



COLLABORATIVE FOR COLCHESTER'S CHILDREN

May 13, 2025

Leadership Work Group/School Readiness Meeting

Cragin Memorial Library

9:00-10:30 AM

Attendance: Cindy Praisner, Laurie Buyniski, Jennifer Rummel, Kate Byroade, Meghan Amado, Nicole Beauchamp, Regina Brady, Jamie Girvin, Julia Lash, Rosemary Kelley, Dan Sullivan, Eve Hurley, Jessica Kuckel, Sarah Russel, Bernie Dennler, Sharon Wilinski, Christina Pace, and Consultant Deb Adams

Partner Updates

Cragin- Preparation for the Summer Reading program in full swing, planning for Fall. K. Byroade is applying for a community wifi grant that will expand service to the Town Green, Town Hall, Youth Center, and an area at the Rec Plex. Boxwoods are being pulled from landscaping due to disease. Ideas for replacement options should be directed to Kate. Fundraising will be required.

Castle - Preparing for summer and planning all of the classroom shifts as kids age up. Getting ready for graduations.

TVCCA-

WIC - 3300-3400 families with increasing caseload, fully staffed, farmer's market season will begin in June

Family Bridge- Universal home visiting program continues, Full caseload and hired a per diem nurse to assist. Colchester will be part of phase 2 which will begin in the next couple months. Teresa and Regina will attend Legislative Day 5/14 at the Capital to highlight TVCCA programs. Legislature is in session. Now is the time to call or write to them.

HeadStart - Federal funding seems intact but continued advocacy for Head Start is appreciated right now.

CPS - District is looking to expand accreditation from just the high school to include the whole district. Accreditation would provide an independent review of curriculum and instruction, leadership, assessment, support from the community, special education, co-/extracurricular activities. Requires a community member to take part in process. Will be presenting the idea to the BOE at an upcoming meeting.

CPS Special Education- District is preparing for the Extended School Year program. Families are being notified and classrooms are being set for this summer. Additionally, the district is working to increase "meaningful access" by increasing consistency across the district and providing information before the meeting so the family can process and prepare for the meeting.

CES - Kindergarten Orientation is this week. Kindergarten registration is ongoing. There are flyers with QR codes to encourage people to register. Families can also receive registration

assistance at the orientation. May 30 is Fun Day. Preschool orientation will occur in August once Early Start spaces are filled.

Town: Town Meeting is scheduled for May 22. First vote is for the water system; second meeting to immediately follow to vote to move budget to referendum. Referendum is planned for Tuesday, June 3. Bids to renovate the Youth Center are open. Hopefully the completion date will be late fall or by end of the year.

Parent Updates:

OEC Ambassadors - Christina Pace, our OEC Parent Cabinet member, introduced herself. She is new to the work and looking forward to learning more about what we do. Community Cafe is Friday, May 16th. The Brain Architecture Game will be the main activity.

Parent Council - Council is wrapping up events for the school year, fundraisers include MandiLee Photography, Family Pizza, & Mel's with Rock Painting. Planning for three Farmer's Market dates are also underway. Rosemary Kelley and Renee Behlman have agreed to lead the Parent Council next year.

McKinney-Vento Homeless Update - District continues to support families eligible for transportation and free breakfast and lunch. Relook at eligibility in July. Recently a family reached out to C3 and through District and Social Services, we were able to help the family.

C3 Updates-

S. Wilinski shared that Joyful Noises wraps up for this school year next week. It has been a very good session. Additionally, CPraisner noted that Baby and Me and Flip It workshops will also finish next week. There are 4 Stroller Walks planned for May and June. There will be a 4 week session of Baby and Me in July.

Budget Review - Budget is generally on track June 30 budget end. L.Buynski will not use all of her hours and remainder will be allocated for other expenses such as childcare. LECC funds are within the final few hundred dollars. Toner needs to be purchased and laminating film for the StoryWalk may also be purchased. Transition to LGP grant funds have been extended through Sept 30th. We have less than \$300 remaining. There will be another round of Transition funds coming focused on stabilization. Unfortunately, after further discussion, materials and equipment are not going to be eligible purchases. C.Praisner may apply for annual expenses such as website, registration program, and Farmer's market items. A revision to move all remaining funds to the supply line for the QE grant was approved. CECP and Castle can submit purchase ideas in the amount of \$985 each to C.Praisner within the next few weeks.

OEC/SR Updates -

C.Praisner has begun working on income redeterminations as required for current families. L. Therian and J. O'Meara will meet with C.Praisner on Friday, May 16th to create a rubric form for each Early Start application. After that is completed, CPraisner will begin the selection process starting with the family with the most need. Spring monitoring visits are almost complete and reports will be completed soon. It looks like professional development requirements have been met for all staff.

Early Start CT Update

Deb Adams, a consultant hired with Transition to LGP funds, reviewed her findings. She compared the original School Readiness requirements with the new legislation and C3's work. Overall, C3 is in a good position to apply. To review the new changes, she reminded the group that Early Start CT is about more than just preschool and expands the work to include infants and toddlers. Her report can be found here- [LGP Summary Report](#). The more in-depth crosswalk document is also available for review- [Colchester Document and Activity Crosswalk](#)

Among the changes might be an expansion of the Parent Ambassador role. If this happens, C3 will need to reconsider how that role fits with the Parent Council and what the expectations and time commitments might be. Current Parent Ambassador or Parent Council members may reconsider their participation based on the new information.

Overall, Deb sees Colchester as an exemplar community. Telling our story and carefully considering our data, our capacity and our areas of need were encouraged. Needs assessment may possibly highlight new ways to meet the needs of families.

C3 Bylaws are strong but will need some revisions to add in Early Start focus areas. School Readiness Council by-laws will no longer be needed.

Application submission deadlines are still unknown. The group agreed that C.Praisner will meet with B.Dennler and D. Sullivan to determine the fiduciary. D. Adams recommended thinking about who might be more flexible and have faster turnaround times.

Possibilities for future decision-making on the application could be:

- June 10th meeting at 9 am in Pupil Services office
- Executive committee with Castle rep as community representative
- If information beyond that already discussed over the last few meetings is not required, CPraisner can complete and submit the application without further discussion or approval from the larger group.

It was suggested that we take another look at the availability of Family Resource Center funding for Colchester. Perhaps something will change as a result of the Early Start CT funding. If FRC grant remains unavailable, we could still crosswalk FRC goals to determine where C3 has gaps.

Upcoming Meeting Dates for 2024-2025

June 10 at Pupil Services Office

Submitted by:

Cindy Praisner, Early Childhood Coordinator