

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

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS REGULAR MEETING**

Thursday, November 10, 2005

**UNAPPROVED MINUTES**

**PRESENT**

Peggy O'Shea, Chair; Diane Brown; Guy Cooley; Dr. John Heilman; Juanita Heinzen; Jim Mills; Michael Pachik; Edward Peachey, Vice Chair; Linda Tamanini; Cindy Seletos; Ann Sullivan; Donna Rippley for Dr. Carol Thomas; Judi Vitucci; Judith Miller, Secretary; Louise Boothby-Llorente; Jack Geller; Cindy Jameson; Steve Overton

**STAFF**

Janet Chapman; Merita Kafexhiu; Patty Van Alstine; Lindsay Carson; Barbara Scarsbrook; Patti Higgs; Mary Ann Goodrich; Juliette Relyea

**ABSENT**

Dr. Calvin Harris; Lounell Britt; Le Ann Elliot, Treasurer; Ellen Lasher; V. James Dickson; Art O'Hara; Benjamin Shirley

**IN ATTENDANCE**

Julie Ulibarri; Paul Runyon; Deb Ballinger; Bill Lemen; Mary Bennett, Lynne Faimalie; Fred Bruneau, Danny Morris

**OFFICIAL RECORDER**

Lindsay Carson

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair O'Shea called the meeting to order at 4:06 p.m.

**A. Adoption of Agenda**

Chair O'Shea, called for approval of the agenda for the November 2005 meeting.

A motion was made by Jack Geller and seconded by Jim Mills to:

*To approve the November 2005 Agenda.*

The motion passed unanimously.

## **B. Approval of Minutes**

Chair O'Shea, called for approval of the September 2005 minutes.

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

*To approve the September 2005 minutes.*

The motion passed unanimously.

## **II. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

Chair O'Shea presented an update on the Legislative Proposal to provide pre/post assessments on VPK children in Pinellas County. Although the Agency for Workforce Innovation (AWI) agrees with the concept of the proposal, they have expressed the following concerns:

1. Many coalitions are not as far along in the implementation process of VPK.
2. AWI is facing possible budget cuts, therefore funding is not available.
3. They would like multiple counties to participate in the pilot.
4. They would like more input and research on the assessment tool.

Chair O'Shea also presented the concept of the proposal to Senator Fasano. He did not offer support as he did not think testing 4-year olds was appropriate. Chair O'Shea will continue to educate legislators and present at the December 1<sup>st</sup> Pinellas Legislative Delegation. The Legislative Committee is also exploring other options, including a smaller sample size and other funding sources.

## **III. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Janet Chapman introduced Patricia Higgs, the new Administrative Manager for the Coalition. Ms. Chapman presented the 2004-2005 Annual Report along with the 2003-2004 Annual Report for comparison. She shared the Even Start Annual report was also available to those who would like a copy. The VPK Plan is complete pending Board approval. The Cost Allocation Plan has been submitted to AWI for review and is almost complete. The results of the Independent Audit should be available at the next Board meeting.

Ms. Chapman also presented the Coalition is facing a \$1.5 million deficit. At the end of last fiscal year, a rate increase for providers was approved, parent fees were reduced and children were overenrolled to eliminate excess in funding. The wait list has been reinstated. Currently there are about 400 children waiting to be served. Additionally there are 900 children served through Low Income Employed Families (LIEF) but waiting on School Readiness funding. We will review the attrition each month and plan to move to a 1 in 1 out system. The wait list does not affect Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) children or those receiving protective services.

Ms. Chapman shared that VPK is continually growing. Several new programs will begin in December and January along with many summer programs. Providers were surveyed to determine the expected capacity for the winter and summer. We are expecting a need of about 1,500 slots in summer programs. The school district plans to offer 1 VPK class at every

available elementary school. We are also recruiting faith-based providers who were hesitant initially. Currently, there are 4,270 children enrolled/eligible for VPK and 159 Providers.

#### **IV. COMMITTEE REPORTS and ACTION ITEMS**

##### **A. Executive Committee**

###### **1) Board Membership Term Limits**

Description:

In January 2005 the Partnership for School Readiness was restructured under the Agency for Workforce Innovation. The Pinellas County School Readiness Coalition was redefined as the Early Learning Coalition of Pinellas County, Inc.

According to the Coalition Bylaws approved April 2005, Board members may serve up to 2 consecutive 3-year terms. It is recommended that membership terms for members prior to these changes begin as of January 2005.

A motion was made by Michael Pachik and seconded by Vice Chair Peachey to:

*To approve the Board Membership Term Limits.*

The motion passed with a majority. Jim Mills voted nay.

##### **B. Service Delivery Committee**

###### **2) School Readiness Service Priorities**

Description:

Deb Ballinger presented that in the event that a waitlist is implemented to receive School Readiness scholarships, it is recommended that income eligible 4-year olds participating in a VPK program, bypass the waitlist to the extent funds are available. Without the availability of School Readiness funding to provide before and after care, these children may be unable to attend a VPK program. To ensure all 4-year olds have equal access to VPK programs VPK students who need before and after care will be prioritized for services as 1. D.

Janet Chapman added that providing wrap care for VPK students has less of a fiscal impact than providing a full day of care for School Readiness. Currently, there are 762 School Readiness children also participating in a VPK program. By providing only wrap care, we are saving \$1,160,374 in School Readiness funding.

A motion was made by Jack Geller and seconded by Cindy Jameson to:

*To approve the Proposed School Readiness Service Priorities.*

The motion passed unanimously.

### 3) VPK Plan Approval

#### Description:

Deb Ballinger presented the Coalition is required to have a VPK Plan that reflects the Coalitions activities and ensures compliance with state funding regulations and laws.

The Coalition has been granted an extension to November 14, 2005 to allow for the approval process. Presented is our VPK Plan, effective through July 2006.

The Coalition is allocated 5% of the service dollars to administer the program or \$811,858. This number is based upon serving 6,451 children. At this time we have 4,178 children enrolled.

Administrative dollars are billed by cost reimbursement and are proportionate to the number of children served. A statement of concern about the limited administrative dollars will not be attached to the plan.

A motion was made by Linda Tamanini and seconded by Cindy Jameson to:

*To approve the VPK Plan and open discussion.*

#### Discussion:

Jim Mills requested the current anticipated spending budget for Coordinated Child Care (CCC) and Early Learning Coalition (ELC). Janet Chapman explained that the VPK contract is a cost reimbursement and ELC projects 1.1% of the allotted 5% administration funding with CCC receiving 3.9%. Without knowing exactly how many students will be served by VPK in Pinellas, it is difficult to make a concrete projection. Guy Cooley added that the allotted 5% for administration does not adequately cover the true costs to administer the program properly. CCC will be spending some of their Fund Balance to cover the additional costs.

Mr. Mills expressed concern that we do not know how much we will get. He posed the following questions: 1. What have we budgeted for planned expenditures? 2. What have we spent so far? 3. What are we not doing due to lack of funding, ex. Monitoring? Janet Chapman will provide this information at the next Finance Committee meeting.

Michael Pachik recommended the following changes to the VPK Plan and action item 05.11.03. 1. Page 28 of the plan references the School Board where it should refer to School District Administrators, not the actual Pinellas County School Board. 2. Mr. Pachik recommended deleting the last sentence of Action Item 05.11.03 as he does not agree that this is the appropriate venue to address the need for additional funding for program support costs. He proposed drafting an independent statement to be approved by the Board. He also suggested attaching the administrative budget report Janet Chapman will be presenting at the next Board meeting. Chair O'Shea offered to share this report at the December 1<sup>st</sup>, Pinellas County Legislative Delegation – Public Hearing.

A motion was made by Michael Pachik and seconded by Jack Geller to:

*To amend the Action Item 11.05.03.*

The motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Michael Pachik and seconded by Jack Geller to:

*To amend the VPK Plan.*

The motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Cindy Seletos and seconded by Cindy Jameson to:

*To approve the VPK Plan as amended.*

The motion passed unanimously.

### **C. Finance Committee**

#### **4) Budget Amendment #2**

##### Description:

Janet Chapman presented the second amendment to the 2005-2006 Coalition Budget because: The Coalition received additional funding from Department of Education (DOE) for the Voluntary Pre Kindergarten (VPK) Facilitator Grant in the amount of \$54,161.50. Additionally, the Coalition made changes in the administrative budget by moving money among the line items to cover phone, training and travel expenses of the VPK Regional Facilitator. AWI has provided funding to hire a liaison between AWI and the ELC's, therefore the \$8,000 originally budgeted for dues for the Association of Early Learning Coalitions has been reallocated.

A motion was made by Vice-Chair Peachey and seconded by Cindy Jameson to:

*To approve Coalition Budget Amendment #2.*

The motion passed unanimously.

### **IV. INFORMATION ITEMS**

Chair O'Shea presented that December 2<sup>nd</sup> will be the quarterly meeting with Lt. Gov. Jennings with Coalition Chairs and Executive Directors.

### **V. OTHER BUSINESS**

Guy Cooley presented the Early Childhood Assessment Tool Study results. The study found that the ASQ can not serve as a pre/post assessment. It did show both parents and providers using the ASQ found consistent results, proving the reliability of tests administered by the providers. He also noted that when other counties were surveyed on the assessment tools they use, there was no consistency. He recommended sending this report to the Office of Early Learning and urging them to provide more guidance in the selection of a uniform assessment tool.

Diane Brown presented that the School Readiness providers need more guidance on school closings for hurricanes. Historically, providers have followed the public school guidelines but this is not a policy of Coordinated Child Care (CCC). If the provider is open, children absent on these days are considered unexcused. If they provider closes, they are not paid. Ms. Brown would like a policy developed to address this issue. She recommends following the public schools. Janet Chapman added that the public schools are sometimes closed, not due to a safety hazard, but in preparation to open as shelters for neighboring areas. Guy Cooley added that centers required to close due to an evacuation order are still paid. Judith Miller also added that many of our providers provide care to first response emergency personnel such as firefighters and police officers. Guy Cooley recommended bringing this issue to the Provider Support Committee, November 18<sup>th</sup> for further discussion and recommendation.

Janet Chapman clarified the new School Readiness attendance policy. Students may be absent up to 3 days in a month with no documentation. The forth and fifth day require documentation that may be provided by the parent. For example, if a child is sick, but does not require care of a physician, parents may write a note. Students absent for 6 or more days will require documentation from a healthcare provider. Any absences in excess of 10 days will be unpaid. Vacations are not considered an excused absence.

**VI. PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no public comment.

**VII. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 5:10 P.M.

Approved by:

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Peggy O'Shea

Date