

EARLY LEARNING COALITION OF SARASOTA COUNTY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

School Board of Sarasota County, Brown Awning Building
The Landings, 1960 Landings Boulevard, Sarasota
6:00 PM – September 16, 2009

MINUTES

1. ATTENDANCE

a. Voting Members Present:

Laura Bauman	Mike Breton	Tami Conetta
David Hicks	Jill Jacoby	Chris Kofler
Kathryn Stuckey	Pauline Tracy	John Stump
Amy Tuck-Farrington		

b. Non-Voting Members Present:

Lisa Williams	Connie Snyder
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c. Absent (Voting):

Bill Little	Janice Mee	Steve Spangler
Cheryle Williams		

d. Absent (Non-Voting):

Sonia Figaredo-Alberts	Hope Kinney
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e. Staff:

Janet Kahn	Mary Wolf	James Pawlak
Valerie Walton		

f. Visitors:

Raphael Gomez	Barbara Schimmel	Jennifer Ourednik
Judy Corso	Nicole Parker	

2. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:00. Tami Conetta welcomed everyone and asked everyone to introduce themselves as we had new board members who would be recommended for approval to the board tonight..

3. CONSENT AGENDA

Tami asked for a motion to approve the consent agenda. Motion passed.

4. PRESENTATIONS:

Janet reminded the group that Laura Bauman had suggested at the June meeting that at each Board meeting, there be something shown or shared to remind us all why we do our work and make it "real."

Janet showed the Board a video from the Ounce of Prevention group. This very powerful and effective video demonstrates the importance of investing in the early years. The Board then discussed how such a tool could be used for a variety of purposes to educate the public. It is short, conveys the message very effectively and has a significant immediate impact on viewers. Copies of the DVD have been ordered for Board members and staff to use.

The final LEAF commercial that is currently running was also shown which features ELC staff.

Janet then presented a brief power point that identified for the Board some of the current "hot topics" for early care and education in our state. These are issues that the Board needs to be aware of and they will also likely be discussed at future board meetings and/or have impact on our work.

The following are the “hot topic” issues were identified:

Assessment: how children are assessed; debate over the tools, whether the tools are truly measuring school readiness, accurately showing progress of children, are they developmentally appropriate (i.e. new tools to measure early literacy and reading skills) , what are they being used for and is that appropriate (i.e. accountability for VPK)

Social Emotional issues: the continued need to focus on this area to support children, the issue of challenging behavior, increasing in young children, children additionally experiencing the stress of their parents/families in bad economic times

Funding issues: ELC’s funding was reduced by the legislature across the board, for us locally it is a \$337,000 permanent cut to core funding, currently being replaced with temporary ARRA funds, we will need to carefully monitor utilization and manage budget, one of the legislative issue/focus for ELAC is to restore these funds, children will most likely need to be disenroll when ARRA funds are depleted, children being enrolled now are informed that service is time limited

Reaching all children, not just those in subsidized program/support all families: This has always been a part of our overall mission. The issue is even more in the forefront now given the fact that many children have now been pulled out of care due to economic reasons and these children are either at home, or in other care situations that may or may not meet the early learning needs of those children. These children may lose skills achieved and/or lose the benefits of social emotional support, interacting with peers, etc. In addition, parents/families in times of stress need additional supports overall

Outcome/Indicators. Continues to be a focus overall. Need to be able to measure true impact of work; this is also a focus within our local community with committees looking at this (i.e. positive youth development workgroup)

AWI’s Statewide Framework:

Screening children, ensuring follow up

Assessing quality of programs

Professional workforce, Build now upon the Core Competencies, career ladder,

AWI’s current framework for focus of work falls into three areas: Screening of Children (community screenings); Assessing quality programs (looking for consistency across the state); Professional workforce issues including: 1. Coordinated professional development system. 2. Build upon core competencies. (Janet mentioned that in Sarasota we began this process last year for all of our trainings) 3. Establish a registry for Early Childhood teachers putting them on a career pathway in several different areas of domain to include teachers, mentors, directors and trainers. 4. Career Ladders and push towards degrees. 5. Supports.

5. CHAIR REPORT

Tami reported that she was unable to attend the recent ELAC Statewide meeting of the ELC Chairs but will be attending the next scheduled meeting in December which should be covering the Legislative session, budgeting issues as well as the areas Janet just went over. Tami also reported that her application for Board Chair has been submitted to the Governor’s office and currently AWI is recognizing her as the Interim Chair.

6. ACTION ITEMS

A. Election of Vice Chair positions/ Finalize current officers:

Tami reported there are two people being recommended for the two Vice Chair positions: Amy Tuck-Farrington as First Voce Chair and Mike Breton has agreed to be our second vice chair. In the role of Treasurer Steve Spangler is being recommended to continue. Motion to approve recommended officers was made by Pauline Tracy, seconded by Kathy Stuckey. Motion approved.

B. Appointment of representative for Board seat representing children with disabilities:

Tami reported that this position has been vacant since Dr. Goldstein's passing. Judith Corso from Early Steps is being recommended to take this position. Judith is an Occupational Therapist by trade, has worked in the community for 10 years primarily with children birth through three, helped develop an Early Intervention program for Military Families in Germany and currently sits on the Florida Interagency Coordinating Council for infant and toddlers which advises the Department of Health. She is well known in the early care community and has often done trainings for the ELC.

C. Nomination and approval of new private sector member:

Tami introduced potential Board member Nicole Parker for a private sector seat. Nicole is employed by Urban Trust Bank, a mission based bank whose target clients are those typically underserved by typical banks...She recently moved to the area from Michigan where she has previous board experience with the Perry Preschool in Ann Harbor as well as the Chamber of Commerce. Her application has also been approved for nomination by the EDC. Tami stated that the nominating committee did not have an official meeting but they did review her application and by email concurred to bring forward to the full Board for a vote. Motion to approve Nicole Parker's application was made by Tami Conetta, seconded by Laura Bauman. Motion passed.

D. Approval of Plan amendment reflecting the Board changes approved tonight:

Janet reminded the Board that any time there are changes to the Board membership a plan amendment must be submitted. We will need to add Nicole and Judith and designate the officers. Tami asked for a motion to approve the revised Plan reflecting the board changes: Tami Conetta as acting chair, Amy Farrington as first vice chair, Mike Breton as second vice chair, Steve Spangler as Treasurer, Judith Corso as representing children with disabilities and Nicole Parker as private sector member. Motion passed.

E. Executive Director Evaluation – report from workgroup and approval of salary increase and contract modification:

Chris Kofler reported that at the last Board meeting a committee was appointed to look into the annual performance review and salary adjustment for Janet and that through the changes of the Board Chair the executive director has not had a formal written review in recent years or a salary review and adjustment in four years. Pauline Tracy, David Hicks and himself as committee chair, met twice to come up with a process that included a review of performance and a review of comparable positions. A zoomerang survey was sent to the Board which took the criteria that they felt was most important and through email allowed everyone on the board to provide feedback... Chris stated that not all board members responded but a significant number did and the majority indicated that Janet was exceeding expectations in most areas.

The review process took the performance assessment into account and the committee also spent a lot of time looking at comparable positions at other Coalitions as well as other executive positions in the county within the market place. Based on all of that and results of the performance reviews, achievements of the ELC under Janet's leadership, and on Janet taking on additional responsibilities over the last 4 years, as well as bringing in significant new funds to the Coalition, and falling behind in salary versus other Coalitions and ED's in the county, the committee met twice with Janet and concluded that would recommend to the Board a 7.7% increase to Janet's salary effective September 1st and Janet is also eligible to receive the previously approved cost of living increases of 2.5%.

Motion from the committee is to approve the additional 7.7% increase to bring Janet in line with similar responsible positions elsewhere within the county. Chris stated that the committee has already committed to meeting again 12 months from now to include another performance review and survey. Tami stated that this is a committee motion and does not require a second. Janet was asked to excuse herself from the meeting so discussion could take place. Tami thanked the committee for the time and thought put into this review. Tami questioned what other benchmarks were used. Discussion ensued regarding the other Sarasota County comparable positions reviewed and other Early Learning Coalitions as well as weight factored for longevity, budgeting, accomplishments, and community involvement. Discussion ensued regarding the 7.7% being recommended with the questions regarding the cost to replace skill sets, has Janet been receiving the 2.5% cost of living adjustment over the last 4 years which Tami and Chris responded: yes she has, the adjustment income is to reflect competencies,

skill sets for improvements, achievements, and increased responsibilities, and making this retroactive back to July 1st. Mike Breton made a motion to accept the committee's recommendation to increase Janet's salary by 7.7% but make it retroactive to 7/1/09, coincidental with our budget year. Kathy Stuckey seconded motion. No further discussion. Motion passed.

7. PUBLIC COMMENT

None at this meeting.

8. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

Janet referred to the written report sent prior to the meeting.

Janet stressed that VPK enrollment has been off the charts this year with the highest number at the earliest point in time, is still going on and it looks like that they are all still in care since initial enrollment..

We now have 1002 children on the SR waitlist which is the highest it has been since Janet has been at the Coalition. Janet reported that this is very unusual but a clear sign of the economy and there has also been low attrition, very few no shows for appointments, we no longer have people not submitting documentation and we are now serving what Janet calls the "new poor" of people who have never been eligible for services before as well as the group we have always served. The wait list has been purged recently and everyone sent back their postcard and there was minimal reduction.

Discussion ensued including how this compares to last year (which was at this time around 350); what we currently know about these families; the Coalition plans to conduct a mailing to these families to see what their needs are, what services we can refer them to and possibly send out a packet of information so they have some tools to support early learning for their children as parents while they are waiting.

Mike Breton asked if there is anyway to get a handle on what the circumstances the parents are currently using for child care and possibly find alternative resources. Discussion ensued regarding getting a survey conducted, using this data to present to Legislature, share with the county and possibly putting a monetary figure for the cost per child on the wait list to take to other funders. Janet reported that other counties are seeing the same low attrition and trends. Tami reported that there is a new program at the Community Foundation of Sarasota that we may be able to apply for that actually funds operational costs then we could possibly be able to shift other dollars to child care slots. This new opportunity for funds at CF (and at GCCFV too) is mostly looking to build up capacity (i.e. fundraising) so that we would have some sustainability, or efficiencies, etc. Tami stated that this is something that the Board should be discussing and that this is not a short term problem and we have been very fortunate in the past with state, county and federal dollars that have been applied to the programs but those dollars are being pulled back and it is likely that when the stimulus dollars are depleted, those monies will not reappear. Tami also stated that finding an alternative for funding slots needs to become a priority for the Coalition. Discussion ensued regarding the possibility of setting up some kind of programs through either Senior Centers or Community Centers and researching this possibility and options.

Janet stated that she will have a full report on the Look for the Stars next month after the council meets but it is very clear that those sites that attended targeted trainings did make significant improvements and shows the need for targeted training and that quality is hard to maintain. This also shows that the directors need to have continued supports. We need to be sure we are supporting the sites that may have achieved a higher quality and then this year there is some slippage but we need to see what needs to be provided to them to maintain the quality. She reported that this past year 123 trainings were provided to 2900 teachers and although this clearly reflects duplicate teachers, this is still a huge increase that was surprising even to staff. Janet also reported that the Annual Report is in process of being finalized and she will share highlights at the next meeting as well. The *Because it Matters* initiative is also going well.

9. DISCUSSION ITEM/ NEW BUSINESS

a. Legislative/Communication Workgroup Report and Plans:

Amy Farrington reported that the committee determined to focus initially on the local legislators so they know we are here and we are a resource and to go to when there are bills that may impact early learning, to have them call us when they need us, to get our name out there and focus on the economic impact that early learning does have in the community. Legislative committee weeks start October 5th. They have decided to start meeting with representatives now and have already met with Senator Detert and Representative Fitzgerald which went well. They are setting up more meetings for next week and they have a one piece document that John Stump worked on that they will be using as a "leave behind".

Amy has set up a bill tracking system so as bills go through the State legislature, she'll send them to Janet to get input and feedback. Federal legislation is harder to track but Janet receives information from the state association to help with that. They are also working on trying to get a better tie in between the business and the education communities and a lot of that is going to be through the Chamber. Amy is working on with the Chamber Leadership program on their educational day and also there is a Florida Chamber event coming up October 12-14 and the state association of Early Learning Coalitions is having their meeting at this same event in order to participate... Janet to be e-mailing out the information regarding this event to everyone. Mike asked if a press kit will be prepared. Amy responded that she has the one page leave behind sheet as well as newsletters etc. and that the committee can create this. Tami suggested that a list be created of any board members that have a personal relationship with legislatures. Amy will do a survey for the Board members to complete.

b. ELC Ten Year Anniversary 2010-Opportunities, establish planning workgroup

Tami stated that we have our Ten year anniversary coming up. Janet stated that this could be an opportunity to conduct many events for the entire year within the community including press releases and publicity. The official 10 year anniversary is May 10, 2010. We may be looking at doing something along the lines of the Look for the Stars launch done last year, and then some smaller events throughout the year. Janet and Tami asked for volunteers for a planning group. Jill Jacoby, Connie Synder, Pauline Tracy will participate. We will work with KSC on this.

10. OLD BUSINESS:

None at this meeting

11. FINANCE Report:

James Pawlak reviewed the various reports sent out by email prior to the meeting. The Board Financial indicators report reflects the final costs before the 13th invoice. Overall the admin and non direct operational funds were \$83,000 under what was budgeted, so clearly well within the thresholds. Quality expenses were as budgeted and were the same amount as last year. Gold Seal was \$50,000 under budget due to there being less accredited sites, which was then moved to the regular slot dollars. Infant and toddler and CCRR and inclusion all exceeded required thresholds.

James reviewed the child care costs over the course of the year with the continued high mandated referrals and very low attrition, particularly in the last 4 months of the fiscal year. We carried a small deficit of \$89,000 child care slots into FY 2010 year (within the allowable 1.5%) and we will need to manage utilization and capacity very carefully going forward. The ARRA funds are temporary, our core SR budget was reduced by the legislature for a total of \$337,000 and we will need to end the fiscal year prepared to go into the following year with that reduced budget.

Due to the legislature also taking away previous allocated funds for VPK, most ELC's including ours, had to carry a VPK deficit into FY 2010. VPK is an entitlement program so we must serve all children who apply and cannot refuse to serve or disenroll children to stay within budget.

12. ANNOUNCEMENTS.

Janet stated that the 17th Street complex has arranged a fund raiser with Players Theater for their "preview night" performances. Anyone attending those performances will be able to designate \$5 of the cost of the ticket to go to an agency within the complex. This will be ongoing through April and if the Coalition receives funds this would be unrestricted funding. Janet will send an email out to everyone.

13. ADJOURNMENT.

Meeting adjourned at 7:32 p.m.