



MEETING NOTES

Region 8 Family Council Meeting

Date & Time: April 27, 2023, 6:30 p.m.

ZOOM: Lauren, Ashley, Casey, Brianna, Jane, Brittany, Bethany, Becky.

Family and Community Engagement Specialist Dean Wright called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

Regional Manager Lou Ann Hayes updated Family Council members on what discussions the Action Council has had and how it all will fit into the Regional Needs Assessment that is nearing completion.

Dean then asked what barriers are there in meaningful engagement with parents, families, and caregivers. Casey said, in her experience with kids in the school district and in the PTO, she sees a lack of engagement from parents in general.

Communication between all of them is good, but many parents don't make the effort for meaningful engagement. Whether they don't know how or don't have the internet to follow updates is unknown but they are not participating in events or meetings.

Ashley said when she had her first child she struggled with not knowing what her role should be regarding school activities. So she contacted teachers to ask.

Lauren said often it's hard to meet with teachers in person because the times available don't mesh with parents' schedules, so it's hard to develop a relationship with the teachers. Her contact is limited to emails and only one in-person meeting. Jane said her job hours prevent her from meeting with teachers because appointments are during the day. So, she has to take time off to meet with them. Further, since teachers don't send home a summary of lessons taught, she has no idea what her daughter is learning that week. Perhaps a summary timeline of lessons to be taught would help so parents can reinforce those lessons at home.

The discussion shifted to what are the needs in Region 8 regarding ECEC. Jane said in her town there is no wrap-around child care compounded by a bus driver shortage which results in few transportation options when kids get out of half-day care. Many parents have to leave work to pick up their kids. The daycare hours don't mesh with



the family's needs. Often work hours begin or end at different hours than daycare is open.

Wages for ECEC workers are a problem. Jane said her factory production workers make more than teachers or ECEC workers. Ashley said also there is no support for teachers in dealing with behavioral issues with students either with more staff or emergency response. Becky suggested high school students could help with child care after school to get volunteer credit hours. With no wrap-around daycare, she said it makes finding a job within that half-day time window hard.

But finding teens willing to do that is hard as well. Members said high school students now have busy schedules after school with sports and other activities. They also have the option of paying jobs when they turn 16.

Another need is a continuation of early intervention services for kids from ages 3-5. Lauren said social service programs do a good job from birth to 3, but then it falls off when kids go to preschool, especially in the smaller towns. The YMCA child care program is helping in those areas with support programs, but the jobs are not full-time which limits the people they can hire.

Dean then asked what are we missing for the Regional Needs Assessment. Casey again said schools are not good at giving out information on preschool screenings. Lauren said summer child care is a huge challenge since kids are out of school and the few providers are even more overwhelmed. She said an increased focus on preschool for all may help be a solution. Dean said that is part of the Governor's overall plan to improve child care.

The meeting adjourned at 8:01 p.m. and the next Family Council meeting is May 25.

Todd McKenna
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