



**BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
MEETING MINUTES  
February 25, 2010**

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

**Day/Date/Time:** Thursday, February 25, 2010 – 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, Jo Ann Carman, Bonnie Clark, Jayne Goldstein, Joe Mascaro, Dave Meglay, Nicole Miller, Beth Rawls, Teresa Suarez, Mary Beth Wehnes

**Board of Director Members Present via Telephone/Video Conference:** Elizabeth Callaghan, Debi Martoccio

**Board of Director Members Excused:** Dr. Steve Kanakis, Sonya Jackson, David Lambert, Karen Livengood, Pat Mulieri

**Board of Director Members Absent:** None

**Coalition Staff Present:** Kim Borrego, Shannon Dewey, Pattie Eacobacci, Jim Farrelly, Nicole Gonzalez, Ramute “Jak” Jakubauskas, Jack Karuso, Betsy Kier

**Guests Present:** Shane Harris, Learning Tree Preschool; Bill Kleinsorge, Pasco County Schools; Jackie Maness, Longleaf Learning Center; Missy Nurrenbrock, Genesis School; Debbie Pfenning (on behalf of Sonya Jackson), Hernando County Schools; Jill Scharrer, Footprints Preschool; Rob Wardlow, Williams, McCranie, Wardlow & Cash

**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. Clark seconded. All were in favor with no abstentions and the motion carried. **(Action Item #0910-31)**

- **Approval of Minutes, January 28, 2010 Board Meeting**

Ms. Hammond requested a motion to approve the January 28, 2010 minutes. Mr. Meglay moved to accept this motion and Mr. Mascaro seconded. There was no discussion. All were in favor with no abstentions and the motion carried. **(Action Item #0910-32)**

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

Ms. Hammond stated the Executive Committee had met and discussed the FY 2009 Financial Audit which is being presented today. She informed the Board and guests that the Early Learning Coalition would be featured this evening on WEDU as part of their Be More Awards program.

## **IV. Presentation of FY 2009 Financial Audit for Acceptance – Mr. Rob Wardlow of Williams, McCranie, Wardlow & Cash**

Mr. Wardlow distributed copies of the FY 2009 Financial Audit report and stated he would make himself available to answer any questions. He reviewed the financial statements for the benefit of Board members. He explained the Statement of Functional Expenses on page 6 does not currently show a breakout of expenses for 2009 compared to 2008, but he would be able to provide that information if requested. He referred the Board to page 19 and the Findings on the Financial Statements. Mr. Wardlow stated there was a total of two (2) findings here and referred the Board to Reference Number 09-01 and explained that when the balance sheet was reviewed it was found that the receivable accounts, instead of having a debit balance, contained credit balances. There were also a number of journal entries, approximately fifty-three (53), that had to be made and there were some entries that had to be corrected from the previous year.

Reference Number 09-02 - in reviewing the cash disbursements internal controls, Mr. Wardlow stated a check had been issued and was found to have cleared the bank having no signature.

Reference Number 09-03 – refers to not meeting the match and has to be stated for compliance purposes.

Ms. Miller inquired how many Coalitions meet the match requirement. Mr. Farrelly stated he knows of none and explained that currently the state issues a “match waiver,” but eventually if the \$315,153 is not raised by the Coalition, the State may deduct that amount from the School Readiness allocation. He explained that because of the

potential threat of losing the \$300,000 and the fact that Coalition staff is not permitted to fundraise, is why the Foundation was created.

Ms. Hammond requested a motion to accept the FY 2009 Financial Audit as presented. Mr. Meglay so moved and Ms. Miller seconded the motion. All were in favor with no abstentions and the motion carried. (**Action Item #0910-33**)

## **V. Review of Coalition's Age Range for School Readiness Services**

At this time, Mr. Farrelly introduced Mr. William "Bill" Kleinsorge, the Coalition's new Financial Director, to the Board. Mr. Kleinsorge is the former Financial Director for the Pasco County School District. His employment with the Coalition will commence on Monday, March 15, 2010.

- **Introduction – Jim Farrelly, Executive Director**

Mr. Farrelly informed the Board that in January, when the need to create a waitlist was first presented to the Executive Committee, one of the first issues to be discussed was the Coalition's age limits for services. Historically, Coalitions were chartered to serve children from birth to age 12, and some Coalitions still do, including this Coalition. Services for this age range are also included in the Coalition's 3-year plan. As the Board begins the process of looking at the age range for services, it must consider how the current birth-12 age range impacts the waitlist.

Mr. Farrelly stated information has been put together for the Board's review to obtain a better understanding of the age range issue. He stated that the trend in Florida, considering the long waitlists, is to move away from the birth-12 and focus more on younger children. Mr. Farrelly informed the Board that the Coalition's current waitlist contains about 375 children and he predicts that it will grow by about 100 children per month. He stated the ARRA funds allowed the Coalition to get through January without a waitlist. The Coalition will not have a large influx of federal stimulus dollars for next fiscal year and the State is already discussing cuts which may preclude up to 650 children not being served in Pasco and Hernando counties alone.

- **Practices among Early Learning Coalitions – Kim Borrego, Program Quality Manager**

Ms. Borrego distributed a list of the 31 Coalitions, annotated with the age range of children they serve (attached). Ms. Borrego explained the document shows a breakdown of the ages currently being served. She informed the Board that about 42% of the Coalitions are serving children birth-12. She stated that ELC of Gateway is entering into a similar conversation with their Board. A number of other Coalitions are also beginning to have discussions in regards to age range.

A discussion followed on the ELC of Pinellas making a change this fiscal year to serve birth-5 because of their large waitlist. Ms. Kier explained to the Board that the Coalitions are required to manage their united waitlist and verify that clients are eligible for services, but other Coalitions may have different ways of managing their unified

waitlists. Discussion followed on income eligibility, the criteria used to determine eligibility for services and the leeway Coalitions have to determine some of the criteria.

Mr. Farrelly stated that five (5) years ago all Coalitions would have been in the birth-12 age range category, and that Coalitions were all working with a central agency, but the trend has been to work away from central agencies. Now, less than half of the Coalitions still serve the birth-12 age range.

- **Age Distribution (School Readiness Children), January 2010 – Betsy Kier, Assistant Executive Director**

Ms. Kier distributed an Enrollment Data by Age Group chart (attached). She stated it has been broken down by the number of children served in each county, the ages of the children served and the percentage of that age range served. In Pasco, 25% of the Coalition's enrollment is school-aged children 6-12 and in Hernando it is 34% of ages 6-12. In the 9-12 age range, 11% are Pasco children and 13% are Hernando's.

Ms. Kier informed the Board that currently, for every one of the school-aged children receiving care, a birth-5 child coming in for services is placed on the waitlist. Ms. Suarez inquired what types of services are being provided to the children in the 6-12 age range. Ms. Kier responded the before and after care programs such as those offered at Place and the YMCA. Private providers also offer full-time summer programs to this age group.

Mr. Farrelly explained that years ago when the readiness program was established, the focus of the program was School Readiness – to prepare young children to enter and succeed in school. This meant the birth-5 age range. School Readiness was expanded to include school-aged children when funding dollars were more readily available. He stated the Coalition's vision statement reminds us that our focus is to prepare children to enter school.

Ms. Arnett requested to see a breakdown of ages of children currently on the waitlist on the report at the next meeting. Mr. Meglay stated the Coalition should go back to the original mission statement or change it to reflect the inclusion of School Readiness. Ms. Suarez stated she believes the Coalition should include children in the birth-6 age range because, by law, children are not required to be in school until the age of 6 and many children are not yet ready developmentally. Ms. Rawls stated the amount of children currently in 9-12 age range slots, if removed, would cover the current wait list. Ms. Arnett stated the Board does not have enough information as to the financial implications. She recommends enlisting more community support for the older children such as the Boys/Girls Clubs or the YMCA.

Ms. Hammond reminded the Board that funding is limited; there are more children requiring services than available funds. She suggests focusing on where the impact will have the greatest affect and she believes it will be for the birth-5 and perhaps the 6-7 age range populations.

Mr. Farrelly stated he believes the projected waitlist will be close to 1,000 children by July 1<sup>st</sup>. This may not reflect actual need as many parents choose not to go on the waitlist. Ms. Arnett stated the poverty rates are increasing, but the eligibility requirements have not changed. Ms. Kier stated that one of the Coalition's requirements is to have and manage a unified waitlist. Staff does weekly reviews of the waitlist to determine who is still eligible.

Additional discussion followed on setting priorities based on poverty level or age requirement. Ms. Hammond explained that the eligibility criteria are set by the State, but the Coalition's flexibility is in setting the age criteria. Ms. Carmen reminded the Board that services must be provided for children in protective custody and TANF clients through the age of 12.

- **Options for Consideration – Jim Farrelly, Executive Director**

Mr. Farrelly stated there are two (2) options to consider:

1. Make no change – age ranges will stand and the waitlist will continue to grow and may approach 1,000 or more by the end of this fiscal year. A list of age ranges on the waitlist will be brought back for review at the next meeting.
2. Reduce the age range for eligibility purposes. If services are restricted to birth-5, this will mean an additional 878 slots in Pasco and 455 in Hernando. If services are restricted to birth-8, it would mean the availability of 373 slots in Pasco and 167 in Hernando.

Mr. Farrelly stated any change would be massive and impact the communities, families and providers. He suggests that if changes are going to be made by the Board, they should be made this spring as any changes would have to be implemented in phases. After a brief discussion, Mr. Farrelly stated an infinite number of options are available once a decision is made on the core age range. Ms. Hammond suggested discussing any changes after the criteria has been determined. Ms. Rawls suggested knowing how many providers serve older children may be helpful information.

Mr. Meglay suggested crucial information be emailed to the Board members so the process is not prolonged. Ms. Miller suggested creating a document for the Board's review that showed "tiers" of plans for siblings, etc.

Ms. Callaghan inquired if the age range had been presented to provider groups. Mr. Farrelly stated yes, providers were notified that the Board would be having a discussion and the topic was discussed at the recent Providers Advisory Council meeting. Some of those members are here today. He also distributed a letter (attached) from one of the providers regarding the proposed change. Ms. Callaghan suggested surveying the providers to get their comments and an idea of how this change would impact them.

Ms. Hammond stated the Board will have to stay focused on the core mission and that any change will have ramifications to providers, parents, and children.

Ms. Hammond inquired if any of the guests would like to comment. Mr. Shane Harris of the Learning Tree stated he understands the changes being discussed, but suggests considering it from a provider's perspective and how the shift in age range ratios will impact their teachers and classrooms. He believes it may have an adverse impact and that many centers may close. Ms. Missy Nurrenback of Genesis School stated providers would like to receive more information and believes a special meeting for providers should be considered. Ms. Jill Scharrer of Footprints stated the dependence on funds from the Coalition has grown which includes this age range. This age range is also at greater risk without services.

Mr. Mascaro suggested discussing the current 150% income eligibility format with AWI to see if it could be lowered. However, Ms. Kier stated, this may result in a family having services in multiple levels which would also increase the Coalition's staffing adding to the administrative expense.

Ms. Suarez stated that if making changes in the age range causes the loss of quality providers, it puts children in the 0-5 age range at risk and will decrease their availability for services.

#### **VI. Utilization Reports – Betsy Kier, Assistant Executive Director**

Ms. Kier informed the Board that School Readiness enrollment in Hernando is down by 95 children and VPK is also down by 48 children. In Pasco, School Readiness is down 252 children from December and VPK is up by 7.

Mr. Farrelly stated there is good news on the financials. The projection through June 30, 2010 shows a \$500,000 balance in ARRA funds. The Coalition will stop transferring children into the ARRA program and back into School Readiness as these funds cannot be carried over into the next fiscal year, but the ARRA funds can. He stated the Coalition is in a better financial position now than in January and will discuss the possibility of opening the waitlist on a one in, one out basis, at the March Board meeting.

#### **VII. Public Input**

None

#### **VIII. 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. Ms. Suarez so moved. Without further discussion the meeting was adjourned at 10 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Ramute "Jak" Jakubauskas  
Administrative Assistant