

Hampton and Scotland School Readiness Council

Tuesday, April 25, 2023

Zoom Meeting Minutes

Zoom Recording:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/rec/share/3vTQFLWpaS4JU9u2GkFoV9jcakRri7MukwYFiphqtofkKKs4RnKM1p3kZBG85yvJ.XMQxxtfxu4wb8E6u?startTime=1682462055000>

Passcode: 4DM7^pFv

Attendance: Scott Sears, Joy Becker, Ann Knowles, Sam Roberson, Brittany Santiago, Andrea Kaye, Geri White, Terry Surprenant

- 1) **Call to order:** Joy called the meeting to order at 6:34 pm.
- 2) **Audience for citizens:** None
- 3) **Adjustments to agenda:** None
- 4) **Approval of March 28, 2023 meeting minutes:** Scott moved to approve the minutes. Geri seconded the motion. No discussion. Motion passed.
- 5) **Acceptance of financial reports**
 - a. **Hampton:** Geri moved to accept Hampton's financial report. Scott seconded the motion. No discussion. Motion passed.
 - b. **Scotland:** Scott moved to accept Scotland's financial report. Sam seconded the motion. No discussion. Motion passed.
- 6) **Program updates:**

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

Hampton

- Hampton had their site visit from NAEYC. It seemed to go well but the assessor doesn't give any feedback at the time. They should receive a report and decision within 3 months.
- Six families attended preschool screening on April 18th. Sam met with parents while the specialists screened the children.
- It's on the BOE agenda to assign a member to the SR Council.

Scotland

- Preschool screening is scheduled for tomorrow, April 26th. Ann is expecting 2 families to attend.
- Preschoolers are receiving special science activities on Fridays.
- The PTO will be sponsoring an Egg Hunt at the school this Friday.
- PD - Carol has been reading a new book called "Oh Boy" to expand her thinking on strategies for meeting the care and learning needs of male students. She has many boys in the class this year. Also, Terry completed a classroom observation last week (Using a tool called CLASS) and will be meeting with Ann and Carol to share data tomorrow.
- Pre-K can be a challenge for Special Teachers who are certified K and up. Staff are considering the needs of preschoolers and best practices for this younger population.

- The preschool outdoor space is being revamped. The playscape is currently unavailable because ground covering is being replaced. They have been providing children with alternative outdoor experiences.

7) **SR Liaison report**

a) **OEC updates**

- i) EASTCONN has sent contracts to Hampton and Scotland for next year. Terry will continue in the role of Liaison and Monitor.
- ii) Administrators are completing the necessary documents for the FY 24 grant. Original signature pages need to be maintained on site, can be scanned for upload. Terry placed related information in a Google folder and shared the link with members on 4/18. She will complete the online application on each communities' behalf before the May 4th due date.
- iii) Terry attended Hampton's preschool screening and was available to few families to answer questions about the grant and encourage participation. She will be doing the same for Scotland tomorrow.
- iv) Due to under-enrollment, the OEC reallocated 2 of Hampton's and 1 of Scotland's spaces to other programs effective April 1st. They are requiring that we submit the grants for next year based on these reduced numbers: Hampton – 14, and Scotland – 17. However, there will be a process for programs to request that their allocations be increased back to previous levels (Hampton – 16, Scotland – 18) as long as they can demonstrate that they will be able to fill them. Both programs have a sense that their enrollments will be up next year. Terry has already drafted that documentation for Hampton. The OEC will provide more information in the coming months.

8) **New Business:**

School Readiness Grant Quality Components –

- Professional Development – QE grants remain at \$3,881 per year and support this need. Both programs indicated that they are planning to utilize these funds in the same manner next year. Enrollment funds can also be used for PD (and don't need to be spent down until the end of FY 24).
- Recruitment and Enrollment – Numbers are looking up for next year. It seems like parents are becoming more comfortable with enrolling children in programs at this time.

9) **Old Business:**

a) **Family involvement**

Terry and Sam spoke to newly enrolling families about participating in the SRC. Terry shared that perhaps the council doesn't need to meet as often as 8 times per year. Most others meet 4 – 5 times. Maybe more families would be willing to attend if it was less of a time commitment. Scott noted that in order to make this change, the group would have to vote to change the bylaws. There was discussion about frequency, the need to meet more often in the spring when the grant is due, and the possibility of returning, at least in part, to in-person meetings. This issue will be discussed at the next meeting at which time the schedule can be set for FY 24.

b) Updates to SRC Policies

- i. Terry has met with each program to discuss their current Family Fee policies and procedures, and is in the process of placing those documents in a shared folder. Hampton has recently updated their family handbook and parent enrollment packets to meet the requirements of the grant.
- ii. There was a deep and thoughtful conversation about whether or not it is appropriate to charge a family fee when a child has an IEP. Points raised included:
 - Geri shared detailed information about IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) – Children from the age of 3 are to be provided a free and appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment.
 - School Readiness policies require that all families be charged a fee for the program. A conundrum exists because the state agencies have policies that don't seem to agree.
 - Sam shared that while she agrees with Geri's points, it's not one size fits all. It's currently not fair that a wealthy family pay nothing due to a child receiving speech services, while others may have low incomes but have to pay. Policies should be consistent.
 - Some families utilize private preschools because they need full-day care. In some communities, children with IEPs enrolled in private child care programs have special services pushed in by the district, and the public school does not pay for those families' tuition.
 - Joy pointed out that preschool is an optional program. As a regional council Hampton and Scotland need to be on the same page.
 - The position of the OEC is that programs are different than services. The program has a fee; the SPED services are to be provided without charge.
 - Currently, if a child has a one-on-one and/or if a full-day program is indicated on the IEP, that family is not charged.
 - It was decided that this issue will be put up for a vote at the next meeting and Terry will highlight this in the meeting invite.
 - Scott suggested that there should be 2 versions of policies with one indicating that no fees be charged in cases where child has an IEP, and the other stating that a pro-rated fee will be assessed. Terry will draft this language in advance.
 - It will be important for members to attend. The principals were asked to encourage their superintendents to participate or at least be aware of the issue and provide their input.

10) Audience for citizens: None

11) Next Agenda Development:

New Business –

c) Vote on updated council policies

d) Generate meeting schedule for FY 24 (may also need a vote for change of bylaws if number of meetings is reduced.)

12) Adjournment: A motion to adjourn was made by Scott at 7:49 PM and seconded by Ann.
Motion passed unanimously.

FINAL MEETING for FY 23 will be held on May 30, 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