

EARLY LEARNING COALITION OF SARASOTA COUNTY  
**BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**

School Board of Sarasota County, Brown Awning Building, Rooms A-B  
The Landings, 1960 Landings Boulevard, Sarasota  
21 February 2007

MINUTES

**1. ATTENDANCE.**

a. Voting Members Present:

Jill Jacoby	Laura Bauman	Janice Mee	Laura Benson
Pauline Tracy	Kathryn Stuckey	Lois Natiello	

b. Non-Voting Members Present:

Dr. Norman Goldstein	Lori White
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c. Absent (Voting):

Tami Conetta	Lisa Glenn	Steve Spangler
David Hicks	Chris Kofler	Bill Little

d. Absent (Non-Voting):

Ken Modzelewski	Hope Kinney	Sue Loncaric
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e. Staff:

Janet Kahn	Mary Wolf	Linda Mason	Sandy Zook
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f. Visitors:

Dick Aubry	Jennifer Ourednik
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**2. CALL TO ORDER.** Vice Chair (Laura Benson) called the meeting to order at 6:07 pm, skipping the Consent Agenda at first, and moving to the Chair Report, as there was not a quorum present initially. A quorum was obtained later on.

**3. CHAIR REPORT.**

a. Change in Chair. Laura Benson reported that Kim Binkley- Seyer would be stepping down as chair of the Board due to a family emergency that requires her time and attention. Laura also announced she is prepared to perform the duties of Acting Chair (with the Board's consent) until the Governor appoints a new Chairperson. Laura may consider reapplying again to be appointed permanently.

b. Janet and Laura also took the opportunity to introduce a new Board Member, Pauline Tracy, who replaced Nora Patterson as the member appointed by our local Board of County Commissioners. Pauline attended last month's meeting as a guest, but she has now been officially appointed.

**4. PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION.**

a. Summary of ELC Building Better Boards self assessment results: Laura asked Janet to review the results that were displayed on the Power Point. A total of 15 Board members completed the survey. The full report has been e-mailed to each board member. Several new areas were added to the category of "high satisfaction" since the last survey in 2004, but there are some areas that indicate less satisfaction on the part of the Board and those areas need some discussion and attention.

Laura noted that some of the questions do not apply to our board due to how we are structured in state legislation and other factors. She also reminded everyone that the board has been reacting to several things over the past couple of years including implementing the Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten program and prior to that, fighting for our waiver to remain independent. Now the Board can focus more on strategic issues and its own Board development.

The consultant from the Gulf Coast Community Foundation who reviewed our report with us prior to the meeting had noted that overall the results were good and our board is functioning quite well.

The following is a summary of the results, taken from the report itself:

*The highest satisfaction were in the following areas:*

- *The board requests and receives sufficient information for meaningful discussion.*
- *The board reviews financial reports on a predetermined schedule.*
- *The board conducts an annual performance evaluation of the chief executive.*
- *The board ensures that the annual budget reflects the priorities of the organization.*
- *The board has developed a written job description for the chief executive.*

*The areas where there was some satisfaction are:*

- *The board plans, sets policies, develops resources, and makes decisions as part of a coordinated process that supports its mission and strategic plan.*
- *The board-chief executive relationship is effective and efficient.*
- *The board seeks partnerships with other organizations to achieve a common goal.*
- *During the past year, the board conducted oversight of the organization's finances and fiscal policies.*
- *Roles are clearly delineated between the board and staff.*

*The areas the board members were least satisfied with are:*

- *The board engages in team-building activities.*
- *The board has developed diversified income sources, including public funds, fees, contracts, donations from individuals, corporations, and foundations and/or endowments.*
  - Janet pointed out that this question does not exactly fit the Coalition's mission in that one of the purposes of the Coalition is to be the local recipient of the State's child care dollars, and that will likely always constitute the bulk of our funds. Our ability to diversify income sources in the traditional sense is somewhat limited.
  - Janet and Laura added that the ELC Board is very different than many non-profit agencies in that many members are mandated, or appointed, and we are a board in which most of the participants have several roles within the community and networking is different because of certain restrictions on board member interactions (i.e. sunshine law)
  - In terms of fundraising, because many Board members specifically represent certain mandated entities, there additionally can be certain conflicts with fundraising.

There were several areas where the board responded 'Not Sure,' which indicates there is a need for clarification in the following areas:

- *The board references the mission statement in decision-making.*
- *The board uses written selection criteria for choosing board members.*  
*(see comments above as they relate to this topic too)*
- *Taskforces and committees have a stated purpose and goal.*
- *Committee and taskforce members and chairs are rotated on a predetermined schedule.*
- *Board committees or taskforces include a small number of people with complimentary skills.*
  - Laura Benson took this opportunity to point out the three previous statements were all about committees and committee structure. There have been many changes in how the ELC committees work over the past two years and we have not really had the opportunity to focus much discussion on this topic. Board members clearly need more information as to how our committees currently function, and how our committees and other related committees in the community function together.
- *The board has set strategic direction based on 5-10 year goals.*
  - Janet reminded the board that this assessment was taken right before the retreat in November and the board members may feel differently now. Also, this correlates directly with the next bullet points.
- *The board monitors progress towards planned goals on a consistent basis.*
- *The board sets guidelines for assessing partnership opportunities based on mission, needs, goals, and organizational capacity.*
- *During the past year, all new board members were provided a formal orientation that included both organization information such as mission and strategic plan and board operations such as roles and responsibilities and bylaws.*

- Laura Benson responded to this saying that Janet knows that this happens, but because other board members are not involved in the orientation process for new Board members, the other members may have marked this question as 'Not Sure' because they really did not know.
- *The board has a leadership development plan for board members.*
- *The board has established policies for length of board services and rotation of board members and enforces those policies.*
  - Janet explained that this is determined by legislation.
- *The board has developed a clear policy on attendance and financial contributions.*
  - Again, Janet pointed out that this policy does not apply, as we do not require financial contributions from Board members.
- *The board has a conflict of interest policy in place.*
- *Board members are informed on governance accountability requirements such as the Sarbane-Oxley Act.*
  - Janet assured the Board that there is a conflict of interest policy and we do follow the accountability requirements of this act.

Kathryn pointed out that she was new to the board when she took the survey, and therefore was unsure about several of the questions. Others may have felt the same way. Also there was not a chance to mark N/A so most probably used the “ unsure” option in lieu of that.

Laura Benson asked for feedback as to how Board members might like to participate in team building. She also asked if Board members felt they are not “effective”. She stated that this Board has been actively involved in positive changes within the child care community and wanted Board members to feel that they have been a part of this. The work of the Quality Child Care Council is one example of this.

Laura Bauman responded she is still working on finding a place whether it is on the board or in a committee, where she can most effectively assist the Coalition, especially given her time constraints. Lois mentioned she does not always have something to contribute every meeting, and her schedule is such that she cannot sit on any of the committees, so sometimes she does not feel effective. Others agreed.

Laura Benson then asked board members to think of ways to address this issue as a Board as well as to keep our Vision and Mission in focus. She committed to keeping the discussion of this issue in the forefront so that Board members can feel effectively engaged in the work of the Coalition. Clarification of the committees needs to be a focus in future meetings as well. She referred to an updated Board Manual that the officers have asked Janet to prepare for all Board members, as many Board members have been on the Board for while and have not had the benefit of more recent comprehensive orientations.

Laura also asked if having the Mission Statement more visible on a poster, along with bullets of the strategic plan for the board to refer to, would be helpful. Kathryn even suggested placing the Mission Statement on the back of their nameplates, so they see it during the meeting, and to add it to the agenda.

Janet has discussed this issue with the Board consultant and informed the Board that it will be a priority to get board members more involved in committees, and know what is discussed/focused on during the various committee meetings, and in Coalition partnerships throughout the community.

It was also noted that many Board members participate in other work within the community that is related to the work of the Coalition, whether as a volunteer, or in their respective work roles. Staff members of course also participate in numerous work groups with partner agencies. How all of these work groups intersect with the work of the Coalition and how it all fits together needs to be noted on a matrix so that ELC Board members can fully understand not only complementary work going on in the

community and how it impacts the work of the Coalition, but also to see other opportunities for involvement that supports their ELC Board member roles. Staff will work on this chart or, matrix, to share with Board members

Janice Mee requested a discussion about the ELC board's powers and responsibilities, outlined within the statutes and legislation, during a future board meeting. Other Board members were encouraged to suggest additional topics that will facilitate strategic dialogue.

## 5. CONSENT AGENDA.

- a. Approval of Agenda for tonight. Agenda was unanimously approved.
- b. Approval of Minutes from January 17, 2007 meeting. Minutes were unanimously approved.

## 6. ACTION ITEMS.

- a. Approval to extend term of current officers. Current officers are as follows: Laura Benson, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice Chair; Tami Conetta 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chair; Lisa Glenn, Secretary; Steve Spangler, Treasurer. Laura Benson opened up the floor for additional nominations. With no nominations made, Laura asked for approval of continued terms for the current officers. Lois Natiello made the motion, Janice Mee Current officers were unanimously approved.
- b. Approval of an Acting Chair, pending new Governor appointment. Since the current Chair, Kim Binkley- Seyer was stepping down as mentioned earlier, and with Laura Benson being the 1<sup>st</sup> Vice Chair, the board needed to approve her as the Acting Chair until the Governor appointed a new Chair, Janice moved to approve Laura Benson as Acting Chair, Lois seconded it and it was unanimously approved.

## PUBLIC COMMENT:

*(There was no Public Comment.)*

## 8. OLD BUSINESS.

- a. Bylaws clean up and changes (will be presented next month) Janet reported that she and Mike have already worked on the bylaws to 'clean them up' and reflect current committee structure and to add the Quality Child Care Council Advisory Council that was discussed and voted on last month. Mike and Lisa Glenn will finalize these changes and present the proposed revised bylaws to the Board within the next 2 months. The changes will be circulated before the meeting and other Board members can provide additional feedback that can be discussed at the meeting if needed.

## 9. DISCUSSION ITEMS.

- a. Quality Childcare Council (QCC) update. Janet and Janice reported the Council has been working on the Quality Rating System's overall budget. The Gulf Coast Community Foundation accepted a letter of intent to request partial funding for the project. The Council will also ask for financial assistance from Sarasota County and others including possibly the Sarasota School District. There need to be funds in the following major categories:
  1. Assessment of the sites to determine a baseline;
  2. Mentors/ Technical Assistance for sites to improve from lower levels to a minimum of a three (three has been determined as the minimum acceptable level for a site);
  3. Sustaining Payments for higher level sites to allow those sites to remain at high levels. These payments will include allowances for improving child care workers pay to \$10/hour for CDA. The ultimate goal is to have all teachers at a minimum level of a CDA.

Janet went on to report that the cost is approximately \$1 million for the first year of program. Most of that amount is already currently being invested now in related areas. For example, \$400,000 is already invested by the Coalition toward mentoring, Technical Assistance, and Gold Seal differential. The Gulf Coast Community Foundation has supported quality child care with approximately \$300,000 yearly for the Gold Seal Project. The county also has provided

funds for the Gold Seal program each year. The Gold Seal program is ending. Although it is not guaranteed the money will now be given to the Quality Rating System, Janet is very optimistic that the level of investments will continue and the difference in what is currently provided and what is needed will be allocated. Pauline asked what the difference is. Janet replied approximately 100-200K for year 1.

The two other components of the Quality Rating System project being worked on is the system for tracking children outcomes- tracking the children from child care centers and child care homes through kindergarten and into 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, and the Communications Plan. Laura Benson added this will integrate many different parts of the community and should make the Board members feel more involved in the work of the Coalition and the community.

Pauline asked if this project was unique to Sarasota. Janet answered that many states do this now at a State level. In Florida, although it was discussed as a possibility to be implemented at the state level in the near future, that process is on hold now. Many other counties/Coalitions do already have Quality Rating Systems. Several others are also in the process of establishing one. What is unique is that Sarasota does not have a Children Services Council to fund this and we are moving forward anyway, and also that our local funders took the initiative to have the discussion as to how they could invest more effectively in early childhood, and specifically quality child care, and were able to come together, reach consensus and decide to collaborate on this project.

Janet pointed out that the Board really laid the groundwork for this project through many of their discussions about quality within child care, the continuum of quality, and additionally their support for funding and assisting lower quality sites so that all sites could make strides in this arena.

b. Program Updates.

- Janet informed the Board that 340 people attended the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Provider Conference, a record attendance! Several members of the board discussed moving to a larger facility in order to allow more people to attend.
- The Florida Center is in the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase of the Infant and Toddler Initiative, there is both a fall and spring program. It is an intense mentoring program with clear pre and post tests, new materials provided and video taping the results.
- Janice mentioned the site that received a makeover from the Women's Initiative. Janet reported Love and Laugh loved their makeover and it has created momentum for change and improvement in that site. There is another site planned for a makeover in South County in April. The ELC Board members who participated were thanked for their work on the project.

c. Request for additional funds. Laura Bauman asked for an update on the surplus funds discussed at the last meeting. Janet thanked the board for asking her to request the full amount needed, because the entire amount was placed on the list and she is hopeful the Coalition will receive some additional funds. The deadline had been extended, however, so we have not yet heard of AWI's decision.

**10. ANNOUNCEMENTS.** No additional announcements.

**11. ADJOURNMENT.** The meeting was adjourned at 7:05 pm. The next meeting will be on Wednesday, 21 March 2007.

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Laura Benson, Acting Chair