

FLEMINGTON-RARITAN REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

EARLY CHILDHOOD ADVISORY COUNCIL

SPRING MEETING MINUTES

May 6th, 2025

The Virtual Spring Meeting of the Flemington-Raritan Regional School District Early Childhood Advisory Council was held on May 6th, 2025 via Zoom. The meeting commenced at 3:45 pm.

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.

Welcome and Introductions

Riley Finnegan opened the meeting by introducing the Preschool Leadership Team and providing a brief overview of the ECAC's mission. She also shared updates regarding the open Preschool Lottery Entry Form for the 2025–2026 school year.

Preschool Lottery Update

Amanda Cahill provided a detailed recap of the preschool lottery process, noting that over 300 applications were received. Approximately 200 children are currently on the waitlist for the 2025–2026 school year. Ms. Cahill invited ECAC members to share suggestions for improving the lottery process while maintaining equity. The group engaged in a thoughtful discussion about the benefits and drawbacks of the lottery system, collectively emphasizing that transparency remains paramount.

Mid-Year Parent Survey

The Mid-Year Parent Survey, launched in early March, has received 29 responses. The survey is designed to gauge parent satisfaction with the preschool program. Results will guide the planning of future in-person workshops with the aim of increasing attendance, engagement, and addressing family needs.

Parent Workshops

Ms. Finnegan reviewed feedback from the Mid-Year Parent Survey, particularly regarding in-person parent workshops for the upcoming school year. Parents expressed interest in partnering with the child development program, allowing students to supervise school-aged children during workshops or committee meetings. Flyers featuring ideas for next year's events were shared with ECAC members for input. Members showed enthusiasm for ideas such as a "Preschool Playdate" or "Preschool Picnic" to promote community-building among families. To boost participation, ECAC educators suggested distributing flyers and surveys directly to families through students.

Home Visits

The preschool program is introducing home visits as a new initiative. Ms. Finnegan sought feedback on how to encourage family participation and suggestions for visit locations. Members discussed the potential comfort levels of families welcoming educators into their homes and proposed ways to ease concerns and increase engagement.

Chronic Absenteeism

Chronic absenteeism remains a key focus for the preschool leadership team. Staff are working directly with families to identify root causes, such as transportation issues, and provide support where needed. Ms. Finnegan

highlighted the importance of addressing this concern in the next school year and requested input on how to communicate the value of consistent attendance. A conversation followed about the potential implementation of an attendance policy. Members agreed that increased teacher communication and distribution of policy information—particularly at events like open house—would be beneficial. Mrs. Deangelis expressed interest in distributing materials during the open house. The group concluded that a clear policy may also help create opportunities for waitlisted families to access available spots if chronic absenteeism leads to enrollment changes.

Community Needs Assessment (CNA) 2025–2026

Ms. Finnegan presented proposed additions to the Community Needs Assessment for the upcoming school year and invited feedback. Council members will continue this discussion and share additional input at the next meeting.

District-Wide PTO Discussion

The concept of a district-wide PTO was introduced to the ECAC. Members considered both the potential benefits and challenges of such an initiative. Further exploration and discussion are planned for future meetings.

Next Meeting

The next ECAC meeting is scheduled for June. Families interested in participating can register through the district website, the *Penguin Post* newsletter, or by contacting Preschool Community Parent Involvement Specialist Riley Finnegan directly.

The meeting concluded at 4:40 PM.