

HEBRON SCHOOL READINESS COUNCIL

February 13, 2013
GILEAD HILL SCHOOL
MUSIC ROOM
7:00PM

Council Members Present: Barbara Wilson, School Readiness Liaison
Jared Redmond, AHM/PREP Representative
Judith Richard, Hebron Director of Special Education
Donna Lanza, Town Hall Representative
Marilyn Piecuch, Hebron Resident and NAEYC Consultant
Cindy Lalonde, Parent
Eric Brody, GHS Acting Principal
Kathryn Veronesi, Acting Superintendent
Christopher Lapsis, School Readiness teacher
Heather Holbrook, AHM Designee
Liz LaChapelle, PTA President/Parent (arrived at 7:07pm)

Council Members Absent: Cheri Labombard, Douglas Library
Polly Simon, Hebron Daycare Provider
Ellen Kirkpatrick, School Nurse
Christa Goodwin-Babka, Hebron Daycare Provider
Becky Murray, Family Resource Center Coordinator

1. WELCOME

Jared Redmond called the meeting to order at 7:01pm. Introductions were made. Heather Holbrook was in attendance on behalf of Becky Murray. H. Holbrook is a preschool teacher at the KinderRHAMa program at RHAM High School.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

Samantha Schadtle, a parent, spoke regarding the 1 slot that could be opened for a student that is age-eligible for Kindergarten but might not be ready to go. She spoke to the benefits of having that option and strongly encourages the Council to consider allowing it. Mrs. Schadtle also spoke about other grants that are available to assist in funding the needs that the school may have, specifically she mentioned the playground.

Carol Connolly, a parent, thanked the Council for being in Hebron and impacting student lives. She commended Mr. Lapsis on his leadership. Mrs. Connolly feels that in regards to the budget there should be transparency. She spoke to the topic regarding the playground and stressed that it was separate from School Readiness. The playground is needed for everyone. Mrs. Connolly said that she is determined to support every child in Hebron regardless of income.

3. REVIEW & APPROVAL OF JANUARY MINUTES

D. Lanza would like more detail in the minutes as to what exactly was transferred in the budget lines. J. Richard went over each line with what the changes were and commented that as of this meeting, the state

still has not approved the changes formally. She has been in discussions with Gerri Rowell at the state. J. Richard will speak more to that in the Budget Review.

D. Lanza motioned for approval with the changes made.

L. LaChapelle seconded.

Unanimously approved.

4. TEACHER REPORT

Christopher Lapsis ran a slideshow during the meeting. He spoke in regards to the 2 newest students that have entered the School Readiness Program. The class has adjusted well and the new students have joined in smoothly.

5. STATE MEETING UPDATES

B. Wilson stated that the last meeting was on January 23rd. She spoke with Gerri Rowell to discuss the 5% allowable for Kindergarten eligible students. It was initially meant for students that have not had any exposure to education at home. It is up to the School Readiness Council to make a determination.

There is a new initiative to have center based facilities. If large cities/towns have multiple sites, they are being encouraged to combine. It doesn't really pertain to Hebron.

B. Wilson reported that the Early Childhood Teacher Certificate was talked about in the meeting. This certification will prove that teachers are highly qualified. The teachers that are coming out of colleges with this program automatically received it. Teachers that are currently teaching but don't have this specific certification, can apply for it and Charter Oak State College gives professional development recommendations to complete the requirements. Teachers can also be grandfathered in if appropriate. J. Richard asked if our teachers would be grandfathered in. B. Wilson believes so. They would need to still apply if they left our district for another program however. M. Piecuch spoke about Charts-A-Course and how all the information is conveniently stored with them in regards to that certification once our teachers have it.

6. ENROLLMENT UPDATE

B. Wilson stated that there are currently 14 students enrolled in the School Readiness Program. This number includes our 2 new students. She is receiving phone calls almost daily about the program for next year. It appears that a lottery will need to be held for the full tuition slots that will be open. We are also getting calls about the reduced tuition slots.

7. TUITION/PARENT INTERVIEWS

Stephanie Levin reported that we are half way through the school year and that all families are paid up to date. She reported that letters will be drafted to inform parents what their remaining balances are for tuition as well as information regarding the 2nd family interviews that are required per School Readiness Policies and Procedures. L. LaChapelle asked if there have been any issues. S. Levin reported that there haven't been any major delinquencies, just an occasional friendly reminder.

8. BUDGET REVIEW

J. Richard spoke regarding the budget transfers that were submitted to the state. Gerri Rowell has rejected the Property line transfer. J. Richard continued on and spoke in regards to the original amount in the grant and that it was thought that we would be able to work on the preschool playground. There were many discussions back and forth regarding the Smart Boards and whether they are age appropriate for preschoolers. J. Richard moved on to the salary and benefit lines. The Board of Education is funding the balance this year along with the grant and the incoming tuition. For the 2013-2014 fiscal year, the Board of

Education will not be providing any funding. J. Richard stressed that the Council will need to sustain the salary and benefits within the grant and tuition. The Council will receive the grant to review when it is written. J. Richard stresses that the Council needs to look at a 5 year plan. D. Lanza asked about the grant amount of \$107,000. M. Piecuch said it has remained stagnant at that amount for at least 8 years. D. Lanza asked if the Hebron Board of Education is not supporting it because they have to reduce the budget. K. Veronesi clarified that the Board of Education didn't know that they helped to pay the salary and benefits. L. LaChapelle also feels that the Board of Education information was confusing. Discussion regarding the relationship between the School Readiness Council and the Hebron Board of Education continued. M. Piecuch discussed how another district runs their non-profit preschool. J. Richard talked about expansion of the program in the future. The Council spoke about the recent discussions regarding the needs that have been expressed about the playground at Gilead Hill School.

9. PUBLIC COMMENT

C. Connolly spoke about possible ways to generate income. She wanted to know if the School Readiness program tuition is standardized. She recommends an increase in tuition. Mrs. Connolly spoke in regards to the future membership of the Board of Education and requests that every parent attend the Board of Education meetings to champion this program. Mrs. Connolly recommends that a playground committee be formed. She thanked Mr. Lapsis again.

S. Schadle asked for clarification on the Smart Board decision. She asked if it would be acceptable for a purchase to be made with outside funding.

Mr. Lapsis spoke about the use of a Smart Board in the classroom. He believes that the state just doesn't have a clear understanding about the potential there is to having this technology in a preschool classroom. NAEYC will not approve or disapprove of having one in a classroom. NAEYC only states that they are encouraging of technology.

S. Schadle extended her thanks and supports higher tuition. Mrs. Schadle spoke to the RHAM preschool and thinks a collaboration with the School Readiness Program would be great. In regards to the playground discussion, she offered to write a grant on behalf of the program. She spoke about specific grants that are out there (Hasbro, Kaboom, Lego, etc.)

K. Veronesi suggested that a School Readiness Summit be scheduled to be able to have some collaboration. D. Lanza suggested a presentation be developed by the Council before any information is made public.

10. MEETING ADJOURNED

J. Redmond requested a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:40pm.

D. Lanza motioned

M. Piecuch seconded.

Unanimously approved.

The next School Readiness Council Meeting will be held on March 13th at 12:30 p.m. in the GHS Activity Room.

Respectfully Submitted:

Stephanie Levin, School Readiness Clerk