

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
19 September 2007

MINUTES

1. ATTENDANCE.

a. Voting Members Present:

Laura Benson	David Hicks	Jill Jacoby	Chris Kofler
Janice Mee	Kathryn Stuckey	Pauline Tracy	Mike Breton

b. Non-Voting Members Present:

Dr. Norman Goldstein	Hope Kinney	Lori White	Sue Loncaric
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c. Absent (Voting):

Steve Spangler	Tami Conetta	Laura Bauman	Bill Little
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d. Absent (Non-Voting):

Ken Modzelewski

e. Staff:

Janet Kahn	Mary Wolf	Mike Miller	Linda Mason
Sandy Zook			

f. Visitors:

Linda Parsche	Randee Tolbert	Jennifer Ourednik	Jackie Fountaine
Sandy Carpenter			

Linda Johnson of DCF attended for Lois Natiello

2. CALL TO ORDER. Acting Chair (Laura Benson, 1st Vice Chair) called the meeting to order at 6:01pm. Laura deferred the formal part of the agenda until a quorum was reached shortly after.

3. PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION.

a. Year in Review: Overview of 06-07 Annual Report. Janet presented a power point presentation highlighting the accomplishments of 06-07 and the focus for the Coalition for 07-08. These are areas that are included in the required annual report that will be submitted to AWI at the end of the month.

- o The ELC had a very stable year with no major crisis. The Coalition served over 3500 children between both school readiness and VPK. 1230 SR children received developmental screenings, with 21% requiring a rescreen, and approximately 15% of those rescreens requiring some additional follow up. 2769 children received hearing/vision screenings. That number is higher because full classrooms are screened, not just individual children. The Coalition also expanded the parenting information given out at intake; and tightened up the overall data collection and reporting process. Comprehensive support services also continued for over 200+ local child care providers.
- o Two primary goals for the year included trying to find solutions to address infrastructure and capacity needs for providers including funds for facility and program improvement, and assisting providers with staff recruitment and retention. Possible solutions were to implement a Substitute Training and Recruitment (STAR) Program and the Quality Rating Improvement System.
 - The STAR Program was successfully implemented in November. 26 substitutes were recruited out of 69 interviewed. These substitutes provided a total of 512 days of service for the 12 participating sites. Additional sites have signed up for the current year. For 07-08, the Coalition will be taking this model and expanding it to address centralized recruitment of permanent child care staff.
 - The Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS) is on the way too. The Quality Child Care Council was formed last year and identified goals and strategies centered around a QRIS. Through a phone survey conducted by the Coalition, it was also found to have widespread

child care provider support for the program. 87 of 104 center directors are interested in participating in the initial phase. Family homes were not included in the initial survey of interest but will be part of the program too. The funding pieces are almost in place, beginning with the Gulf Coast Community Foundation of Venice's challenge grant issued in April, and now the county has preliminarily approved funding, along with the United Way, school district and the Partnership for Children's Mental Health, which is providing in-kind support. There are still some outstanding grant requests, including one to the Wachovia Foundation.

- The Coalition Communication's Plan was developed, giving the Coalition a new tag line—"Ready for Learning, Ready for Life! The communication plan will also allow the Coalition to coordinate with other messages in the community.
- The Coalition provided several services to providers including 66 trainings for 1592 participants. 23 child care providers received mentoring services with over 90% achieving 3 or more goals. Additional training focus areas this year was on literacy, disaster preparation and working with challenging children. The Coalition also received a record attendance of 350 at the annual provider conference.
- Continuing services included mini grants to providers- which saw a record year for these, the Infant and Toddler Initiative, Kindergarten Checklist- which saw an increase in the number received 1000, up from 600 the prior year, calls to the warm line doubled, and the item that the ELC includes in the Newborn Bag Collaborative on infant brain development was rated as very helpful.

Pauline Tracy suggested the Coalition use Channel 19 to advertise services and important information about child growth and development.

- New initiatives included working with the United Way's Women's Initiative group which provided significant makeovers to two local providers, the Ready, Set, Grow fair grew to 5000 attendees as the ELC and Healthy Start partnered with the United Way Success by 6 initiative which made the event one for the broader community and moving it to a larger venue, the Challenging Behavior Initiative that the ELC contracts with the Florida Center to provide served 54 children with many success stories, and the Resource Room grew in participation numbers, to name a new of the other activities this year.
- A workforce study was conducted, which provided good and bad news. Overall wages have come up slightly but our community has lost ground in terms of educational level, with a large number of all local preschool teachers with only a high school diploma and the minimum training required Janet offered handouts of the workforce study to those who were interested and pointed out that the focus this year will be to get teachers in CDA and AA programs to continue education, as well to ensure that there is a minimum wage in the field for those with a CDA of at least \$10.

Hope Kinney added that Children First has had success in moving staff along from the minimum education as they have been conducting naptime trainings for their teachers which will result in 15 teachers obtaining their CDAs after one year through this model. Kathryn Stuckey reported that MCC is also providing 5 week intense classes rather than the traditional 15 weeks. Both models show good promise to assist staff in achieving these goals.

- Outreach to parents/community continued including movie ads, magazine ads, flyers and posters. Most outreach focused on VPK recruitment and general awareness since we did have a waiting list for SR services for most of the year, and included the Reading Festival, Publix Back to School Fair, Goodwill Back to School Fair and North Port Social Services Fair. These outreach events helped to increase the number of children participating in VPK as our numbers for the current year are up.
- The Coalition has a significant new partnership with the Sarasota Partnership for Children's Mental Health where there are many opportunities for collaboration.
- Finally, the Coalition also installed a new phone system which has a number of advanced features so that callers can get to where they need to for services, will allow for tracking the number of calls received, voicemails and calls returned. This will address the one area that customers do express frustration with (the phone system, etc) It will also have remote

connections with the ELC office in Venice, North Port satellite office, and the 17th Street administrative offices so all offices will be combined into one system and this will save on the monthly telephone costs as well, an added bonus.

- Challenges for the upcoming year include of course, budget concerns given the current climate and reduced tax revenues locally and for the state. Additionally since the Coalitions have not had an increase in funding for 9 years, without additional resources it will be difficult to comply with the increased responsibilities given to the Coalition. Child care costs in general have risen and it is a challenge to keep the SR reimbursement rate at the allowable rate. Capacity issues will be a challenge for child care providers as well as they work to maintain high quality early learning environments, and as there continue to be sections of the community that are underseved. The ELC will also continue to work towards a coordinated community message about early learning.
- Five broad goal areas for the upcoming year continue to be:
 - Quality Child Care
 - Meet the needs of children served
 - Parent education and involvement
 - Community Awareness
 - Board Development

Laura suggested and the Board members agreed, that this presentation should be used as a part of their community outreach development. It was suggested having a board event, or sending invitations to make community members more aware of the ELC's programs and goals achieved in early education by using this presentation. Janet will also work with Cheray on taking the lengthy required annual report and creating a user friendly report that will be appropriate to share with the general community as well.

b. Presentation by Family Child Care Association to ELC.

Randy Tolbert and Sandy Carpenter of the family child care association, SPICE, presented the ELC with a Certificate of Appreciation for the scholarships given for local family home providers to attend the "Family Child Care Shines Throughout Florida" annual Family Child Care Conference in June.

In addition, Randy, Sandy and Jackie Fontaine also wanted the full Board to know that the Early Learning Coalition of Sarasota was presented with the "**Agencies Helping Associations Prosper**" award at the FFCCHA annual conference in Clearwater Beach in June. This is given by FFCCHA to one agency statewide each year and the three family child care associations in our county joined together to advocate for the Coalition to receive this award, in appreciation of the on-going support the Coalition has shown family providers through scholarships to conferences, mini-grants, trainings and mentoring services.

In past years the Coalition has received Certificates of Appreciation from the individual family associations, so it was especially gratifying for us to have them join together to request the Coalition be the recipient of this statewide award this year. Laura and Janet thanked the representatives for this honor.

4. CONSENT AGENDA.

Laura returned to this part of the agenda as a quorum had been reached early in the presentation.

- a. Approval of Agenda for tonight. Agenda was unanimously approved. (motion- David Hicks, 2nd Chris Koefler)
- b. Approval of Minutes from June 16, 2007 meeting. Minutes were unanimously approved. (motion- David Hicks, 2nd Chris Koefler)

5. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT.

There was not an additional Executive Director's Report this month as it was tied into the above presentation. Janet did submit a written update on Coalition activities over the summer (since the

last Board meeting) to the Board prior to the meeting. Janet also distributed a handout that summarized the main Coalition goals for the upcoming year. . A financial overview statement was also handed out, as a companion to full financials that Mike had e-mailed, it was explained that the VPK Admin budget was “over” right now because of the start of VPK year and enrollment issues but that it will equalize over the course of the year.

6. OLD BUSINESS.

a. QCC/QRS update. Janet reported that the Coalition is really close to getting all of the funding for the QRS. The Coalition received a sizeable amount from the County, but is still waiting to hear from Wachovia. The start date is still on hold for this reason.

b. Budget Updates/legislative action. The Coalition has been able to make preparations in case of budget cutbacks by allocating the Infant and Toddler dollars differently. Also, child care slots are slightly underutilized right now as we are working on bringing in new children from the waitlist. If needed, we can hold back.

7. CHAIR REPORT and DISCUSSION.

a. Update on recruitment efforts. Laura reported that over the summer both Pauline and Mike had found possible candidates, but it is important for all members to continue looking for prospective new members. Laura will follow up and report back at the next meeting. This will be an ongoing issue to address as the Governor will not officially make any appointments if there are not at least 2 candidates for each open governor appointed seat.

b. Next meeting, regular meeting or retreat? Laura asked the group whether they felt that we need a “board retreat” this year. After some brief discussion it was decided that the goals and objectives outlined at the retreat last year are still valid. Members decided to take a look again at the retreat summary and goals from last year’s retreat at the next regular Board meeting and use additional regular board meetings as needed to continue that process. So this will be the primary focus of the next meeting, to review the goals and current strategic plan and see what areas require modification, additional discussion, etc.

8. ACTION ITEMS.

There were no action items.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

(There was no Public Comment.)

9. ANNOUNCEMENTS.

Janet announced and gave out invitations to the Glasser-Schoenbaum annual event on October 24th. All Board members are encouraged to attend and to invite others who would be interested.

10. ADJOURNMENT. The meeting was adjourned at 7:09pm. The next meeting will be on Wednesday, 17 October 2007.

Laura Benson, Vice Chair/Acting Chair