



## MEDIA ALERT

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## GOVERNOR RICK SCOTT APPOINTS THREE TO EARLY LEARNING COALITION OF PASCO AND HERNANDO COUNTIES INCLUDING NEW CHAIRSPERSON

*Governor Rick Scott has appointed Dr. Steven N. Kanakis as Chairperson for the Early Learning Coalition of Pasco and Hernando Counties, Inc.*

The Early Learning Coalition of Pasco and Hernando Counties, Inc. is pleased to announce Governor Rick Scott's appointment of Dr. Steven Kanakis as Chair of Board of Directors for a three (3) year term beginning on January 31, 2014. Dr. Kanakis is a self-employed forensic psychologist in New Port Richey, Florida and long-time, accomplished board member for the Early Learning Coalition. He is considered an expert in the field of Clinical Psychology in adult criminal court, juvenile criminal court, dependency court, probate court, and family court. Dr. Kanakis also performs evaluations for disability determination, rehabilitation training, and learning disabilities. Dr. Kanakis resides in New Port Richey with his wife, Angela and two (2) great children Alec (13) and Nikki (11).



"I am very excited for the opportunity to have been named Chairman of the Early Learning Coalition of Pasco and Hernando Counties by Governor Rick Scott. I look forward to improving an already well-functioning organization that is responsible for both School Readiness and Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten funding for our region. There is no more important task than readying the minds of our next generation for a lifetime of success and accomplishment. I anticipate producing effective delivery systems for these services with ever decreasing overhead costs. This translates into superior educational opportunities for children at the most cost-effective price point for the taxpayers' dollar. I would like to thank Governor Scott for this unique opportunity to be able to impact the lives of our most influenceable citizens," said Dr. Kanakis.

In welcoming Dr. Kanakis' appointment, James J. Farrelly, Executive Director of the Coalition noted that, "Dr. Kanakis has a long record of contributing to the Coalition. As past Chair of the Board's Quality Committee, Dr. Kanakis consistently emphasized the value of direct spending for both children and Early Learning providers. I expect that interest will continue and expand."

Farrelly noted that, "Ms. Hammond was the first Chair of the merged Coalition, having been initially appointed by Governor Bush in 2005 and re-appointed by Governor Crist in 2009. She led the organization through the challenging waters of merger and several changes in administrative leadership. She oversaw a Coalition in its merged infancy and while it slowly grew, from seven employees and one small location to over forty dedicated employees and four locations spread among two large counties. Successfully serving nearly 13,000 children

this past year alone, Lisa's legacy now and forever more, will be the many opportunities for children and families to which she dedicated herself."

Also, receiving Governor's appointments were local business owners James A. Cook (Pasco) and Elizabeth Narverud (Hernando). Mr. Cook fills a vacant Governor's appointed seat through April 30, 2015 and Ms. Narverud fills a vacant Governor's appointed seat through April 30, 2016.

For more information about the Board of Directors please visit [www.phelc.org](http://www.phelc.org).

### **About the Coalition**

*The Early Learning Coalition of Pasco and Hernando Counties, Inc. is one of 30 Early Learning Coalitions in Florida. It works to ensure that programs and services are available to assist families with young children during their formative years. Florida's Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) program is for all children who are four-years old on or before September 1st. School Readiness provides subsidized child care for low-to-moderate income working families. Starting as separate organizations in 2000, Pasco and Hernando counties joined forces to form the Early Learning Coalition of Pasco and Hernando Counties in 2005. The non-profit serves over 9,000 children between infancy and eight years old, working with more than 300 providers in the counties.*

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