

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

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS REGULAR MEETING**

Thursday, July 12, 2007

**APPROVED MINUTES**

**PRESENT**

Voting Members: Cindy Seletos, Vice-Chair; Linda Tamanini; Jack Geller, Treasurer; Steve Overton; Dr. Claude Dharamraj; Anne Sullivan; Lounell Britt; Michael Pachik; John Morroni; Lourdes Benedict; Le Ann Elliott

Non-Voting Members: Louise Boothby-Llorente; Judith Miller-Buckner; Guy Cooley; Diane Brown; Gary Cernan for Gay Lancaster

**ABSENT**

Juanita Heinzen; Pam Moore; Cindy Jameson, Secretary; Edward Peachey; Ellen Lasher

**STAFF**

Janet Chapman; Bonnie Touchton; Lindsay Carson; Barbara Scarsbrook; Merita Kafexhiu; Mary Ann Goodrich

**IN ATTENDANCE**

Paul Runyon; Lynne Faimalie; Jackie Crain – Attorney; Lynn Gibson; Bonnie Mettetal; Paula Godfrey

**OFFICIAL RECORDER**

Lindsay Carson

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

A quorum was present and Interim Chair Seletos called the meeting to order at 4:04 p.m.

**A. Adoption of Agenda**

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

A motion was made by John Morroni and seconded by Le Ann Elliott to:

*Approve the July 2007 Agenda.*

Discussion:

The motion passed unanimously to approve the agenda.

**B. Approval of Minutes**

Interim Chair Seletos called for approval of the May 2007 minutes.

A motion was made by Linda Tamanini and seconded by Lounell Britt to:

*Approve the May 2007 minutes.*

Discussion: There were a few typos which will be corrected. These typos do not affect content.

The motion passed unanimously.

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

Interim Chair Seletos deferred to Executive Director Janet Chapman to report on the ELAC meeting as she was unable to attend. Ms. Chapman shared that Monesia Brown the new Secretary of Agency for Workforce Innovation led the meeting. She also noted The Office of Early Learning logo has been eliminated. There was lengthy discussion on the new AWI logo which does not reflect children in any way. Over 50% of AWI's funding is for children's services. The Chairs also discussed revising the VPK law to require an Associates degree for VPK teachers by 2013 and keep the Bachelors as an aspirational goal. They are producing a quarterly newsletter to send to legislators to begin building relationships and advocating for these changes.

Their next meeting will be Thursday, September 21<sup>st</sup>.

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

Ms. Chapman reported July 1 begins the new fiscal year 2007/ 2008. Once again the base allocation for School Readiness remained the same. Pinellas was funded at a lower level by the Child Care Executive Partnership (\$80,000.00 less) and their VPK allocation was reduced to align with the actual number of children they serve. All contracts have been renewed and services continue.

### Child Care Purchasing Pool

The Child Care Executive Partnership has changed their funding guidelines. (See attached legal opinion). It opens the door for more opportunities to find match donors. She is meeting with the United Way to leverage more funds for CCEP to make up for the \$80,000 reduction. United Way currently contributes about \$200,000 for childcare in Pinellas County. Through the CCEP, that could become \$400,000.

### Leadership

Ms. Chapman reported she has been working with the Governor's appointment office to clarify some paperwork issues and is hoping to hear soon of an appointment for Chair.

### Legislative Update

At the last meeting of the Early Learning Coalition Chairs there was a proposal to develop a tri-fold brochure at the state level highlighting the key points to present to our legislators. The key is a common message to all legislators that the Coalitions decide are important so we are all speaking with a unified voice.

The Executive Directors and their Chairs have been challenged to visit every delegate in their area during late July and August with this message. More information to follow after next week's meeting in Tampa. There are many legislators to visit. Ms. Chapman is requesting that Board members participate in the visits.

#### Reallocation

Once again AWI is looking at re-allocation of School Readiness dollars. This is an annual activity. The Agency for Workforce Innovation is recommending the reallocation formula be applied to new funds only. Still we have to figure out who will be held harmless and which Coalitions will receive the **NEW** money.

They are also discussing Performance Measures as a means to convince the legislature that Coalitions will do better if we receive more funds.

#### Playgroups

She also shared the Coalition has collaborated with Everyone's Youth United to implement playgroups in the Child's Park area of St. Petersburg. EYU was awarded \$11,000 through a Weed and Seed Grant.

### **IV. PRESENTATION**

Barbara Scarsbrook presented the School Readiness Rates for 2005-2006. She shared that not all providers received a score depending on how many children they served and how many were screened. She also shared there was little consideration given to children with special needs or English language learners. This can negatively impact the Readiness Rates of VPK providers who serve these populations. Pinellas County had 15 low performing providers, three of which were in the school system. These providers are required to acknowledge that they are low performing and submit an improvement plan. The improvement plans must address target areas as identified by their needs assessment.

Many providers were not satisfied with their scores because they do not demonstrate growth. Open discussion took place on the need for a pre/post assessment to show individual gains. Art O'Hara shared that R'Club offered both a school year and summer VPK program in Tarpon Springs with the same teacher and curriculum. Their school year program met the Readiness Rate, but the summer program was low performing. The summer program consisted of mostly Head Start students.

Mary Ann Goodrich, Regional VPK Facilitator shared that DOE has been tasked with implementing the law as it is written. The law requires Readiness Rates be determined by the Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screener (FLKRS). Additionally, DOE is focused on the end result, "Are kids ready?" Regardless of where they were when they entered the VPK program.

Providers raised concerns that this may encourage providers to "cherry pick" their students to ensure a passing Readiness Rate for the programs.

Additional discussion took place on how parents will use the scores. The Coalition is required to publish the scores for parents, but is also educating parents on what the scores mean and what to look for in a quality program. The Quality Rating System may serve as a better guide for parents.

## IV. COMMITTEE REPORTS and ACTION ITEMS

### A. Executive Committee

#### 1) Action Item 07.07.01 – Even Start Support

Description:

The Even Start grant funds family literacy programs offering basic education courses for parents pursuing a GED. The program also offers parent education, literacy instruction for parents learning how to successfully engage their children literacy activities with their children and home visitation.

A motion was made by the Executive Committee and seconded by Anne Sullivan to:

*Support the Even Start program offered by the Pinellas County School Board*

Discussion: Steve Overton questioned if this requires Board approval.

The motion passed unanimously.

#### 2) Action Item 07.07.02 – Executive Director’s Authority to Move Funds

Description:

The Coalition prepares an annual budget each year. After appropriate revisions, the draft is presented to the Finance Committee for discussion, revision, and approval. The approved draft is then submitted to the entire Board of Directors for final approval and adoption.

It is the policy of the Coalition to closely monitor its financial performance by comparing and analyzing actual results with budgeted results. As the Coalition moves through the year some expense lines may be over expended, while others may be under utilized. The transfers of funds from one line item in the Coalition administrative budget to another require a budget amendment.

In the past the Budget amendment was presented to the Finance Committee and to the Board of Directors for approval.

Approved by Finance and Executive Committees.

A motion was made by the Executive Committee and seconded by Anne Sullivan to:

*Grant the Executive Director the authority to approve Budget Amendments related to transferring of funds between line items within a category including: Personnel, Operating and Contractual. Additionally, the Executive Director may reallocate funds between categories not to exceed \$5,000. The Executive Director will notify the Finance Committee members of the amendment by e-mail. A report will be prepared for the next Finance Committee meeting.*

Discussion: John Morroni agreed with the concept but suggested reducing the authorized amount to move between categories.

The Executive Committee withdrew the motion.

A motion was made by Jack Geller and seconded by Dr. Dharamraj to:

*Grant the Executive Director the authority to approve Budget Amendments related to transferring of funds between line items within a category including: Personnel, Operating and Contractual. Additionally, the Executive Director may reallocate funds between categories not to exceed \$5,000 after notifying the Finance Committee. The Finance Committee may request a meeting within 5 business days of the notification. If no meeting is requested, the Executive Director may amend the budget.*

Discussion: The Board discussed if this process would comply with Sunshine Laws. Attorney Jackie Crain advised it should be permissible since email communications are public records. Steve Overton suggested that this process implies approval by the Finance Committee.

The motion passed unanimously.

### **3) Action Item 07.07.03– Inclusion Coordinator Position**

#### Description:

The Coalition has applied for a grant from the Developmental Disabilities Council. The grant will be funded at \$75,000 with an additional \$25,000 match. The purpose of the grant is to hire an Inclusion Coordinator to develop a model inclusion program for early care and education. Contingent upon the award of the grant the Coalition will need to hire an Inclusion Coordinator in August. The grant award will be posted on July 20, 2007.

A motion was made by the Executive Committee and seconded by Dr. Dharamraj to:

*Approve the hiring of an Inclusion Coordinator if the grant is awarded.*

Discussion: Judi Miller-Bruckner shared that this is a much needed service in the community. Mike Pachik inquired on the expenses absorbed by the Coalition. Ms. Chapman responded the Coalition will absorb minimal administrative costs.

The motion passed unanimously.

## **B. Finance Committee**

**4) Spending Plan Update-** Jack Geller presented the Coalition is projecting a balanced budget for fiscal year 2006-2007.

### **5) Action Item 07.0704– Proposed 2007-2008 Coalition Budget**

#### Description:

Treasurer Jack Geller presented Fiscal Year 2007-08 estimated total combined budget is \$50,455,190 including \$33,422,900 for the School Readiness program; \$16,892,994 for the VPK program; \$85,000 for the VPK Regional Facilitator; and \$54,296 for the VPK Outreach and Awareness and Monitoring Initiative program.

This budget addresses two major programs SR program and VPK program and ensures that:

**School Readiness Grant**

- 75% of the Coalition's SR allocation is expended on direct child care
- 8 % is designated for quality initiatives,
- 2 % for administration and un-obligated funds,
- 14% for non-direct services,
- 1 % for inclusion and resource and referral services.

**Voluntary Prekindergarten Grant**

- 95% of the Coalition's VPK Grant allocation is expended on direct child care
- 5% of the VPK grant allocation is expended on administration and non-direct services.

The proposed Coalition budget for FY 2007-2008 has been developed with the following goals:

- Maximum accountability of federal and state funds
- Serving an average of 6,800 SR children per month given priority to children at risk of abuse, neglect, and children in families that are receiving temporary cash assistance
- Serving at least 5,983 VPK children as estimated on the Grant Award
- Effective, and lean administrative support

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

*Approve the 2007-2008 Coalition Budget.*

Discussion: John Morroni inquired on how much the Coalition keeps in reserve. He suggested holding back 5%. Mike Pachik asked how are budget will be affected by the impending property tax reforms. Janet Chapman shared the Coalition budget is mostly federal dollars which has been flat lined for 6 years. She has kept \$90,000 unallocated and in the event of a budget cut or shortfall, will reevaluate quality projects. Guy Cooley added that any funds that are not spent by the end of the fiscal year are returned and can not be put into a fund balance.

The motion passed unanimously.

**C. Service Delivery Advisory Committee**

**6) Report:**

Discussion:

Lynne Faimalie reported the committee has not met. They will meet again on August 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**D. Foundation Committee**

**7) Update**

Discussion: Mike Pachik reported the committee has not met. They will be scheduling a meeting with interested Board members this month.

**E. Board Development Committee**

**8) Update**

Discussion: Lindsay Carson reported the committee met and is beginning recruitment of new private sector members. At least one vacancy must be filled. They are also reviewing reappointment of officers which will take place at the September Annual Meeting. Several members will also come to the end of their first term in January 2008. They may be reappointed for an additional 3 year term. Vice-Chair Seletos added she would like all members to complete a self-evaluation before or at the Annual Meeting.

**F. Legislative Committee**

**9) Update-** This update was included in the Executive Director's Report.

**IV. INFORMATION ITEMS**

Louise Boothby-LLorente asked about the Children's Cabinet. The signing of the Bill was today in Ft. Lauderdale. The members of the cabinet were outlined in the legislation.

**V. PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no public comment.

**VII. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 5:22 P.M.

Approved by:

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Dr. Ken Peluso  
Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Cindy Jameson  
Secretary

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date