



Early Learning Coalition of Lake County
Innovative services for children of Lake County

These minutes summarize the key issues of the ELCLC Professional Development Committee. An audio recording of this meeting is available upon request.

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Hays Ginn called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m. **The following members were in attendance:** Mr. Hays Ginn, Ms. Nancy Allison and Ms. Junie Albers-Biddle. **The following members were absent:** Ms. Michele Rawls, and Dr. Joann Greata. **The following staff was present:** Ms. Laura Close.

Mr. Ginn reported that he had met previously with Ms. Close to discuss a meeting schedule for the committee over the summer. The committee has been meeting the first Wednesday of the month following the full Board meeting. This usually works out well for the group, but it may not be necessary to meet every month particularly during the summer months. The next deadline for the submission of new applications is due September 30, 2009. Ms. Close commented that the Committee could meet following the first deadline to do a preliminary review of applications received to determine eligibility. Then a follow up meeting could be scheduled at the end of the semester to determine satisfactory completion of course, the GPA and ensure that all pertinent receipts, FAFSA documents, have been provided to make the final determination regarding the amount to be reimbursed. Ms. Close stated this meeting would be in late January to do the final review in order to be presented at the February 2010 Board meeting date .

Ms. Close commented that she and Mr. Ginn agreed that the committee needs to discuss future agendas relating to Committee goals, etc. Ms. Close asked if any members had issues with the application or reimbursement forms. Mr. Ginn commented that some minor changes were made to the fall 08 and spring 09 documents. Ms. Close commented that in processing applications, it was discovered that the zip codes were not on the forms and it took staff considerable time to research the appropriate codes for the applicants.

Ms. Close reported that the Coalition's website has recently been updated and is more user friendly. It is easier to find information. The section relating to the Professional Development Reimbursement Program now has the application forms and brochures available. Ms. Close stated that it would be good to develop some sort of checklist for those what are applying for the program to have something they could print and use as a guide in preparing their applications with all the documents that are required. Ms. Allison thought this was a good idea.

Ms. Close commented on the difficulty this past year with the FAFSA application process. Ms. Close commented that she contacted FAFSA and received assistance in going through the steps to get the verification reports. Ms. Close said that following that discussion, it made the process easier to understand and now she can assist the applicants as needed. Ms. Close would like for a link to be added to the Coalition's website for providers.

Ms. Close referred to the section of the Application Verification document regarding *Enrollment Verification* to be verified by the Committee. Ms. Close asked the Committee what documents would be acceptable to provide the information. After some discussion, the group decided that when the applicant submits their final paperwork, they should provide the *class schedule* that will list dates and times of the courses. Ms. Allison commented that since the reimbursement determination doesn't happen until the end of the semester detailed course schedule will be satisfactory until the official transcript with the course and final grade is received.

Ms. Allison inquired about on-line courses relating to eligibility and reimbursement. The committee stated that on-line courses are acceptable provided they are done through an accredited institution and they are related to an early childhood education degree. After some discussion, the committee stated that most providers are employed and do attend regular classes on campus; however, some may have a have full time job, children, etc. and can't go to a campus.

Their on-line courses are the same; however, it was noted that a provider doing on-line courses would score lower on the rubric than someone attending LSCC or UCF campus.

Ms. Allison raised the issue of a provider who is already approved for the reimbursement program and needs to cut the courses or reduce their hours because they were suddenly laid off or terminated from their job with a center after enrolling in the program, but went to another job that is not child care related and wanted to continue with their education. The Committee reviewed the criteria for eligibility and stated that this issue would have to be decided on a case by case basis; reason for termination would be taken into consideration. Ms. Allison stated that already knows she will have to lay a staff person off due to the lower number of VPK students, and she commented that there are several other providers in the south Lake area in the same position. Ms. Buchbinder stated that employment is verified at the initial application and determination process and at no time is this done during the school semester. Mr. Ginn suggested that someone on the reimbursement application a line be added stating that if applicant is no longer employed state reason for termination. Ms. Close commented that addition to the application would also need to be added to the Rubric. Mr. Ginn suggested leaving the application as is for now and see how it works. The Committee can make any needed changes for the next year if necessary. Ms. Close requested that the Committee get a listing of all the accredited agencies for the September meeting and would like to schedule additional meetings to discuss the on-line courses.

Ms. Close commented that Directors should have good dialogue with their teachers and encourage them to apply to the Coalition for assistance with their continuing education. Ms. Close also commented that some transcripts have been coming in slowly or after the deadline. Ms. Close stated that one she was told some of the late receipts of transcripts was due to teachers being slow in entering the final scores. Ms. Close commented that although the participant has been verified eligible for reimbursement, the Coalition cannot send out reimbursement payment until transcripts and all documents have been received.

Mr. Ginn commented that the Coalition can't change the deadline dates and students need to understand that they should request their transcripts as soon as they see grades are posted.

Ms. Close raised the issue regarding Ms. Carolyn Martin who has applied numerous times for the program and has been denied due to the course of study not being part of the ECE degree. Ms. Close commented that Ms. Martin has been instructed to contact Dr. Greata at LSCC or Ms. Junie Albers-Biddle for guidance on which courses are appropriate for the ECE degree that would also be on the approved list for her to qualify for assistance from the Coalition.

Ms. Close informed the Committee that she has done some formatting on the programs forms to make it easier for applicants. Ms. Allison stated that she will advise her staff to indicate on the form that they may be laid off.

Ms. Close reported that many providers have expressed their concerns that the Coalition does not offer training for CDA. The committee discussed the situation and discussed options through the TEACH program. Ms. Allison stated that the contract required that teachers stay with the center one year after completion to be eligible for a scholarship and that centers must give the teachers time off to do the studies. Ms. Allison commented that she will not sign the contract and she cannot afford to pay the teachers to be off work, nor can she guarantee future raises. Ms. Allison stated that she does pay \$48.75 to TEACH for her teachers.

Ms. Close commented that the next meeting will be September 2 after the regular Board meeting, and that she will send an email to committee members with future dates.

There was no further discussion. Meeting adjourned at 11:05 a.m.

Submitted by Laura Close, Quality Operations Manager