



## CONNECTICUT FAMILY SUPPORT COUNCIL

### May 9, 2013 Meeting Minutes

**Meeting Location** - Office of Protection and Advocacy, Hartford

**In attendance:** Sharon Dexler, Ann Gionet, Sara Lourie, Linda Mizzi, Lisa Sheppard, Robin Wood, April Dipollina

Mona Tremblay present via telephone

**Excused Absence:** Jennifer Carroll, Tesha Imperati, Robyn Trowbridge, Renee Toper

**Absent:** Terry Cote, Sylvia Gafford-Alexander, Mark Greenstein, Colleen Hayles, Karen Hlavac, Steven Hernandez, Miriam Martinez, Maureen Smith

**Call to Order:** 10:32 am

Introduction of Committee members in person and on the phone.

**Public Comment:** No public present

**Review of April Minutes:** Reviewed the draft minutes from the April 11, 2013 meeting. There were no corrections. April Dipollina made a motion to accept the minutes, Robin Wood seconded and the motion was approved with Sharon Dexler abstaining.

#### Old Business

1. Annual Report - A final set of corrections have not been made and Council members will be polled one additional time to make sure that final edits are captured. The report has not been posted or disseminated. Linda Mizzi has agreed to send the draft electronic version to Council members and request final edits. It was emphasized that it would be helpful to have this disseminated to the legislature prior to the end of the session this June but it has to go to the Governor first (as previously decided by the Council). Lisa Sheppard and Sharon Dexler will draft the cover letter for the Governor and legislators. Ann Gionet has agreed to assist with making copies for the legislature.
2. Teleconferencing - Robin Wood looked at available dates and it was not possible to start until the upcoming June meeting. Video conferencing is not available for

the September meeting (which is the annual retreat) but otherwise Robin has scheduled the Council meetings for each month. Robin prepared a 1-page handout for Council members that includes the location of each DDS office with video conferencing capacity and with the contact person. It is imperative that Council members identify a specific location and sign up with Dianne Gill (via email or phone) at least one week in advance for each meeting; she will make sure there is a DDS staff person available to assist the Council member in each location being used that month.

It was confirmed that at least initially this is being done for Council members to make it possible for those who would have to drive long distances to have an alternative if they cannot get to Hartford for a particular meeting. It is felt that this may be helpful in recruiting new members from across the state who would find this more convenient.

A main site for the meeting will still be designated and members of the public will be invited to that site; it was agreed that at this time it did not seem feasible to have members of the public go to alternate sites. A question was raised about guests, and it was agreed that guests can accompany a Council member if they are going to an alternate site.

## **New Business**

1. Nominations Committee/Annual Meeting - July is the annual meeting which includes election of officers. A Nominations Committee is needed to prepare a slate for elections. Sara Lourie will send an email to Council members soliciting volunteers for the Nominations Committee.
2. Community Partnership Grant - Robin Wood provided an update on the status of the Partnership grant application to improve family support across the system. Fifteen (15) states have put in applications, including Connecticut; a minimum of 5 will be selected. The application includes the development of a Family Support Steering Committee, Cross Disability Alliance, and participation in the National Community of Practice around family support across the life span as well as development of a state level Community of Practice. There is an assessment component and there is interest in any input around good tools for a system-wide assessment of family support capacity. There was a discussion about existing assessment tools and suggestions that Council members might have in that area. There was also discussion that the Family Support Council should have a formal role and Lisa Sheppard volunteered to participate. Robin reported that DDS has decided to work on the establishment of best practices even if they don't receive the grant funding.

It was decided that this will become a standing agenda item for future meetings.

## **Standing Agenda Items**

1. DVD/Family Stories Sub-Committee (Mona Tremblay, Robin Wood, April Dipollina and Robyn Trowbridge) - Mona and Robin W. met around the potential for using the new DDS video lab for recording family stories. The lab is still being built and the timeframe for its availability is not certain; however because there would be preparation involved, it is still possible to start the process, identify potential families and have them work on developing ideas for their videos. There will be some paperwork involved with use of the video lab and each family will be asked to develop a "story board" which outlines the content of the video. Robin W. has agreed to be the liaison between the Council, family members and the DDS staff who handle the video lab. Mona and April have already identified some families who are interested and ready to start and the Council discussed using these to "pilot" the process and see how it works before expanding. It was suggested that we try to get families representing different geographical areas of the state.

This will continue as a standing agenda item at each meeting.

2. School Climate Sub-Committee (Carlos Colon, Sharon Dexler, Tesha Imperati, Lisa Sheppard, Marie Bennett) - Sharon reported that the sub-committee met and discussed the huge breadth of the topic area and the need to select an area of focus as a starting point. The sub-committee is recommending that the focus be on pre-school settings with the hope that if you start with younger children, this will be less of an issue as they get older. There was extensive discussion about existing curriculum (e.g. Melissa Marshall working on a bullying project around "degrees of mean"), the possibility of looking at a "train-the-trainer" model for pre-school (adapting what is often geared towards an older student population to the more specific needs of small children) and ways to integrate this into the pre-school curriculum. There was also an example given of an interesting situation in which there was "reverse bullying" where the child with a disability was suspended because he was bullying other children and concerns expressed regarding how the school meets all the children's needs in a situation such as this.

The sub-committee will plan to continue these conversations and try to identify if there are specific projects on which the Council can/should focus.

## **Announcements**

Jennifer Carroll has resigned from the Council after 10 years of involvement and will be greatly missed.

A Membership Sub-committee is needed to work on new member recruitment. Current Council member terms need to be reviewed. Robin Wood agreed to get information on terms of current members and send that to Lisa Sheppard.

**Meeting adjourned at 12:07 pm**

**Next meeting: June 13, 2013**

Minutes recorded by Sara Lourie, Interim Secretary