



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

Thursday 10/29, 8:30am, Children and Youth: Greenwich Public Schools

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Dr. Toni Jones, Superintendent, Greenwich Public Schools
Gordon Beinstein, Principal of Western Middle School (WMS)

According to the Greenwich United Way's Needs Assessment, the community and service providers continue to place a very high priority on meeting the needs of our children and youth. Over the past ten years, focus groups have cited the need to close the achievement gap as the most important issue to address. Other critical needs include counseling to address mental health, behavioral, and substance abuse problems; job training, and coordinating services to meet the needs of our youth.

Highlights from the Presentation:

Governor Lamont and the school principals are taking a number of recommended cautionary measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 such as mandatory masks, 50% of student capacity in public areas, plexiglass dividers, opening gymnasium for lunch, and giving children a mask break outside. The school district has not adopted the use of the Governor's contact tracing phone app.

The superintendent and WMS principal agreed that our greatest strengths as a school community have been our resiliency and our teachers embracing educational technology with sometimes little to no experience with three months left in the school year. The students and parents have been fantastic coming together to help distribute food and taking care of families who have been devastated by the pandemic.

Juniors and seniors will be visiting college and university campuses virtually. Greenwich was also supposed to host two SAT tests. The first was cancelled due to the pandemic and they are evaluating how to host another one in Greenwich. The schools recognize the tests' importance and are evaluating to find solutions.

There is concern over screen fatigue, so teachers are trying to balance the right amount of computer work versus non-screen activities. They will continue to use assessment tools to identify gaps in learning and outcomes. Teachers and principals are learning through webinars, Twitter, connecting with colleagues, and learning new pedagogies of teaching with technology. They mentioned the growing achievement/opportunity gap due to the pandemic and it is something they are closely monitoring.

Take-aways from the latest Key to Education Report from the Governor's office were that the direct interviews with the parents were most helpful, and that more interventions are needed. Some Greenwich schools are working on being more consistent and transparent in the way they communicate with parents (e.g., newsletters every month), Individualized Education Plans (IEP), and training for teachers.

Next Community Planning Council Meeting:

Thursday, 11/12, 8:30 am, Virtually via Zoom, Topic: Human Services in Greenwich

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