



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

These minutes summarize the key issues of the Board meeting of the Early Learning Coalition Lake County, Inc. An audio recording of this meeting is available upon request.

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Will Pruitt, Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. **The following members were in attendance:** Mr. Will Pruitt, Mr. B. E. Thompson, Mr. Hays Ginn, Mr. Eddy Worker, Ms. Jeanie Rowin, Ms. Marie Carlberg, Ms. Donna Gregory, Ms. Michele Rawls, Dr. Barbara Howard, Ms. Porcha Green, Ms. Sherry Olszanski, Ms. Darnell Stewart, and Ms. Marsha Carpenter. **The following members were absent:** Commissioner Linda Stewart, Ms. Cheryl Ridley, Ms. Sandra Stura, Ms. Nancy Allison, Ms. Stephanie Ellis and Dr. Hugh Brockington. **The following staff was present:** Ms. Leshia Buchbinder, and Ms. Patricia Pierce. **Guests present:** Ms. Cindy Winkle, Ms. Patricia Brantley, Ms. Melody Carlisle, Ms. Doreen Chatelier, Ms. Alison Petrie, Ms. Nakia Myles and Mayor John Christian. Mr. Raphael Gomez, State Analyst, was present for the meeting via telephone.

PRESENTATION

Mr. Pruitt asked Ms. Cindy Winkle to present two recognition awards to her two staff members present. Ms. Winkle commented that two of her teachers from Our House had completed obtained their degrees in early childhood education. Ms. Winkle presented Ms. Patricia Brantley and Ms. Melody Carlisle with framed certificates for their outstanding achievements.

CONSENT CONSIDERATIONS

Mr. Pruitt proceeded with the Action Items for consideration. Mr. Pruitt asked for a motion on Action Items 444 through 449. Mr. Thompson moved to approve Action Items 444 through 449, seconded by Mr. Ginn. Motion carried.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ms. Buchbinder commented on action items 446A and 446B. Ms. Buchbinder stated that the amendment to LifeStream's contracts ELC1 and ELC4 was required due to the funds received through the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (AARA). Ms. Buchbinder stated that approximately \$900,000 of ARRA funds had been awarded to Lake County for a two year period. Ms. Buchbinder also reported that the VPK allocation for Lake reflected a separate allocation (SFSF) which will be specifically used for VPK programs through school districts. Ms. Buchbinder further commented that the VPK allocation is lower than last year and the State is aware of this and reassures the Coalitions that if the children are served the funds will be available. Ms. Buchbinder also said that Lake County was awarded \$6,618 to be used for VPK outreach and awareness for 2009-2010. This amount has been reduced from previous outreach allocations. These funds will be used to market VPK in local magazines, placing ads for VPK roundups and other marketing expenses such producing VPK flyers or brochures.

Ms. Buchbinder reported on the surplus equipment sale previously authorized by the Board. Ms. Buchbinder stated that there was some confusion with the local newspaper and the ad ran on the same day of the noticed sale and not prior to the date as requested. Ms. Buchbinder shared with the board that several providers were at the Coalition first thing in the morning and commented they had seen the advertisement in the paper. The Coalition staff fortunately had the items organized and priced, so the equipment sale took place as advertised. Ms. Buchbinder reported that some of the items were sold in complete sets and others were sold as single items such as keyboards or monitors.

Ms. Buchbinder commented that \$732 was received from the sale and the funds were used to purchase new resources for ELC quality programs.

Ms. Buchbinder referred to a letter that had been sent to Ms. Olszanski from IDW, Inc. acknowledging the outstanding services they received from Mr. Wesley Paul, Behavior Specialist with CCCS. Ms. Olszanski commented that with a staff of two and Ms. Hoban, the Behavioral Specialist program has come a long way and services had improved significantly from the previous year.

Continuing with the Executive Director's report, Ms. Buchbinder updated the Board regarding the non-compliance and potential termination of contracts as discussed at the May and June board meetings. Ms. Buchbinder reported that there were only two providers who were out of compliance at the previous meeting that were unable to sign a 2009-2010 provider contract. The remaining providers were given a final opportunity to attend scheduled meetings to meet their requirements for compliance. Ms. Buchbinder shared that corrective action plans have been implemented on providers who have not met the curriculum requirement. The two providers who did not sign a new contract were for unrelated situations; one was due to the flooding of their center and the other was closed by DCF. Ms. Buchbinder commented that out of the providers who were cited for non compliance with developmentally appropriate curriculum, only two had not purchased the necessary curriculum. Ms. Buchbinder commented that Montessori Nest in Mt. Dora is moving to a new location and changing its name. Ms. Buchbinder stated that currently Montessori Nest does not use an ELCLC approved curriculum and the Coalition is working with Montessori to ensure that the new facility meets the requirements necessary to gain a SR contract. Ms. Buchbinder also commented that Lake County Academy is also currently under corrective action for curriculum. The Coalition will continue to offer technical assistance to Lake County Academy.

Ms. Rawls shared information regarding conversations she has had with several providers who felt that the contract signing meeting in June should not have counted towards the meeting requirements for SR providers. Ms. Rawls added that going forward, all providers need to know that the Coalition will remain firm on the issue of meeting the requirements and failure to do so will result in termination of their contract. Ms. Rowin added that the board approved the termination of non-compliant providers and that the deadline for meeting the goals would be set for May 2010. Ms. Buchbinder agreed with Ms. Rowin; going forward for next year all providers who at mid-year are at risk of non-compliance, would be sent a reminder letter. The letter will address the number of meetings required, the number they have attended and the opportunities remaining for them to stay in compliance. Mr. Ginn commented that the Board did not need to waste time in the future to discuss the non-compliance of providers and that the decision to terminate will stand based on the new guidelines as approved by the Board.

Mr. Pruitt acknowledged Mayor John Christian who inquired about the Enrichment Sessions, commenting that his staff at Kids of Distinction has called several times to ask who needed to attend the meetings. Mayor Christian acknowledged the importance of the meetings as this is the livelihood of the providers; he also suggested that it would be helpful if all the Enrichment Session dates and times were posted a year in advance so that providers could better plan ahead to attend the meetings. Ms. Buchbinder referenced a flyer that was included in the packet that list all the enrichment sessions as well as the SR provider meetings for the 2009-2010 program year. Ms. Buchbinder also stated that the flyer had been mailed to providers and would be posted online as well.

Ms. Buchbinder presented the ELCLC Resource Room calendar for that was sent to all providers. Ms. Buchbinder pointed out to the Board that there are a scheduled days that the room will be open from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. to accommodate all providers. Also included in the packet was a flyer listing the dates and times for all SR provider meetings. Additional training flyers are being developed that will indicate the yearly dates and locations of future trainings. The trainings will also be posted on the ELC website.

Ms. Buchbinder provided the VPK news updates, stating that 91 children were enrolled in the 2009 summer VPK program; this is an increase of approximately 30 children from the previous summer. The 2009-2010 school program starts on August 24, and as of August 5th there were 501 children currently enrolled.

Ms. Buchbinder reported that OEL/AWI had released new policy notices specifically addressing a uniform attendance policy for providers. Also included were revised rules and procedures for providers regarding advance payment. Ms. Buchbinder commented that these types of documents will be posted to the Coalition's website so that providers will have access to the most recent information. Ms. Buchbinder referred to the 2009 Market Rate Survey provided by OEL. Explaining to the board the included document which explains why the survey was done, its intended purpose and the process overview. Ms. Buchbinder commented that she is in the process of obtaining market rates from other coalitions to see where Lake County stands in comparison. Ms. Buchbinder said that the market rate survey was available in soft copy if anyone would like to do a further review of the information, she would forward the excel spreadsheet upon request.

The Executive Director's report also included a copy of letter approving revisions to the 2006-2009 Coalition Plan. Ms. Buchbinder commented that the amendments related to Board membership and the June 2009 sliding fee scale.

Ms. Buchbinder also referenced a letter from the Director of AWI congratulating Mr. Pruitt on his recent reappointment by Governor Crist to a second term as Chair of the ELCLC Board and as a member of the Early Learning Advisory Council. Also included in the packet was a copy of a press release by the Governor's office dated June 9, 2009 announcing Ms. Cynthia Lorenzo of Tallahassee as Executive Director of the Florida Agency for Workforce Innovations. Ms. Buchbinder stated we have had no word on the other two governor appointee applications for Lake County.

Ms. Buchbinder moved on to the official response from AWI on the tri-annual performance review. Ms. Buchbinder stated that there was nothing new in the report and the findings were the same as discussed last summer during the exit interview. Ms. Buchbinder reminded the board that the official report was due to the Coalition in October 2008, but was received in June 2009. Ms. Buchbinder stated that corrective action plans were put in place immediately following the review and the majority of the issues were resolved.

Ms. Buchbinder pointed out the third quarter ELC1 contract monitoring report for 2008-2009. Ms. Buchbinder commented that there were two discrepancies; one related to travel vouchers and the time of departure and arrival; the other contained a question regarding the calculation of mileage. Ms. Buchbinder reported that of 123 parent files reviewed, 6 were found to have missing documents and on some there was a question regarding the calculation to determine eligibility. Also, of the 123 children's attendance records reviewed, 13 parents failed to sign their children in and out on one or more occasion. When the documents were requested, it was noted that 3 providers failed to provide complete the sign in/sign outs. Ms. Buchbinder commented that going forward the Coalition will develop policies and procedures as well as training for providers on how to properly complete monthly attendance sheets and sign in sign out logs. Ms. Buchbinder commented that during the review, it was suspected that some of the sign in sign out logs were not being completed correctly Ms. Buchbinder further stated that it is important to have policies and procedures in place to adjust payments if a case of fraud is suspected.

Ms. Buchbinder moved to Board information commenting that a letter was submitted from Mr. Jon Cherry reappointing Ms. Sherry Olszanski as his designee to the ELCLC Board of Directors.

Ms. Buchbinder commented on the 12 month Attendance Roster for 2008-2009, and noted that according to the bylaws, Ms. Sandy Stura, At-Large representative, has exceeded the maximum of 5 absences in 12 months and therefore is considered to have resigned. Ms. Buchbinder stated that Ms. Stura does travel frequently, and requested Ms. Pierce to contact Ms. Stura to see if there may have been any error in recording her attendance. Ms. Buchbinder commented that with the approval of Ms. Dawn Mainville for a private sector position, there are still three vacancies on the Board. Mr. Ginn commented that he has another contact who may be interested in Board membership. Ms. Buchbinder reported that Mr. Ginn had referred Mr. Stuart Frandson who was going to attend today's meeting; however, Mr. Frandson was unable to attend.

Ms. Buchbinder referred to page 99 of the Director's report which listed additional amendments to the 2006-2009 Coalition Plan. The amendments reference programmatic changes that had been implemented previously and were submitted to bring the Plan current before starting on the 2009-2012 Coalition Plan. Ms. Buchbinder pointed out that one of the changes to the plan included an amendment to the current pre and post assessment process for Lake County. Ms. Buchbinder commented that when the amendments are approved by the State, a complete document showing the changes will be provided to the Board.

FISCAL /UTILIZATION REPORT.

Mr. Pruitt asked Ms. Buchbinder to proceed with the Financial Report. Ms. Buchbinder commented since there was no meeting in July, 2009, the Board packet included the May and June 2009 fiscal information. Ms. Buchbinder referred to page 3 stating this report ended June 30th and shows that the Coalition administrative overhead is within \$5 of spending the total allocation. Ms. Buchbinder stated that there is approximately \$5,000 remaining of the \$7.3 million for SR adjustments. Ms. Buchbinder pointed out that administrative funds totaling a \$13,000 surplus was reclassified to BBD and used for resources; Quality surplus funds in the amount of \$4,400 were also moved to the BBD and Infant/Toddler budget. Ms. Buchbinder commented that educational staff was able to use some of the surplus funds to attend a training on the ERS tool in North Carolina.

Ms. Buchbinder commented that the budget also shows VPK was over spent in the amount of \$106,000. Ms. Buchbinder explained to the board that this deficit was forced on all Coalitions by the State and the deficit would be billed in the 09-10 program year. A letter of explanation has been requested from the State to help answer any questions or concerns raised by the auditors. Ms. Buchbinder stated that this will have no effect on the overall funding.

Ms. Buchbinder reviewed the locally generated funds for outreach and awareness for the bus program and stated that the funding received from South Lake Foundation had been expended. The remaining funds from the CSC and the Orlando Sentinel Family Foundation will be used for the upcoming program year. Ms. Buchbinder commented that the 13th allocation will be provided at the September board meeting.

Ms. Buchbinder continued the utilization report stating that there were 2,437 kids served in SR for May and June 09. The Coalition received an additional \$60,000 for slots as other Coalitions did not use their funds. With this award the Coalition only utilized approximately \$26,000 of the \$350,000 ARRA award for Lake County. The ARRA allocation is a two year award in which the balance will be carried forward. The funds will be used for parents receiving unemployment compensation and parents in the working poor population. Ms. Buchbinder stated that she will work with Ms. Olszanski to see how many kids have been moved on or off the wait list. Ms. Buchbinder stated that the utilization reports show BG8 numbers are up this year and referrals are down and there are approximately 100 children waiting for care.

Ms. Buchbinder referred to page 14 of the utilization report pointing out the 1st time certifications totaled 221 and terminations totaled 270. Ms. Buchbinder will have CCCS research the reasons for the high number of termination through the EFS database to see why parents are no longer qualified for services. Ms. Buchbinder reviewed the additional information included in the utilization report regarding the Behavioral Specialist report which shows an increase in the number of visits by Behavioral Specialist and the number of facilities that were visited. Mr. Pruitt asked if there were funds available to grow the Behavioral Specialist program for the new fiscal year. Ms. Buchbinder reported that this is the last year of the 3 year contract with LifeStream and that the Coalition will be proceeding with the Procurement and ITN process for next year. Ms. Buchbinder encouraged members to review the other information in the packet and to contact her if they have questions.

COMMITTEE UPDATES

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE.

Mr. Ginn stated that the Professional Development Committee had met on July 27 to review the application and reimbursement process. The Committee also reviewed the current application forms and made some minor changes as requested by Ms. Close. The Committee looked at scheduling future meetings to review applications for the upcoming semester. The Committee will meet after the regular Board meeting in September.

SCREENING AND ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE

Ms. Buchbinder reported that the Screening and Assessment Committee did not meet due to scheduling difficulties, but Ms. Close and Ms. Rawls, committee chair, did meet. Ms. Buchbinder referred to the action item regarding changing of the pre and post test assessment tool. Ms. Buchbinder commented that the current assessment tool has been very challenging and hard to understand by providers. Ms. Buchbinder also stated that the assessment results for the last two years have not yielded the information necessary to determine the success of our school readiness program. Ms. Buchbinder commented that several professionals in Lake County, who are very familiar with screening and assessment tools, had been contacted to get their thoughts about the current tool. Upon review, it was the consensus that the results are not meeting the needs of Lake County. Ms. Buchbinder commented that the state has been playing with the idea of going to a state-wide assessment tool for some time now and with the ARRA funds received, the dollars are available to bring this to fruition. Ms. Buchbinder also reported that the Executive Directors of the Association of Early Learning Coalitions have charged Dr. Kathryn Snow and her team to review seven different assessment tools and provide a synopsis of the effectiveness of each tool. The discussion continued around the fact that the Coalition had previously tried a variety of assessment tools such as the LAP-D and High Scope COR, but they have not worked very well for the providers. The Coalition Board as well as the state needs to see results that will show where the children started and where they ended. The plan that has been submitted to the State requires that within 90 days, the Committee will review and make a recommendation to the Board. Once approved, Coalition staff, along with guidance from the Committee will implement and train on the tool by the end of February.

Ms. Hoban requested to address the Board. Ms. Hoban commented that she is a professional in the screening and assessment field for many years, and had developed the tool. Ms. Hoban defended the effectiveness of the tool stating that the results would be achieved with proper training for the providers. Mr. Pruitt agreed with Ms. Hoban's statement that providers would have to be trained and that would be a stipulation on any tool.

Ms. Buchbinder commented that after two years of unsuccessful results, the Coalition needed to look at another tool for the centers that is easier to use, is cost effective, out of the box and has been proven to be successful. Ms. Buchbinder commented that providers were trained on the tool and the same providers still had challenges. Ms. Buchbinder agreed that training and technical assistance is necessary for any tool. Ms. Buchbinder commented that an assessment tool is used to assess children and the tool should guide the instruction of the children, where they are and where they want the children to be.

CURRICULUM ADVISORY COUNCIL

Ms. Carlberg provided a brief report from the Curriculum Advisory Council stating that she had met with Ms. Close but the whole Committee was not available to meet. Ms. Close is still trying to find some common time to get everyone together. Ms. Close and Ms. Carlberg discussed the need to develop a rubric so that the Coalition will have a standard tool to judge all curriculums used by providers. The State has already approved a list of curriculums and we need to make sure that we approve what is on the state's list.

PROVIDER GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

Ms. Buchbinder reported that the Provider Growth and Development Committee met to discuss putting a process in place to offer additional services or trainings to providers who have achieved a 4.5 or better on the ERS. The Committee will research what type of programs or special services could be made available to help them continue to grow their centers. Some providers may want assistance on accreditation while others may want help with marketing their centers. Dr. Brockington discussed getting help from the Board members to see if anyone can bring resources to the table. Ms. Buchbinder commented that for example one of the potential board applicants is a manager at a local business which specializes in carpet cleaning and restoration. The company may collaborate with the Coalition to a 20% discount on services, or maybe Healthy Living Magazine, where the Coalition places ads, may be able to offer advertising at discounted prices to those providers who qualify. Ms. Buchbinder stated that during the committee meeting Ms. Allison commented that some providers may not want to run ads, but would like to have training on marketing their programs, or writing a business plan, or how to open a new business. Ms. Buchbinder stated that the Committee will meet again following the September Board meeting. Ms. Rowin asked if the Coalition would contact SCORE to assist with training on doing a marketing plan. Ms. Buchbinder said more information will be forthcoming following the next Committee meeting.

PROGRAMMATIC REPORTS

Ms. Buchbinder said the Programmatic reports are in the packet for review and members could call if they have any questions. Ms. Buchbinder referred to the Quality report stating an SR meeting was held on August 11th to discuss changes to the SR contract for this year. Ms. Buchbinder reported 122 Intent to Contracts were submitted and 120 SR contracts were signed. There were 2 family day care homes that did not sign a new contract.

OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Pruitt called for Old Business. Ms. Kathryn Sutherin inquired about the VPK provider status for a facility in South Lake County specifically about the status of their license and whether or not they are able to offer VPK. Ms. Buchbinder explained that it was her understanding that the facility, Big Bounce, had an agreement with DCF that Big Bounce would not operate the fun zone or the summer camp at the same time as the child care facility. Ms. Buchbinder stated that a complaint had been filed with DCF and upon investigation, Big Bounce was found to be not in compliance with the agreement and the facility was fined and the license placed on a probationary status. Ms. Buchbinder explained that some of the information she has reviewed from the state indicates that a provider under a probationary or provisional license may not be able to offer the program, but she is requesting confirmation from the State. Ms. Marsha Carpenter, DCF Licensing Supervisor, provided a brief explanation of the situation and said they are currently under a corrective action plan for six months. Ms. Buchbinder will keep the Board posted if new information is provided.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Pruitt asked for New Business. Ms. Buchbinder reported that the ELCLC Board Retreat was held in August of 2008 and it was time to plan the 2009 Board Retreat. Ms. Buchbinder asked if members would like to combine a Board meeting with the Annual Retreat possibly in September or October, 2009. Several members checked their calendars and after some discussion, Ms. Rowin moved to hold the Annual Retreat on September 2nd, following the regular meeting. The members agreed the meeting will begin at 9:00 a.m. for regular business and then proceed to the Annual Retreat ending at 11:00 a.m. Mr. Thompson seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Ms. Olszanski commented that Ms. Carol Hoban will be retiring at the end of the month and thanked Carol for her efforts in bringing CCCS to where it is over the past few years.

There was no other business. Mr. Ginn moved to adjourn at 10:25, seconded by Mr. Thompson.

Respectfully submitted by:
Patricia Pierce
Executive Assistant

Approved September 2, 2009