

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

BOARD OF DIRECTORS REGULAR MEETING

Thursday, January 11, 2007

UNAPPROVED MINUTES

PRESENT

Voting Members: Cindy Seletos, Interim Chair; Linda Tamanini; Jack Geller, Treasurer; Steve Overton; Dr. Claude Dharamraj; Edward Peachey; Anne Sullivan; Ellen Lasher; Lounell Britt; Cindy Jameson, Secretary; Michael Pachik; John Morroni

Non-Voting Members: Eva Bryce representing Louise Boothby-Llorente; Judith Miller; Guy Cooley; Lourdes Benedict; Diane Brown

ABSENT

Juanita Heinzen; Dr. Carol Thomas; Le Ann Elliott; Gay Lancaster

STAFF

Janet Chapman; Patty Van Alstine; Lindsay Carson; Barbara Scarsbrook; Merita Kafexhiu; Patricia Higgs

IN ATTENDANCE

Charlie Harris; Susan McPhee; Mary Bennett; Lynne Faimalie

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 January 2007 meeting.

A motion was made by Jack Geller and seconded by Ellen Lasher to:

Approve the January 2007 Agenda.

Discussion: none

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 Ellen Lasher and seconded by Linda Tamanini to:

Approve the November 2006 minutes.

The motion passed unanimously.

II. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Interim Chair Seletos welcomed County Commissioner John Morrioni to the Board. She also shared she attended the Quarterly Board Chairs meeting in Orlando. AWI presented an optional self-assessment tool for Board members to complete. She suggested bringing it to the March meeting. They also discussed the results from the Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screener (FLKRS) that measures school readiness. Pinellas County exceeded the state averages.

III. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Janet Chapman presented:

Procurement- The Coalition received two requests for the Request For Proposals. Only one agency submitted an Intent to Bid.

Child Care Purchasing Pool – She does not recommend the Coalition apply for Purchasing Pool dollars due to the projected surplus of \$1.2 million.

Health and Safety Rules for School Readiness Providers -The rule addressing school readiness providers/programs meeting health and safety standards is in the final phase of rule making. The Office of Early Learning incorporated our comments into the final rule. She will present an implementation proposal at the March Board meeting. Part of this mandate includes a process for appeals for providers whose funding is impacted. This may be done by the entire board or an appointed committee. This rule is intended to prohibit providers with chronic health and safety violations from providing school readiness services.

Department of Children and Families Child Care Licensing Program-The Secretary of the Department of Children and Families recommended to Governor Crist's Transition Team that the statewide child care licensing program be transferred to the Agency for Workforce Innovation. This should not impact Pinellas County as we have our own local licensing board.

School Readiness Funding Formula-The Office of Early Learning has proposed and submitted to the Governor a funding formula to re-allocate funds for the School Readiness program throughout the state. With no additional funding this means some Coalitions gain funding at the expense of other Coalitions. The Pinellas Coalition is slated to lose \$2.5 million and that equates to services for approximately 700 children.

Discussion: Judi Miller requested we apply for CCPP in light of the expected budget cut. Money can not be carried over to a new fiscal year. Pinellas County receives match funding from the JWB which is considered a third priority in the awarding CCPP. In 2005-2006 when the Coalition was facing a projected \$3 million deficit, the Coalition was awarded only \$6,000. Lynne Faimalie added that summer 2007 will be 2 weeks longer due to the "Save our Summers"

act that past last year. This will incur an additional expense for the Coalition, but it will be in next fiscal year.

Michael Pachik questioned the state's ability to reallocate these funds since they are federal.

Voluntary Prekindergarten Administrative Expenditures for 2005/2006- The Office of Early Learning identified 16 Coalitions as exceeding the 5% administrative cap for the Voluntary Prekindergarten program. More than 16 exceeded but several covered the shortage with School Readiness dollars or past the cost on to their central agency. Coalitions were asked a series of questions related to why this happened, how they are going to prevent it from happening this year and so on. Each Coalition submitted their own responses on a common template with a cover memo highlighting their collective concerns. A pay back is still possible.

She highlighted the following challenges:

1. 2005-2006 was an implementation year which required many new systems to be created and procedures to be developed.
2. Many parents registered their children for Fall 2006 during 2005-2006.
3. Especially during the initial year, technical assistance and support was necessary for a successful program. In school readiness this is not considered an administration expense, but rather non-direct services.
4. The pre-payment system is very onerous. Guy Cooley shared that about 85% of the VPK administrative funding is used for pre-payment and reconciliation. Ms. Chapman added the Coalition and Coordinated Child Care are currently exploring other payment options.

The Coalition is still looking into becoming an administrator of early childhood continuing education units (CEU's) required for Child Development Associate certificate renewal.

IV. COMMITTEE REPORTS and ACTION ITEMS

A. Board Development Committee

1) Report

Description:

Ellen Lasher welcomed Pinellas County Commissioner, John Morroni to the Board. She also presented the Board Development Committee is actively recruiting new private sector members. Governor Crist will be appointing a new Chair.

B. Executive Committee

2) Action Item 07.01.01 - Coalition Attorney

Description:

Interim Chair Seletos presented the Agency for Workforce Innovation; Office of Early Learning recommends Coalitions consult with an attorney on contracts and enforcement issues.

A motion was made by the Ellen Lasher and seconded by Cindy Jameson to:

Obtain a letter of engagement from Trenam Kemker Attorneys.

Discussion:

Attorney Charles Harris was introduced. He is a business lawyer and litigator with a experience in not for profit law, board governance and liability. He serves as counsel for several local nonprofits including WorkNet and the Pinellas Education Foundation. He is not on retainer but paid \$185 hour. He serves "at will" at the pleasure of the Board Chair.

Additional concerns were raised about conflict of interests between other agencies he serves. Mr. Harris clarified that a conflict of interest would only occur if he were representing one agency to the adverse of another client. He also abides to confidentiality and ethics where he does not discuss the business of other Boards.

The motion passed unanimously.

3) Action Item 07.01.02 - Foundation Committee

Description:

Interim Chair Seletos presented the Early Learning Coalitions of Pinellas County would like to explore the possibility of creating a foundation. This foundation would be an independent entity that provides funding to enhance services to children and supports to early childhood education providers. The Coalition staff is prohibited by the Agency for Workforce Innovation, Office of Early Learning to partake in "fundraising" during work hours.

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

Establish a Foundation Committee to begin the development of an Early Learning Foundation.

Discussion:

The following Board members were appointed to the committee: Judi Miller, Ellen Lasher, Michael Pachik and Cindy Seletos. Legal council will also participate.

The motion passed unanimously.

4) RFP Review Committee

Description:

Interim Chair Seletos presented the RFP responses are due January 17, 2007. Only one applicant has submitted an Intent to Bid. A committee will review the responses. The following members volunteered to serve on the committee: Ellen Lasher, Michael Pachik and Cindy Jameson.

5) Action Item 07.01.03 - Signature Plates

Description:

Interim Chair Seletos presented the Early Learning Coalition of Pinellas County has been using signature plates to sign checks since its inception. Auditors Cherry, Bekaert & Holland recently advised this is not a best practice.

A motion was made by the Jack Geller and seconded by Ellen Lasher to:

Discontinue the use of signature plates for check signing and require checks to be signed by the Executive Director and Chair or Interim Chair or Treasurer or Secretary.

Discussion: Concern was raised on how the checks would be processed in the absence of the Executive Director. Suggestions included allowing the fiscal officer to sign as an alternate to the Executive Director or allowing any two officers to sign.

The action item was modified to read:

To discontinue the use of signature plates for check signing and require checks to be signed by the Executive Director and Chair or Interim Chair or Treasurer or Secretary where in the absence of the Executive Director, any two officers may sign.

The motion passed unanimously with the noted modification.

C. Finance Committee

6) Spending Plan Update- Jack Geller presented the Coalition is projecting a \$1.3 million surplus.

7) Action Item 07.01.04 – De-Obligation of School Readiness Funds

Description:

Jack Geller presented the Office of Early Learning has requested that Coalitions projecting a surplus report their projections for a de-obligation of funds to be redistributed to Coalitions who have a projected deficit.

The Pinellas Early Learning Coalition is projecting a surplus of school readiness dollars of approximately \$1.3 million.

It is not recommended that the Coalition make the decision to de-obligate at this time because:

Current projections are based upon enrollments July through November only. (That is less than 6 months.) It is too early in the year to feel comfortable with our projections.

The Coalition set a goal to serve 7,000 school readiness children and has not met that goal and are continuing to enroll children. Currently serving 6,700 SR children.

The Coalition is facing a potential funding cut in 2007/2008. This year may be our last opportunity to fund special projects such as hearing and vision screening if we lose the proposed \$2.5 million next year.

Discussion: Guy Cooley presented there is a plan to spend the \$1.3 million dollars, maximizing the dollars of both the Coalition and JWB. Additional discussion took place on why a Coalition would de-obligate funds. Some Coalitions throughout the state are currently facing a deficit. There is no penalty for de-obligating funds.

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

Not de-obligate funds at this time.

The motion passed unanimously.

8) Action Item 07.01.05 – Coalition Budget Amendment #3

Description:

Jack Geller presented the following Amendments to the Coalition Budget:

1. Florida First Start is a home visitation early intervention program for children demonstrating risk factors that may result in their not being school ready. The program is administered through Pinellas County School District and is funded 100% by the Coalition. The Project Manager has requested additional funding for the program for the year 2006-07 in the amount of \$12,000 due to:
 - a. School Board Salary increases in August 2006
 - b. Increased mileages
 - c. Copy costs (need to rent a copier)
 - d. New equipment for the play group in a new location
 - e. Training costs (staff needs to update knowledge)
 - f. Purchase of the updated version of assessment tool the H.O.M.E. and language sensitive materials
 - g. Staff work during summer months to have program year around

2. To reallocate \$12,000 from the Un-obligated funds line item to the Contracted Services, Florida First Start Program line item.

This was approved by the Executive Committee.

Discussion: none

A motion was made by Executive Committee and seconded by John Morroni to:

Approve Budget Amendment # 3 “Florida First Start contract increase” as proposed by the Coalition staff.

The motion passed unanimously.

D. Service Delivery Advisory Committee

9) Action Item 07.01.06 – Early Childhood Educator Professional Development Grant

Description:

The Service Delivery Advisory Council would like to apply for the Early Childhood Professional Development Grant from the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE). This is a 3 year grant with an average award of \$3 million. This grant would provide opportunity for early childhood educators to partake in professional development focusing on behavior and literacy through partnerships with the University of South Florida and St. Petersburg College.

The Service Delivery has not met to fully review this grant opportunity. It will be presented at their January meeting. It is very similar to the Early Learning Opportunities Act grant enhancing professional development with coaching and coursework.

Discussion: none

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

Approve the pursuit of the grant opportunity.

The motion passed unanimously. Anne Sullivan abstained.

E. Legislative Committee

10) Pinellas County License Board for Childcare Centers and Family Daycare Homes

Description:

Linda Tamanini presented the Pinellas County delegates voted unanimously on January 7, 2007 to support the bill sponsored by Senator Jones and Representative Anderson to eliminate the 12 hour limitation for family child care homes and centers. This bill allows any licensed caregiver to provide care up to 72 continuous hours. A “compromise” bill was passed in Pinellas that required a review of a provider offering this extended care for high-risk noncompliance. As a result of due process, providers with cited child abuse could still be licensed. Additionally, the local bill requires parents to obtain a variance from the License Board and show a required purpose for care such as 12 hour shifts, multiple jobs or enrollment in school.

Ms. Tamanini requested Board members contact their senators and representatives to encourage them to preserve the special Act under which the License Board operates. Loss of the special Act could result in reducing the minimal health and safety standards for childcare in Pinellas County such as staff child ratios and group sizes. Ms. Tamanini will submit talking points to the Coalition for distribution to the Board.

IV. INFORMATION ITEMS

Janet Chapman clarified that the letter to Governor Crist included in the Board packet was a DRAFT copy created by the Association of Early Learning Coalitions and is not for distribution.

Guy Cooley thanked the Juvenile Welfare Board for funding an additional 65 childcare slots.

Judi Miller invited Board members to the Pinellas Early Childhood Association Winter Conference. Informational flyers were distributed.

Gary Cernan congratulated Guy Cooley on 25 years with Coordinated Child Care.

V. OTHER BUSINESS

VI. PUBLIC COMMENT

