

Great Start Collaborative Board

Meeting Minutes

May 26, 2011

11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Present:

Pat Arter
Craig Blasko
Mona Borowicz
Marcia Bowman
Cheryl Bury
Darla Campbell
Melissa Hartley
Susan Holcomb
Jerry Horton
Kevin Ivers
Sandra Jimenez
Carol Klukas
Amy Mitchell
Katie Newton Blair
Marti Perry
Reyna Price
Carrie Smietanka
Claudia Vescolani
Rachel Wade
Gale White

Area Agency on Aging
Berrien RESA
Tri County Head Start
Roosevelt Elementary School
Berrien County Health Department
South Elementary School
Parent
InterCare Community Health Network
J&J's Christian Center
Berrien RESA
Parent
Berrien County Health Department
Parent Liaison
Telamon Corporation
Michigan Works
Parent
Department of Human Services
Berrien RESA
United Way of Southwest Michigan
Riverwood Center

Approval of January Minutes:

Rachel Wade made a motion to approve the March minutes. The motion was supported by Carol Klukas. Motion carried.

Great Start Collaborative (GSC) and Early Childhood Investment Corporation (ECIC) Report (Amanda Williamson):

Amanda shared that we turned in our 1st quarter progress report to ECIC at the end of April that covered January 1st through March 31st. We received our approval from ECIC, with comments such as “the 40 developmental work is exciting, lots of hard work, love the parent involvement and great media coverage.” ECIC is requiring five earned media pieces of the entire year and we had four out of the five during the 1st quarter.

Amanda shared that on April 27th, the governor announced his intent to sign an executive order creating the Office of Great Start – Early Childhood, which will coordinate early childhood programs and resources that currently are scattered across multiple state departments. Governor Snyder also noted the important role the Early Childhood Investment Corporation will have in making the Office a reality. The Governor said the new office would reduce duplication and administrative overhead, and reinvest resources from efficiencies into quality improvement and service delivery. Snyder adviser Greg Tedder said that “ECIC’s continued role is significant and distinctive because it can leverage public and private money in ways state government can’t.” The plan includes creating the new office by combining the Office of Child Development and Care, located in the Department of Human Services with the Office of Early Childhood Education and Family Services, currently located at the Department of Education. The new office would be housed at the Department of Education and under it, existing programs such as Great Start Readiness Program, Great Parents/Great Start, Preschool Special Education, Child Care Licensing, Head Start State Collaboration, Child Care and Development Program and Early On would fall under it. With all of this being said, we know that the budget is coming to completion in the near future, as early as tonight. ECIC is anticipating that the Great Start Collaborative funding will be maintained in the School Aid budget. However, final decisions regarding the DHS child care quality funds, which funds Regional Resource Centers, Great Start Connect, and ECIC have not yet been made.

Parent Coalition Update (Amy Mitchell):

Amy shared that the Parent Coalition’s 2nd annual book drive collected over 2300 books. The books have been distributed to InterCare – Eau Claire; Berrien County Council for Children; Salvation Army – Benton Harbor; Benton Harbor Sunrise Rotary Red Wagon Program; and Red Bud Ministries – Buchanan. A special thank you goes out to

Chemical Banks throughout the county, Volunteer Center of Southwest Michigan – both St. Joseph and Niles offices, Buchanan Library, Brown School and Benton Harbor Sunrise Rotary.

Amy shared that Star Power 2011 was a great success. Over 4000 people attended from across the state. From Berrien County, 75 people registered, which was an increase of 28 from last year. Our goal was a 20% gain, we had a 60% gain. Six Girl Scouts came with their leader and parents. They had activity books to fill out during the trip, that included a scavenger hunt and to learn about the Government. We had a chance to meet with all three legislators. Al Pscholka talked with the group for over 30 minutes. The legislators shared that they appreciated our positive tone and enjoyed meeting with the kids and parents. Amy also shared that the 2011 Star Power is scheduled for Wednesday, May 16th. Mark your calendars now! Claudia Vescolani thanked Amanda and Amy for their organization of the event. Amanda shared pictures of the day.

As this meeting was Amy's last meeting as the Parent Liaison, Amanda thanked Amy for her hard work and dedication. Amanda shared that there are seven people being interviewed for the position and is hopeful a decision will be made in the near future.

Amy shared that there will be no June Parent Coalition meeting.

Partner Sharing:

Carol Klukas, Berrien County Health Department, asked for support of the Nurse Family Partnership program by writing letters to the Governor and legislators to approve the line item in the budget for NFP. Amanda will send out an email with a sample letter attached.

Lakeland has free health screens to determine the risk of heart disease on Saturday, June 11th from 8:00 am – 10:00 am at an Ebenezer Missionary Baptist Church, 214 East Britain in Benton Harbor. The screening requires a 12-hour fast and will provide a cholesterol lipid panel, which includes fasting cholesterol, HDL, LDL, triglycerides, and glucose (blood sugar) levels. A blood pressure screening is also provided. This screening is intended for community members who have not had their cholesterol checked in more than one year, or who do not have health insurance. Benton Harbor residents are encouraged to attend and find out their risk factors for heart disease, and learn how to reduce this risk. This event is sponsored by HeartSafe. For more information, call 269-559-2808 or 866-260-7544.

Old Business (Amanda Williamson):

Resource Directory - Amanda shared that almost 2000 of the Resource Directories have been distributed into the community. We have about 1000 left, so please let Amanda know if you need anymore, especially Spanish copies.

Developmental Assets - Amanda discussed that we have received funding to be able to hold two more Developmental Assets trainings. More information to follow.

Home Visiting Program - Amanda discussed that we have completed our tasks for Phase 3 of the process, which included a site visit, a second-cut data analysis and an in-depth review of our four home visiting programs that are considered "evidence-based" – Parents as Teachers, Nurse Family Partnership, Early Head Start and Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPI). The state has until June 8th to turn in all of their information. If Berrien County does receive any funding, it will be used for building upon existing home visiting programs. A conference call is scheduled for Friday to learn more about what the State's plan is. More information to follow.

New Business (Amanda Williamson):

Business Summit – The Business Summit will be taking place on Tuesday, June 28th from 11:30 am – 1:30 pm at Lake Michigan College Mendel Center. Our keynote speaker will be Dr. Timothy Bartik from the Upjohn Institute in Kalamazoo. Dr. Bartik is a Senior Economist and author of "Investing in Kids: Early Childhood Programs and Local Economic Development." The program is free of charge and lunch will be served. Reservations are required by June 17th. An invitation will be mailed out soon. Please share the invitation with whomever you think would benefit from this wonderful opportunity. A special award will also be given to a business who we consider to be a Great Start Champion.

Dental Care – There are six billboards up promotion early dental care throughout the county. One of our goals this year is to increase awareness and access to dental care for young children. With the billboards, we have increased awareness. To increase access, we discussed that we wanted to start exploring hosting dental clinics in north and south county. I am starting a work group around this project. Please let me know if you would be willing to be involved.

Kindergarten Transition Summary – The Kindergarten Transition Summary form has been distributed to all Great Start Readiness Programs in our county. Kindergarten principals have also received copies of the form, as well as a letter

explaining the process. So far, we have received positive feedback from many of the GSRP teachers and directors, as well as the Kindergarten teachers and principals.

Early Childhood Birth – Five Campus – A collaboration through United Way of Southwest Michigan, the Great Start Collaborative, Tri County Head Start, Benton Harbor Area Schools, Michigan Works, Childcare Regional Resource Center, Berrien RESA and many others is taking place. The ten Benton Harbor Head Start classrooms and five Benton Harbor kindergarten classrooms will be combining into the old Seely McCord building. There will also be room for the Early Head Start Home Visiting program, a resource hub provided by the Regional Resource Center, and playgroups provided by Parents as Teachers. The center is scheduled to open in the fall.

Michigan State University Evaluation Feedback – Amanda shared the results of the MSU Evaluation that took place ten months ago. There were many accomplishments from Berrien County, as well as some areas that need to be developed. Amanda shared a presentation and will be sent out via email.

Next Meeting: Thursday, July 21st, 11:30 am, Berrien RESA