



**BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
MEETING MINUTES  
April 28, 2016**

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

**Day/Date/Time:** Thursday, April 28, 2016 at 8 a.m.

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

**Board of Director Members Present:** Dr. Steve Kanakis, Chair; Dr. Amy Anderson, Florence Buono, Cynthia Cook, Gus Guadagnino, David Meglay, Angela Porterfield, Diane Rowden, Sam Shrieves, Jessica Weightman

**Board of Director Members Present via Phone:** Beth Narverud

**Board of Director Members Excused:** Cathy Dofka, Josh Kelly, Dr. Steve Knobl, Pat McHugh, Dr. Lori Romano, Mary Beth Wehnes

**Coalition Staff Present:** Pattie Eacobacci, Jim Farrelly, Rachel Hardy, Jak Jakubauskas, Betsy Kier, Joe Mascaro, Audrey Stasko

**Guests Present:** Bimal Bhojani, Kids R Kids of Wesley Chapel; Gina Michalicka, Hernando County Schools; Mike Napier, Pasco County Health Dept.

**I. Welcome and Call to Order – Dr. Steve Kanakis, Chair**

Dr. Kanakis called the regularly scheduled meeting of the Early Learning Coalition of Pasco and Hernando Counties, Inc. Board of Directors to order at 8:05 a.m. Introductions were made followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

**II. Action Items**

**• Adoption of Agenda**

Dr. Kanakis requested a motion to adopt the agenda. Mr. Meglay so moved and Commissioner Rowden seconded the motion. All were in favor with no abstentions and the motion carried. **(Action Item #1516-34)**

- **Approval of Minutes, January 28, 2016 Board Meeting**

Dr. Kanakis requested a motion to approve the minutes of the January 28, 2016 Board Meeting with no revisions. Mr. Meglay so moved and Mr. Guadagnino seconded the motion. All were in favor with no abstentions and the motion carried. (**Action Item #1516-35**)

- **Treasurer's Report – Mr. Gus Guadagnino, Acting Chair**

- A. Financial Statements – January - March, 2016**

In Mr. McHugh's absence, Mr. Guadagnino explained the report covers January through March. At the end of January nearly 90% of the budget had been expended on children, 85% from Direct Services and 5% from Quality and \$3,029.16 was raised for match. By the end of March, the total raised for match was \$19,114.35.

VPK administrative spending for January was higher than state and federal requirements, but by March was at the maximum of 4% for the year.

Dr. Kanakis requested a motion to approve the Financial Statements for January. Dr. Anderson so moved and Mr. Shrieves seconded. All were in favor with no abstentions and the motion carried. (**Action Items #1516-36**)

After Mr. Guadagnino summarized February, 2016 financials, as above, Dr. Kanakis requested a motion to approve the Financial Statements for February. Dr. Anderson so moved and Mr. Shrieves seconded the motion. All were in favor with no abstentions and the motion carried. (**Action Items #1516-37**)

After Mr. Guadagnino summarized March, 2016 financials, as above, Dr. Kanakis requested a motion to approve the Financial Statements for March. Dr. Anderson so moved and Mr. Shrieves seconded the motion. All were in favor with no abstentions and the motion carried. (**Action Items #1516-38**)

### **III. Remarks from the Chair/Executive Committee Report – Dr. Steve Kanakis, Chair**

- **Executive Committee Report**

Dr. Kanakis presented the action items the Executive Committee had acted on since the January Board meeting, as noted on the attached.

- **Introduction of New Board Representative: Cynthia Cook, Pasco County Department of Health**

Mr. Farrelly introduced Mr. Mike Napier, Director of the Pasco County Health Department. Mr. Napier provided a brief background on Ms. Cook who is the Healthy Start Manager and has been with the department for seventeen (17) years. Ms. Cook stated she was pleased to join the Board.

- **Honors to Bimal Bhojani, Owner of Kids R Kids Boyette**

Mr. Farrelly introduced Mr. Bhojani who recently donated twelve (12) slots for children of various ages to the Coalition to help reduce the waitlist. The value of this donation is approximately \$92,000.00. Mr. Bhojani was presented with a plaque, donated by Vice Chair Gus Guadagnino, for his generosity.

- **At a Board Member's Request: Re-consideration of Full Board Meeting Schedule**

Mr. Farrelly explained this request is to consider returning to bi-monthly meetings of six (6) each year rather than the current quarterly meetings. Mr. Meglay stated he would like to revisit the meeting schedule due to concerns that the work of the Board is being placed solely on the Executive Committee. He believes the talents of the Board are not being utilized so the Executive Committee carries the burden of all Coalition responsibilities.

Mr. Meglay moved to return the Board to bi-monthly meetings. Mr. Guadagnino seconded the motion. Dr. Kanakis stated the Executive Committee meets monthly for "housekeeping activities" such as policies and procedures as does the Finance/Audit Committee.

Discussion continued with Mr. Meglay stating that all members are not being as actively involved as could be. He realizes that members have other obligations, but believes the bi-monthly meetings would be beneficial to the organization. Mr. Guadagnino inquired if members can't attend quarterly meetings now, how would we get them to attend six (6) yearly meetings. Achieving quorum has been difficult. Mr. Guadagnino suggested giving each member an obligation such as visiting a center and having them make a report at the next Board meeting. He also suggested having children come in for presentations, as they can be inspiring. Mr. Meglay suggested meeting at different facilities around the counties.

Dr. Kanakis stated he liked the idea of moving the meeting, but was concerned about attendance if the location was not centrally located. Ms. Porterfield stated using all of the Board members is a good idea and they can become more involved by participating at events. She does not believe more meetings will resolve anything, but likes the idea of visiting centers and reporting back.

Mr. Farrelly stated from an organizational point of view, during his first four (4) years, monthly meetings were held and then bi-monthly meetings were introduced. In July of 2015, the Board decided to move to quarterly meetings and during the last two (2) quarterly meetings there was 76% and 82% attendance. For the two (2) prior bi-monthly meetings, attendance was at 63% and 72% so attendance has improved with the quarterly meeting schedule; however, achieving quorum is still a challenge.

Dr. Kanakis stated the Board and the Coalition are running lean and clean. Mrs. Buono stated she appreciates the quarterly meetings and does not feel that she has been left out. Dr. Anderson stated the Finance Committee meets frequently and is very involved. Mr. Guadagnino stated he believes there is a missing link between the Board and providers. Mr. Farrelly explained Board membership does consist of a faith-based provider representative and a provider based representative.

Dr. Kanakis returned to the motion and inquired if all were in favor of moving from quarterly to bi-monthly meetings. As there was only one aye (Mr. Meglay), the motion failed.

Mr. Farrelly inquired if the Board wanted to move to different meeting sites. Ms. Porterfield stated moving the meeting may not help attendance and would make it more difficult for staff. Mr. Guadagnino stated he likes the idea of having a centralized meeting area.

- **Annual Board Reorganization:**

- **Ratification, Board Members, FY 2016-17**

Dr. Kanakis requested a motion to ratify acceptance of Board Members for FY 2016-17. Ms. Porterfield so moved and Mrs. Buono seconded the motion. All were in favor with no abstentions and the motion carried. **(Action Item #1516-39)**

- **Nominations/Appointment of Vice Chair, FY 2016-17**

Dr. Kanakis inquired if there were any nominations. Ms. Porterfield nominated Mr. McHugh and Mr. Guadagnino seconded the motion. Mr. Farrelly stated that during a recent conversation with Mr. McHugh, he had indicated his desire to be Vice Chair.

Dr. Kanakis inquired if there were any other nominees, as there were none; he requested a vote on the motion. All were in favor with no abstentions and the motion carried. **(Action Item #1516-40)**

- **Ratification, Committee Membership FY 2016-17**

Dr. Kanakis requested a motion to ratify Committee Membership. Mr. Shrieves so moved and Commissioner Rowden seconded the motion. All were in favor with no abstentions and the motion carried. **(Action Item #1516-41)**

- **Adoption, FY 2016-17 Sliding Fee Scales**

Ms. Kier explained these scales are presented annually and determine a family's eligibility. These new fee scales are to be in place by May 31, 2016 and the only new change is a slight increase in a family's gross income.

Dr. Kanakis requested a motion to adopt the sliding fee scales. Mr. Meglay so moved and Mr. Shrieves seconded the motion. All were in favor with no abstentions and the motion carried. **(Action Item #1516-42)**

- **Strategic Planning KPI Team Reports:**

Mr. Farrelly explained this is a follow up to the Strategic Plan, as four (4) of the six (6) goals have not yet been completed.

Community Outreach/Public Relations – Ms. Stasko reported that Speaker's Bureau volunteers were first utilized during Storybook Forest on the bus shuttles to introduce families to the Coalition. Additionally, three (3) speaking engagements have been made to

local Rotary and Kiwanis organizations with several others scheduled. Another mailing and a press release will be sent announcing the Speaker's Bureau. She also reported that a VPK brochure has been created and 600 were distributed to over 50 local pediatricians' offices. The VPK brochure is also being utilized at community events and parents are very receptive. Facebook advertising will continue with new videos.

Community Partnerships – Mr. Farrelly explained the Coalition would like to build relationships with both United Ways. Ms. Narverud reported she has emailed the United Way of Hernando County with a request to have the director meet with Mr. Farrelly in regards to FY 2017-18 funding.

Parent Outreach & Education – As Ms. Dofka was out of town, there was no report.

Provider Partnerships – Mr. Farrelly reported that the focus was on QRIS through the Sunshine Stars program and getting more providers involved. Sunshine Stars has taken off and continues to move forward. (Eighteen (18) banners awarded; fifty (50) providers enrolled.)

#### **IV. Utilization Reports - Ms. Betsy Kier, Assistant Executive Director**

Ms. Kier reported School Readiness for March showed 201 fewer children than February which has also resulted in a decrease in the deficit. For VPK, March shows 83 fewer children in the program than in February. She also reported that for the 2016-17 school year approximately 2,470 VPK applications have been approved.

Mr. Farrelly stated the way the Coalition has done business will change dramatically next fiscal year. The house bill Mr. MacKinnon spoke of in January has passed and School Readiness will change drastically as of July 1<sup>st</sup> to bring Florida into compliance with federal government funding. Also, VPK will now be a program for 4 or 5-year olds as parents will have a choice as to when to enroll their child.

#### **V. Committee Updates:**

##### **A. Finance and Audit Committee – Mr. Gus Guadagnino, Acting Chair**

Mr. Farrelly explained a number of children have been enrolled over the past four (4) months, but the waitlist has not been open since December. New enrollees have been mandated placements from DCF or court ordered placements. These placements continue whether the Coalition has needed funds or not. To date, 1,300 children from the waitlist have been placed into services and an additional 1,400 mandated children were also placed. Currently, there are approximately 1,400 children on the waitlist and it may not open until August at which time there could be as many as 2,000 children waiting for services.

Mr. Farrelly explained that in January, Direct Services showed a deficit of approximately \$340,000. After freezing spending and increased scrutiny for enrolling children, the deficit is now at approximately \$167,000 and the Coalition does have the funds available to cover this deficit.

He reported that the FY 2016-17 budget does have a slight increase of approximately \$252,000, but these funds are restricted on how they can be used within Direct Services. Mr. Farrelly stated the proposed budget will be presented to the full Board in July.

Mr. Farrelly distributed the (attached) revision to the Fiscal and Accounting Policies explaining the change relates only to capital or fixed asset purchases over \$5,000 and two (2) quotes will be received for these items. The state requires any purchase over \$35,000 be made through a formal bid process.

Dr. Kanakis requested a motion to approve the revision to the Fiscal and Accounting Policies. Mr. Meglay so moved and Mr. Shrieves seconded the motion. All were in favor with no abstentions and the motion carried.

- **Final Report, Ad Hoc Marketing Committee Update – Mr. Pat McHugh, Chair**

In Mr. McHugh's absence, Mr. Farrelly reported a Speaker's Bureau, comprised of Board members, staff and community volunteers, has been created. The Board viewed the new VPK video which will soon be posted on Facebook. Mr. Guadagnino inquired if a volunteer from the Speaker's Bureau could present at a future Board meeting.

- **Ad Hoc Fundraising Committee Update - Dr. Steve Knobl**

In Dr. Knobl's absence, Mr. Farrelly reported that a productive meeting was held with Mike Fasano's office. The Coalition will have a designated month in which donations will be collected through the mailing of monthly tax bills in which a Coalition created insert will be placed. The Sheriff's K-9 unit was able to raise over \$10,000 using this method.

Mr. Farrelly also reported that fundraising for Brazelton is being discussed as well as encouraging other providers to donate slots as did Kids R Kids. Mr. McHugh has also been in communication with a local brewer, Marker 48, for their "Tap for a Cause" program to host an event in either November or December.

Ms. Stasko explained the Coalition has now joined other non-profits in the annual Give Day Tampa Bay event held on May 3<sup>rd</sup>, a 24-hour on-line day of giving. Over 500 local non-profits are enrolled and \$1.7 million was raised last year.

Mr. Guadagnino suggested, as this is an election year, having a letter prepared to send to local politicians requesting a donation from their left over campaign funds.

## **VI. Executive Director Report – Mr. Jim Farrelly**

### **A. Coalition Update**

Mr. Farrelly stated the Coalition's next big event will be the Annual Conference to be held on Saturday, October 15, 2016. The theme this year is diversity and it will be the first international Early Learning conference in Florida. The Coalition is partnering with two (2) "Early Years" organizations in the UK and will share keynote speakers. The Coalition's keynote speaker will be Mr. Ernest Hooper, columnist with the *Tampa Bay Times* and the Hillsborough Bureau Chief. Mr. Hooper will be donating his time.

SunTrust Bank has donated \$10,000 to the Coalition for match, the largest corporate donation to date. Additionally, SunTrust had eleven (11) staff members volunteer at Storybook Forest.

## **B. Foundation Update**

Mr. Farrelly reported the Foundation has again donated to the Coalition to remove children from the waitlist and has also sponsored two (2) children through their “Child of Promise” program which funds the provider and parent fees for a full year.

## **C. Program Update - Mr. Joe Mascaro**

Sunshine Stars - Mr. Mascaro reported that currently eighteen (18) providers have had Sunshine Stars banners awarded with another fifty (50) involved in the program. Coalition staff visit those providers currently under a QIP (Quality Improvement Plan) every 3-4 weeks to continue building a relationship and improving their quality goals. In May, ten (10) centers will be re-assessed and more banners will be awarded.

Early Learning Florida (ELF) - The second on-line version of Community of Practice ends on May 1<sup>st</sup>. Teachers have done on-line weekly courses and attended regular meetings held at the Coalition. Currently, 45 teachers are involved in the program and each will receive \$125 and a CEU for completing the program.

Performance Funding - Mr. Mascaro explained this is the third year for this OEL program and the Coalition had six (6) providers participate last year. Registration for this year closes soon and ten (10) providers have applied.

Mr. Guadagnino requested that a notice be sent to the Board of all meetings, trainings, etc. that go on at the Coalition so members can stop by.

## **D. School Readiness and VPK Changes, FY 2017 - Ms. Betsy Kier**

Ms. Kier began with the changes to the VPK program explaining the Florida statute has been changed to extend the age of children attending VPK as some parents have chosen to delay sending their children. Those children born between February 2 and September 1<sup>st</sup> can now either enroll or delay enrollment until the following year and then go to first grade from VPK as kindergarten is not mandatory in Florida. Ms. Kier stated that OEL will issue a press release, the Coalition will have information for providers in the upcoming “Spotlight” issue and informational evening meetings for providers will be held.

Mr. Farrelly stated an unknown will be what impact this will have on public schools as VPK readiness rates are obtained in kindergarten and not first grade. Ms. Kier explained the state’s mandated age for first grade is the child must be six (6) by February 1<sup>st</sup>.

School Readiness, Ms. Kier explained, will have mandatory changes that will begin to take place as of July 1, 2016 and must be in place by September 30, 2016. She explained the major impact will be on mandated placements. As of July 1<sup>st</sup>, each eligible family will have one (1) full year of services and staff will not be allowed to make changes to the family’s services unless it benefits the family. In other words, there will be no increases in parent fees if income levels change; however, if the parent is no longer employed,

parent fees can be lowered as the family will have three (3) months to find another job. If another position is not found within that time, then the client would lose services.

Ms. Kier explained that mandated placements would now be placed on the waitlist if there are no funds. OEL recommends reaching out to referring agencies regarding this change and requesting they only write referrals when absolutely necessary. Ms. Kier is making arrangements to discuss these changes with the Coalition's DCF representative. She also explained that mandated placements are usually only for 30-90 days, but now they will also be receiving services for a full year. All mandated placements on the waitlist will have first priority over all other clients.

A brief discussion followed that included ensuring continuity of care, higher chances for fraud so diligence by staff will be increased and more information becoming available on state median income levels.

Mr. Guadagnino inquired if in-kind donations can be considered for match. Mr. Farrelly explained that in some cases, yes they can, but the rules are complex. OEL has denied the Coalition's request to have the \$92,000 in-kind donation applied to match on three (3) different appeals.

#### **VIII. Public Input**

Ms. Stasko reported that Mr. Bhojani and Ms. Kier will be interviewed on ABC's Action 10 News at 9:30 a.m. on Thursday, May 12, 2016.

#### **IX. Adjournment**

Dr. Kanakis requested a motion to adjourn; Dr. Anderson so moved and this meeting of the Board of Directors of the Early Learning Coalition adjourned at 9:55 a.m. without further discussion.

Respectfully submitted by:

Ramute "Jak" Jakubauskas  
Administrative Assistant I