



**BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
MEETING MINUTES  
January 26, 2017**

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

**Day/Date/Time:** Thursday, January 26, 2017 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, Kathleen Casper, Cynthia Cook, Cathy Dofka, Pat McHugh, Dr. Lori Romano, Sam Shrieves, Mary Beth Wehnes, Jessica Weightman

**Board of Director Members Present via Phone:** Josh Kelly

**Board of Director Members Excused:** Gus Guadagnino, Angela Porterfield

**Board Members Unexcused:** Beth Narverud

**Coalition Staff Present:** Carolyn Casler, Bev Doucet, Pattie Eacobacci, Jim Farrelly, Rachel Hardy, Jak Jakubauskas, Jack Karuso, Betsy Kier, Elisha Ray, Kelli Rodriguez, Ljubica Sevic, Audrey Stasko

**Guests Present:** Mr. John Allocco, Hernando County Commissioner; Mr. Eric Fontana, Fontana CPAs; Ms. Laura McKinley, Florida's Office of Early Learning; Ms. Ivette Mendoza, Hernando County Schools; Ms. Patricia Piotrowski, Kids World of Hernando County, Inc.; Judge Lynn Tepper, 6<sup>th</sup> District Judicial Court; Ms. Leslie Thomas, Pasco County Schools representing Ms. Angela Porterfield

**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 8:12 a.m. and thanked everyone for attending.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited followed by introductions.

## **II. Action Items**

- **Adoption of Agenda**

Dr. Kanakis requested a motion to adopt the agenda. Ms. Dofka so moved and Mr. McHugh seconded the motion. All were in favor with no abstentions and the motion carried. **(Action Item #1617-12)**

- **Approval of Minutes, October 27, 2016 Board Meeting**

Dr. Kanakis requested a motion to approve the minutes of the October 27, 2016 Board Meeting as presented if there were no corrections. Mr. McHugh so moved and Ms. Dofka seconded the motion. All were in favor with no abstentions and the motion carried. **(Action Item #1617-13)**

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

- A. Financial Statements – October - December, 2016**

In Mr. Guadagnino's absence, Ms. Hardy presented a verbal explanation of the financial reports covering October through December. Ms. Hardy reported that School Readiness spending for October was well within the required minimum and maximum percentages with over 85% being directed to children. She reported that \$3,025 had been raised for Match bringing the year to date total, which includes in-kind, to over \$27,000. A projected surplus of \$2 million was noted.

November's financials indicate that School Readiness spending was at 83% and over 85% for the year to date. A \$100 donation was reported for Match bringing the year to date total, which includes in-kind, to over \$30,000.

School Readiness spending for December was at 88% for Direct Services and with the inclusion of Quality was over 90% for the year to date. \$1,500 was secured for Match bringing the total, which includes in-kind, to over \$31,000. The projected surplus has decreased to \$1.2 million. The Coalition is currently actively enrolling children into the School Readiness program.

Dr. Kanakis requested a motion to approve the Financial Statements for October through December. Mr. Shrieves so moved and Ms. Dofka seconded the motion. All were in favor with no abstentions and the motion carried. **(Action Item #1617-14)**

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

- **Executive Committee Report**

Dr. Kanakis reported the kick-off event for Years of the Young Child held on Saturday, January 21, 2017 at Discovery Point #39 was a success. He reviewed the actions of the Executive Committee for November through January explaining they had voted to approve the Code of Conduct Policy, approved incentive awards totaling \$11,500 for staff members, approved changes to the Fiscal and Accounting Policy as well as the

Procurement Policy. The Committee also voted to remove three (3) obsolete policies from the website (Contract Management, Payroll and Prior Approval policies) and agreed to present the Annual-133 audit to the full Board for approval.

- **Presentation/Approval, A-133 Annual Audit**

Dr. Kanakis introduced Mr. Fontana who explained the audit for 2016 has been completed, details have been reviewed with the Executive Committee and he stated that one of the highlights of the audit was Mr. Farrelly and Ms. Hardy were “great to work with and very accommodating in supplying everything asked for.”

Mr. Fontana explained the Statement of Financial Position shows current assets and liabilities and has been consistent over the years. A highlight on the Statement of Activities shows that net assets have improved and from an operational standpoint, the Coalition had a solid year.

Mr. Fontana referred to Item 5 on page 9 of the Notes to Financial Statements explaining that OEL provides the Coalition with 99% of its funding. Item 8 on page 11 indicates the Coalition’s management team keeps a close eye on administrative expenses which are well below the required range. On page 15 of the Schedule of Findings, Mr. Fontana explained there were no material weaknesses and no findings.

Mr. Fontana reported the Prior Year Finding on page 17 from year ending 2015 shows the finding has been corrected due to a policy change at the state level. OEL has instituted a new policy that states if match is met at the state level, it is met on a state-wide basis.

Dr. Kanakis requested a motion to approve the A-133 Audit as presented by Mr. Eric Fontana of Fontana CPAs. Mr. Shrieves so moved and Ms. Buono seconded the motion. All were in favor with no abstentions and the motion carried. **(Action Item #1617-15)**

- **“Early Childhood Court” - Judge Lynn Tepper, 6<sup>th</sup> District Judicial Court, Pasco County**

Dr. Kanakis introduced Judge Tepper who explained this was her 33<sup>rd</sup> year on the bench where she has served mainly in Family Court. She stated that the majority of children she sees are in welfare and are under the age of 5. Currently, in East Pasco alone, 120 children under the age of 3 are under welfare care.

She explained the county’s goal is to change adverse child experiences such as physical, sexual and mental abuse by helping to provide nurturing relationships and environments such as quality early learning centers. These centers can be gateways to services for parents to help children facing toxic stress situations. Teachers can be taught to watch for symptoms which can be different in different age groups.

Judge Tepper recommended viewing the “Raising America” video (the Coalition has a copy available) which shows a 40-year study of how a neighborhood is impacted by quality early learning centers. She stated that more education is needed on the impact of

trauma and Infant Mental Health Specialists are key elements to improving outcomes in child welfare.

Ms. Kier stated the Coalition is planning on training two (2) staff members through the Circle of Security trainings which will then begin to be offered to centers and teachers. The Coalition's goal will be to offer these trainings to all providers over the next twelve (12) months.

Judge Tepper was thanked for her presentation, followed by a 5-minute recess.

- **Provider Presentation - Patricia Piotrowski, Owner, Kids World of Hernando County, Inc.**

Ms. Piotrowski explained she opened her center in 2015 using the knowledge she had gained being a director of a before and after school program with Boys/Girls Club of Hernando. Her center now serves 64 children; she is expanding her 4-year old program and has been a School Readiness provider for 1.5 years.

After reviewing the Sunshine Stars checklist on the Coalition's website, Ms. Piotrowski began to offer in-house trainings for her staff as she has always believed that rating centers was a good idea. On her initial assessment, Kids World scored 3 of 5 stars and Coalition staff provided detailed information on making improvements. Ms. Piotrowski stated the Sunshine Stars assessment was a positive experience and is confident that her next assessment will show a 5-star rating. She explained that all her dealings with Coalition staff, regardless of the department, have been positive.

Mr. Farrelly reported the Sunshine Stars program is working and improving the quality in centers and the number of centers involved is growing. The April Board meeting will have an in-depth Sunshine Stars presentation by staff.

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

Ms. Kier reported that School Readiness enrollments have increased by 876 children since July as children have been removed from the waitlist. With the projected surplus, open enrollments will continue.

Ms. Kier reported that VPK enrollments are good, with 172 enrolled since August making this one of the highest enrollment years. She reported that state-wide over 6,000 children have enrolled into VPK for the 2017-18 school year since January 1<sup>st</sup>. She reported that with the new rule change that allows parents to defer enrolling their children until age 5; only eight (8) children have been affected.

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

- **Finance and Audit Committee – Mr. Gus Guadagnino, Chair**

In Mr. Guadagnino's absence, Ms. Hardy reported the Committee has reviewed the monthly financial statements and has discussed various spending avenues for VPK

Outreach and Awareness funds. A newspaper ad has been placed, VPK banners purchased and a push will be made through social media.

- **Ad Hoc Fundraising Committee Update - Mr. Pat McHugh, Chair**

Mr. McHugh reported that the Spelling Bee event scheduled for April 22, 2017 has had issues arise with the venue. This has caused a delay in the scheduling for the event which is now being considered for the fall.

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

### **A. Inclusion Services in our Early Learning Coalition - Ms. Carolyn Casler, Program Manager and Inclusion Staff**

Ms. Casler explained Inclusion Specialists work to identify, secure and prioritize children's needs from the referrals obtained from ASQ's (Ages & Stages Questionnaires) and from the "warm line." The warm-line is state mandated and used by providers and parents to report issues with children. The ASQ's identify children who miss a set number of domains on their assessments. The Inclusion team has a triage system in place to be able to provide services to children who need them the most. Children that can be referred to other agencies for speech or another diagnosis have referral packets provided to their families. If teacher interaction is required, staff will work with the teachers offering suggestions. Training programs are being increased for providers to reduce the number of children expelled from programs.

Ms. Elisha Ray, Inclusion Specialist, explained there are two (2) types of ASQ's - one for developmental screenings and one for social/emotional screenings. She also provides ASQ trainings to providers on the correct use of these tools. Mr. Karuso explained some of the reasons why an Inclusion Specialist is asked out to a center to observe a child. He also provides teacher trainings as well as parent trainings at centers.

Mr. Farrelly explained there has been a change in philosophy; Inclusion Service was a catch all for anyone needing any kind of assistance. Now the Coalition is providing high quality long-term intervention for the neediest of children and the triage approach is being utilized.

### **B. Coalition Update**

Mr. Farrelly reported that 2,400 children were on the wait list in July and now there are only approximately 200 children and their wait is about two (2) weeks before they are placed in a program. He reported that the Kick-Off Event for Years of the Young Child was a success and numerous requests have been made for the YOTYC bumper stickers. Dr. Kanakis indicated that YOTYC tweets are increasing.

### **C. Foundation Update**

Mr. Farrelly stated the Foundation is struggling to obtain board membership to continue to grow. He requested that any interested parties contact him.

**VII. Public Input**

Ms. Mendoza explained she has been invited by Dr. Romano to stop by with sample bags containing community resource information that are being provided to new parents at Bayfront Medical Center; these bags also include a child's book. The Coalition was invited to add information to the resource bags. Dr. Romano explained that a connection is being made to welcome families into the community while promoting the importance of reading.

Ms. Mendoza distributed a bag to all attendees.

**VIII. Adjournment**

Dr. Kanakis requested a motion to adjourn; Ms. Dofka so moved and this meeting of the Board of Directors of the Early Learning Coalition adjourned at 10:20 a.m. without further discussion.

Respectfully submitted by:

Ramute "Jak" Jakubauskas  
Administrative Assistant I