

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

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS REGULAR MEETING**

Thursday, November 9, 2006

**APPROVED MINUTES**

**PRESENT**

Voting Members: Peggy O'Shea, Chair; Linda Tamanini; Jack Geller, Treasurer; Steve Overton; Dr. Claude Dharamraj; Edward Peachey; Le Ann Elliott; Anne Sullivan; Ellen Lasher; Lounell Britt; Gay Lancaster

Non-Voting Members: Louise Boothby-Llorente; Judith Miller; Guy Cooley; Nancy Flanders representing Lourdes Benedict

**ABSENT**

Susan Latvala; Juanita Heinzen; Cindy Seletos, Vice Chair; Michael Pachik; Dr. Carol Thomas; Cindy Jameson, Secretary; Diane Brown

**STAFF**

Janet Chapman; Patty Van Alstine; Lindsay Carson; Barbara Scarsbrook; Mary Ann Goodrich; Bonnie Touchton

**IN ATTENDANCE**

Debra Ballinger; Susan McPhee; Julie Ulibarri; Judy Scott; Mary Bennett; Doug Oakes; Art O'Hara

**OFFICIAL RECORDER**

Lindsay Carson

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair O'Shea called the meeting to order at 4:10 p.m.

**A. Adoption of Agenda**

Chair O'Shea, called for approval of the agenda for the November 2006 meeting.

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

*To approve the November 2006 Agenda.*

Discussion: Ellen Lasher, Guy Cooley and Linda Tamanini each requested to be added under other business.

The motion passed unanimously to approve the agenda as amended.

## **B. Approval of Minutes**

Chair O'Shea called for approval of the September 2006 minutes.

A motion was made by Le Ann Elliott and seconded by Lounell Britt to:

*To approve the September 2006 minutes.*

The motion passed unanimously.

## **II. PRESENTATION**

Patty Van Alstine presented on the Midtown Partnership for Literacy. Their goal is to collaborate on literacy services with other organizations which were previously fragmented. They combined resources to more effectively serve families and collaborate on 4 annual literacy events in Midtown, St. Petersburg. 30 agencies including the City of St. Petersburg participate. 4,400 families were reached by 200 volunteers = \$102,000 in-kind match. 6,400 books were distributed at these events. These events are planned in conjunction with existing events such as the Martin Luther King, Jr. parade.

Historically, funding was available through Even Start. Since that grant was de-funded, partners have committed resources to purchase books and other materials. The Coalition will also be having a sponsorship drive to raise funds for books. Additionally, we have partnered with the St. Petersburg Junior League. This program has been expanded to reach the High Point area of Clearwater sponsoring a bilingual read-a-thon in collaboration with Headstart. Ultimately, the group would like to sponsor mini-grants for communities to host independent fairs.

Discussion on Book drive and sponsorship. Pledge sheet.

## **III. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

Chair O'Shea presented the quarterly meeting of the Chairs (ELAC) discussed a legislative agenda. Some issues are corrective/ clean up items to the VPK law. They are advocating for more school readiness funds and increase in the VPK provider stipend and administration to include non-direct services. She will be meeting Monday with the new legislators with the teacher's union. Governmental agencies will not be advocating for additional funding. The board chairs have 4 committees, one of which is legislative.

She added the VPK provider celebration was excellent. Providers were very pleased to be recognized as professionals.

The Coalition presented Chair O'Shea with congratulatory gifts for her election to the Pinellas County School Board.

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

Janet Chapman presented:

1. The procurement process is a couple weeks behind, the anticipated release date is now November 24.
2. Child Care Purchasing Pool is accepting requests. JWB is third priority. We are working with YMCA and R'Club to increase match dollars.
3. Statewide Quality Rating System (QRS). Toni Jennings is advocating for a uniform statewide system. There are 6 other counties with local QRS. These counties are concerned their programs will be compromised by a state system. They will be developing a uniform system, combining aspects of each county to present to the state as a model. They are meeting in early December to finalize their model.
4. CCDF Health and Safety rules are still in draft. Initially it was left to each Coalition to develop their own rules. Then, the Office of Early Learning wrote a very prescriptive rule. Pinellas County License Board, R'Club, the Coalition and CCC attended a public rules workshop. We are asking to align the health and safety rules with DCF or local licensing regulations verbatim. OEL will be revising the rule.
5. Linda Tamanini and Janet Chapman have been invited to Tallahassee to discuss the moving of the child care licensing program from DCF to AWI. On the local level, this could put licensing under coalitions. This could potentially undermine local licensing standards. The state is working toward a goal of uniformity throughout the state. Dr. Dharamraj questioned the disadvantage to standardization. Currently, there are 67 counties total and 60 are under the same standards. It was suggested state standards be raised to higher quality rather than bring down Pinellas County. Janet Chapman explained that funding is not there for counties without a Children Services Council like JWB. Additional discussion took place on the concept of more stringent requirements determined locally.
6. Janet Chapman has been asked by the Miami Coalition to assist Miami with their RFP.
7. The annual report has been finalized and printed copies will be mailed.
8. The Office of Early Learning will be visiting to discuss the new data system. Pinellas County has been asked to pilot the new system expected to be completed by 2010.

#### Data reports

- Voluntary Prekindergarten Program is expected to meet the goal established by OEL.
- The waitlist for school readiness services is down to 2,300. The Coalition is aiming to serve 7,000 children per month, enrollment still open. JWB is funding an additional \$1 million for child care slots.
- Ms. Chapman introduced the Coalition Plan Progress Report. This report monitors the Coalition's progress toward goals identified in the Plan.

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

### **A. Executive Committee**

#### **1) Continuing Education Units**

Description:

Chair O'Shea presented the Coalition is exploring the possibility of administering CEU's for early childhood trainings. There is no single entity offering CEU's for early childhood training in Pinellas County. VPK requires renewal of a Child Development Associate (CDA) and CDA Equivalent (CDAE). The Coalition will also explore St. Petersburg College and continue discussing partnership with the Juvenile Welfare Board. The Plan requires the implementation of a county-wide Professional Development Plan. Access to CEU's is part of this plan. Administering CEU's also addresses quality control. VPK has aspirational goals that by 2010 VPK instructors will have an Associates degree and by 2013 a Bachelor's. Currently funding is not available to compensate teachers and instructors adequately for these qualifications. The public school system pays close to \$35,000. Chair O'Shea added that the suggestion has been made to the state to start putting money into scholarships to help teachers meet these aspirational goals. Eventually those funds could be used to pay the higher salaries. Administration of CEU's would require staff time but could be charged for accordingly. This would also increase visibility of the Coalition in the community.

## **2) Coalition Attorney**

### Description:

Chair O'Shea presented most boards have an attorney. Mr. Harris was referred; he specializes in not for profit law. His firm does not require a retainer. They work under a letter of engagement. Information about the Coalition, bylaws and contracts has been sent to Mr. Harris for review. He will prepare a letter of commitment.

## **B. Finance Committee**

### **3) Spending plan update**

Janet Chapman presented 75 letters a week are being sent to children on the waitlist for school readiness services. The waitlist is down to 2,300. The Coalition is projecting a \$1 million surplus resulting in continued planned enrollment. VPK is an entitlement program so there is not waitlist.

### **4) Action Item 06.11.01 - 2006- 2007 Coalition Budget Amendment #2**

### Description:

The Early Learning Coalition of Pinellas County is proposing Budget Amendment # 2 for the following reasons:

1. The Coalition has negotiated an agreement with Pinellas County Health Department for the Screening Eyes and Ears of Kids (S.E.E.K) Program. The program will provide hearing and vision screening to 6,000 children 0 to 5 years of age who participate in the school readiness program. Total project costs are \$136,180.
2. To reallocate \$126,120 from the Coordinated Child Care Contract, Quality Initiatives line item to the Pinellas County Health Department, Quality Initiatives line item.
3. To reallocate \$10,060 from the Coordinated Child Care Contract, Quality Initiative line item to the Coalition, Quality Initiatives line item for screening equipment.

Dr. Dharamraj shared that a team of staff have been hired and will administer the screenings at childcare sites identified by CCC. They will initially be screening vision and hearing only, but may expand their screenings to include body mass index at a later time.

A motion was made by the Ellen Lasher and seconded by LeAnn Elliott to:

*To approve the amendments to the Coalition's Budget.*

The motion passed unanimously. Dr. Dharamraj abstained.

## **5) Signature Plates**

### Description:

Jack Geller presented the Coalition is currently using signature plates to sign checks. This will be brought to the attorney for interpretation. If acceptable, it will come to the Board for approval. Ed Peachy shared many nonprofits use stamps and plates. It is more of an internal control issue, there are no federal regulations against it. Signature plates are often used in large geographical areas. Janet Chapman explained the current check writing process. Major payments are made through a wire transfer process requiring multiple authorizations. For routine checks such as utilities and employee travel, the following procedure is followed: An outside CPA physically holds the checks. Internal fiscal officer keeps books, processes purchases orders and requests checks. Janet Chapman holds the signature plates in a safe in her office. The Coalition's independent audit was just completed by Cherry, Beckert and Holland. Janet Chapman will ask for their opinion concerning the use of signature plates. This practice has never been cited in an audit. We will discuss this again at the next meeting.

## **C. Service Delivery Advisory Committee**

- 6) Lynne Faimalie shared the 26 members of the Service Delivery Advisory Council represent: 665 years of professional early childhood education experience, 11 bachelors degrees, 12 masters degrees, 1 specialist degree and 3 Ph.D.s. These dedicated experts meet monthly to advise the Board on programmatic issues. Janet Chapman added this was submitted to the state and was published as a best practice.

### **7) Action Item 06.11.02 – Pre-Disaster Reimbursement Policy for School Readiness**

#### Description:

Lynne Faimalie presented Coalition reimburses school readiness providers for services throughout the year. The Early Learning Coalition of Pinellas County Reimbursement Policy addresses provider payments when a provider's site is temporarily closed due to circumstances beyond the provider's control. The policy, approved in May 2006, states:

A school readiness provider may be paid for days(s) of care for enrolled school readiness children without documentation if any of the following situations occur for day(s) when the provider site is scheduled for service:

- (a) A state of emergency has been declared in advance for Pinellas County by County Government, the Governor, or the President of the United States.

To activate emergency readiness plans, the Governor in the past has declared a state of emergency for the entire state. While Pinellas County was not issued any hurricane warnings,

they were considered in a state of emergency twice in 2006. No school readiness providers closed during these periods.

Discussion: Steve Overton questioned if it is necessary to allow all providers to be reimbursed even those in unaffected areas. Janet Chapman explained although the center location may not be in an effected area, staff may live in one.

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

To strike the following section from the Early Learning Coalition of Pinellas County Reimbursement Policy:

(a) A state of emergency has been declared in advance for Pinellas County by County Government, the Governor, or the President of the United States.

The motion passed unanimously.

### **C. Board Development and Nominating Committee**

#### **8) Director Nominations**

Description:

Ellen Lasher presented Jim Dickson has resigned from the Board. The Board Development Committee will be recruiting a few members exceeding the minimum requirement for the private sector. They have identified several industries they would like to target. Gay Lancaster suggested leadership groups and chambers. Jack Geller offered the "Leadership Pinellas" program as a possible group to target for members.

### **IV. INFORMATION ITEMS**

No informational items were presented.

### **V. OTHER BUSINESS**

Ellen Lasher shared there will be a fundraising event for the Sanderlin Center honoring Lounell Britt. Lounell Britt, the current Executive Director of the James B. Sanderlin Family Service Center carries on the Judge's legacy through her dedication, leadership and commitment to the families of Midtown St. Petersburg. The Board of Directors of the James B. Sanderlin Neighborhood Family Center will honor Mrs. Britt's years of service to the Midtown community at their first annual fundraiser: "**Paving the Way**", *Honoring Mrs. Lounell Britt*, January 26, 2007.

Guy Cooley shared the CCC holiday family drive is in progress. Members wishing to adopt a family or make a donation can contact him. Ellen Lasher will advertise this on Channel 10.

Linda Tamanini presented the Pinellas County License Board (PCLB) represents the minimum standards under which a childcare provider may operate. In 1960 a state law was passed authorizing a special act. Initially, childcare providers were required to have a 4 year degree,

but due to a shortage of qualified staff, the requirements were changed. In 1961 a final law passed, requiring 2 years experience and 12 credits of college credit. At the time, no local institution offered the courses and Florida State University sent professors to teach satellite courses. It was not until 1970 that state licensing was introduced. The special act allowed local licensing to continue operating with the state standards as a minimum. The licensing standards in 1951 were published in a 15 page brochure. The currently licensing standards consist of 75 pages for centers and 50 for Family Child Care Homes. The law was written to allow the local license board to change rules without changing legislation. Palm Beach is the only other county with a law and operates under the county commissioners.

In Pinellas County, there are 419 centers with a capacity of 39,000 slots and 700 homes 35 of which are "large". A regular home may serve 5 children with no more than three under 2 years old. A "large" home has 2 adults and may serve up to 12 children. Infant care in centers started in the 80's. The state rule allows 1 adult to 6 infants with no group size. Other counties may have 24 kids and 4 adults in one room. Pinellas County only allows 3 infants to 1 adult with a maximum of 6 in a group. PCLB operates with 29 staff members: 13 for centers, 8 for FCCH, 4 USDA Food and Drug Administration Program and 4 administrative positions.

The following are examples of the negative impact on quality should the special act be taken away:

- Family Child Care Homes, state only requires registration. There is no monitoring requirement unless a child hurt. (Pinellas, provider must meet licensing standards and are monitored)
- More children, less staff with no limit to group size
- Age ratios based on majority age, (Pinellas, ratios are based on the youngest)
- Providers would be 16 years old with no diploma requirement (Pinellas, providers must be 18 with a high school diploma)
- No discipline or transportation regulations
- No safety regulations for FCCH
- No monitoring of religious exempt and nonpublic schools

Pinellas delegation agenda includes a Bill to allow extended child care. Sponsored by Senators Jones and Anderson. November 1, 2006 Pinellas County License Board (PCLB) passed a variance to compromise with state rule that passed over summer. It will allow a child to stay in care for over 24 hours up to 72 consecutive hours. State law does not allow you to exceed 72 hours in a 7 day period, this leaves a loophole for children to be in care 71 hours 59 minutes, leave for a short time and go back into care for another 71 hours and 59 minutes.

The local variance proposed by PCLB, requires an approval process for providers offering over 24 hours of care. Providers must also be free of negative sanction. November 16, 2006 Linda Tamanini will be attending the delegation meeting to address the proposed Bill. Should they proceed, she is asking for the support of the Coalition. Independent agencies often have a stronger voice than those with a fiscal affiliation. Historically when a special act goes to Tallahassee, it is often lost.

A motion was made by the Gay Lancaster and seconded by Jack Geller to:

*To support the Pinellas County License Board in developing a resolution.*

