

Richland County Youth and Family Council Meeting

January 4, 2024

1:30 p.m.

Richland County Mental Health & Recovery Services Board/Microsoft TEAMS

The following members were:

Present: Joe Devany, Kevin Kimmel, Michele Giess, Sherry Branham-Fonner, Nikki Harless, Stan Jefferson, Dan Varn, Wendy Thompson, Lori Bedson, Darrell Banks

Absent: Tiffany Ellenberger, Michelle Wood, Lisa Benson, Meghan Wheeler, Hannah Crouch

Administrative Staff Present: Michelle Miller, Toby Borders

Present via Microsoft TEAMS: Jamie Klear, Melissa Swank, Shauna Shell, Jenette Karger, Whitney Lindsay, Richelle Ettel, Donna Hight, Jean Taddie

Guests: Anne Vermillion, Ashley Leadingham, Nancy Hartman, Aimee Matusik, Siera Marth-May, Julie Litt, Amanda Soliven, Deena Hamilton, Patricia Dollisch

1. Call to Order & Introductions

President Joe Devany called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. and began introductions. A quorum was established with six voting members in attendance.

2. Approval of December 7, 2023, Meeting Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes of the previous meeting (December 7, 2023) was made by Lori and seconded by Nikki. The motion passed by a voice vote.

3. Treasurer's Report

Toby informed Council members there was no Treasurer's Report to be submitted due to the fact the Finance Committee meets after the Council meeting this month (January 8, 2024). This happens several times throughout the year. The Treasurer's Report for November will be submitted to the Finance Committee on January 8th then presented to the Council in February.

4. New Business - Executive Director/FCFC Updates

Parent Representatives

The Council continues to seek a parent representative to replace a parent representative who resigned several months ago. Michelle distributed a hand-out describing the role and qualifications of a parent representative. Kevin stated he has several parent representatives (paid positions) who serve as part of his Board. He asked if it would be appropriate to have one of them participate on the Council. Guest Aimee Matusik, East Regional Coordinator, Ohio Department of Children and Youth, advised the Council a parent representative for the Council should not be a paid employee (position) of a voting member of the Council. She suggested having one of the representatives serve as a participating member of the Care Management Team. Michelle stated she would discuss the possibility with the Care Management Team.

Local/State Representation

Michelle informed Council members she has been invited to work with OSU to address homelessness and housing issues impacting youth. This is part of a series to address youth issues.

Additionally, Michelle has been representing the Richland County Youth and Family Council on Central Ohio Regional Prevention Council on Childhood Abuse and Neglect down in Columbus; a state workgroup to help Family and Children First Council Directors maintain their positions (decrease turnover in their positions), work force retention and on the Ohio Heartland CAC Head Start Board.

Richland County Youth and Family Council Strategic Plan

Michelle provided Council members with a copy of the Strategic Plan, asking members to review the plan and submit suggestions or comments to her via e-mail. The focus of the plan is literacy. Michelle shared statewide grade level/reading level statistics for local school districts further strengthening this need to address literacy issues. Father involvement in the family is a focus of the plan as well.

EI Update

Julie provided an update on the Early Intervention grant and distributed the EI report for members to review. According to Julie, Richland County Board of Developmental Disabilities has recently gone through an accreditation process for which they received no findings. As part of the process, they mailed 124 parent surveys to parents whose children participated in services; only 22 surveys were returned. However, of the 22 returned, recipients of services ranked the services provided highly. Guest Aimee Matusik asked Julie if the EI program makes referrals to other Youth and Family Council programs when children exit the EI program. Julie replied yes and identified several referral programs (CHAP, Head Start, OhioRISE).

5. Old Business

Imagination Library (Dolly Parton program)

Michelle is continuing to meet with the Health Department and CHAP to address financial questions related to the Imagination Library program.

6. Updates/Announcements/Guest Speakers

Aimee Matusik, East Regional Coordinator, Ohio Department of Children and Youth

Aimee informed members the Ohio Family and Children First Council has moved from under the direction of the Department of Job and Family Services to the Department of Children and Youth. According to Aimee, the Department is hiring regional coordinators and the focus will be to visit the counties more frequently in the coming year. County Family and Children First Councils will be receiving self-evaluation forms to address how counties are meeting Council requirements as established in statute. Additionally, counties will be evaluated on service coordination methods as measured against the Service Coordination Model (based on data entered into OASCIS).

Discussion – Staffing Shortages in Education

Joe advised Council members he is in need of Head Start teachers to maintain programming. Joe stated he has had to close several classes due to a shortage of teaching staff. Kevin stated he is also experiencing shortages in teaching staff. According to Kevin, he has two openings in residential programs (ABRAXAS and Foundations for Living) as well as a shortage of Registered Behavioral Technicians (Aides) that are currently being paid \$25 per hour.

Michele asked Aimee if OhioRISE is working with AETNA to address some of these problems and making connections within the counties. Aimee stated she does not know. Whitney Lindsay (Virtual guest/OhioRISE) informed members OhioRISE is working with AETNA and she would be available to meet with agencies to discuss the program.

Kevin added sign-on bonuses are being provided to entice teachers and asked if the education community is making Psychology and Speech and Language students aware of large sign-on bonuses in special education (up to \$50,000) and funding for graduate studies. Sherry asked what is happening at the state level to identify and address barriers to those entering the teaching profession. Kevin stated Ohio is funding programs locally to incentivize recruitment. One program offers \$5,000 per year for four years of a teaching degree/licensure with an agreement to work in a high need area. Under this program, Mansfield has been identified as a high need area; however, anyone working for MOESC can take advantage of the program as

well. Kevin stated, internally, he's trying to use the program to incentivize support staff, assistants to continue to work in the field while pursuing a four-year degree/licensure.

Stan stated if the education system crumbles it will affect the community. According to Stan, violence in schools is a deterrent to anyone entering the field of education. He stated the district is in need of six Intervention Specialists at this time. Employees across the district are being asked to continue their education so they can be hired in teaching positions.

Wendy advised members the cost of an education vs. the starting wage of a teacher is a barrier to those who may want to enter the field. She encouraged Council members to meet with OSU and NCSC representatives to discuss the educational needs of the area and the challenges of staffing local classrooms. Kevin stated he has been working with OSU and NCSC and has had these conversations. However, NCSC has decreased the number of classes in education being offered. Wendy stated members need to make the colleges aware of the local need and advocate for changes.

Sherry stated she doesn't understand where workers have gone in general; all industry sectors are experiencing shortages, not just education.

Darrell added, in 2000 when he was teaching at Knox County Career Center, the students took classes at their home schools but were also placed out in the schools if they had an interest in education to see if it would be a good fit for them. He doesn't know if this practice is still occurring.

Lori cautioned members not to exclude online options from the discussions and planning process since those entering the workforce at this time are presented with numerous opportunities to work remotely. Eliminating this option could result in missing an opportunity to reach a different/expanded audience.

Stan stated education has to be a chameleon in that it needs to be able to adjust, make changes. He added, after COVID, many district families opted to continue virtual learning because it fit the needs of the family better than traditional schooling.

Deena Hamilton: Love on a Mission representative, stated many of the youth in the LGBTQ community participate in online education as an educational option due to bullying, etc.

Other Updates

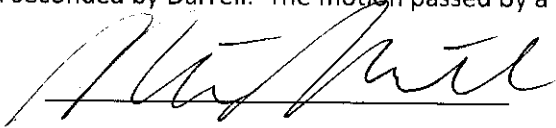
Richland County Foundation representative Siera Marth-May informed members the Summer Programs for Youth grant proposal has been released and the deadline to submit an application is the second Sunday in February (February 11, 2024).

Ashley informed members there has been an influx of referrals by hospitals and self-referrals for moms coming home from the hospital after delivery. Ashley let members know they can refer families/moms prior to birth so CHAP can become connected with the families before the babies are born. Michelle will send an electronic version of the CHAP referral form to Council members.

Adjourn

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Kevin and seconded by Darrell. The motion passed by a voice vote.


Joe Devany, Council President


Michelle Miller, Executive Director