

**EARLY LEARNING COALITION OF PASCO
AND HERNANDO COUNTIES, INC.**

**Executive Director's Report
March 21, 2007**

INTERNAL OPERATIONS

- Progress Report -

- The Coalition has advertised for attorney services. As requested at the last Board Meeting, please review the attached Letter of Engagement from Stephen P. Lee, ESQ.
- Marcie O'Brien of T/TAS has confirmed that she will be facilitating the Strategic Planning Workshop on March 26, 2007 from 4-8:00 p.m. This workshop will be held at the same facility where the Board Cohesiveness Workshop was conducted. The location is behind the Shady Hills Methodist Church inside the ASH Family and Activity Center building, 15925 Green Glen Lane, Shady Hills, FL.
- Coalition staff has been providing technical assistance to the VPK centers to assist in the verification of online data. The target date of May 15, 2007 will determine those centers that are in the lower fifteen percent that will need additional services to improve their VPK programs.
- During the last Board Meeting, further detailed information was requested regarding the T.E.A.C.H. scholarship initiative. See attached detailed information.
- The Coalition has complied with the state requirements for private sector members on the Board. Applications for optional members will be submitted to the Executive/Nominating Committee for review. Please see the attached Board Membership List and the policies submitted from OEL.
- At the January 18, 2007 Board Meeting, information was presented within the Executive Director's report regarding the Pasco School District Contract for Fiscal Year 2004-2005. Per Maria Crosby, the following detailed information is to become part of the record and included within the report:

“Fiscal records and the 2004-2005 school district contract with the Pasco Coalition indicate a funding amount of \$256,254.00 (Quality) for the preschool program and a \$100,377 fixed contracted amount that was used for Early Head Start match. These funds were used to enhance typical School Readiness services with the provision of Head Start-like comprehensive services—health, mental health, disabilities, medical, nutrition, social services and family involvement.”

- Addressing the concerns expressed by several Board Members regarding the increasing number of staff, please refer to the attached organizational charts for your review.
- All Coalition policies and procedures can be found on the Coalition’s website (www.phelc.org). Under the documents section, the following policies and procedures are available:
 - Contract Management
 - Disenrollment
 - Fiscal and Accounting
 - Grievance
 - Personnel
 - Procurement
 - Standard Operating Procedures
 - Travel
 - VPK Program Operating Procedure
- Jim Cook and I will be attending the Early Learning Coalition Chair and Executive Directors meeting in Tallahassee on March 15-16, 2007. Updated information will be presented at the Board Meeting.

- Legislative Updates -

The 2007 Legislative Session Dates are as follows:

January 26, 2007	5:00 PM Deadline for submitting requests for drafts of general bills, including requests for companion bills
March 2, 2007	5:00 PM Deadline for submitting final drafts of general bills, including companion bills
March 6, 2007	Regular Session convenes
March 6, 2007	12:00 Noon deadline for filing bills for introduction
April 24, 2007	50th day – last day for regularly scheduled committee meetings
April 30, 2007	All bills are immediately certified Conference Committee Reports require only one reading
May 4, 2007	60th Day – last day of Regular Session

As of February 28, 2007 the following bills related directly to early learning programs are being followed by Coalition staff:

**Senate Bill 0344 Relating to Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten Education
(No House companion)**

The bill revises the number of instructional hours that are required for school-year pre-kindergarten programs delivered by private pre-kindergarten providers from 540 instructional hours to up to 720 hours.

The bill revises the number of instructional hours that are required for school-year pre-kindergarten programs delivered by public pre-kindergarten providers from 540 instructional hours to the same number of instructional hours as the school provides for a student in kindergarten and first grade.

POINTS OF CONSIDERATION:

Many early educators, parents and administrators of early education programs have stated that the current number of instructional hours for the VPK program does not provide enough time for instructors to prepare four-year-old children for kindergarten. This proposed legislation appears to address this concern by providing an opportunity for private providers to increase instructional hours up to 740 hours or on average 4 hours a day for 180 days and requires the public programs to increase the number of instructional hours to an average of 6 hours a day for 180 days or 1,080 hours a year.

It is important to note that in order for the increase in the number of instructional hours to be a funded mandate for private providers the program budget must be increased by at least 33%. Additional increases must be realized to support the increase in the number of public school program hours.

The bill has been referred to the Education Pre-K-12 Committee and the Education Pre-K-12 Appropriations Committee.

**House Bill 1107 Relating to Child Care/Quality Rating System
Senate Companion 2226**

The bills create the Florida Sunshine State Stars Quality Rating System. The Office of Early Learning (OEL) in AWI must establish the Rating System to provide a voluntary, statewide standard rating system for licensed early learning programs, child care facilities as defined in s. 402.302 and facilities participating in the Voluntary Pre-kindergarten Education Program created under 1002.53.

The Rating System shall consist of five tiers. A tier refers to each level of progression and represents a higher level of quality within the quality rating system. A star symbol shall be used to indicate the quality level. Programs that meet the highest level of quality shall be awarded five stars. OEL is responsible for implementing the requirements for each tier in each category based on recommendations of the Early Learning Advisory Council's Quality Rating System Task Force and recommendations from organized meetings to gather local input from parent and provider focus groups and interviews.

Overall quality rating assessments shall be based on the following components documented by research or best practices to positively impact child and family outcomes:

1. Learning environment
2. Curricula, screening, and assessment
3. Staff qualifications
4. Professional development
5. Business practices
6. Family involvement

Advancement through the tiers in each major component shall be based on the following:

1. Learning environment, verified through document submission or use of the appropriate Early Childhood Environment Rating Scales (Harms, Clifford, and Cryer).
2. Curricula, screening, and assessment, verified through document review and observation.
3. Staff qualifications, verified by linkage with licensing and document review.
4. Professional development for the director, lead teacher, and assistant teacher, verified by linkage with licensing and document review.
5. Business practices verified by document review and observation. (Consideration shall be given to child care providers possessing a Gold Seal Quality Care designation and Head Start and Early Head Start programs of quality and excellence.)
6. Family involvement, verified through document review.

A voluntary pilot program is created for implementing the rating system tier program in Broward, Duval, Hillsborough, Leon, Miami-Dade, Orange, Palm Beach, and Pinellas counties. Centers and programs in tiers 1, 2, and 3 shall be eligible for grants and awards to improve quality. Centers and programs in tiers 4 and 5 shall be eligible for merit awards to maintain high quality. Technical support shall be provided to programs to ensure successful entry into the rating system and movement through the system. The OEL shall coordinate with the participating early learning coalitions to facilitate the successful participation of child care facilities in the pilot program and with those programs currently implementing a quality rating system. Nothing precludes early learning coalitions from implementing a quality rating system in other counties. The pilot program expires on July 1, 2009.

OEL shall develop a workforce development plan to insure the availability of qualified teachers to meet the higher standards. The plan shall include recommendations for funding and expansion of current child care professional development credentialing programs, such as the Teach Education and Compensation Helps program (TEACH), as well as other programs designed to provide professional development, credentialing, and advanced education. \$25 million is appropriated from General Revenue to AWI for 2007-08 to implement this program. The bill is effective upon becoming a law.

POINTS OF CONSIDERATION:

The bill assigns the overall responsibility of the quality rating system to the Agency for Workforce Innovation; however, calls for the coordination with participating early learning coalitions in the pilot program.

The bill does not preclude early learning coalitions from implementing a quality rating system in counties other than the pilot counties.

The requirements of the quality rating system are similar to the requirements of the draft Nature Coast quality rating system.

House Bill 1103 Relating to Office of Early Learning (No Senate Companion)

The bill creates the Office of Early Learning in the Executive Office of the Governor and provides for a type two transfer of the Office of Early Learning in the Agency for Workforce Innovation, the Office of Early Learning in the Department of Education, and child care licensing responsibilities of the Department of Children and Families to the Office of Early Learning in the Executive Office of the Governor.

The Office of Early Learning in the Executive Office of the Governor will be responsible for the administration of the School Readiness Program, the Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten Program, and child care facility licensing. In addition, the Office of Early Learning in the Executive Office of the Governor is designated the lead agency and must comply with lead agency responsibilities pursuant to federal law with regard to the Even Start Program and the Child Care Development Fund.

The bill revises section 1002.65 (2) Florida Statute requiring pre-kindergarten classes to have at least one instructor who holds an associate's or higher degree in the field of early childhood education or child development by the 2010-2011 school year, and at least one instructor who holds a bachelor's or higher degree in the field of early childhood education or child development by the 2013-2014 school year.

The bill revises section 1002.67 (2) (a) Florida Statute requiring the selected VPK classroom curriculum to include a curriculum-based pre-assessment and post-assessment for the purpose of determining a student's progress during the program year.

The bill revises section 1002.67 (6) Florida Statute eliminating the provision for the adoption of a minimum readiness rate that does not exceed the rate at which more than 15% of the kindergarten readiness rates of all private pre-kindergarten providers and public schools delivering the VPK program in the state would fall below the minimum.

POINTS OF CONSIDERATION:

The bill provides provisions for persons and entities holding, in good standing, any child care facility license or registration under Chapter 402, Florida statutes, as of 11:59 PM on the day prior to the effective date of the type two transfer to be deemed to hold in good standing a license or registration in the same capacity under the authority of the Office of Early Learning in the Executive Office of the Governor.

Senate Bill 0106 Relating to Child Care Personnel/Fingerprinting

The bill requires that beginning on July 1, 2008, all fingerprints of child care personnel employed in a licensed child care facility that are submitted for a level 2 screening must be submitted electronically and retained by FDLE. Beginning July 1, 2008 FDLE will search all incoming arrest fingerprints against the retained fingerprints of child care personnel and inform the Department of Children and Families of any identified match. The department must notify FDLE of any person no longer employed by a child care facility. In addition, FDLE is directed to adopt a rule setting the amount of the annual fee for searches that will be charged to the Department of Children and

Families and establishing procedures for retention of fingerprints and dissemination of search results.

The bill provides that child care personnel re-employed after July 1, 2008 who has not had fingerprints electronically submitted must do so. By December 1, 2009, child care personnel whose fingerprints are not yet retained by FDLE must be re-fingerprinted and must meet level 2 screening requirements. Each person who is employed in a child care facility must meet level two screening requirements, including federal criminal history check by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, every five years.

POINTS OF CONSIDERATION:

This bill establishes a process to automatically notify the Department of Children and Families of child care personnel who are arrested immediately. Currently, child care personnel who are arrested after their employment screening is completed may not report the arrest to their employer or the Department of Children and Families and may continue to work in early education and care. The bill appears to increase the safety and protection of children.

Currently, Florida Administrative Code 65C-22.006(5) provides that a background screening conducted for the purposes of child care employment is valid for a period of five years, after which a re-screening that includes, at a minimum, a statewide criminal records check through the FDLE and a local criminal check must be completed. The bill provides each person who is employed in a child care facility must meet level two screening requirements, including a federal criminal history check by the Federal Bureau of Investigations, every five years and appearing to increase the safety and protection of children.

The bill is now in Criminal Justice and is also referred to Health and Human Services Appropriations

Funding Formula:

On February 21, 2007 Gladys Wilson, Deputy Director of the Office of Early Learning in the Agency for Workforce Innovation presented the School Readiness Child Care Allocation Formula to the Committee on Transportation and Economic Development Appropriation. Reports indicate that the presentation prompted questions from the Committee members with regard to waitlists, school readiness estimating conferences, and VPK surplus dollars. Overall, it appeared that the members of the Committee understood the lack of funding in school readiness and the resulting issues in developing a funding formula. In addition, reports estimate approximately 40-70 child care providers from Dade County attended the meeting in shirts stating "Don't Cut Our Kids". Providers shared information with regard to the effects the funding formula would have including the disenrollment of 1, 500 students with a waitlist of 5,000 children. In addition, the Dade group placed 7,341 letters on the Senator's desks and stated the letters had been written by parents in two days.

Senator Diaz de la Portilla stated he had no intention of cutting the funds for Dade County.

- **Outreach** –
 - The Children’s Forum has created a demo for our new website. Coalition staff met, discussed and submitted updated information to the Forum. This website will be tentatively for viewing in a “live environment” within 30 days.

- **Financial Update** –
 - The Office of Early Learning monitoring for the current Fiscal Year year-to-date financial program data was successfully completed the week of March 5, 2007. There were no material findings only minor recommendations. The final report will be available towards the end of the Fiscal Year.
 - Monthly Statement of Financials – January (Action Item #0607-37) presented by the Treasurer, Jean Rags.
 - School Readiness and VPK Utilization reports to be provided by Childhood Development Services, Inc.
 - Monthly fiscal reviews continue for all cost reimbursement invoices.
 - Expenditures remain within the approved financial limitations.

MONTHLY REPORTS

**FEBRUARY VOLUNTARY PREKINDERGARTEN AND
SCHOOL READINESS MONTHLY REPORT
(DRAFT)**

Special Activity Report

Date	Reason for Activity	Training / Conference Outcome
2/1/07	WGBS committee meeting	Planning
2/6/07	OEL IT conference call	Informational Updates
2/7/07	Educational Survey	Provider Survey
2/8/07	VPK on site registration – Little Sunshine	Child registration
2/9/07	VPK on site registration – Bright Beginnings	Child registration
2/9/07	VPK Parent Meeting	Conflict Resolution
2/13/07	OEL IT conference call	Informational Updates
2/13/07	VPK on site registration- ABC childcare	Child registration
2/14/07	DOE / OEL VPK conference call	Informational Updates
2/15/07	VPK on site registration – Kids Stuff	Child registration
2/16/07	VPK on site registration – Little Lambs	Child registration
2/17/07	WGBS committee	Fundraiser
2/20/07	OEL / IT conference call	Informational Updates
2/21/07	VPK on site registration- Holy Cross	Child registration
2/22/07	VPK on site registration – Cedarview	Child registration
2/23/07	VPK on site registration – Building Blocks	Child registration
2/24/07	Step Up Florida	Community Activity
2/27/07	OEL / IT conference call	Informational Updates
2/28/07	DOE / OEL VPK conference call	Informational Updates

Training Report

Date	Training Title	Parents	Community	Providers	# of Children Ages 0-5	# of Children Ages 5-12	Training Type
2/1/07	Observation Training			6	320	150	VPK /Quality
2/5/07	VPK Literacy Training			16	1664		VPK/Quality
2/6/07	VPK Literacy Training			13			VPK/Quality
2/7/07	VPK Literacy Training			16	641		VPK/Literacy
2/12/07	Sign Language Class			17	653		Quality
2/26/07	Approaches to Learning			17	670		VPK/Quality
2/27/07	Approaches to Learning			13	473		VPK/Quality
2/28/07	Approaches to Learning			14	1325		VPK/Quality
2/2/07	Active Parenting – 3	4			4	2	Parent
2/7/07	Parent Support Group	3			3		Parent
2/9/07	Active Parenting – 1	6			11	5	Parent
2/16/07	Active Parenting – 2	5			9	4	Parent
2/22/07	Partner w/ Big Brothers & Big Sisters	2				3	Parent
2/23/07	Active Parenting – 3	5			9	4	Parent

Meeting Report

Date	Type	Agenda	Parent	Community	Provider
2/5/07	Hernando Mom's Club	Presentation of VPK	26		
2/7/07	Staff Meeting	Discussion for Website			
2/8/07	CDS meeting	Informational/Update			
2/12/07	School Board VPK meeting	Meeting		5	
2/12/07	CDS Provider Meeting	Informational/Updates			30
2/13/07	CDS Provider Meeting	Informational/Updates			20
2/15/07	CDS Provider Meeting	Informational/Updates			25
2/19/07	Staff Meeting	Local Training		7	
2/22/07	Training Preparation	Prepared for Creative Curriculum.Net training		1	
2/22/07	Training Preparation	Prepared for Creative Curriculum.Net training		1	
2/22/07	Healthy Start Board Meeting	Informational/Updates		18	
2/23/07	Week of the Young Child Meeting	Planning		4	

VPK Report

# of Site Visits	# of T/A Visits	# of T/A Requests	# of VPK Children
24	17	2	485

VPK Monitoring

# of Classrooms	# of T/A	# of T/A Requests	# of Follow-Up Meetings	# of Teaches Trained on Performance Standards	# of Teachers Attended D.O.E Early Literacy	# of VPK Children
35	0	5	16	10	35	657

Inclusion/PEEP*

Providers Served	New Warm Line Calls	Site Visits	# of Children Served	Referrals to Other Sources

*Information to be released at Board Meeting.

Contact Report

Type	Parent	Community	Provider	# of Children
Telephone	255	50	390	
Correspondence	2	6	698	
Site Visits			23	115
Newsletters				
Technical Assistance			23	
Referrals	1		1	
Survey/Assessments	79			
VPK Registration			10	258

Health and Safety Inspections Report

# of Classrooms/Homes Monitored	# in Compliance	# of T/A Requests	# of Follow-Up	# of Children
6	6	0	0	56

CENTRAL AGENCY MONTHLY REPORT

	January			February		
	PASCO	HERNANDO	COMBINED	PASCO	HERNANDO	COMBINED
CHILDREN						
UNDUPLICATED CHILDREN SERVED	2715	1159	3874	2860	1208	4068
CHILDREN REMOVED FROM WAIT LIST	36	0	36	219	0	219
CHILDREN ON WAIT LIST	362	351	713	0	371	371
# TERMED-INELIGIBILITY ISSUES	186	50	236	140	31	171
VPK CHILDREN SERVED	2344	947	3291	941	2407	3348
PROVIDERS						
#OF VPK PROVIDERS	92	36	128	92	36	128
# OF VPK CLASSROOMS	177	180	357	177	180	357
# NEW CENTERS	2	0	2	5	0	5
Contracted		58	58		58	58
Vouchered	2	8	10	5	8	13
Informal				0	0	
# NEW FAMILY HOMES	6	0	6			
Contracted		18	18	0	18	18
Vouchered	6	0	6	1	0	1
Informal	0	1	1	0	0	0
# of GOLD SEAL FACILITIES	27	7	34	27	7	34
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE						
CLIENTS	160	10	170	153	15	168
PROVIDERS	19	38	57	11	72	83
COMMUNITY REFERRALS		2	2	0	3	3
MONITORS						
SCHOOL READINESS ATTENDANCE	9	0	9	6		6
Pass	9	0	9	6		6
Fail						
PROGRAM ASSESSMENT	11	0	11	6	0	6
Score	97%avg	0	97%	98%avg		
SCREENINGS						
AGES & STAGES	316	103	419	133	92	225
DENVER / BRIGANCE		7	7		3	3
LEVEL II						
REFERRALS		1	1	11	1	12
TRAININGS						
CURRICULUM		2	2	1	2	3
Attendance				30	37	67
VPK						

**CENTRAL AGENCY MONTHLY REPORT
(Continued)**

	January			February		
	PASCO	HERNANDO	COMBINED	PASCO	HERNANDO	COMBINED
Attendance						
EARLY LITERACY						
Attendance						
INCLUSION						
Attendance						
PARENT INVOLVEMENT						
Attendance						
OTHER*	2		2	2	0	2
Attendance	56		56	40	0	40
ASSESSMENTS						
PRE TESTING						
POST TESTING						
QUALITY						
Initial Assessments	11		11	9	0	9
Classroom Observations	19		19	0	51	51
Technical Assistance	5	14	19	8	26	34
SAFETY NET (PASCO ONLY)						
Children served	32		32	27		27

Submitted by:

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