

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

15 October 2008

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE.

a. Voting Members Present:

Tami Conetta	Mike Breton	David Hicks	Jill Jacoby
Bill Little	Janice Mee	Lois Natiello	Pauline Tracy

b. Non-Voting Members Present:

Dr. Norman Goldstein Soja Figaredo-Alberts

c. Absent (Voting):

Laura Benson	Steve Spangler	Chris Kofler	Laura Bauman
Kathryn Stuckey			

d. Absent (Non-Voting):

Hope Kinney Ken Modzelewski

e. Staff:

Linda Mason	Marjorie Fondacaro	James Pawlak
Mary Wolf		

f. Visitors:

Eva Balcar	Randee Tolbert	Reginal Williams
Royal Logan	Sandy Carpenter	Doreen Moskowitz

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 pm by 1st Vice Chair, Tami Conetta

2. CONSENT AGENDA.

a. Approval of Agenda for tonight. Agenda was unanimously approved.

b. Approval of Minutes from September 16th 2008 and the June 18, 2008 meeting (June minutes had not been approved at the September meeting). Minutes were unanimously approved. (Motion-Pauline Tracy 2nd Janice Mee)

3. CHAIR REPORT.

Tami Conetta is chairing the board meeting as Laura Benson had a scheduling conflict for this evening. Tami stated that there is no official Chair's report for tonight but asked Janet to introduce our guests/auditors.

Janet introduced our monitoring team from AWI/OEL, Reginal Williams and Royal Logan, who were both present for tonight's meeting, and also acknowledged the other program team members, Christine Johnson and Andrea Raines, as well as the Eligibility monitoring team members Ginger Tate, LaToya Sampson and Junior Tate, who have already completed their work.

Janet stated that the team had spent several days with the Coalition this week to conduct both our annual eligibility and once every three-year program monitoring. Attending the Board meeting is one of the final tasks involved. The team has spent lots of time interviewing Board members in person as well as some telephone interviews with Board members, interviewing staff, talking with community

partners and meetings with providers. It is an extensive monitoring that covers all aspects of our work including governance structure, program operations and management, implementation of our Plan, educational service delivery system, child care resource and referral, and client/provider files.

Janet thanked the team for their professionalism and their work. Staff appreciated that for as much work that staff put in to prepare for the monitoring, it was evident that the AWI team had prepared as well and read through all of the materials submitted during the self assessment process. Reginal Williams, as the team leader, thanked the staff and the Board members for their time and stated that it was evident that staff had put in a lot of time and effort to prepare for this monitoring.

Tami concluded by stating that she and Laura Benson had spent time with Regional Williams and Royal Logan today and reviewed our Board Governance procedures, history of the board and where we are currently, and she is pleased with our progress and know that we will continue as a Board to make great progress.

4. PRESENTATION.

Highlights of FY 2008 official Annual Report submitted to AWI

Janet presented a power point with highlights from the official Annual Report that the Coalition submits to the state. She clarified that the time period covered is the fiscal year, July 2007 through June 2008.

How was this year different? Last year we had open intake and enrollment all year and had difficult time reaching full capacity. This year we were fighting deficit, stopped intake early in the year and only re-opened it for May and June. Attrition was low, protective services and mandated referrals were steady all year. We requested and received an additional 175K from AWI during their annual realignment of funds. Due to planned budget cuts that we knew were coming, staff was scaled back, responsibilities reorganized.

One significant highlight of the year was the implementation of the *Look for the Stars* quality improvement system. 142 first year participants, much more than the 85 originally expected for the first year in initial projections. We are actually at our second year target already in terms of numbers. This shows the strong commitment of our local providers (as well as our community) to high quality care. Aggregate data shows that the two highest areas were positive interaction and language/early literacy. These are two areas that we have focused intently on over the past several years, so it shows there can be an impact.

Summary of the numbers: Served 3564 children in both SR and VPK. 95% of the children we serve are in the 0-5 age group as prioritized by the Board several years ago. Almost all other Coalitions still serve 30% or more school age children, which are much less costly to serve and therefore they can serve many more children. Janet commented that this is important to note when looking at comparison reports between Coalitions as to numbers of children served and costs. Other numbers: 86 VPK providers in 07-08, up from 51 the first year and 72 last year. (Currently we have 91 VPK providers).

Bill Little asked what percent were we at 4 years ago in terms of age mix of children served in SR program and Janet responded that we too were at around 30%.

Developmental Screenings: 1772 children received ASQ developmental screenings, with about 25% requiring some follow up. Over 3500 children received hearing and vision screenings with 340 requiring follow up exams. This is a large increase due to the effective partnerships we have to assist us with this and due to providers taking advantage of the service.

Sonia Figaredo-Alberts asked if the hearing and vision information could be shared with the district as all children coming into Kindergarten get screened. If the district knew the children

already screened, there could be some potential savings of time and resources. Janet stated that we could certainly work this out and agreed that she and Sonia should discuss this further.

Warmline calls and behavioral support: 129 centers received some sort of support from the Warmline. Well over 400 children received some sort of intervention. 99 children were served in the BBB, Building Better Behavior program, and 144 total were referred

Bill asked Janet to clarify the 99 vs. 144. Janet explained that the 144 represented the total number of children referred for behavioral concerns identified by the teachers, but that upon assessment it was more of a training issue for the teacher or an environmental issue with the classroom. There was some general discussion as to the types of intervention and assistance that might be provided. Bill asked if this then translated into some formal trainings that the ELC would sponsor within the community, at our annual conference, etc. Janet confirmed that yes this would be one area that would determine training needs.

Sonia confirmed that behavioral concerns are a huge problem for the district as well with entering Kindergarteners who are struggling in their environment and truly in crisis. Despite some excellent services in the community for young children, there still needs to be more focus on this to ensure that the mental health needs of young children are met.

Bill commented that there is a wealth of data now to delineate how the services are making a difference and the impact on the community. Looking back over the years, there is powerful evidence of a real systems change that has had an impact on children beyond just learning. Janice Mee agreed and thought that this is an area for further work/analysis in conjunction with the Partnership for Children's Mental Health. There was additional discussion as to how this ties in with last month's review of Raymond Kaiser's (former chair) long term vision for a system to ensure that no children would fall through the cracks and that there would be early identification and appropriate follow up.

Transition Checklists: Almost 1300 kindergarten transition checklists from 61 sites were received, up from 600 the first year and 1000 the second year. Janet explained the intent of the checklist as being to not only ensure that there is some mechanism for communicating about the child to the Kindergarten teachers, but also to facilitate a discussion with the parent regarding the child at the point of transition. Janet shared that a recent survey with Kindergarten teachers indicated that most of them found the information very helpful and offered some suggestions for items to include, but that there was one school team that did not find them helpful at all. Janet asked for further suggestions.

Trainings: 1900 teachers/directors participated in 100 workshops, 437 individuals visited the resource room

Substitute Teacher program, now called STRDE- 18 teachers provided 1000 sub days or 7000 hours of sub time. This is an increase from the first year of 500 days and 4000 hours. It currently runs fairly smoothly, but one "positive" effect of the poor economy is that with census being lower in some site and more people out of work, sites have reportedly an easier time recruiting qualified teachers and they need less of them. We will evaluate each year the ongoing needs for this program.

Other areas of focus were around communication about our role and economic impact of child care. Our 2008 Report to the Community was produced and widely distributed, although our community meetings were not well attended, the report was subsequently mailed with a cover letter from Laura Benson, as chair. The Economic Impact paper was produced. We need to link more strongly with businesses and dialogue on the connection between child care and economic development as well as on early learning and future success. There also needs to be both public and private investment in early care and education.

There was discussion as to joining the local chambers as a means to connect more strongly with the business community (*Note: Janet later confirmed that this is an allowable cost and the*

ELC has since joined 3 of the chambers). Janice Mee reiterated that joining the Chamber of Commerce does give us a chance to reach out to our business leaders in the community

Mike Breton mentioned that he sat on the education government issues and transportation committee for the chamber in Venice and this could serve as a vehicle where we could introduce ourselves. We could easily have a brief synopsis every month of what's happening in the Early Learning Coalition. Everyone agreed that this was a great idea.

Areas for the future: Revamping training approach to include Core Competencies, more training series and documented follow up to ensure retention and implementation of the knowledge gained, focus on the challenge of reaching the parents of the 50% of children not in care to ensure that they are receiving appropriate information for children to enter school ready, strengthening partnerships in the midst of competing for the same limited resources, remaining fully compliant with more demand and less resources, and maintain the positive momentum of the Look for the Stars program.

Tami commented that she is always impressed to hear the report of the activities of the year, realizes how busy staff is, and can see the positive impact the ELC is having on the community. The other members agreed.

5. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT.

Written report was submitted prior to meeting- Janet had no additions to the report.

Tami wanted to remind everyone that November 13th is the Look for the Stars official Kick Off celebration at the Historic Spanish Point, 8:30-10 am

Janet mentioned that the county and the cities of Sarasota, Venice and North Port as well as the School Board are all doing official Proclamations to be read into the record and proclaiming Nov 13th as Quality Child Care day in Sarasota. Then at the event there will be a ceremonial signing of a "community proclamation."

6. OLD BUSINESS.

a. QCC/ QIS updates -already provided in the context of the above discussions

b. Audit Committee update- Mike Breton commented that there is no update since the last meeting. Plan is for Janet to arrange for an appropriately noticed meeting between Mike Breton and Laura Benson to move this forward, it needed to wait until after the election given Laura's focus on that.

7. FINANCE Report

James reviewed the financial report distributed at the meeting, that includes the preliminary quarterly financial data. We are within all thresholds, although the VPK admin is still high, but projected to go down once all children enrolled are paid for.

8. ACTION ITEMS.

Lois Natiello provided a brief summary of the Nominating Committee meeting and stated that the committee is recommending for approval Lisa Williams from Suncoast Christian Academy as the new Faith Based Representative. Tami made a motion for the Board to accept the committee's recommendation, this does not require a 2nd. Tami asked for any discussion, hearing none, *The Board unanimously accepted the committee's nomination.*

Lois also indicated that Janet had been asked to engage the other candidates in the work of the ELC in whatever way possible. Tami who also sits on this committee mentioned that the other 2 candidates had great potential. She commented that the board needs to identify individuals who can become future Board members and involve them in committees or work groups as appropriate.

Tami also mentioned that the now vacant Private Provider (child care) position (due to Ken reaching term limits) is the next one to be filled and applications for that position will be requested. The Nominating Committee will meet again before the November meeting and hopes to have a candidate for that seat to recommend for approval.

Lois retires in May 2009 and at that time there will need to be a new appointment from DCF. There may also be a private sector business seat open if Laura Bauman does not continue given that she is now a new and first time mom.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Randee Tolbert commented that she is part of the Look for the Stars program and that although she is not required to attend, she has been attending the QIS training series for the family child care providers and has enjoyed them.

9. NEW BUSINESS

Executive Director Evaluation and Contract : Laura Benson is still working on the evaluation of Janet and that should be completed shortly. Janet explained that she was raising the issue of an official contract at this time because of the recent events with the Manatee Coalition resulting in unexpected termination of staff. Janet is requesting an official contract that outlines expectations and in particular outlines a process for termination of employment with some protections and severance. Several Board members thought that such a contract was in place and agreed that this was necessary and can certainly be provided. Janet will obtain samples from other Coalitions and Tami will pull samples as well. A short- term work group will then meet to finalize this by the January meeting.

Retreat and new Strategic Plan: Given that most of the short and long-term goals that were established in the last strategic plan have been accomplished, it is time for a new retreat and meaningful plan for the next several years. There was discussion as to the timing of the retreat. Everyone agreed that the planning should wait until after the holidays. David Hicks mentioned that there might be some items/issues that come up in the AWI monitoring report that might impact potential topics and wondered when that report will be done. (sometime in January). Bill asked when the new Plan was due as we are coming to the end of the current three year Plan. Janet responded that it would be due around July but that there has been no guidance issued yet on the new Plans so there would likely be an extension on the existing Plans. All agreed that this is a good time to reassess where we are now as well as to reflect back on the original "Platinum Plan", and articulate a vision going forward. March was proposed as a potential timeframe for the retreat, using a regular Board meeting, but with an extended time as a first meeting, with follow up meetings as needed.

10. ANNOUNCEMENTS.

Although Ken Modzelewski is not here for his last official Board meeting, the Board wants the record to reflect their appreciation of and acknowledgement for his service to the Board as one of the founding members, and serving 2 full 3-year terms, he has now reached term limits. Tami read the statement on the memento that Janet will deliver to him in person.

Reggie thanked everyone again for the time, hospitality and effective preparations for the monitoring visit.

11. ADJOURNMENT.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:06pm