

FLEMINGTON-RARITAN REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

EARLY CHILDHOOD ADVISORY COUNCIL

WINTER MEETING MINUTES

JANUARY 7, 2025

The Virtual Winter Meeting of the Flemington-Raritan Regional School District Early Childhood Advisory Council was held on January 7, 2025 via Zoom, the meeting commenced at 3:50pm.

Riley Finnegan introduced the Preschool Leadership Team and provided a brief overview of the purpose of ECAC, and updates on the open Preschool Lottery Entry Form for the 2025-2026 School Year.

Early Childhood Advisory Council members were welcomed and provided with an overview of the Preschool Leadership Team.

Feedback on the Lottery

Ms. Finnegan provided an update to members that the Preschool Lottery flyers are posted throughout the community and that parents are submitting their children's information via a Google form. Ms. Finnegan reminded members that the lottery opened on January 3, 2025 and will close on February 21, 2025. Ms. Finnegan also restated that families that submitted the Lottery Entry Form will be notified of student placement and waitlist placement for their child on March 14, 2025. A video will be uploaded on the website and posted in our newsletter, in English and Spanish, focusing on navigating the website and how to complete the Lottery Entry Form.

Community Needs Assessment

The Community Needs Assessment (CNA) opened in early September and we have received 52 responses. The CNA is used to develop workshops and events including the December workshop that was presented in collaboration with Nicole Bateman, the Preschool Intervention and Referral Specialist to educate families on potty training. This workshop had the highest attendance from families this year.

Parent Workshops

Based on the responses from the CNA and trends throughout the District, the January workshop will focus on A day in the Life of a Preschooler and the Importance of Attendance. As we move into the Spring, the parent workshops will include topics on challenging behaviors, presented in collaboration with our BCBA; language development, presented in collaboration with speech language pathologists; Children's overall health; and kindergarten readiness, with conversations with kindergarten teachers during the workshop.

ECAC members were asked for strategies to assist in increasing parent participation in workshops. Members provided ideas to Ms. Finnegan including to focus on during the next council meeting.

Chronic Absenteeism

Chronic absenteeism is an issue that is being tracked in the preschool program, with the leadership team focusing on getting to the root cause on a one-to-one basis with the families. Support has been offered to the family, by questioning if it is issues with transportation, and supporting in instances that are not illness. The preschool leadership team is working on strengthening relationships with families by providing the tools for

more open communication. The Preschool Website has been updated with additional information and the *Meeting and Assistance Form* to meet with the Preschool Social Worker and Community Parent Involvement Specialist, Riley Finnegan.

Administrative Updates

The Supervisor of Early Childhood, Amanda Cahill, reviewed the Preschool Attendance Guidelines that were provided to all of the preschool families in October of 2024. The Preschool Program is working with District administration to continue to focus on reducing chronic absenteeism by establishing preschool policies for attendance.

The Whole Child Fair Update

The Whole Child Fair organization has established over 20 vendor tables already booked for the April 8, 2025 event. We are expecting activities to include music from the DJ Club from JP Case, free books and library card applications from the local library, child crafts from our preschool partners, community and health resources, and resources on the benefits of animal therapy with a puppy kissing booth. The leadership team collected input from ECAC members and will plan to include a children's art exhibit. ECAC members also proposed the idea to include vendors that provide summer break and holiday childcare, such as summer camps, clinics, and activities.

District-Wide PTO

A district-wide PTO idea was brought up to the ECAC. Benefits and barriers of having a district-wide PTO were discussed and will be reviewed again during future council meetings by the leadership team and ECAC members.

Next Meeting

The next Early Childhood Advisory Council meetings will be scheduled for March and May. Families may register to attend ECAC meetings utilizing the link on our website, through our Penguin Post newsletter, and by contacting Preschool Community Parent Involvement Specialist, Riley Finnegan.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:40pm.

Meeting Attendees

First name	Last name	Title and Organization
Bateman	Nicole	Preschool Instruction Coach (PIC) and Intervention and Referral Specialist (PIRS)
Birkenstock	Ryan	Parent, Board of Education President
Caffyn	David	Parent
Caffyn	Samantha	Parent
Cahill	Amanda	Early Childhood Supervisor
Case	Robyn	Preschool Teacher

Colavito	Karen	Director, Precious Gems Academy
Colonna	Rachel	Preschool Social Worker
Correa	Delta	Parent
DeAnglis	Laurie	Preschool Teacher
Dvoor	Carol	Safe Harbor
Ferrara	Theresa	Preschool LDTC
Finnegan	Riley	Community-Parent Involvement Specialist (CPIS) and Social Worker for Preschool
Goldschlag Reinking	Allison	Early Childhood Specialist Supervisor, Central Jersey Family Health Consortium
Gonzalez	Raquel	Assistant Director, Precious Gems Academy
Hamblin	Dr. Danielle	Director of Pupil Personnel Services and Special Education
Harmeyer	Dr. Erin	Parent, Assistant Research Professor National Institute for Early Education Research-Rutgers
Javier-Mannino	Katherinne	Administrative Assistant for Preschool
Killion	Erin	Parent
Kovacs	Eva	NJ Preschool Inclusive Education Project District Liaison
Marcine	Vicki	Preschool Instructional Coach
McGann	Dr. Kari	Superintendent, FRSD
Nass	Alison	Parent
Phillips	Sandy	Parent
Weckesser	Amy	Director, First Friends Child Development Center