

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 March 2007

MINUTES

Revised 16 April 07

1. ATTENDANCE.

a. Voting Members Present:

Jill Jacoby	Laura Bauman	Janice Mee	Laura Benson
Pauline Tracy	Lois Natiello	Tami Conetta	Chris Kofler

b. Non-Voting Members Present:

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

Lisa Glenn	Steve Spangler	David Hicks	Bill Little
Kathryn Stuckey			

d. Absent (Non-Voting):

Ken Modzelewski	Lori White
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e. Staff:

Janet Kahn	Mary Wolf	Linda Mason	Mike Miller
Sandy Zook			

f. Visitors:

Linda Parsche	Jennifer Ourednik	Jackie Fountaine
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- 2. CALL TO ORDER.** Acting Chair (Laura Benson, 1st Vice Chair) called the meeting to order at 6:03 pm, and began by welcoming Linda Parsche with OEL who will now be attending the Board meetings. Laura deferred the formal part of the agenda until a quorum was reached shortly after.

3. CHAIR REPORT.

Laura Benson reported that the Board received Kim Binkley- Seyer's formal resignation from the Board due to a personal family emergency. Her resignation letter was submitted to AWI and the Governor's office, and we are currently awaiting a new Governor appointed chair. Laura herself will submit another application to the Governor's office. Also, Laura informed that the Board that Lisa Glenn had to resign for personal reasons as well, and now we are in need of one private sector seat from within the community. Laura encouraged Board members to recruit and as they do they should inform prospective Board member candidates the ELC Board is efficient and it is a great way to give back to the community. Chris asked for clarification regarding the process for private sector seats, as he assumed that all were appointed by the Governor, and therefore had to go through the lengthy questionnaire process. Laura clarified that was only for the 3 seats that are appointed by the Governor, and that the rest of the 1/3 private sector are from within the community and go through the required local process, which is much easier.

Janet also took the opportunity to convey that Kim, the former chair, specifically stated in her resignation letter she was very pleased to have served with a fine Board and staff.

4. CONSENT AGENDA.

a. Approval of Agenda for Tonight. Agenda was unanimously approved. (*motion- Lois Natiello 2nd- Laura Bauman*)

b. Approval of Minutes from February 21, 2007 Meeting. Minutes were unanimously approved. (*motion- Lois Natiello, 2nd- Laura Bauman*)

Chris then asked what constitutes a quorum and Mike Miller informed him it is when over half of the voting members are present. This led to discussion reminding everyone who is eligible to be a

private sector member of the Board. Those eligible cannot be in a government position, or a public entity, cannot be a child care director, or benefit from the child care industry. They can be retired from business, as long as they had been in a position of authority within the business. Tami asked about having a student representative from the student leadership project (STAR) in our community. They provide a great deal of insight and a fresh perspective. Because the legislation is written the way it is, it was discussed that the Board cannot create their own slots, such as a non-official board member, although there are some allowable optional positions. Laura agreed to contact the STAR Program to see if there were any students involved who own their own business and would be interested in sitting on the Board. It was also mentioned that Young Professional Group or the Community Foundation- Board Source would be good options. Janet stated that in fact Laura Bauman had come to us through the CF Board program. She agreed to post another listing for our ELC.

5. PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION.

Current ELC Committees and Areas of Focus. Janet handed out a packet containing current flyers and information given to parents, an updated fact sheet which outlines what the Coalition does, and handouts outlining the ELC's committee structure and community entities who partner with the Coalition to promote early education. Janet also informed the Board that much work has been done on trying to come up with a viable 25 word statement which sums up what the Coalition does. This would be sent to the ELC Board soon. She also mentioned that a VPK article was recently published in *Mommy Magazine*, and there was a quote in there regarding what the Coalition does that seemed to resonate with a parent, or "the community at large" so we want to look at that as well.

Laura then asked Janet to discuss the committee structure within the Coalition; there have been many changes made to the committee structure over the past few years as a result of Board training on best practices, etc. Please refer to the attached Committee Structure flow chart for further information.

- Board Committees
 - The Executive Committee is comprised of the Board officers and only meets during emergencies and is incorporated in the Continuity of Operations (COOP) Plan. The ELC Board members had decided long ago that they wanted significant discussion on substantive issues to be held at the full Board meetings.
 - The Budget and Finance Committee meets every month and routinely looks at the current budget, utilization projections and all the issues that correspond with that. The treasurer of the Board holds the Chair position on that committee.
 - The Communications Committee has not been a standing committee, but the Board did vote to make this committee a joint committee with the Quality Child Care Council's Communications Committee.
 - Our Strategic Direction Committee will be renamed the Governance Committee under the new bylaws currently being worked on, so that it accurately reflects the work that this committee encompasses. It will address board leadership and development, nomination of Board members, and strategic vision and risk assessment. It is important that the risk assessment is separate from the Budget and Finance Committee function (as per best practice).
 - Ad Hoc workgroups are always created as needed. Currently a committee has formed to work on bylaw revisions.
- Staff or Program Committees
 - The Professional Development and Quality Committee is a recent combination of the prior two committees: Staff Development and Training Committee and the Quality Committee. This committee discusses a wide variety of issues including professional development and quality enhancement, and then from these discussions ad hoc work groups are formed.
- Quality Child Care Council Advisory Committees
 - Quality Rating System
 - The Communications Committee, which again will be a joint committee with the Board's Communication Committee.

- Sustainability Committee

Laura commented that this gives the Board a clear understanding of how the Coalition works and allows the Board to keep an executive focus. She also offered if there was any committee a member of the Board was interested in serving on, ask and it can be arranged.

Janet then mentioned there are many community entities which either the Board members or Coalition Staff serves on. Please review the Primary Related Community Entities Served On handout.

- Sarasota Partnership for Children's Mental Health
- Success By 6
- Women's Initiative
- Healthy Start Coalition
- Early Steps/ FDLERS/ Early Success (MCC)
- Sarasota County Technical Institute Advisory Council
- Sarasota Community Organizations Active in Disaster (COAD)
- CSI- Health
- Community Alliance
- Child Care Associations
 - ECA
 - FCCH Associations
 - Faith Based

Janet and Laura pointed out that the Coalition works with many partners throughout the community with cross over, and it is a network of support partners. She also added that if there are any committees or community groups the Board is interested in becoming more involved, let her know and she can direct them to the different work groups available. The Board notified Janet of some additions and corrections on the sheet. Janet agreed to make those changes and re-send the flowcharts with the corrections. Laura stated that the Coalition works to integrate the community through collaboration and sharing of resources in the early education field, and this chart is one example of the Coalition fulfilling its original legislative intent.

b. Child Care- overview of current issues.

Since the current Quality Child Care Council is well on its way toward addressing one of the main areas of the ELC Board (*a focus to improve quality of child care sites*), discussion at the ELC can now look toward other issues impacting the child care industry. A list was shared of some of the key issues facing child care, and these issues can frame strategic discussion at the ELC meetings, tonight and in future meetings. Please also refer to the handout for the list:

- Quality of Child Care- the Quality Rating System addresses improving the quality of sites through a comprehensive system of support and accountability.
- Workforce Issues- Currently 47% of Sarasota child care workers only have a high school diploma. This is an area where we have lost ground in recent years, as many of those who achieved a Child Development Associates (CDA) have left the field. Other issues tied to this are low wages and high turnover in child care centers. Janet pointed out that there needs to be a focus on investing, encouraging and providing assistance to keep those who earn CDAs in child care. The Board discussed programs available through Sarasota County Technical Institute and Manatee Community College for teachers looking to earn their CDA, and the availability of earning college credit through CDA classes. Another issue raised was the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). Laura and Janice began discussing that some CDAs may have left the field to become teacher's aides in the public school district because of the pay difference and for benefits. However, due to lower enrollment rates, aides are being released from the Sarasota County School District. Many have been rehired, but if the trend of lower enrollment continues, many of those aides may be looking for positions. These people, despite the difference in pay, could be enticed to work in child care centers.

Janet then led the Board into a discussion regarding NAEYC recently changing standards for teachers no longer just accepting a CDA, and requiring that all teachers obtain a minimum of an Associates degree (and eventually Bachelors) for child care sites to receive NAEYC Accreditation. To begin addressing this issue, SCTI and MCC are teaming up to provide teachers who complete the CDA through SCTI to be given 12 hours college credit. Also, for teachers who received a CDA through other programs, such as the YMCA Gold Seal Project, an additional class is being

designed for these teachers to take so they also will be eligible for the 12 hours of college credit. The Board agreed that by doing this it will make a difference for teachers who have received their CDA, and now need to begin coursework for their Associates degree. Hope reported that at her site teachers receive their 40 hour training over the course of a month as they work. Children First has also partnered with MCC for their teachers to begin taking CDA classes as they work, and they have 10 teachers currently enrolled in the program. Hope also mentioned the T.E.A.C.H. program has been giving scholarships, which is how many of the teachers are paying for the CDA classes. We need to keep reminding teachers to take advantage of these type of programs. Passport is another option for many. T.E.A.C.H. does not always have the funds to cover all who apply within a given year.

- Capacity Issues- Potential child care centers that are looking to open new sites, or looking to expand, are having difficulties finding space and cannot afford paying the impact fees. A child care facility planning to open in North Port was unable to because of the impact fees they were going to be charged. North Port is a fast growing area, and the demand for child care there is increasing. Also, the child care center had planned to open an infant center which is the highest demanded area of child care. Hope, with Children First, is also opening a site in North Port in the fall, and they already have a waiting list. The board discussed the implications of these impact fees and briefly discussed advocacy plans, getting the public involved, and telling the stories of families who cannot find care and child care sites who cannot afford to open. The Board agreed that this is a very important issue facing child care in Sarasota County, and therefore decided that they would like to discuss this more in depth at the next board meeting.
- Infant Care- As mentioned briefly under the capacity issues, there is a lack of infant care in the community. VPK is much more profitable; infants are more costly because ratios for infants are much lower than in the older age groups. The Board needs to look at possible incentives and ways to encourage providers to open quality infant rooms. There are more young families and larger families in the community than several years ago.
- Business Expertise of Inexperienced and Overwhelmed Directors- There is a strong need to assist new child care providers as they open to make good business decisions and give them all their options. Finding new and innovative ways to assist current directors with increasing education and organizational skills is equally important.

6. ACTION ITEMS.

There were no action items.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

(There was no Public Comment.)

7. OLD BUSINESS.

- a. Bylaws Clean-up and Changes- Status Janet reported Mike is continuing work on this project with a couple of Board member's initial input, and is hopeful that it will be completed and ready for presentation next month.
- b. School Readiness Request for Additional Funding- Update The Coalition received \$68,000, which along with the measures already taken to manage the budget, should help us enough to come close to our allocation. Janet reported that hopefully we will also be able to open the waiting list at the end of April, knowing that once you stop intake that it takes several weeks to pull in new families. The goal is to start the new fiscal year with a good number of children enrolled to start. Upon mentioning this, Tami asked to know the number of children on the waiting list currently for scholarship care. It was reported approximately 225, with new requests coming in every day.
- c. Communications Plan - Update Janet informed the Board that it is still being worked on by the consultant, and the targeted date is hopefully the next Quality Child Care Council on April 4th. After that it will be presented to the Board.

8. DISCUSSION ITEMS.

a. Legislative Issues- Two items of interest: (1) the bill to consolidate the Early Learning Offices under the Governor have moved through some committees, as well as (2) the bill for the Quality Rating System Pilot Project. But there are many more steps involved. There are other bills related to children's issues. There is lots of discussion as to qualifications for VPK teachers for example. After being asked by the Board, Janet agreed to forward a sample of one of the many Legislative Updates she receives each week to the Board.

It was asked by the Board if Coalitions will struggle to meet the 5% margin the Coalition must stay within for their budget. Janet reported that yes, many do still struggle with this, and many have to compromise on monitoring and/or offering technical assistance. Unfortunately there is no real attempt to correct this in the current legislative session. For us this year, since we are serving 300 additional children, the Coalition has additional dollars to work with this year. Our Coalition is monitoring VPK expenditures carefully and we are being very frugal. But often there are systems issues that require costly staff time to fix. For example Janet also reported that 1600 of our VPK files are over by a penny because the EFS system is not capable of handling rounding. This is something that EFS is working on, and Linda Parsche reported that they are looking at several different ways to resolve this issue without requiring the Coalitions to spend time working on it, or taking any measures against the Coalitions and child care centers.

b. Program Updates.

- VPK- Janet notified the Board that 500 parents are already in the enrollment process for fall VPK, including those scheduled later this month for intake. The full outreach has not yet begun so we are ahead of our timeline from last year. So far there are only 9 children enrolled for the summer VPK program.
- Children's Week- It is next week, and Janet wrote a guest editorial for the Pelican Press which everyone should look for. The Child Care Connection will have a celebration in the lobby with gifts for families and children. Children in local child care centers drew pictures of their hands. Some were sent on the Tallahassee to be displayed in the Capitol, and others were saved and will be displayed at the Child Care Connection and local Sarasota County Libraries. The county commissioners signed a proclamation that has been framed and will also be on display at CCC.
- Substitute Training And Recruitment Program- numbers of substitutes being used are increasing every month.

9. ANNOUNCEMENTS.

There were no other announcements.

- 10. ADJOURNMENT.** The meeting was adjourned at 7:23 pm. The next meeting will be on Wednesday, 18 April 2007.

Laura Benson, 1st Vice Chair/Acting Chair