

Early Learning Coalition of Pinellas County, Inc.
Working for the Success of Pinellas County's Children

BOARD OF DIRECTORS REGULAR MEETING

Thursday, March 8, 2007

UNAPPROVED MINUTES

PRESENT

Voting Members: Cindy Seletos, Interim Chair; Linda Tamanini; Jack Geller, Treasurer; Steve Overton; Dr. Claude Dharamraj; Edward Peachey; Lounell Britt; Cindy Jameson, Secretary; Michael Pachik; Le Ann Elliott; Lourdes Benedict

Non-Voting Members: Judith Miller; Guy Cooley; Diane Brown; Juanita Heinzen; Sandy Smith representing Dr. Carol Thomas; Gary Cernan representing Gay Lancaster

ABSENT

Louise Boothby-Llorente; Ellen Lasher; John Morroni; Anne Sullivan

STAFF

Janet Chapman; Lindsay Carson; Barbara Scarsbrook; Merita Kafexhiu; Patricia Higgs

IN ATTENDANCE

Charlie Harris; Susan McPhee; Mary Bennett; Lynne Faimalie; Paul Runyon; Wilson Romos-Cortez

OFFICIAL RECORDER

Lindsay Carson

I. CALL TO ORDER

Interim Chair Seletos called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m.

A. Adoption of Agenda

Interim Chair Seletos called for approval of the agenda for the March 2007 meeting.

A motion was made by Ed Peachy and seconded by Linda Tamanini to:

Approve the March 2007 Agenda.

Discussion: Interim Chair Seletos requested Item C.8. Early Intervention Follow-up Project be postponed until May 2007 while additional information is gathered.

The motion passed unanimously to approve the agenda.

B. Approval of Minutes

Interim Chair Seletos called for approval of the November 2006 minutes.

A motion was made by Mike Pachik and seconded by Lounell Britt to:

Approve the January 2007 minutes.

Discussion: Lourdes Benedict corrected that she is a voting member of the Board.

The motion passed unanimously with noted correction.

II. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Interim Chair Seletos shared there is no state report. She also shared the Coalition has partnered with St. Petersburg College to establish the Step-Up Scholarship for Early Childhood Educators fund. This will replace the previous scholarship program sponsored by the Coalition. Through this partnership, SPC will match all funds contributed by the Coalition, doubling the amount of scholarships offered.

III. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Janet Chapman presented:

1. Procurement

The procurement process is complete. The Executive Committee approved the award of the contract be given to Coordinated Child Care of Pinellas, Inc. The Board Action item in will ratify this decision.

2. Child Care Purchasing Pool

The CCPP funding is diminishing. The pot is \$19 million and anyone can apply from year to year who has the local community match. As more Coalitions apply for the funding those Coalitions who have consistently participated over the years are suddenly faced with a reduced allocation. A recommendation is being made to the Board that all Coalitions currently funded never gain or lose more than 10% of their allocation annually.

3. Health and Safety Rules for School Readiness Providers and Voluntary Prekindergarten Program Enforcement

The Coalition is beginning to take on a new role with enforcement. Ms. Chapman is working closely with the Coalition attorney. Providers may appeal enforcement actions to the Coalition Board.

Legislative Update

School Readiness Reallocation Formula

A presentation was made to the Senate Committee on Transportation and Economic Development Appropriations on February 22. After much discussion "The Committee members seemed sympathetic and willing to look for solutions to serve children". Overall there was a realization that there is not enough dollars in the program and Coalitions facing cuts must be held harmless or will be forced to disenroll children.

Children's Cabinet

In Governor Crist's State of the State Speech he expressed his support for the formation of a Children's Cabinet that would oversee and coordinate state services to children. This includes child care licensing, early education and care. If this passes it means the Coalition's primary funders will be moved from the Agency for Workforce Innovation to a "children's agency" called the Children's Cabinet.

Quality Rating System

There is a Senate and a House Bill filed to implement a Quality Rating System for all child care facilities. Pinellas has been proposed as a pilot site along with other Coalitions that already have QRS's. \$25 million has been requested to fund the project.

After School Care

A Senate Bill has been filed requiring the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA) to perform a study of how to maximize federal dollars to fund after school programs. There is no companion bill at this time.

Voluntary Prekindergarten

There are some bills proposed to lengthen the VPK day to 6 hours. It is currently 3 hours. At this time there is nothing definitive to report.

Odds and Ends

On March 3 the "Read to Succeed" 3rd Annual Reading Festival was held at the Enoch Davis Center. Even though the day was cold and rainy approximately 125 people turned out for story telling, face painting and reading circles. All families receive children's books to take home and the importance of reading to your child is emphasized.

The Coalition is involved in a large data scrubbing effort. The Child Care Information System utilized by Coalitions (mandated by funders) does not interface or talk to the Department of Education's data system. All VPK providers have been asked to visit a DOE website to ensure the children listed as attending their program did in fact attend; spelling of names is correct and gender specification along with other factors.

Coordinated Child Care of Pinellas, Inc. was required to pay back \$225,000 for reasonable necessary costs which exceeded state allowed administration costs for VPK.

IV. COMMITTEE REPORTS and ACTION ITEMS

A. Executive Committee

1) Action Item 07.03.01 – Continuing Education Units

Description:

Interim Chair Seletos presented VPK teachers with a Child Development Associate (CDA) are required to renew their certificate every 3 or 5 years depending on the certification they hold. To renew a CDA, providers must take a college course or attend CEU training. There is no local agency currently administering Continuing Education Units for early childhood educators in Pinellas County. This service will be provided for Pinellas, Pasco, Polk, Hernando, Hillsborough and Manatee Counties. The expected revenue is about \$18,000 year.

The Coalition would like to pursue becoming accredited to provide CEU's for early childhood educators.

Fiscal Impact:	Application cost	\$450
	Site visit plus per diem	\$1,280
	Annual renewal fee	\$300

A motion was made by the Executive Committee and seconded by Linda Tamanini to:

Apply for certification to offer CEU's for early childhood educators.

Discussion: Steve Overton inquired about the availability of staff to oversee the process. Janet shared she expects the revenue will cover a part-time staff person to handle data entry and other clerical duties. He also questioned a conflict of interest if the Coalition requires particular training and then charges for the CEU's. Janet clarified the CDA renewal is a state requirement and the Coalition is just making it easier for providers to meet the requirement. Diane Brown added this is a much needed service in the community. Teachers working to renew their CDA/CDAE have a difficult time finding training that offers CEU's. Linda Tamanini clarified that CEU's will not be offered for every training as they do not meet the requirements. CEU training is in lieu of a college course and therefore must meet higher standards.

The motion passed unanimously.

2) Action Item 07.03.02 – Request for Proposal Award

Description:

Interim Chair Seletos presented Chapter 411, the School Readiness Act requires Coalitions to competitively procure service contracts every 3 years. The Early Learning Coalition of Pinellas County, Inc. advertised RFP #2006-001 for the delivery of School Readiness and VPK Services, November 22, 2006. The deadline for applications was January 17, 2007. The Coalition received one proposal from Coordinated Child Care of Pinellas Inc. The Evaluation Committee met on February 9, 2007. Coordinated Child Care scored consistently above average. The RFP Evaluation Committee recommends the contract for the delivery of School Readiness and VPK Services in Pinellas County be awarded to Coordinated Child Care of Pinellas, Inc.

A motion was made by the Executive Committee and seconded by Linda Tamanini to:

Award the contract for the delivery of School Readiness and VPK Services for Pinellas County to Coordinated Child Care of Pinellas, Inc.

Discussion:

The motion passed unanimously. Steve Overton abstained due to conflict of interest. He administers the 401K benefits for Coordinated Child Care of Pinellas, Inc.

B. Finance Committee

3) Spending Plan Update- Janet Chapman presented the Coalition is projecting a surplus of just under \$1 million. There are currently about 1,200 children on the waiting list. Children who entered the waitlist before January 15, 2007 have been placed.

4) Action Item 07.03.03 – Coalition Budget Amendment #4

Description:

Janet Chapman presented the Finance Committee is presenting Budget Amendment # 4 to the Board for the following reasons:

On January 25, 2007 the Coalition entered into an agreement with St. Petersburg College Foundation for the Step-up Scholarships Program. The Foundation will match the amount of Scholarships that the Coalition pays to Providers by 100%.

The amendment:

1. Reallocates \$14,750.00 from the Coordinated Child Care contract, Quality Initiatives Scholarships line item to the SPC Foundation Inc., Quality Initiatives line item.
2. Reallocates \$8,125.00 from the Coordinated Child Care contract, Quality Initiative line item to the Coalition to administer the teacher scholarships.
3. Reallocates \$7,000.00 from the Unallocated budget item to the Legal services line item.

She added the Coalition funds \$50,000 in scholarships which will now double through the Step-Up Scholarship fund. The Coalition receives applications for 3 to 4 times the number of scholarships available. She is currently working to expand this project to include University of South Florida.

A motion was made by Finance Committee and seconded by Le Ann Elliott to:

Approve Budget Amendment # 4.

Discussion: Judi Miller commented that this has been an excellent opportunity for providers and for many, a catalyst to begin their college career. Jack Geller questioned if these providers could use the scholarships to obtain degrees and progress in the public school system. Open discussion took place on drop-out policies and commitment letters to remain in field. Ultimately, this is very difficult to enforce. Janet added that scholarships are provided for one class each semester which means it will take several years to complete a bachelor's degree. During that time, these teachers utilize their skills to teach our children.

The motion passed unanimously.

C. Service Delivery Advisory Committee

5) Action Item 07.03.04 – EFT Requirements for School Readiness and VPK Providers

Description:

Lynne Faimalie presented School Readiness and VPK providers may be paid by paper check or through an electronic funds transfer (EFT). The paper check process is more costly and less efficient. The Coalition would like to require providers to accept payment via EFT. Providers unable to obtain a checking account may be issued an EBT card which would allow them to access their funds similar to an ATM card.

This move to Electronic Fund Transfer will save money and staff time in mailing via the US Post Office. Providers will receive their funds more quickly. The change will occur over the course of 6 months to a year with all new providers being required to have EFT capabilities.

A motion was made by Linda Tamanini and seconded by Jack Geller to:

Require School Readiness and VPK providers to accept payment via EFT.

Discussion: Guy Cooley added that providers will have 6 months to 1 year to comply. Ed Peachy commented that this is a policy decision for Coordinated Child Care and does not require Board approval.

The motion passed unanimously.

6) Action Item 07.03.05 – Early Identification Follow-Up Project

This item was postponed until the May 2007 meeting.

7) Action Item 07.03.06 – VPK Quality Improvement

Description:

Lynne Faimalie presented VPK Instructors are required to have a Child Development Associate (CDA) or equivalent (CDAE) and complete a 5-hour emergent literacy course. Training on the *Florida Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Education Standards* is “optional”. This training describes what four-year –old children should know and be able to do by the end of VPK. The Standards are designed to guide administrators and teachers as they develop and implement appropriate early learning environments. The training has been offered since November 2005.

A motion was made by Linda Tamanini and seconded by Mike Pachik to:

(a) *Require VPK Instructors with a CDA or CDAE to attend training on the “Florida Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Education Standards” effective August 2007.*

Discussion: The Board discussed the timeframe for the implementation of the rule. Steve Overton questioned the availability of the training. The training is offered by the Coalition so frequency and availability are within our control. It is currently offered bimonthly, but could be offered monthly if necessary.

(b) A motion was made by Jack Geller to strike the effective date. There was no second.

(c) A motion was made by Ed Peachy to table the item and send it back to the Service Delivery Advisory Council for clarification. There was no second.

Lynne Faimalie clarified that the intent of the Service Delivery Advisory Council was to require that all current VPK Instructors complete the training prior to next school year.

Attorney Charley Harris suggested amending the action item to read:

”Require current VPK Instructors with a CDA or CDAE to attend training on the *Florida Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Education Standards* by August 1, 2007; all newly hired instructors with a CDA or CDAE must attend this training by August 1, 2007 or within 90 days, whichever is later.”

(d) A motion was made by Jack Geller and Seconded by Lounell Britt to amend the action item as suggested by Attorney Charley Harris.

(d) The motion passed unanimously

(a) The motion passed unanimously as amended.

8) Action Item 07.03.07 – Health and Safety Rules for School Readiness

Description:

Lynne Faimalie presented the Agency for Workforce Innovation Office of Early Learning requires that School Readiness services are provided in a healthy and safe environment. Each Coalition is required to develop health and safety rules and enforcement procedures for providers in violation. The ELC of Pinellas has partnered with the Pinellas County License Board for Childcare Centers and Family Day Care Homes and Coordinated Child Care of Pinellas, Inc.

A motion was made by Jack Geller and seconded by Ed Peachy to:

Approve implementation of the proposed compliance process.

Discussion: Steve Overton clarified that CCC will make recommendations to administration, only appeals will come before the Board. Guy Cooley shared the Coalition and Coordinated Child Care will only monitor informal providers as licensed and religiously exempt sites are already monitored by licensing. He added this is a work in progress and the first year of implementation will just be tracking and monitoring licensing reports. Steve Overton suggested monitoring staff rotate to keep objectivity. Janet Chapman shared informal providers may get assistance in becoming licensed through the Caring for Kids program. Ed Peachy questioned the liability on the Coalition if a site is deemed safe and a child is later injured. Janet Chapman responded that the Coalition has sovereign immunity. She added regulating agency is only responsible for what they observe during their visit. Charley Harris added the Coalition has the statutory obligation to enforce health and safety rules. Liability falls if you knowingly allow unsafe conditions to continue providing care.

The motion passed unanimously.

E. Legislative Committee

9) Update- This item was previously address in the Executive Director's Report.

IV. INFORMATION ITEMS

Janet Chapman invited Board members to sign up for site visits at child care centers, family child care homes and Florida First Start play groups and home visits.

V. OTHER BUSINESS

Juanita Henizen shared that Head Start has implemented technology innovations to address staffing issues. They have purchased 12 kiosks for parent eligibility and employment applications. Their Family Services department has a high turnover rate so staff spend more time recruiting instead of providing support services to families. Dr. Dharamraj added the Healthy Start Coalition is piloting 5 kiosks at WIC offices.

