



**BOARD OF DIRECTORS
MEETING MINUTES
October 22, 2009**

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

Day/Date/Time: Thursday, October 22, 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; Sister Roberta Bailey, Jo Ann Carman, Elizabeth Callaghan, Jayne Goldstein, Karen Livengood, Joe Mascaro, Dave Meglay, Nicole Miller, Beth Rawls, Teresa Suarez, Mary Beth Wehnes

Board of Director Members Present via Telephone/Video Conference: Dr. Steve Kanakis

Board of Director Members Excused: Susan Arnett, Sonya Jackson, Jack Mariano, Janis McKnight

Board of Director Members Absent: Burt Harres

Coalition Staff Present: Damaris Conner, Pattie Eacobacci, Jim Farrelly, Ramute “Jak” Jakubauskas, John T. Karuso, Betsy Kier, Maryrose Wersan

Guests Present: Cassandra Clayton, Happy Land Daycare; Precious Knight, Happy Land Daycare; Debbie Pfenning (on behalf of Sonya Jackson); Rachel Surrency, VPK mom

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 8:35 a.m. Introductions were made.

II. Action Items

- **Adoption of Agenda**

Ms. Hammond requested a motion to adopt the agenda. Mr. Meglay moved to accept this motion and Ms. Wehnes seconded. All were in favor with no abstentions and the motion carried. (**Action Item #0910-19**)

- **Approval of Minutes, September 24, 2009 Board Meeting**

Ms. Hammond requested a motion to approve the September 24, 2009 minutes. Mr. Meglay moved to accept this motion and Mr. Mascaro seconded. All were in favor with no abstentions and the motion carried. (**Action Item #0910-20**)

- **Treasurer's Report - Ms. Elizabeth Callaghan**

Monthly Statement of Financials – August, 2009

Ms. Callaghan informed the Board that the Finance/Audit Committee, at their last meeting, had discussed the 09/10 Budget. The budget indicated that 18.31% of the School Readiness grant has been expended, 31% of the VPK grant and 2% of the VPK Outreach grant have been expended. The ARRA funds may be a cause for concern due to the lack of response from parents. This program will be monitored closely. Ms. Callaghan reported that Ms. Wersan updated the Committee on the status of the SAGE accounting software system and the Committee did recommend approval for payment of the liability insurance invoice, to be acted upon later in the meeting.

Ms. Callaghan presented the August Financials and directed the Board to the Dues/ Subscriptions/Fees line item on page two (2) for School Readiness. She informed the Board that this increase was due to the annual dues renewal for the Association of Early Learning Coalitions. Ms. Callaghan also reported that expenditures for the purchase of office supplies were higher this month. Ms. Callaghan requested a motion to approve the August 2009 Financials. Discussion followed on the cost of belonging to the Association of Early Learning Coalitions and Mr. Farrelly stated that he believes the support and assistance given by the Association is worthwhile. Mr. Meglay moved to accept this motion and Ms. Wehnes seconded. All were in favor with no abstentions and the motion carried. (**Action Item #0910-21**)

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

- **Summary Report, Annual Evaluation of Executive Director**

Ms. Hammond informed the Board that the Executive Committee had met last week and conducted Mr. Farrelly's annual review. She reported there were no criticisms and thanked Ms. Callaghan and her staff person, Ms. Becky Martin, for collecting the information. Ms. Hammond reported that the instrument showed that the Board, as a whole, is happy with the direction of the Coalition and Mr. Farrelly's leadership. The Committee reviewed

information that had been provided indicating salary ranges for executive directors across the state and members had agreed to move Mr. Farrelly's salary to the median of these ranges, retroactive to July 1, 2009.

Ms. Hammond briefly discussed her history with the Coalition and the positive impact that Mr. Farrelly has made since his arrival. Mr. Meglay and Ms. Wehnes also added their comments on Mr. Farrelly's behalf.

Mr. Farrelly stated that he has worked with different Boards since 1981 and this is the finest Board he has every worked with. The welfare of children is a common thread for everyone and he thanked the Board and his staff for their assistance.

- **Report and Recommendation, Grievance of Happy Land Daycare**

Ms. Hammond reported that an Ad Hoc Committee composed of Executive Committee members had been convened to listen to the grievance submitted by Happy Land Daycare. She stated that Mr. Farrelly provided research for the series of three (3) monitorings that were conducted at the center and that the center had improved over the monitorings, but not to the level of our policy and our expectations.

Ms. Hammond stated that the Committee's vote was 3-1 to extend the center's probationary period instead of terminating the payment agreement. The reason for the reconsideration was during the process of monitoring, it is the practice that the monitor reviews the results, in an informal manner before they leave the center. On the second monitoring, this did not happen. Because of that oversight, the Committee came to a consensus, that the probationary period should be extended for sixty (60) days, additional Technical Assistance would be provided, and another, final monitoring will be performed in sixty (60) days. It is the Committee's expectation that the center will achieve a score of 80% or above. If it does, the center will remain open, if not, their contract will be terminated. Ms. Hammond stated this had been discussed with Ms. Clayton who agreed and now the Committee brings the 3-1 vote to the Board for ratification.

Ms. Hammond requested a motion to ratify the Executive Committee's decision to continue Happy Land Daycare's reimbursement agreement for sixty (60) days from October 22, 2009 at which time the same assessment tool that has been used for the last three (3) assessments will be used to perform a fourth assessment and the center will be required to meet a minimum of 80%. Dr. Kanakis motioned to approve ratification and Ms. Callaghan seconded the motion. Discussion followed.

Mr. Meglay stated this situation concerns him because it has been ongoing for seven (7) months. Improvement has been seen, but not at the level the Coalition expects. He stated Coalition staff has been able to go out to different centers and that out of approximately 320 contracted providers, only six (6) are on a Corrective Action Plan. He stated that staff has put in an incredible amount of hours working with these centers to help them achieve the minimum requirement. Mr. Meglay remarked that Ms. Clayton has stated that she disagrees with the Coalition's monitoring assessment tool. He is concerned because if she has disagreed with the findings in the past, why she would change her observations on the tool at this point. He stated the Coalition and this Board is charged with ensuring that children are

given a safe environment in which to obtain a good foundation for their education. He stated that he does not see that happening. Mr. Meglay remarked that it was true that on the second assessment there was an operational error. This did not change the results. On the third assessment, the Coalition was assured that the center would meet the minimum requirement of 80% and it did not. He continued by stating that if the Board changes what the requirements are for providers now, the providers will not know what is expected of them. We will give them an assessment tool and tell them this is what you will be assessed on – maybe. He does not believe it is fair to the providers, or staff, because we are telling staff they are not doing their job. Mr. Meglay stated he has never been to this center and was curious if staff, on an informal basis, had been out to see what if any improvements have been made. He feels that if the center is not observed, things will not change which is not fair to the children or their parents who expect a quality center.

Mr. Farrelly informed Mr. Meglay and the Board that he had been to the center on the morning prior to the grievance hearing. He dropped in at approximately 11:30 a.m. for an unscheduled visit, with the intent to confirm the list of improvements indicated in Ms. Clayton's letter including the equipment and supplies that had been purchased. He stated he was not able to confirm the improvements because the director was not on site and he was approached by three (3) children, initially unattended. A teacher came out after 3-4 minutes, Mr. Farrelly inquired if the director was in, he was told no, at which time Mr. Farrelly left the center.

Mr. Meglay posed the question, "You were able to walk in the door and no one knew you were there?" Mr. Farrelly stated that yes the gate was unlocked, the door was unlocked and he walked in. He waited in the lobby for 3-4 minutes, unattended, with children before a staff member approached. Mr. Meglay stated he understands the center has approximately 60 children, where were they? Mr. Farrelly stated he could not answer that question. Mr. Meglay stated this concerns him more than everything else that has taken place. If someone could just walk in the door, what would stop that someone from taking an unattended child that walked up to them? He stated that if the Board ratifies the extension of this contract after hearing this, the Board is closing its eyes to this issue that if something happens, it will be the Board's fault and the Board will be questioned as to why it was allowed to continue.

Ms. Hammond explained it is procedural that an informal conversation takes place at the end of a monitoring with a follow up report or a formal conversation. This is the piece of the process that was missed. Ms. Hammond stated that because of this procedural flaw, the Ad Hoc Committee did vote to extend for sixty (60) days. It was a 3-1 vote. Ms. Wehnes stated that this center is continually not following the rules and putting children in danger and she hoped that licensing was contacted because licensing is able to find a center non-compliant based on a partnering agency's report as to what happened.

Ms. Callaghan inquired if licensing had been contacted and it would have been appropriate for Mr. Farrelly to mention the visit to the center at the Ad Hoc Committee meeting for the members to respond to.

Ms. Suarez inquired what scores were obtained and was informed by Mr. Farrelly that on March 16, 2009 – 50%; May 11, 2009 – 62% and on September 1, 2009 – 65%. Ms. Hammond inquired of Ms. Kier if there were categories of the assessment. Ms. Kier replied

the tool covers all aspects. Ms. Hammond inquired if some categories were lower and Ms. Kier replied yes, the main areas were that a Coalition approved curriculum was not fully implemented which resulted in a lack of developmentally appropriate activities and a lack of appropriate and adequate teacher interaction with the children. Ms. Kier stated there were no major safety issues.

Ms. Miller stated, that as a member of the Ad Hoc committee, her biggest issue was that this center had received its Gold Seal accreditation in 2008 which would hold it to a higher standard. She believed, that as of yet, they have not renewed this accreditation. Ms. Wehnes stated that in a new licensing rule, an unattended child is a Class One violation that would result in the loss of the Gold Seal accreditation.

Ms. Rawls stated that some things may pass an accreditation, but the monitoring process gives a clearer picture; there is an ability to monitor the center at a closer level than that of accreditation.

Ms. Hammond informed Ms. Clayton that she would now be allowed to speak for three (3) minutes.

Ms. Clayton addressed Mr. Farrelly by saying that he stated that prior to the meeting of October 15, 2009, he visited the center. He replied that was correct. Ms. Clayton inquired what were the children doing. He replied that the children were in a room; he explained that as you walk into the center after he had parked across the street. Ms. Clayton inquired where did he park? He replied in a parking lot across the street. She inquired what kind of parking lot? Mr. Farrelly stated he parked in the parking lot across from your center, Happy Land Daycare. He stated he walked through a chain link fence which was open, he approached the center door, he opened the door, walked in and was in the lobby area and within about three (3) minutes, he had three (3) little children that came to him from the first room on the left. Mr. Farrelly stated the first little boy hugged his leg and he said hello and they looked for a staff member. A staff member came out, within about three (3) minutes, Mr. Farrelly asked for Ms. Clayton and was told Ms. Clayton was not available or on-site; they talked for a few more moments. Ms. Clayton inquired what date this was. Mr. Farrelly stated the day before the grievance hearing, on the 14th, he believed it was a Wednesday. He continued by saying he asked the staff person to please let Ms. Clayton know, after he introduced himself as the Executive Director of the Coalition, that he had visited, and he then departed.

Ms. Clayton stated that “at that time the children are normally eating lunch.” She stated that “Mr. Farrelly would have known what kind of parking lot he parked in if he would have come to the center. He would have known that the children were eating lunch at the time he arrived. If they ran up to him, it would have to have been at lunchtime because it is their lunchtime.” She stated “that if he wanted to be impressive – fine. But, as I have said before, don’t impress on the livelihood of everybody else. I understand that this is a number based thing and children should be safe. If you had found that situation in coming into the center, you are right, you should have called licensing, immediately, you should have called licensing. Because these girls (referring to her staff) know they are held to a standard too and their job is to be there supervising the children. And I think that with all the things that are going on with this Coalition and this staff that they (referring to her staff) would have better sense not to be supervising the kids. And then, on October the 15th, when I arrived here that morning

and it was the first time I had seen a written assessment and when I got back to the center and read the assessment it was clear to me that at 8:25 on the 15th and I was told that it was mailed to me on September 2nd, the mail is slow, but it is not that slow. And the things that I saw in that assessment would bring anyone to tears. We should not have to resort to lying to impress anybody. If you are doing a good job, you are doing a good job, but don't do your good job just to say we're going to take down centers to prove that we are better than CDS. You can be better than anybody but don't just go after centers and say we are going to make a point that this is not what we are going to tolerate. If your job is to help the children, do so, help the children. Don't go after people just because you want to impress someone."

Ms. Hammond interjected and stated that she does not believe that this is the case here and asked that Ms. Clayton refrain from any sort of innuendo. She thanked Ms. Clayton for her comments and stated they would be taken into consideration.

Ms. Hammond stated there is a motion on the floor and a second. There was no further discussion from the Board members. She restated the motion: "To continue the reimbursement agreement with Happy Land Daycare for sixty (60) days from October 22, 2009 at which time another assessment using the same assessment tool will be conducted with the required minimum of 80% to be achieved."

Mr. Farrelly requested a roll call motion. Ms. Jakubauskas read the names of the voting members and they voted as follows:

Jo Ann Carmen – no
Lisa Hammond – no
Steve Kanakis – yes
Joe Mascaro – no

Dave Meglay – no
Nicole Miller – yes
Mary Beth Wehnes – no
Elizabeth Callaghan – yes

Ms. Jakubauskas reported the vote as being five (5) no and three (3) yes. As the motion failed, Ms. Hammond directed Mr. Farrelly to proceed with contract termination.

IV. Program Committee – Mr. Dave Meglay

Mr. Meglay reported the Committee met last week and the number of providers under review is dropping. The Committee is reviewing only six (6) providers at this time. One of the centers discussed was FP of Pasco County, which has two (2) centers, and recently had an incident at one of their centers. He stated the Committee decided not to place any more children in this center until their issues are resolved. The other center is fine. Mr. Meglay reported that another center, SG, had their contract canceled for different issues. Mr. Meglay commended staff for going above and beyond to help the centers achieve the scores that they need. Mr. Meglay stated the monitoring tool is being fine-tuned and made more demanding and providers are making the changes to the tool with provider input, not the Board dictating to the centers.

Also discussed was ARRA funding and the number of families being served. Currently 71 people have utilized the program. Career Central is actively working with the Coalition, articles have been published in the paper, and the Coalition will have additional press

releases for additional exposure. Ms. Hammond stated that Ms. Jean Rags has a health and human services newsletter that goes out monthly and she suggested placing something in the newsletter. Flyers should also be delivered to Ms. Rags' office.

V. Finance and Audit Committee – Ms. Elizabeth Callaghan

- **Recommendation for Approval, Invoice to Roe Insurance for Directors and Officers Liability - \$5,713.57**

Ms. Callaghan stated because this invoice is over \$5,000, it requires the approval of the Board and the Finance Committee recommends approval. Ms. Hammond requested a motion to approve. Mr. Meglay so moved and Mr. Mascaro seconded the motion. All were in favor with no abstentions and the motion carried. (**Action Item #0910-22**)

VI. Executive Director Report – Mr. Jim Farrelly

- **Coalition Update**

Mr. Farrelly announced the introduction of the Coalition's Conference Center with Dr. Kanakis who volunteered to show the capability of the system. It has the capacity to have up to six (6) individuals at a time participate on the video conference. He explained that it is legal to vote and obtain quorum with this type of system. Ms. Gonzales will be able to showcase the documents being discussed on the screen. This will expand opportunities for the Board and Committees to meet and achieve quorum. It will also be utilized for provider trainings. The system also has the capacity to host twenty-five (25) video participants. Mr. Farrelly reported the Coalition was able to purchase this system for under \$4,000. He thanked Ms. Gonzales and Ms. Eacobacci for their assistance.

Mr. Farrelly informed the Board that for a second month in a row, 412 additional children were served in Hernando and 613 in Pasco, compared to last year.

Mr. Farrelly requested that Board members put the following events on their calendars:

Saturday, November 7 – the Coalition's 2nd Annual Early Learning Conference at Crews Lake Middle School on Shady Hills Road. The cost is \$15 for the conference and breakfast and lunch is included. Keynote speaker will be Dr. Pam Phelps. Registration will begin at 7:30 a.m. and the conference will conclude at 4:30 p.m.

Mr. Farrelly announced that the Coalition received a \$25,000 donation from the Hernando County Commissioners. He also stated that former Board member, Ms. Jean Rags, is very involved with the Week of the Young Child in Hernando County and she was able to have the **March 27, 2010** event dedicated to the Coalition.

December 12, 2009 – the Coalition's 1st Annual Reindeer Run/Walk for Early Learning – the roll out event for the Coalition's Foundation will be held at Sun Lake High School in Land O'Lakes. Ms. Gonzales will be organizing the event and Mr. Farrelly expects a minimum of

500 participants, with the help of provider involvement. The entry fee has not yet been set. Every runner/walker will participate with a “red” nose and jingle bells for their shoes. Tentative start time will be 9 a.m.

Mr. Farrelly announced that the Foundation had met this week and discussed the event as well as the delay in receiving the Foundation’s 501(c)(3). Another topic discussed was a “Day of Sharing.” Mr. Farrelly stated that Disney is initiating a wonderful opportunity that will begin on January 1, 2010. Disney will be partnering with non-profits nationwide to encourage community volunteerism. When an organization partners with Disney, volunteers will be recruited for specific needs. When a full day of community needs has been completed, the volunteer will receive a voucher for admission to one of the Disney parks. Mr. Farrelly hopes to generate an approved list of needs from the Coalition’s providers, begin the program on a quarterly basis, and eventually do it monthly.

He asked for the Board’s reaction. Ms. Hammond stated that the program sounds good but once a month would be aggressive. Mr. Meglay stated he liked the idea because it shows the providers that yes we do care and we are trying to help them by making their lives easier. Ms. Livengood stated she has her list ready and it is a wonderful way for providers to be able to save costs and put funds back into their centers.

Mr. Farrelly announced that Board Chair, Lisa Hammond, was awarded her Ph.D. in May.

- **Approval, \$7,300 Invoice from CDS for September Accounting Services**

Mr. Farrelly explained this invoice was for accounting services performed by CDS while Ms. Wersan was on medical leave. Ms. Hammond requested a motion to approve payment of the \$7,300 invoice. Mr. Meglay so moved and Ms. Carman seconded the motion. All were in favor with no abstentions and the motion carried. **(Action Item #0910-23)**

- **Grievance Policy – Revised – 3rd Reading**

Mr. Farrelly stated the changes requested are highlighted in yellow. Ms. Hammond requested a motion to approve the Grievance Policy. Mr. Meglay so moved and Ms. Wehnes seconded the motion. All were in favor with no abstentions and the motion carried.

- **Board Member Fingerprinting Policy – 2nd Reading**

Mr. Farrelly stated the proposed Fingerprinting Policy is presented unchanged from the last meeting. He stated that Ms. Rawls has an implementation method. Ms. Rawls stated that Pasco County schools have a process for an initial fingerprinting which is then run every year. For an \$85 fee, per person, the Board needs to be fingerprinted only once. The procedure can be performed at the Coalition. The \$85 is a one-time fee and currently the cost is \$65 annually. Ms. Rawls stated that if something would happen, the Coalition would not have to wait for the annual screening, it would appear immediately and the Coalition would be contacted within 24 hours. Ms. Hammond requested a motion to approve the Fingerprinting Policy. Mr. Meglay so moved and Ms. Miller seconded the motion. All were in favor with no abstentions and the motion carried.

Ms. Hammond inquired if the fingerprinting could be arranged after the next Board meeting scheduled on November 19, 2009. Mr. Farrelly replied that he would work on this with Ms. Rawls.

VII. Utilization Reports – Ms. Betsy Kier

Ms. Kier reported that there was a zero wait list and that 29 children were enrolled in Hernando County through the ARRA program and 42 in Pasco. Information on these programs was discussed at recent Provider meetings. She stated that VPK in Hernando showed 23 less children than last year, but VPK enrollments are coming in daily. In Pasco, there are 129 more children than last year. Ms. Pfenning stated that summer VPK programs in Hernando had been contracted out to providers and all calls on VPK are referred to the Coalition. Mr. Farrelly stated that VPK outreach has doubled over the past year with about 500 children being reached this past weekend. Ms. Kier stated that there will be a large media blitz on VPK beginning in January and postcard mailings will also be done.

VIII. New/Unfinished Business

None

IX. Public Input

Ms. Rachel Surrency, a VPK mother, stated she volunteers at a daycare center and reported that AMSCOT was having a bike helmet give-a-way and suggested to their office manager about a collaboration with the Coalition. She was grateful for the opportunity to learn more about the Coalition.

X. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn this meeting of the Early Learning Coalition of Pasco and Hernando Counties, Inc. Board of Directors was requested by Ms. Hammond. Mr. Meglay so moved. With no further discussion the meeting was adjourned at 9:45 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Ramute “Jak” Jakubauskas
Administrative Assistant