

**Kent County**  
**Family & Children's**  
**Coordinating Council**



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**KCFCCC Meeting Minutes**  
**April 21, 2009, 12:00pm – 1:30pm**  
**MSU Extension Offices – Room B**  
**775 Ball Avenue, NE**

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**Members/Alternates Present:** Susan Broman, Candace Cowling, Kristen Gietzen, Jack Greenfield, Bob Haight, Lynn Heemstra, Paul Ippel, Jackie Klinestecker, Kevin Konarska, Rich Liberatore, Sharon Loughridge, Cathy Raevsky, Diana Sieger, Dr. Bernard Taylor, Matthew VanZetten, Andy Zylstra

**Members Absent:** Tom Czerwinski, Bev Drake, William Forsyth, Judge Patrick Hillary, Lynne Ferrell, Ron Jimmerson, Carol Paine-McGovern, Patti Warmington

**Guests:** Tony Campbell, Fritz Crabb, Renee Borg, Susan Leedy, Diane Gibbs, John Wilmot, Nancy Teat, Randy Zylstra, Wayman Britt,

**1. Welcome & Call to Order**

Jack Greenfield opened the meeting with a welcome and asked everyone to introduce themselves.

A motion was made by Lynne Heemstra to approve the February minutes, supported by Cathy Raevsky, **UNANIMOUS**.

**2. Schools of Hope Presentation**

Jack Greenfield welcomed Tony Campbell from United Way to talk about Schools of Hope.

Schools of Hope was initiated through several forums with the Hispanic and African American community. Two themes emerged from the forums; Education and Employment.. Four criteria were developed for the program: 1. High Quality Academic Intervention; 2. Scalable; 3. Sustainable; 4. Empower the local neighborhood to be part of the solution.

The program focuses on K-3<sup>rd</sup> grade with a goal to bring all 3<sup>rd</sup> graders up to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade reading level. Tutors are trained in tutoring reading and literacy skills and the program is designed to increase their ability to support literacy in the schools. Other key points include that the program is aligned with the classroom. There is now a process where the tutor and classroom teacher share information so both know what is going on with the students. Finally, programs are consistent in every school.

Currently, the In-school program has about 1,200 tutors that work with the Grand Rapids Public Schools. They work with students in grades 1-3 who are slightly behind in reading.

The After School Program utilizes the Youth Education for Tomorrow Afterschool Program, also known as YET. They are in three pilot sites, New Hope Baptist Church partnering with Campau Park Elementary, Neland Avenue Christian Reformed Church partnering with Alexander Elementary, and

Church of the Holy Spirit in Belmont partnering with Chandler Woods Charter Academy. The program runs 4 days a week, Monday through Thursday, 90 minutes each session. There are 5 components done each day; 1. Read Aloud - teachers read to the students; 2. Shout Out - interactive discussion between lead staff and kids; 3. Writing Component - kids are engaged in authentic writing related to the Read Aloud & Shout Out; 4. Word Works – fun, interactive literacy games kids play building from Bingo to Go Fish using new vocabulary words; 5. Independent Reading, the 100 book challenge, which helps kids determine their exact reading level.

The program will expand to 4 more sites this fall, for a total of 7.

The last component is the Family Literacy Program. Key components include: 1. Child's education; 2. Parent's education – particularly in the area of English as a second language; 3. Parent & Child Time together. This program serves roughly 20 families.

### 3. **System of Care Presentation**

Jackie Kleinstecker shared information about the Community Family Partnership, the name created for use with the System of Care.

Jackie outlined the goals of the Community Family Partnership:

- Provide accessible behavioral health services
- Assist all children in being successful in school
- Assist all children to safely live with their families
- Assist all children in being successful in the community resulting in reduced juvenile court and corrections involvement
- Strengthen families to remain intact

Originally, the CFP was designed to serve children that have serious emotional disturbances, aligning services around those children. Currently it has been decided to promote a much larger coordinated system of care across all children and families in the community, not just kids with mental health or substance abuse issues.

A System of Care Leadership Team was created and consists of several agencies; DHS, the Court, County Administration, network180, KISD. It will be expanded over time. This group will proceed as a committee of the KCFCCC to provide coordination of efforts and structure within the community. They want to be sure not to create any redundancies or gap areas and to operate in an efficient manner. They also want to be sure to align their initiatives and services within what is currently happening.

Jack Greenfield said the action brought before the Council from the Executive Committee is to create a formal committee called the Community Family Partnership System of Care Committee. A motion was made by Diana Sieger, supported by Cathy Raevsky, **UNANIMOUS**.

### 4. **Strong Family Safe Children Funding Update**

Matthew VanZetten included in the meeting packet a memo from the State regarding contract planning and applicable office allocations for the next fiscal year. He said he received it about a week prior. The response was due today on how the local DHS offices are planning to spend their local allocations.

He went on to say historically the Coordinating Councils have been the planning and decision makers regarding Strong Family Safe Children money. This memo changes that and says we can provide recommendations, but the local Child Welfare Director has final authority. The memo also addresses how we need to spend our money. Each of the areas must be in alignment with the Children's Rights Settlement and proof of each activity's compliance must be provided.

DHS and KCFCCC agree that it makes sense to work together and come up with a joint plan in spending of the resources to make sure the initiatives are maintained. Initiatives include Strong Families Safe Children monies are traditionally used for - Healthy Start and Early Impact. They also provide funding for the Adoptive Family Support Network for post-adoptive services and money for the Kinship Program at Family Outreach Center. With the Kinship Program there is some clarification needed from Central DHS on whether that will be an eligible service or not, based on their changes with the settlement requirements. DHS is currently trying to get clarification regarding that. They are also working to determine if Post Adopt services of the Adoptive Family Support Network will be in alignment with what the State will accept.

Matthew said they have been working on determining what the best ways are to limit the number of referrals into Early Impact, so the families that are most needy receive services, getting the referrals under the contracted amount. Right now we are about 30-40% over-referred. He said they are working on trying to scale that back.

Network180 has been trying to figure out how to use more Medicaid dollars to expand Early Impact and Healthy Start. They have been working closely with Arbor Circle. He said they are also trying to determine if there are ways to use the in-home care line item of the County Child Care Fund to maintain the level of services needed. They are also trying to find if there are lapse dollars in other parts of the State to use. Taking a look at how to best layer the dollars in the System of Care alignment talked about earlier in this meeting to be sure the program is protected for Early Impact.

Regarding Healthy Start, the assessment portion of that is up for bid this year. To get services in place, they need to have an RFP issued in the next few weeks. DHS is working to make sure we are going to get our contract on time.

The Catholic Charities portion of the service delivery has a contract in place and don't expect that to be canceled. Matthew says he has been on the phone a lot trying to piece it all together and making sure we aren't cutting ourselves short. You can see the change in the State directive in terms of the Settlement taking priority in the dollars and the control function taking back. He says we are in the best place to work closely and collaboratively with DHS and to have this framework of a System of Care so when things come down the pike; we have a plan and maintain our close relationships.

## **5. Board of Commissioners Priority Setting**

Matthew VanZetten reminded the group that in May and June the Board of Commissioners will be doing their priority setting process. Dr. Lynn Harvey from Michigan State will be doing the optic scan with a list of questions in a couple of sessions in May so that there will be real time information. They will be provided a list of questions and we can see where the commissioners have a consensus built about what their priorities are. There will be a discussion period in June and then Administrative staff and the Fiscal office can start developing the Board's budget.

Some of the Executive Committee members will be speaking with some of the commissioners to talk about the Coordinating Council's priorities, so they are aware of what they are. Matthew wants everyone to understand the County budgeted a \$2 Million deficit this year to pull out of fund reserves. They went to a \$5 Million deficit because projected revenues were declined. Some de-appropriations were made at a recent Finance Committee meeting, so we are back to about \$2 Million deficit. The Board delayed about \$3 Million worth of capital projects. Next year there will be some significant budget challenges at the County. The City has been dealing with it for many years and it is now starting to hit the County revenues.

Keeping flexible dollars and working together will be more of a priority in this tight economy. Staying at the table is something we need to make sure we are doing what we need to do. Protecting key programs is important also.

Wayman added the County will continue to evaluate where priorities are. This committee's voice is important, so it's necessary to convey the important programs and services to the Commissioners when meeting with them, especially the Prevention dollars the County provides. He added there will also be an opportunity to convey concerns when meeting with State Legislators in May.

Matthew agreed, saying there will be a meeting with Senators Hardiman and Jansen on May 18 regarding the Children's Rights Settlement. There will be a presentation about the work the KCFCCC does. Invitations will be sent out to some members of the Coordinating Council to participate in the meeting. Our hope is to provide legislators an understanding on what it means for our community and others in the State when Prevention dollars are removed. It's not just the County conveying this, but the community as well.

Jack Greenfield said the meetings he has had with County Commissioners has shown him they are very supportive of our work and recognize the importance of a council such as ours.

#### **6. Kent School Services Network**

Matthew VanZetten said Kent School Services Network is in the final year of their 3-year pilot process. They have been meeting with the various funders and program people to listen to their compliments and concerns about where they are at. The Kent ISD and the Coordinating Council are working on a budget and some refinements in the program that will be brought to the Leadership Committee at the May meeting.

At the June meeting there will be a presentation regarding Kent School Services Network, its evaluation and what they see moving forward in the short term and into the long term.

#### **7. First Steps Update**

Jack Greenfield said there was a partnership meeting where representatives of the Commission, Great Start Collaborative, Great Start Parent Coalition and the KCFCCC were present. The goal of the meeting was to discuss the roles and responsibilities of these groups and how they could work together. The outcome of the discussion would be to go into a MOU. That will be done at the next meeting too – they will continue the dialogue on what arrangement will work best centering around the Early Childhood System in our community. What needs to be done, what groups need to work on what, those clarifying issues.

Jack asked for comments from any of the others who attended that meeting.

Matthew said it was a positive meeting and we will be in alignment. The request that the Coordinating Council brought; Representation on the board of First Steps and Regular communication were in alignment with others.

Jack added that one thing that was highlighted in that discussion was the role of parent involvement. He said out of that discussion he believes that this group needs to pay attention to that.

#### **8. Public Comment**

None.

#### **9. Miscellaneous**

Candace Cowling said they will be updating the Resource Guide. They are partnering with RDV Foundation so they can add some additional information they are collecting. They are hoping to

collect service capacity information, which should be helpful for a number of different planning groups; RDV, KCFCCC, Youth Master Plan. Emails will be forthcoming for updates.

#### 10. **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 1:10 p.m.

**Next Council meeting:**      Tuesday, June 2, 2009, 12:00pm – 1:30pm  
MSU Extension Room B