



**APPROVED BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES OF
September 17, 2009**

Members Present

Christina Worley
Tana Ebbole
John O'Malley
Ken Kahn
MJ Steele
Perry Borman
Philippe Jeck
Dr. Roanne Moreno
Dr. Barbara Weinstein
Patrick Cannan
Nicole Matlock
Wanda Baldwin
Commissioner Vana
Dr. Carmen Nicholas
Kristy Pressly
Dr. Marsha Fishbane

Members Absent

Helene Rosen
Traver Gruen-Kennedy
Leondrae Camel
Kerry Perl

Guests

Doreen Moskowitz
Beverly Sears
Tracy Crawford
Terrie Ellis
Beverly Beguesse
Karen Deringer
Sally Laws
Gail Fabian
Juanita Bentley
Elizabeth Jackson
Barry Miller
Reinier Potts
Sidney Ross

Ex-officio

Warren Eldridge
Vivian Blackmon-Taylor
Mike Sothen
Christie Young
Ginger Gladden
Aruna Gilbert

These minutes summarize key action items of the meeting of the Board of Directors for the Early Learning Coalition. They do not include all issues discussed. A transcript of the meeting by recorded audiotape is the official record and is available to all interested parties.

CALL TO ORDER

Kristy Pressly called the meeting to order at 1:03 p.m. A quorum of voting members was established.

Warren Eldridge read Kerry Perl's resignation letter. Kerry Perl thanked the Coalition for the opportunity to sit on the Board. Mr. Eldridge suggested that Kerry Perl attend the next Board meeting so the Coalition can recognize his participation and leadership over the years.

CHANGES, ADDITIONS, DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA

None were noted.

PRESENTATIONS

Cheryl Mundy of the Children's Services Council presented to the Board the Healthy Beginnings System.

Aruna Gilbert of the Early Learning Coalition presented to the Board the Coalition's 2008-09 Annual Report.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

Warren Eldridge reported that the Nominating Committee will be meeting on October 7, 2009. We have two candidates interested in joining the Coalition's Board of Directors.

Mr. Eldridge also reported that over the upcoming year the Board will see more of the Coalition staff. The Coalition is very proud of the organization's depth.

Mr. Eldridge reported on the recent visit to the Coalition by Brittany Birken, Director of the Office of Early Learning in Tallahassee. She was able to see the extraordinary partnerships we share with CSC, PBCC, FCI, the School District and DCF. The State looks at Palm Beach as the model for collaboration.

Mr. Eldridge reported that the Early Learning Information System (ELIS) is in procurement at the State level. The multiple systems that were presented the past couple of days in Tallahassee are an improvement over the current EFS database.

Mr. Eldridge mentioned that the State is looking at ways to standardize quality. The three main issues are assessments, professional development and registry. Approximately seven or eight million dollars will be spent on this project from stimulus funds. This may allow opportunities to move forward on quality activities that in the past we have not been able to afford.

Mr. Eldridge updated the Board on the objectives given to him by the Evaluation Committee in June. The first objective was revenue generation as it relates to the Child Care Executive Partnership Committee and other activities. Over the past month Mr. Eldridge met with Ann de las Pozas of Family Central, Randy Palo of CSC and Kristy Pressly of the ELC Board. The CSC and ELC are working with the Community Foundation to create a dedicated fund for Early Care and Education. Also, the Coalition will rely on Kristy Pressly and Christina Worley of the ELC Board who have experience with the community to look at funds in coordination with CSC and Family Central to generate matching funds. With every dollar that we generate it could bring down three dollars from state and local funding sources. The Coalition is taking a rather aggressive but thoughtful approach. The second objective is rules hearings. Now that the Coalition is a much more mature organization it is not only focusing on legislation but on rules. Often times you can win legislation but you can lose rules. Mr. Eldridge has given substantial time to rules hearings as it meets with the Board's approval.

CONSENT ITEMS

- A. Approval of Audit Committee Meeting Minutes of August 24, 2009
- B. Approval of Evaluation Committee Meeting Minutes of June 23, 2009
- C. Approval of Executive Committee Meeting Minutes of May 21, 2009
- D. Approval of Board of Directors Meeting Minutes of June 18, 2009
- E. Approval of Plan Amendment – Assessment
- F. Approval of Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP)
- G. Finance Report

Commissioner Vana motioned, Tana Ebbole seconded, and the Board unanimously voted to approve the Consent Items.

OLD BUSINESS

Child Care Slot Utilization

Mike Sothen reported that the Coalition is at 100% utilization at this time. Currently, we are serving approximately 10,000 children in the State's School Readiness Program.

Legislative Update

Warren Eldridge reported the House is voting on bill 3221 - Block Grant. It is expected to pass. The Association of Early Learning Coalition's is meeting with Senator Nelson to request that he host a meeting with the Federal Delegation as it relates to early care and education. The Committee will involve the Children's Services Councils statewide because there is a lot of work to be done with our Federal Delegation. This will provide the opportunity for funding through the Child Care Development Fund as it is up for reauthorization next year.

In response to fundraising, Dr. Weinstein inquired if the funds raised are to be actual dollars or can they be donations in kind such as back packs to children or food drives for families, etc. Christina Worley responded ELAC would like actual dollars raised. Tana Ebbole mentioned that the real money is going to come from the State and Federal governments. What is our legislative advocacy? We need to have conversations with our Florida legislative committees.

ACTION: Commissioner Vana suggested we contact Kevin Rader of the House Pre-K-12 Policy Committee. He is very eager and pro-education. Christopher Smith of the Senate Transportation and Economic Development Appropriations Committee is very dedicated and is another person to contact also.

VPK Update

Warren Eldridge reported that VPK enrollment increased by 20% for the third year in a row. We may run out of funds around February or March. The State has assured the Coalition in writing that VPK is an entitlement program and the State has to fully fund the program.

Curriculum Update

Aruna Gilbert reported that four curriculum goals were presented to the Board in March. To date, curriculum is on target with those goals. The Curriculum Committee, which is comprised of the Coalition, Family Central, Inc., PBC School District, members of the Personal and Professional Development team and CSC worked on a curriculum check list that was based on Florida standards. They narrowed it down to an all inclusive list of curricula and have currently piloted with several QIS and non-QIS centers. The pilot is focusing on Pre-K classes (age 3 and 4) at this time. The monitoring of providers to ensure that the provider's lesson plans and/or activities are aligned with the identified curriculum will commence in July 2010.

Quality Rating Improvement System Update

Christie Young reported that the Multicounty QRIS Collaborative continues to work via meetings and quarterly conference calls. Some of the items being discussed are marketing of the star ratings system and the use of the Quality Counts brand. The Collaborative decided to form workgroups for family child care, curriculum and child outcomes. Palm Beach County will be launching its five star Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS) Quality Counts effective October 1, 2009. Quality Counts is funded by the Children's Services Council of Palm Beach County.

The original members of the Multicounty Collaborative are currently planning to meet in Tampa on December 1, 2009 to discuss in more detail the accomplishments of the group and its future role.

Family Central Monitoring Report

Christie Young provided an update on the Agency for Workforce Innovation's comments on Family Central, Inc. (FCI) which were communicated on May 21, 2009. This verbal communication contained compliance issues relating to VPK provider files. Since that time, FCI and the Coalition prepared and submitted a correction action plan to the State. The Coalition has completed a monitoring of VPK school year and summer files and all compliance matters have been addressed. Currently, the State has not issued any written report but has accepted the Coalition's corrective action plan.

Board of Director's Retreat

Mr. Eldridge suggested that we wait until we have the Coalition's new Chair appointed before we schedule the next Board retreat. It will be a great opportunity to introduce the new Chair. The next Board retreat will be scheduled six to eight weeks following the appointment of the new Chair.

Child Care Provider Visits

Warren Eldridge mentioned the Coalition will begin child care provider site visits for the Board members again in three to four months.

ACTION: Philippe Jeck inquired if staff followed up with Title 1 funds and if it is only for the School District or is it available to the private providers also. Are the funds already allocated?

Tana Ebbolle also inquired that there is additional revenue coming down the funding stream, how are we maximizing every funding stream? Can the School District choose to contract through the Early Learning Coalition or contract directly with the providers if they do not already have the internal capacity?

NEW BUSINESS

Market Rate Report presented by Vivian Blackmon-Taylor

Warren Eldridge mentioned that this will be a three part presentation:

1. At this meeting we will be reviewing the child care market rates and how the Coalition compares to other Coalitions across the state. We will also discuss how the Coalition's maximum payment rates compare to the market rate?
2. At the December 17, 2009 Board meeting we will conduct an analysis of Gold Seal payments and analyze how our Coalition compares to other Coalitions.
3. At the March Board meeting we will discuss how the Coalition can move forward as we require more quality from the providers. How does the Coalition adjust the market rate to be fair to providers while also balancing the need to serve more children?

Vivian reported that every two years the Agency for Workforce Innovation conducts a survey to determine the prices being charged by child care providers in each county. The survey is required by the Federal Child Care and Development Fund and is also required by State statute. In Palm Beach County, Family Central is the entity responsible for Child Care Resource and Referral and they survey the child care providers annually and enter the information into the Enhanced Field System (EFS), the statewide child care data system. AWI then pulls the data from that system to begin the process of calculating the child care market rates locally and across the state. The market rate is reported as a full time weekly rate. There are part time rates, hourly rates, annual rates, etc. but everything is converted into a weekly rate. The weekly rate would consist of five days a week and 6 or more hours a day. A rate is excluded if it is less than \$50 or more than \$250 for full time weekly care.

The child care market is classified into subsets (centers or homes and the age of the child) to account for the differences in type of care. AWI calculates the 75th percentile for each market rate subset. The child care market rate is defined as: The annually determined 75th percentile of a reasonable frequency distribution of child care rates in a predetermined geographic market at which licensed child care providers charge a person for child care services §402.3051(1)(b)4.(c), F.S. Hypothetically if there is a list of 100 child care rates ordered from lowest to highest; the rate listed at 75 on the list of 100 would be considered the market rate.

Based upon the above definition of the Coalition's market rate, the following is a summary of the key points made during Vivian's presentation:

- The Coalition has not awarded a rate increase to providers in the last 5 years. The rate increase awarded 5 years ago was only for the infant and toddler care categories.
- The last rate increase awarded for all care levels was over six years ago in January 2003.
- Palm Beach County's market rate is between 16% and 20% higher than the overall state-wide market rate.
- The Coalition currently pays the maximum Gold Seal differential of 20%.
- For centers that are not Gold Seal providers, the Coalition is paying between 60% and 70% of the market rate.
- For family child care centers that are not Gold Seal providers, the Coalition is paying between 72% and 81% of the market rate.
- For centers that are Gold Seal providers, the Coalition is paying between 72% and 85% of the market rate.
- For family child care centers that are Gold Seal providers, the Coalition is paying between 86% and 97% of the market rate.
- The Coalition's maximum reimbursement rates are higher than Orange County, Hillsborough County, and Miami Dade County but are lower than Broward County's maximum reimbursement rates.
- If the Coalition was to adopt Broward's maximum reimbursement rates, the incremental cost would be approximately \$1,800,000 and the number of unfunded slots would range between 325 and 500.

Based on various questions from Board members an action item was given to Coalition staff to bring the following information to the December 17, 2009 Board meeting as it relates to the market rate study:

- The Board would like to know how many provider market rates were thrown out of the sample due to the rate being below \$50 per week or exceeding \$250 per week.
- The Board would like to know what the incremental cost would be if the Coalition adopted Broward's maximum reimbursement rates including lowering the Coalition's maximum reimbursement rates for infants and toddlers to Broward's maximum reimbursement rates.
- The Board would like to know what percentage of Palm Beach and Broward County providers are Gold Seal providers and would like this information factored into the incremental cost calculation to adopt Broward's maximum reimbursement rates.
- The Board would like to know what percentage of the market rate the Coalition was paying when maximum reimbursement rates were increased for all care levels in January 2003.
- The Board indicated that it would like for providers to share their point of view at the next Board meeting but that a time limit be set for each provider's comments.

Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC) Review

Christina Worley reported on the ELAC meeting she attended. Harry Duncanson, the former ELC Broward Chair is the new ELAC Chair and Rich Morrison is now ELAC Vice Chair. Christina Worley also discussed the workforce issues relating to child care staff.

Mr. Eldridge commended Christina Worley for going to Washington D.C.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

None were noted.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Sidney Ross, executive director of Whiz Kids Schools is grateful for the time allotted for the next Board meeting for the providers to express their opinions about the market rate. Ms. Ross suggested perhaps staff could go out to providers and meet with them to get an idea of some of their questions beforehand.

ACTION: Tana Ebbole suggested creating a formal survey to providers so everyone has an opportunity to express their thoughts.

ACTION: Christina Worley suggested the providers present their questions before the meeting begins and that a time limit be put on each comment.

NEXT MEETING

December 17, 2009

ADJOURNMENT

Tana Ebbole motioned, Christina Worley seconded, and the Board unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 3:00 p.m.
