



**BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
MEETING MINUTES  
February 26, 2009**

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

**Day/Date/Time:** Thursday, February 26, 2009 – 8:30 a.m.

**Location:** Office of the Early Learning Coalition  
15506 County Line Road  
Spring Hill, FL 34610

**Board of Director Members Present:** Lisa Hammond, Chair; Susan Arnett, Sister Roberta Bailey, Curt Bromund, James Cook, Denise Gill, Sonya Jackson, Dr. Steve Kanakis, Joe Mascaro, Dave Meglay, Nicole Miller, Lydia Pinkowski, Jean Rags, Beth Rawls

**Board of Director Members Excused:** Elizabeth Callaghan, Mary Beth Wehnes, Patricia Wisman

**Board of Director Members Unexcused:** Dr. Burt Harres

**Coalition Staff Present:** Pattie Eacobacci, Jim Farrelly, Nicole Flechas, Nicole Gonzalez, Marie Grace, Ramute “Jak” Jakubauskas, Betsy Kier, LuAnn LaCava, Debbie Thomas, Maryrose Wersan

**Guests Present:** Steve Davis (via phone); Carol Eurton, CDS; Tiffany Largie, Private Sector; Karen Livengood, Discovery World; Theresa Miara, Sugar Plum; Laurie Mykel, ABC Academy; Vincenza Neve, Little Rascals Day Care; Tom Scheffey, CDS; Theresa Scott, All About Kids Daycare

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

Ms. Lisa Hammond, Chair, called the meeting of the Early Learning Coalition of Pasco and Hernando Counties, Inc. Board of Directors to order at approximately 8:40 a.m. Roll call was taken, introductions were made and a quorum was present.

Ms. Hammond requested Mr. Farrelly to recognize retiring Board Member, Steve Davis, who was present via a phone call from West Virginia. Mr. Farrelly commented that Mr. Davis had been part of the Board during an intricate and important time for the Coalition. Mr. Davis met with Mr. Farrelly on numerous occasions to discuss the importance of fundraising to raise needed dollars for providers and children.

Ms. Hammond stated that she was honored, on behalf of the Board of Directors, to present to Mr. Davis a plaque recognizing him for his service to the Coalition. Ms. Hammond and Mr. Farrelly thanked Mr. Davis for his commitment, and wished him well.

## **II. Action Items**

- **Adoption of Agenda**

Ms. Hammond requested that the agenda be reviewed for adoption. Ms. Rags moved to accept this motion and Ms. Miller seconded. All were in favor with no abstentions and the motion carried. (**Action Item #0809-11**)

- **Approval of Minutes, January 22, 2009 Board Meeting**

Ms. Hammond requested a motion to approve the January 22, 2009 minutes. Mr. Meglay moved to accept this motion and Ms. Rags seconded. All were in favor with no abstentions and the motion carried. (**Action Item #0809-12**)

- **Treasurer's Report - Ms. Jean Rags, Coalition Treasurer/Board Member**

### **Monthly Statement of Financials – December 2008**

Ms. Rags reviewed the December Financials and reported they reflect the 4% state reduction with \$27,863 still being held as a line item until the Coalition receives further direction from the State. She reported higher expenses for meetings due to training for an inclusion specialist and professional fees for the auditors' services. Ms. Rags requested a motion to approve the December Financial Report. Mr. Meglay moved to accept this motion and Mr. Cook seconded. All were in favor with no abstentions and the motion carried. (**Action Item #0809-13**)

## **III. Remarks from the Chair and Executive Committee Report - Ms. Lisa Hammond**

Ms. Hammond informed Board members that the funeral for Captain Bierwiler of Hernando County was held on February 25, 2009. A memorial fund has been set up at Washington Mutual for his children. An address was provided for any contributions.

Ms. Hammond stated the Executive Committee had met last Friday and discussed the monitoring session that AWI will begin in April. Also discussed was the selection and criteria for a provider representative from Pasco County; the audit was reviewed with

Mr. Rob Wardlow of Williams, McCranie, Wardlow & Cash; Mr. Farrelly discussed the first meeting of the Coalition's Foundation.

**IV. Finance and Audit Committee – Mr. Jim Cook, Chairperson**

**A. Approval, Revised 2008-2009 VPK Budget**

Mr. Cook stated he had good financial news. The Coalition had been awarded over \$1 million for VPK because of the increased number of children. An amendment will be made to the CDS contract to allocate \$1,044,289 for slots. An additional \$1,690 was awarded for outreach and monitoring.

Mr. Cook moved to accept the Revised 2008-2009 Budget and Mr. Meglay seconded. All were in favor with no abstentions and the motion carried. **(Action Item #0809-14)**

**B. Presentation and Acceptance of Financial Audit, FY 2008**

Mr. Cook stated the Coalition was ahead of schedule with the audit and it had been submitted for approval at a joint committee meeting of the Finance/Audit and Executive Committees last week. Ms. Wersan distributed copies of the audit.

In Mr. Wardlow's absence, Mr. Farrelly requested the Board refer to pages 22-26 as these are the findings from the 2008 audit to the previous year. All of the previous years' findings have been corrected and certified as corrected by the auditors. Because audits are becoming more complex, Mr. Farrelly asked the Committee to refer to the letters in the audit. He explained the auditors had three (3) findings.

The first finding is due to the increased scrutiny. Mr. Farrelly explained in the past, the auditors were able to make entries to assist the organization, but now they have to report making those journal entries, as Mr. Wardlow's team has noted.

The second finding is the Coalition's funds are in an interest bearing account and the interest is required to be returned to the State each quarter, but for several days each month, the account exceeds FDIC regulations. The solution is sweeping into treasuries, a recommendation which has been discussed with the Finance/Audit Committee and which is now in progress.

The last finding is "Match," which has not been met. The Coalition's match is \$347,000 and the hope is that the Foundation will help to raise the match in the future.

Mr. Farrelly thanked Ms. Rags and Ms. Wersan for their assistance with the Coalition's finances, resulting in these audit findings.

Mr. Cook made a motion to approve the Audit and Ms. Rags seconded. All were in favor with no abstentions and the motion carried. **(Action Item #0809-15)** Ms. Rags acknowledged staff's diligence in this regard.

Mr. Farrelly informed the Board that an invoice in excess of \$5,000 is being presented for approval. Pot of Gold Multi Cinema is the advertising company used for the VPK ads shown at local movie theatres and has submitted an invoice in the amount of \$5,592.00 for payment. Mr. Cook made a motion to approve the invoice and Dr. Kanakis seconded. All were in favor with no abstentions and the motion carried.

**V. Program Committee – Ms. Jean Rags, Chairperson**

Ms. Rags explained that as part of the Coalition’s extensive 3-year review by AWI/OEL, when amendments were made to the Coalition’s Annual Plan, they were approved by the Board but the Program Committee’s changes were not submitted to the contracted agency to amend the plan. Ms. Rags requested a motion to approve the Amendments to the Annual Program Plan as unanimously voted on by the Coalition’s Board of Directors. Ms. Arnett moved to approve the amendments and Dr. Kanakis seconded the motion. All were in favor with no abstentions and the motion carried. **(Action Item #0809-16)**

**A. By-Laws, 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading**

Mr. Farrelly stated that all changes were highlighted in yellow and had been approved by the Program Committee. Ms. Arnett moved to approve the amended By-laws and Mr. Mascaro seconded the motion. All were in favor with no abstentions and the motion carried. **(Action Item #0809-17)**

**B. Internal Control Policy, 3<sup>rd</sup> Reading/Adoption**

Mr. Farrelly explained that this policy had come before the Board for first and second readings, but did not come back to the Board for final approval. Ms. Rags moved to approve the policy and Dr. Kanakis seconded the motion. All were in favor with no abstentions and the motion carried. **(Action Item #0809-18)**

**C. Recommendation, Consolidation of Services**

Mr. Farrelly distributed copies of his recommendation to the Board for Consolidation of Services. He explained this was a product of over 100 hours of staff time and if approved, would become effective no later than July 1, 2009. He explained that the Coalition has been bringing services in-house from the central agency for the past thirteen (13) months. The first service brought in-house was the provider meetings followed by the school readiness program in July and then, in January, the provider trainings and child development screenings. These moves saved over \$300,000, leaving the Coalition in a good financial position.

However, the Coalition needs to do more in managing our financial resources to provide more services to children while improving the quality of those services. Mr. Farrelly explained there were two (2) remaining contracted responsibilities:

- Eligibility, Resource and Referral – please see attached Recommendation Policy
- Provider Reimbursement – issuing the checks to providers.

Mr. Farrelly explained that successfully assuming these additional responsibilities would require additional staff and dollars. He stated the needs are outlined in Section IV. With these additions the Coalition will be able to save over \$400,000. This translates into 140 full-time additional children in childcare next year. He informed the Board that our administrative costs are currently 4.2% and stated they are anticipated to be even less next year – no greater than 3.9%.

Mr. Farrelly recommends the Board approve allowing staff to develop the necessary transition plans for the remaining contracted services to become effective no later than July 1, 2009. Dr. Kanakis moved to approve the recommendation and Ms. Arnett seconded. Ms. Pinkowski requested discussion and inquired if the savings included increases in current payroll. Mr. Farrelly stated it did. Ms. Rags inquired if there was adequate space availability in this office. Mr. Farrelly stated there was. Ms. Gill inquired if there would be an additional burden on current staff. Mr. Farrelly stated no.

Ms. Hammond asked about office space in Pasco. Mr. Farrelly stated offices in East Pasco, West Pasco as well as in Hernando County would be opened. This would expand our services facilities by 50% and help clear up confusion as to where parents and providers can go for services. The office in East Pasco would be placed in an area readily accessible to residents of nearby Hernando County. Ms. Arnett suggested the Dade City Business Center.

A provider from Dade City was recognized and stated that some of her parents were waiting six (6) months to a year for services. She believes it is a good idea to cut out the “middleman” because the current system is not flexible.

There was a brief discussion on a mobile outreach unit to go into specified communities.

Mr. Meglay thanked and commended Mr. Farrelly for taking the initiative to take on this project with its additional responsibilities.

There was no further discussion. Ms. Hammond requested a vote on the motion. All were in favor with no abstentions and the motion carried. **(Action Item #0809-19)**

Ms. Hammond thanked CDS for their years of service. She stated that as the Coalition has grown and taken different directions, CDS has been supportive and made sure the transitions have been smooth.

Mr. Bromund commented that Mr. Farrelly had been the individual responsible for pulling things together and a good relationship exists within both agencies. Mr. Bromund stated that changes are being made throughout the State and that CDS will do everything possible to make the transition successful and will offer guidance in critical areas.

#### **D. Presentation on Readiness Rates, 2007-2008 – Ms. Debbie Thomas and Ms. Marie Grace, VPK Specialists**

Ms. Thomas informed the Board that VPK readiness rates are based on 4-year old children who entered kindergarten in FY 07-08. The children are assessed within the first 30 days and the assessment is tracked back to the VPK provider to see how well they are prepared to enter kindergarten. Studies have shown that children not in VPK are not as successful starting in school.

Ms. Grace stated that in FY 07/08 there were 161 VPK providers; 150 offered the program year-round and eleven (11) offered the summer program. They served a total of 6,104 VPK 4-year olds. Of these providers, 130 had successful scores and fourteen (14) were not rated because fewer than four (4) of their children completed the program. There were seventeen (17) low performing providers (LPP). The average score for FY 07-08 was 247, ninety (90) of our providers achieved 247 or above. Three (3) centers had a perfect score of 300.

Ms. Thomas stated that 87% of our providers had a successful rate. She stated that out of the seventeen (17) LPP's; one (1) of them has closed. There is a possibility that there are three (3) second year LPP providers, they may now have to purchase an approved curriculum (costs vary from \$1,250 - \$14,950). Because of this expense, they may no longer offer VPK. A specific 10-hour training will also be recommended for these LPP's.

Discussion followed on offering specific trainings to assist providers in ways to improve. Also discussed were challenges faced by some providers including health issues in children, low-income areas, language issues, and centers whose children are 85% special needs. Karen Livengood of Discovery World stated her VPK program is a 6-hour per day session because it is difficult to accomplish and retain high readiness rates by doing a 3-hour per day program. She finds her families can not afford a second session or wrap-around care and the children end up with no services because of the lack of funds.

Ms. Jackson informed the Board that, due to budget cuts, if the Hernando School District has to close their schools for the month of July, they will endeavor to find outside sources for their VPK locations.

#### **VII. Central Agency Utilization Reports – Tom Scheffey**

Mr. Scheffey presented the reports for January 2009 and gave a brief overview. There were 310 children on the wait list in Pasco as of the end of January and 266 in Hernando. The last week of February, the Coalition directed CDS to place children on the wait list. Since then, 125 children were placed in Pasco with the wait list now at 110. In Hernando, there are now 17 children on the wait list with 200 children being placed. Mr. Scheffey explained CDS' procedure of pre-qualifying families by phone and stated that CDS does not recommend individual providers; the parents pick the provider from a referral list generated by CDS or their children are already enrolled in a center. He stated the VPK program is for working parents, the purpose of care is

employment. Protective cases or work force referrals are priorities. Ms. Eurton of CDS and Mr. Farrelly recommend opening 325 slots in Pasco and 125 in Hernando.

Ms. Hammond requested a motion to approve the Utilization Reports. Ms. Arnett moved to approve the reports and Mr. Meglay seconded. All were in favor with no abstentions and the motion carried.

#### **VIII. New/Unfinished Business**

Ms. Hammond asked the Board members to print their own board packets to save the Coalition the expense. She remarked that several packets would be available at each meeting. The Coalition will remind Board members to print their packets.

Mr. Farrelly reminded Board members to complete the Code of Ethics form and he asked all guests to sign the guest list.

#### **IX. Public Input**

None

#### **X. Adjournment**

A motion to adjourn this meeting of the Early Learning Coalition of Pasco and Hernando Counties, Inc. Board of Directors was made by Mr. Meglay. With no further discussion the meeting was adjourned at 10:10 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Ramute "Jak" Jakubauskas  
Administrative Assistant