



**BOARD OF DIRECTORS
MEETING MINUTES
January 24, 2013**

Meeting: Early Learning Coalition of Pasco and Hernando Counties, Inc.
Board of Directors Meeting

Day/Date/Time: Thursday, January 24, 2013 at 8:30 a.m.

Location: Early Learning Coalition of Pasco and Hernando Counties, Inc.
15506 County Line Road, Suite 103
Spring Hill, FL 34610

Board of Director Members Present: Lisa Hammond, Chair; Marsha Carpenter, Bonnie Clark, James Cook, Ann-Gayl Ellis, Jayne Goldstein, Dawn Harvey, Steve Kanakis, Steve Knobl, Joe Mascaro, Patrick McHugh, Dave Meglay, Heidi Rand, Kathryn Starkey, Teresa Suarez

Board of Director Members Excused: Jo Ann Carman, Gus Guadagnino, Angela Porterfield

Board of Director Members via Phone: Teresa Suarez (until her arrival in person at 8:45 a.m.)

Board of Director Members Absent: Jean Rags

Coalition Staff Present: Danielle Berche, Kim Borrego, Bev Doucet, Pattie Eacobacci, Jim Farrelly, Jak Jakubauskas, Betsy Kier, Katie Nelson

Guests Present: Gretchen Fremmer, Wee Care Preschool

I. Welcome and Call to Order – Ms. Lisa Hammond, Chair

Ms. Hammond called the regularly scheduled meeting of the Early Learning Coalition of Pasco and Hernando Counties, Inc. Board of Directors to order at 8:32 a.m. Introductions were made and new Board members welcomed.

II. Action Items

- **Adoption of Agenda**

Ms. Hammond requested a motion to adopt the agenda. Mr. Meglay so moved and Mr. McHugh seconded the motion. All were in favor with no abstentions and the motion carried. **(Action Item #1213-22)**

- **Approval of Minutes, November 15, 2012 Board Meeting**

Ms. Hammond requested a motion to approve the minutes from the November 15, 2012 Board Meeting as presented. Mr. McHugh so moved and Mr. Meglay seconded the motion. All were in favor with no abstentions and the motion carried. **(Action Item #1213-23)**

- **Treasurer's Report – Mr. James Cook, Chair**

- **Approval, Financial Statement – November – December 2012**

Mr. Cook explained the School Readiness fiscal year spending budget for November was 42% spent with administration spending at 7.22% for the month and 5.48% year to date. Non-Direct Services spending was at 3.93%, Quality spending at 4.65% and Direct Services at 84.42% which is well above the 70% minimum.

Ms. Hammond requested a motion to approve the Financial Statement. Ms. Clark so moved and Mr. McHugh seconded the motion. All were in favor with no abstentions and the motion carried. **(Action Item #1213-24)**

- **Approval, Financial Statement – December 2012**

Mr. Cook explained the School Readiness fiscal year spending budget for December was at approximately 50% spent with administration spending at 6.16% for the month and 5.48% year to date. Non-Direct Services spending was at 3.52%, Quality spending at 9.72% and Direct Services at 82%.

Mr. Cook stated the Coalition's match requirement is approximately \$329,000 and \$11,000 in match funds was raised in December, of which \$6,000 was raised by the Annual Conference. Year to date, the total amount raised for match is approximately \$20,000.

Mr. Cook reported a projected surplus of \$161,000 in School Readiness and stated the surplus was being reduced by the additional placement of 100 children from the wait list into services. VPK administrative spending is at 3.29% for the month and 3.72% for the year, which is below the maximum cap of 4%.

Ms. Clark moved to approve the December 2012 Financial Statement as presented; Mr. Meglay seconded the motion. All were in favor with no abstentions and the motion carried. **(Continuation of Action Item #1213-24 as noted above)**

III. Remarks from the Chair/Executive Committee Report – Ms. Lisa Hammond, Chair

- **Introduction of New Board Members**

Ms. Hammond welcomed the new Board Members and thanked them for their willingness to serve the young children of Pasco and Hernando Counties. She stated, “It is a worthwhile and rewarding experience that sets a foundation for the future of our counties and our country by providing enriched Early Learning environments.”

- Commissioner Starkey stated she was excited to a member.
- Dr. Steve Kanakis was welcomed back to the Board.
- Dr. Steve Knobl stated he was happy to serve.
- Ms. Marsha Carpenter stated she was happy to serve and announced that Hernando County has a new DCF counselor as of Friday, January 25, 2013, Ms. Susie Blanchard.

- **Honor to Retiring Board Member – Commissioner (Dr.) Pat Mulieri**

Mr. Farrelly announced that Ms. Jo Ann Carman will also be retiring as of January 31, 2013. He explained in the past the Coalition had presented plaques to retiring Board members, but have since opted to present them with children’s artwork. Commissioner Mulieri’s artwork was dropped off at her office and Mr. Farrelly will personally deliver Ms. Carman’s artwork.

IV. Program Committee – Ms. Jayne Goldstein, Chair

- **Committee Update**

Ms. Goldstein reported that forty (40) providers had received CLASS assessments and those outcomes will be seen in February or March. Additionally, thirty-one (31) providers had scored 85% or above on their School Readiness assessments with six (6) providers being placed under a Corrective Action Plan (CAP).

V. Finance and Audit Committee – Mr. James Cook, Chair

- **Committee Update**

Mr. Cook stated the Finance/Audit Committee met on January 22, 2013 and though the Committee lost Commissioner Mulieri, it gained Dr. Knobl. The Committee discussed the SAGE accounting software with its ambitious schedule which is on track for implementation by April 1, 2013. The Committee also discussed federal funding and a possible reduction in funds.

Mr. Cook explained the Board had approved a program to reduce paper usage and thus far, 65,000 sheets have been saved equaling 130 reams of paper and saving seven (7) trees.

VI. Quality Committee – Ms. Jo Ann Carman, Chair

- **Committee Update**

In Ms. Carman's absence, Dr. Kanakis reported the Quality Committee had approved two (2) Quality Incentive applications totaling over \$2,000. He stated the Quality Budget has been spent down by 24% and suggested perhaps providers have become stagnant and wait until the end of the year. He stated the Coalition is mandated by the state to improve the quality of centers and that staff will be developing new ideas to involve providers. He requested that all Committee members attend the next Quality Committee meeting in person to discuss the new ideas and a new Chair will also have to be appointed.

Mr. Meglay inquired if the Quality Committee believes the remainder of the budget will be spent down by the end of the fiscal year. The Board briefly discussed the Quality Budget being divided into quarters with any unspent funds being re-directed to School Readiness at the end of each quarter. Ms. Rand commented the Quality Committee will not spend the funds for the sake of spending, but will transfer them to School Readiness. Ms. Suarez suggested doing a survey and using the data to identify areas that need focus such as additional training or curriculum and develop incentives around these areas.

VII. Ad Hoc Committee – Mr. Patrick McHugh, Chair

- **Committee Update**

Mr. McHugh stated the goal is to raise \$329,000 for match funds. Upwards of \$20,000 has already been raised and he believes with the Committee's Plan of Action, the remainder of \$309,000 can be raised.

- **Second Review and Approval, Plan of Action**

Mr. McHugh explained a Chairman's Club has been added to the plan and will soon be launched to businesses with suggested annual giving levels between \$100 - \$250. He stated that Applebee's will be hosting a give back day (lunch/dinner) on February 13, 2013 and a golf outing is being planned for the fall. Mr. McHugh requested that Board members review the plan and step up to volunteer as Board participation is needed to help raise the funds. The events highlighted in yellow are areas where assistance is needed.

Ms. Hammond requested that when a Children's Art Show is scheduled that it be around her schedule so that she can support this event.

Mr. Farrelly stated he would like to supplement what Mr. McHugh has stated. The Ad Hoc Committee has worked hard for four (4) months. The Coalition's largest challenge has been provider improvement, but match fundraising is going to be an even larger challenge. \$300,000 from the Pasco/Hernando area is a huge amount of money and Coalition staff members are not able to fundraise.

The Coalition has discussed having an event in May for providers for some time and volunteers are needed to steer a committee for this event as well as the Children's Art

Show. 100% of the funds raised from these events will go to children, enabling the Coalition to remove them from the wait list.

Ms. Hammond requested a motion to approve the Plan of Action. Dr. Kanakis so moved and Ms. Rand seconded the motion. All were in favor with no abstentions and the motion carried. **(Action Item #1213-26)**

Ms. Ellis inquired if Board members could work in teams and if so, she would chair the Adult Spelling Bee. Ms. Clark volunteered to be co-chair.

VIII. Ad Hoc/Annual Board Evaluation Committee – Mr. Gus Guadagnino, Chair

- **Committee Report**

In Mr. Guadagnino's absence, Mr. Farrelly reported that this evaluation is the final re-worked version containing the suggestions made by members at the November meeting. It allows for new members to answer and gives a range of options. He explained that if the Board approves the evaluation, it will be distributed in May.

Ms. Hammond requested a motion to approve the Annual Board Evaluation. Commissioner Starkey so moved and Mr. Meglay seconded the motion. All were in favor with no abstentions and the motion carried. **(Action Item #1213-27)**

IX. Utilization Reports – Ms. Betsy Kier, Assistant Executive Director

Ms. Kier reported that School Readiness enrollment for December showed an increase of twenty (20) children from the previous month with a projected surplus of \$161,000. She explained the Coalition has opened the wait list to 100 children and those slots should be filled by the end of January.

Referring to the VPK report, Ms. Kier explained that December enrollment numbers were down which is an annual occurrence because schools that close for winter break do not submit their attendance rosters for December. Those numbers will be included in next month's report. Ms. Kier explained that she and Ms. Berche will communicate with Pasco County Head Start which serves over 600 children and encourage them to submit their rosters before going on break.

A brief discussion followed on the decrease in VPK enrollment in Hernando County. Mr. Farrelly explained that a recent statistical analysis showed that over the last four (4) years, VPK enrollments are up by 15%.

Commissioner Starkey commented that Pasco County is working to place advertising on bus benches and including VPK could help reach more families. Commissioner Starkey will advise Mr. Farrelly when the agenda item appears before the commission.

Ms. Hammond inquired as to the number of children on the wait list. Ms. Kier stated that 415 are currently on the list, but that number will be reduced. She explained that Coalition staff is finding it challenging that families who have pre-qualified are being

removed from the wait list due to discrepancies in their application. Supervisors have removed twenty (20) children from the lists whose families never came in for services. Ms. Kier stated that 76 of the 100 slots opened were in Pasco County and the wait list contains families who have pre-qualified in November and December.

Ms. Hammond inquired how much work was involved in the pre-qualification process and if the effort was worthwhile if families are not actually qualifying. Ms. Kier will look more closely at the numbers and obtain hard data to present at the next meeting.

Mr. Farrelly stated eligibility requirements have to be tough because if the state auditors find children in service who are ineligible, those funds will have to be repaid to the state by the Coalition from the funds generated by match fundraising.

X. Executive Director Report – Mr. Jim Farrelly, Executive Director

- **Coalition Update**

Mr. Farrelly welcomed the new Board members and stated the Coalition works consistently at trying to reduce the wait list so children can begin services immediately. He reported that some Coalition's wait lists are so large that families can wait years for services.

He reported he believes it will be a good year in the legislature. Speaker of the House Will Weatherford has requested Mr. Farrelly provide the Coalition's perspective on the needs for Early Learning to his office on an on-going basis.

He stated that Applebee's will have their give back night on Wednesday, February 13, 2013 and five (5) local Applebee's restaurants will participate. Ms. Doucet has flyers available and the Coalition will receive 10% of the ticket sale.

Mr. Farrelly announced that Mid-Florida Community Services will be having an open house at their Spring Hill location on February 9, 2013 from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. Ms. Rand stated that Head Start has been at this location, but now Mid-Florida will have new services at this site.

Mr. Farrelly requested that the Board hold the date of Saturday, April 6, 2013 for the Week of the Young Child's annual Storybook Forest event being held at Crew's Lake Park. Last year over 900 people attended the event and this year the Pasco County Commission voted to waive the \$2 parking fee. Additionally, there will be train rides available and "Olivia the Pig" will attend to sign her book. Ms. Doucet informed the Board that the Bernstein Bears, Clifford the Big Red Dog and McGruff will also be at the event. Three hundred (300) bike helmets will be given away to children and car seats will also be available for a \$20 donation. The car seats are valued at \$160 each and families will have to register on-line to obtain a car seat; only two (2) car seats will be donated each hour.

- **Foundation Update**

Mr. Farrelly stated the Foundation is moving forward and this past fall raised enough funds to donate \$5,000 to match which removed two (2) children from the wait list. Interest is growing among providers to host events to benefit the Foundation. Last spring, Little Sunshine Preschool held an event that raised \$1,200. This year, they will hold another Spring Festival scheduled for Saturday, March 23, 2013 and Longleaf Learning Center will also be hosting an event on Saturday, March 16, 2013.

- **Second Reading, Safety Policy**

Mr. Farrelly reminded the Board this policy was created in an effort to save 5% on Worker's Compensation insurance.

Ms. Hammond requested a motion to approve the Safety Policy. Mr. Meglay so moved and Mr. McHugh seconded the motion. All were in favor with no abstentions and the motion carried. (**Action Item #1213-25**)

- **First Reading, E-Verify Policy for New Hires**

Mr. Farrelly stated this policy will be added as page 12 of the Coalition's Personnel Policies to comply with the Governor's Executive Order #11-116 which states that after July 1, 2013 any new employee must have their eligibility verified through the E-Verify system.

Ms. Hammond requested a motion to approve the E-Verify Policy for New Hires. Mr. Meglay so moved and Ms. Suarez seconded the motion. All were in favor with no abstentions and the motion carried.

- **Statistics and Suggestion, Age Range for School Readiness Services**

Mr. Farrelly explained that five (5) years ago the Coalition served ages 0-12 which was common throughout Florida's Coalitions, but over the years the age range changed as Coalition's worked more closely within their mission of preparing children to enter and succeed in school and shrinking funds. Several years ago this Coalition changed its age range from 0-12 to 0-8 years of age and it is time to review the age range again.

He explained that currently 6, 7, and 8-year olds are being served in before and after school programs that support homework preparation and playtime. However, this does not address the mission of preparing children to enter and succeed in school. The target range should be 0-5 as these are the years when fertile minds can be impacted the most.

Mr. Farrelly stated that a good portion of children on the wait list fall into the 6, 7 and 8-year old category. The state does plan to go to a 0-5 age range, but has not announced when. If this Board agrees, Mr. Farrelly believes this would be the logical time to begin serious discussion.

Ms. Kier presented the following information and stated the numbers reflected are from the end of October. As of October 29, 2012, 342 children were enrolled in the 6, 7 and 8-year old category. They were enrolled among 154 providers county wide, but only four (4) providers served ten (10) or more children. The majority of providers only serve 1-2 children. A very small number of providers would be impacted financially by this change. Ms. Kier stated that as of October 29, 2012, 631 total children were on the wait list, of which 532 were 0-5 years of age.

Ms. Suarez stated the mandatory age for enrollment in school is 6-years of age and advised caution if cutting off at 5-years, especially if the child is not enrolled in kindergarten. The Board was informed that kindergarten was not mandatory and that some parents hold their children back until the age of six (6) when they must enter the first grade.

Ms. Rand commented that before and after care is considered part-time and the 0-5 age range would fall into the full-time category for funding.

Mr. Mascaro inquired how many centers would be forced to close. Ms. Kier stated that only four (4) have more than ten (10) children. Plans would be put in place and the age range topic was presented at the January provider meetings and discussed with no negative comments. Ms. Goldstein inquired if staff from any of these four (4) centers attended the January provider meetings and was informed only one (1) center was not represented.

Mr. Farrelly stated that 100% of the Coalition's responsibility is services for children and not to keep providers in business.

Mr. Meglay suggested pursuing the 0-5 age range but looking at 5-year olds on a case by case basis. A discussion followed on children with special needs being served through 12-years of age.

Mr. Farrelly inquired if the Board would like to pursue changing the age range and suggested having a special meeting to present the change.

Ms. Hammond requested information on what the financial impact would be to the Coalition's funding and would like to see a revised wait list indicating 5 and 6-year olds. She inquired if it is the Coalition's policy to provide priority services to 0-first grade, why would there be a need for any action other than changing the policy. Or, take children, 0-5 years of age, off the wait list before 6, 7, or 8-year olds. Ms. Kier stated any change to the policy would require a change to the Coalition Plan and would have to be approved by OEL.

Ms. Carpenter stated she would like to see what consideration would be given to older siblings and Ms. Suarez requested to see a distribution of ages being served.

Mr. Farrelly recommended having a full Board meeting and scheduling it in the evening at about 7 p.m. to make it readily accessible to both providers and parents. He suggests

have it at a venue that is centrally located, such as PHCC's New Port Richey or Spring Hill campus.

Ms. Hammond requested a motion to schedule a special Board meeting to discuss age range. Mr. Meglay so moved and Mr. McHugh seconded the motion. All were in favor with no abstentions and the motion carried.

XI. New/Unfinished Business

Ms. Gretchen Fremmer explained she was a provider whose contract was cancelled due to failure to file a contract application. She accepts responsibility for not following through, but would like to have her contract re-instated for the sake of the children she serves. Ms. Hammond recommended she file a Grievance and staff would discuss the procedure with her. Once filed, the Grievance will be brought before the Executive Committee.

A brief discussion followed on the number of providers who did not follow through with their contract applications and that new state contracts will be in effect as of July 1, 2013. Any of the providers who did not file contract applications will be able to reapply at that time.

XII. Public Input

None.

XIII. Adjournment

Ms. Hammond requested a motion to adjourn. Ms. Clark so moved and this meeting of the Board of Directors of the Early Learning Coalition of Pasco and Hernando Counties, Inc. was adjourned without further discussion at 10:10 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Ramute "Jak" Jakubauskas
Administrative Assistant