

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
17 October 2007

MINUTES

1. **ATTENDANCE.**

a. Voting Members Present:

Laura Benson	Tami Conetta	Laura Bauman	Jill Jacoby
Chris Kofler	Bill Little	Lois Natiello	Pauline Tracy

b. Non-Voting Members Present:

Dr. Norman Goldstein	Ken Modzelewski	Sue Loncaric
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c. Absent (Voting):

Steve Spangler	Mike Breton	David Hicks	Janice Mee
Kathryn Stuckey			

d. Absent (Non-Voting):

Hope Kinney	Lori White
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e. Staff:

Janet Kahn	Mike Miller	Linda Mason	Sandy Zook
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f. Visitors:

Linda Parsche	Randee Tolbert	Jennifer Ourednik	Eva Balcar
Emory Conetta			

2. **CALL TO ORDER.** Acting Chair (Laura Benson, 1st Vice Chair) called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

3. **CONSENT AGENDA.**

a. Approval of Agenda for tonight. Agenda was unanimously approved. (motion- Chris Kofler, 2nd Lois Natiello)

b. Approval of Minutes from June 16, 2007 meeting. Minutes were unanimously approved. (motion- Chris Kofler, 2nd Lois Natiello)

4. **CHAIR REPORT and DISCUSSION.**

a. Status of recruitment of new Board members. Laura asked all Board members to continue looking for prospective board members, and give their names to her. She has contacted one individual, but they were not able to do it because of other commitments at this time. She has been pursuing one other possibility but they have been unable to connect yet. She has 2 other individuals to contact as well.

b. Building Better Boards annual Self Assessment Process. Laura informed the Board that it is time to complete the annual BBB board self-assessment/evaluation. The web address and passwords will be sent out soon and board members are to log on and complete the survey just as they did last year. It is important to do this review each year and reflect on the Board's performance.

c. Discussion of November meeting. The next board meeting would normally be scheduled for the Wednesday before Thanksgiving. In addition, the room at the Landings where we meet is being renovated and will not be available. The Board unanimously decided to cancel the November meeting, as there is no pressing or urgent action items. Since the Board does not routinely meet in December, the next Board meeting will be in January.

d. Ear Institute Fundraiser dinner. Laura notified the board that she received an email from the Ear Institute for their upcoming fundraising dinner in which they will be honoring Dr. Glasser and will feature the ELC's partnership with them around hearing screenings. Since the ELC will be highlighted, she wanted the board to be aware of the event and to let them know that she as Chair

will represent the Board, unless another Board member is able to attend. may need to be present for the event.

PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION.

a. Review of Goals from 2006 Board retreat. The Board had decided that they did not need to have a Board retreat this Fall, but preferred to have a review of the goals previously established. Janet presented a power point presentation showing the Coalition's progress toward goals set by the board during the retreat November 2006. At that retreat the Board was asked to visualize the Coalition's annual report five years from now, and what they would like to see reported in it. The following are those "headlines"

- Every child in childcare in Sarasota County receive high quality care.
- Every family receives the support they need to nurture the learning potential of every child.
- Providers strive to maintain or improve the quality of their care.
- Donors and other community leaders step up to cover the cost of helping providers make quality gains.
- The chamber touts childcare quality as one of the 10 reasons to relocate to Sarasota.

From this list the Board created goals for the Coalition to work towards to achieve the vision of the Coalition. Some of the top goals are as listed below:

- All child care sites are of equal standards.
- There is widespread community investment in support of high quality child care.
- Business community recognizes importance of quality childcare/investments.
- A comprehensive Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS) is in place
- Providers are "happy" and earning a good living.
- Teachers will have 2 year degrees with corresponding better pay as better educated teachers will lead to positive outcomes for children.

Janet and Laura pointed out that the goals created from this retreat are not only timely, but also achievable. It is now one year since the retreat and the Coalition is poised to implement to QRIS which will assist providers with quality improvement. Now the Coalition needs assistance from the Board reaching the business community. It is important businesses realize childcare is an investment in the future, it reduces absenteeism, and affordable quality childcare makes it easier to attract good employees. The business community can support child care by providing financial or counseling or business mentoring to providers; also, by supporting quality childcare employers are supporting their employees. The Coalition needs the business community's assistance with supporting quality child care initiatives and policies at the local and state level.

b. Review/Discussion/Modification of Strategic Plan. The Board then discussed the Coalition's progression toward meeting the goals of the strategic plan, by picking out some of the specific goals and discussing the actual progress.

A. For the Coalition to implement a program to centrally recruit and train preschool teachers and substitutes at the community level.

The Substitute Training and Recruitment (STAR) program has been successfully implemented with over 512 substitute days used in the first year. Now the plan for 07-08 is to expand this successful model to include permanent teacher recruitment as well.

B. Strengthen the overall infrastructure of local child care sites through partnerships within the Quality Child Care Council, encourage investment of additional community dollars into child care system; promote an effective quality rating system.

C. Continue to successfully engage child care sites in quality improvement plans that lead to high quality sites, with positive outcomes for children.

D. The Coalition will develop and implement a Quality Rating Improvement System for child care sites and recognize those sites that exceed minimal licensing and basic legislative standards (in conjunction with any statewide system and/or with local community partners).

There has also been significant progress in achieving these goals. The Quality Child Care Council has set goals and expectations for the QRIS, which is waiting to hear from a couple of additional funders before it rolls out in January 2008.

E. Continue to provide onsite support, training and technical assistance to providers on working with children with special needs including those with challenging behaviors. Collaborate with community partners to address the mental health needs of young children.

F. The Coalition continues to sponsor an extensive system of provider trainings, mentoring and on-site technical assistance services for child care providers.

The Coalition is continuing with training and onsite support to sites that need it most through community partnerships with SCTI, the Florida Center and the Sarasota Partnership for Children's Mental Health. There continues to be extensive on site assistance with challenging children through the Building Better Behavior initiative.

G. Activities to promote effective transition and communication from/between preschool to Kindergarten.

Kindergarten checklists have assisted to connect and provide lines of communication between kindergarten and preschool teachers. In addition there has been recent discussion with the existing south county program through the GCCFV to facilitate transitions in K-12, and expanding that to the surrounding preschools.

H. In partnership with others, assess factors that influence working families' ability to access child care.

Janet reported this is an ongoing challenge and that we have fluctuations in our community. Enrollment in child care has recently decreased. This led into additional discussion on this topic.

Bill asked if the Coalition had hard data to show this decline. He has a meeting with the County coming up in which any information identifying trends would be helpful. Janet admitted there was not hard data at this point, but the Coalition could work on tracking that data, she also added the Coalition currently does not have a waiting list for scholarship care which is the first time in a while. We are bringing in families now. Many providers report openings and no waiting lists, for the first time in many years. School district enrollment is down overall, free/reduced lunch students have increased, and the number of homeless children has increased to over 2000 students.

Sue asked if there was a hotline parents could call to find local openings. Janet said that there is not, but it is something that has been discussed from time to time. It is important to balance the need to match families looking for care with those sites that have opening, with the educational component of the Child Care Resource and Referral services.

I. Effective communication about the work of the ELC, particularly reaching the business community.

There has been progress on this goal in that we have a Communications Plan, a revised logo, a great new tagline. We now need to move forward with this goal.

Tami suggested creating a script and a short power point the board could use to book presentations when they are in the community. The Board agreed this was a great idea. Laura Benson suggested creating a sub-committee to do that during the break before the Board meets again in January. Laura Benson, Lois, Pauline and Chris volunteered to work on this. Chris added that he thought the year end report was well done, provided great information and could be easily adapted into a power point/ 2 page handout for presentations. The Board had previously stated that they want to do a community event, distribute a "report to the community" taken from the annual report, and invite business leaders and partners to attend to get the word out about the Coalition's work and progress toward quality child care. Janet is working with Cheray on the Report to the Community and January is the targeted date for such a community meeting.

Chris added he could get presentations scheduled with the local Kiwanis Clubs, which has a lot of business people involved. Laura suggested the entire Board think of other community organizations, and associations, other boards they are involved in, etc that would be appropriate for a presentation and/or dissemination of information on the work of the ELC. She also reminded the group that often these groups are constantly looking for presenters for their meetings.

The Board agreed that rather than adding new goals to the strategic plan, they would like to focus all their energy into the Communications Plan goal, and creating a presentation message and getting it out into the community over the next year. The Board feels that it is their responsibility to take on the communication piece to the business community.

Bill also suggested that when marketing the QRIS that the name is misleading. Renaming it to encompass everything the QRIS can do, and emphasizing that it is more a system of support and improvement of quality, than a rating system. He also stated that when speaking with the County Commissioners they were caught up on the rating system piece when really the program encompasses a whole lot more in quality improvement. The Board agreed that the name should make it clear that it is quality improvement for child care, not just rating the child care sites. Bill suggested QICC- Quality Improvement Child Care. Pauline suggested tying in the tag line "Ready For Learning, Ready For Life" with the title. The Board agreed working on the name is something the Communication Committee, who will be working on the power point, can also work on.

5. ACTION ITEMS.

a. New 3-year terms for Laura Benson, Laura Bauman, and Pauline Tracy. (Motion- Chris Kofler, 2nd- Tami Conetta)

6. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT.

a. State Monitoring of Files- Janet informed the Board that the Coalition received an AWI state monitoring this week focused on eligibility for both SR and VPK for the 06-07 program year. Close to 200 child files were reviewed and all of the VPK provider files, which involved 180 teachers and their credentials, etc There were some findings and areas for improvement noted. Staff and management considered this to be a good experience to see what issues emerged and a good opportunity for technical assistance. The team that did the audit commented that overall our files were good, they had many positives comments in the exit interview and identified some best practices. They also specifically stated that they could see the commitment level from the staff and a dedication to our mission. They also added that our fraud protection was amongst the best in the state. It was also stated that it should be expected there would be some findings. We have 14 days to respond to the preliminary findings and either concur or challenge them, after which an official written report will be issued. There may be some areas that will require a corrective action plan. Janet and staff were not surprised by any of the findings and believe that we have already put in place necessary procedures to address them.

b. Audit Update. Janet reported that the yearly financial audit has almost also been completed. The Accountant is waiting for the final confirmation letter from AWI to complete it. The final audit should be ready for Board approval in January.

c. Personnel Update. Janet announced that this would be Mike's last Board Meeting because he is retiring. She thanked Mike for his hard work and reminded the Board that Mike has been with the Coalition since the beginning, and his knowledge will be hard to replace. Janet is currently interviewing and fortunately has a very strong candidate with whom discussions are almost finalized. Also, Sandy, who coordinates our Substitute recruitment program, does a range of other task and takes the minutes at the Board meetings will also be leaving, she is relocating out of the area.

d. State level agreement between Head Start and Early Learning Coalitions: Janet informed the Board about a state level agreement between Head Start and Early Learning Coalitions. Janet had forwarded that agreement to the Board prior to the meeting. Hope Kinney had wanted the Board to be aware of this. We have always collaborated with our local HS program but for many others across the state this is something new.

e. There will be a Governor's Children Summit in January in Orlando, to have a topic of early childhood discussed at the state level. The Coalition was asked to recommend a representative from the medial field, business and communications. Janet had also asked our local partner, Success by 6 to recommend some individuals to represent our community. Janet took the opportunity to ask Bill Little if he might be available as the Health representative. Laura stated the she needed more information and specific details before discussing other representatives,

especially business people. Janet will try to get additional specific information and forward it to the Board. This summit is important because it is recognizing the importance of early childhood by the Governor and will bring a higher degree of attention.

f. Whole Child Update: Janet also wanted to update the Board on the progress of the previous Whole Child project. Janet and Nance Enoch from the United Way are working on finalizing a two-year update report for the community. There have been some questions recently as to what is happening with this project, and we want the community know that many different community entities have stepped up to take on parts of this project. The Whole Child was originally intended as a catalyst for the community to accomplish the overall goals set through Whole Child. Janet will be emailing the Board additional information regarding this for them to share with others in the community.

g Janet mentioned that in January there will be several informational items for the Board to officially approve. For example, AWI requires that the Board “approve” the Coalition’s approved curriculum listing, the ones that staff have authorized providers to use. There are other such items that require Board approval but given how our Board remains focused on strategic issues and not on operational details, this will be provided to the Board members as informational pieces on a consent agenda approval basis. They are more than welcome to ask for additional information if needed.

7. OLD BUSINESS.

a. VPK Updates. We are almost at our target number of serving 1600 children.

b. Budget updates/legislative actions. The Coalition is doing fine. Janet reported that the Coalition is prepared for a 4% reduction in case of budget cuts at the legislative level. We have delayed some quality expenses, and staff raised are effective November 1, instead of July 1. In addition right now we are under enrolled in SR. But so far AWI has indicated that most of the cuts will be absorbed through a reduction in administrative state positions. VPK staff costs are higher in August and September but should decrease every month to be within the 5% cap.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Randee Tolbert announced she is the new local representative for Florida Family Child Care Homes. She also wanted to mention that family child care homes have seen a decrease in enrollment as well, and mentioned that having a hotline for parents to call would be helpful. Bill suggested calling Alberto who is in charge of the County’s 211 hotline. They could create a field for centers to register their openings. Sue suggested linking it into the myflorida website since providers already use it for job openings. Randee said that Sandy Carpenter emails the Coalition family child care openings after their meetings each month. Janet stated that clearly this is a priority and something Coalition staff will continue to work on.

9. ANNOUNCEMENTS.

Ken announced the Venice YMCA received a grant from the Community Foundation because they are building a “Center for Excellence.” The Venice YMCA center will continue their commitment to high quality infant care with this new center.

10. ADJOURNMENT. The meeting was adjourned at 7:13pm. The next meeting will be on Wednesday, 16 January 2008.

Laura Benson, Vice Chair/ Acting Chair