



Community Planning Council

The Community Planning Council was established by Greenwich United Way to encourage the most effective and efficient health and human service delivery system for Greenwich. Comprised of community leaders, nonprofit service professionals, Greenwich United Way board members, and community volunteers, the work of the Planning Council, particularly through its periodic Needs Assessments, has led to the development of some of the Town's most valued programs and institutions.

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Community Planning Council Meeting Tuesday November 21st , 8:30 am, Temple Sholom

Youth: A Conversation with Greenwich Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Jill Gildea

According to the Greenwich United Way's Needs Assessment, the community places a high priority in meeting the needs of our children and youth. Greenwich has approximately 17,000 children under the age of 20, or 28% of the population. Over the past 10 years, closing the achievement gap has been cited as one of the most pressing needs in the Assessment.

Highlights from the Presentation:

- Having been appointed Superintendent just this past July, Dr. Gildea noted that she is very impressed with the quality of the educational offerings and staff. She cited the District's innovative programs, enormous variety of extracurricular activities, and the engagement of families as some of the strengths she has observed.
- The Achievement Gap closely correlates with a number of risk factors, including stress and trauma in the home arising from poverty, food insecurity, and family instability. In Greenwich, approximately 6% of the population is at the federal poverty level, 15% of students qualify for subsidized lunches, and 20% of the population earns more than the federal poverty level, but not enough to cover the cost of all household expenses.
- Dr. Gildea noted that personalized learning will be at the heart of the District's strategy to address the Achievement Gap. She explained that the focus will be on an individual student's growth, rather than that student's deficits. She noted that the Greenwich United Way-funded Reading Champions program is an example of this approach. Reading tutor volunteers work to tailor their lessons to their individual child's needs. As a result, these children have seen significant gains in fluency. Dr. Gildea noted that early intervention and access to high-quality pre-school are also critical to narrowing the Achievement Gap. She noted that the District is partnering with the Greenwich United Way on its early childhood intervention and education program. The Town's Department of Human Services has recently issued a report on the Achievement Gap, recommending early intervention.
- The District is also introducing a new model for staff professional development, which will also focus on personalized learning to address a teacher's specific needs. An example of this is the District's partnership with Teacher's College at the middle schools, whereby teachers focus on a particular professional development need. These teachers have access to the Teacher's College staff to help them achieve their needs.
- The District is also supporting a variety of innovative programs to engage students and meet the educational needs of a variety of students. A good example of this approach is the Engineering Design class for 5th graders that is a multi-disciplinary approach. At Greenwich High School,

500 West Putnam Avenue, Suite 415 • Greenwich, CT 06830 • 203-869-2221

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Innovation Lab is another example of this approach. Innovation Lab is a problem-based learning model that has been very successful, with the first class of students to graduate in 2019.

- The District does face some challenges. It has recently completed a review of its facilities that recommends a significant increase in funding to maintain and renovate the District's schools.

Next Community Planning Council Meeting:

Tuesday, 1/16/18, 8:30 am, Temple Shalom. Topic: Mental Illness: Stress and Anxiety in our Youth and Young Adults