Quality Components for future discussion.

12) Adjournment: A motion to adjourn was made by Geri at 7:11 PM and seconded by Joy. Motion passed unanimously.

NEXT MEETING will be held on February 28, 2023.

Held through Zoom

Respectfully submitted by Teresa Surprenant, Hampton and Scotland School Readiness Liaison
These minutes are unofficial until approved at the next School Readiness Council Meeting