



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

These minutes summarize the key issues discussed at the meeting. An audio recording is available upon request.

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Pruitt called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. and a quorum was confirmed. The following members were present: Mr. Will Pruitt, Mr. B.E. Thompson, Ms. Nancy Allison, Ms. Marie Carlberg, Ms. Sabrina Ciceri, Mr. Eric English, Mr. Hays Ginn, Ms. Porcha Green, Dr. Barbara Howard, Ms. Maureen Jergins, Ms. Dawn Mainville, Ms. Sherry Olszanski, Ms. Michele Rawls, Ms. Cheryl Ridley, Ms. Jeanie Rowin, Commissioner Linda Stewart, Mr. Eddy Workinger, Mr. Oscar Palau for Ms. Donna Gregory, and Ms. Daphne Harvey for Ms. Marsha Carpenter. The following members were absent: Dr. Hugh Brockington, and Ms. Kimberly Grabert. The following guests were present: Dr. Shelia Smalley, Ms. Denise Lancaster, Ms. Alison Petrie, Ms. Betsy Harrington, Ms. Cindy Winkle, Ms. Doreen Chatelier, Ms. Nakia Myles, Ms. Emily Lee and Ms. Kathryn Sutherin. The following staff was present: Ms. Leshia Buchbinder, Ms. Laura Close and Ms. Patricia Pierce.

CONSENT CONSIDERATION

Mr. Pruitt presented Action Items 525 through 527 and asked if anyone had questions or comments. Being none, a motion was made and seconded to approve Action Items 525 through 527.

INFORMATIONAL REPORT

Ms. Buchbinder introduced Dr. Shelia Smalley from the Humanities and Fine Arts Charter School and offered Dr. Smalley a few minutes to inform the board about a new opportunity for Lake County's children. Dr. Smalley stated that the mission of the Humanities and Fine Arts Charter School in Leesburg is to provide quality educational programs for K through 2nd grade students. The program promotes academic success and creativity through the infusion of humanity and the arts. The school will begin accepting applications in March with classes starting in August, 2010 with kindergarten through 2nd grade and then as those students go forward, new children will be enrolled at the kindergarten level.

Ms. Buchbinder continued with the Executive Director's Report. Ms. Buchbinder informed the Board members and visitors that thanks to a suggestion from one of the board members the monthly Coalition board meetings will be going green and rather than printing out the entire board packet for members, the information will be presented electronically with only Action Items and the Fiscal and Utilization Reports being provided in hard copy. Any information not distributed prior to the meeting will be distributed to members after the meeting is concluded.

Ms. Buchbinder began with a review of the 2010 legislative update referencing the listing of potential house and senate bills that could affect early learning. Ms. Buchbinder encouraged members to review the document on their own and noted that these bills may or may not have been filed. Ms. Buchbinder commented on one bill which impacts current vaccination requirements and Mr. Pruitt pointed out another bill that requires all children complete a swimming safety course prior to entering Kindergarten. Mr. Pruitt commented that someone has to pay for these items and that this requirement could potentially impact Coalitions. Mr. Pruitt commented that the public needs to fully read and understand the language of these bills. Ms. Buchbinder assured members that she will continue to monitor any bills that impact early learning and inform the Board if any bills directly impact the Coalition.

Ms. Buchbinder provided an update on the Coalition's 2008-2009 Annual Report. Ms. Buchbinder commented that the costs of developing and reproducing a suitable version for public distribution has increased significantly this past year and the Coalition is seeking a format that can be designed in-house that will save considerable dollars.

Ms. Buchbinder also reported that she will be meeting with Ms. Olszanski to discuss potential opportunities and ideas to meet the 6% match requirement for the School Readiness program. Ms. Buchbinder commented that match dollars have become very challenging to acquire this year due to the economy. Ms. Buchbinder stated that it is important that we find new ways to bring in more cash match dollars for the program. Ms. Buchbinder commented that a possible match opportunity could be the design of an "adopt a child" campaign which would allow individuals or businesses the opportunity to donate dollars on a smaller scale. Ms. Buchbinder also commented that a request was submitted to KCI to continue the previous partnership with the Coalition for the 2009-2010 program year.

Ms. Buchbinder referred to the 2009-2010 Contract Compliance Monitoring Schedule for LifeStream/Child Care Choice Services. Ms. Buchbinder commented that we are waiting on the release of the CCR&R monitoring tool from the State and that the current schedule has been changed to accommodate the release.

Ms. Buchbinder commented that the FLKRS scores were mailed prior to the meeting and briefly mentioned the additional charts that were included in the VPK Update portion of the ED report. Ms. Buchbinder pointed out the Early Childhood Observation System (ECHOS) scores for Lake County are higher than the overall scores for the State. Ms. Buchbinder also pointed out that the Lake County scores for the Broad Screen are also higher than the overall scores for the State.

Ms. Buchbinder referred to the VPK Readiness Rate timeline. Ms. Buchbinder reported that the preliminary rates have been released and providers have 14 days to dispute the rates if they feel their scores are not accurate. Ms. Buchbinder reminded the board that the State Board of Education is responsible for setting the 2008-2009 Low Performing Provider score which reflects the bottom 15% statewide. Ms. Buchbinder commented that the information will be reviewed with providers next week during the provider meetings that are scheduled at the Coalition.

Ms. Buchbinder reviewed the training calendar and encouraged members to review the topics and dates of training and extended an invite for board members to attend. Ms. Buchbinder also commented on the spreadsheet included in the packet regarding the current OEL rules timeline. Ms. Buchbinder explained that the document reflects current rules that are under development. Some of the rules apply to VPK re-enrollment and attendance policies, CCR&R and program eligibility. Also in the packet were some flyers regarding upcoming meetings for the Early Learning Advisory Council/AWI. Ms. Buchbinder stated that she and Mr. Pruitt will be attending the meetings and encouraged ELCLC Board members to attend.

The last item of the Executive Director's Report was a board nomination form which had been submitted from Ms. Jennifer Walz for membership as private sector representative. This information will be forwarded to the Nomination Committee for review. Ms. Buchbinder stated that if approved, this would leave only one vacancy which is the IDEA representation. Ms. Buchbinder also announced that Ms. Allison's second term on the Board will expire in April, 2010. Lake County providers were notified February 1st of the pending vacancy by letter along with a ballot to be completed by any provider indicating their interest in being considered for the position or they could nominate another provider for the position. The deadline for the nominating submissions is February 12. Ms. Buchbinder stated that the names of those providers nominated will be placed on a ballot and sent to all the providers for final nomination. The Coalition is planning on having the final results in time for consideration at the March 10th Board meeting.

Ms. Buchbinder proceeded to do a brief review of the Fiscal and Utilization Reports for December. Ms. Buchbinder stated that we are in the last six months of the program year and going forward the Board will see additional quality expenditures. Ms. Buchbinder commented that the January Utilization reports show over 2,100 children are enrolled in school readiness through SR and ARRA dollars. Ms. Buchbinder stated that there is no wait list at this time for the school readiness program. Ms. Buchbinder requested that board members and providers to outreach to families in need of assistance so we can continue to serve families in need. Ms. Buchbinder also stated that we are required by the State to utilize 50% of the Lake ARRA allocation and as of January it looks like we will be able to meet this requirement

Mr. Pruitt asked Mr. Ginn to proceed with the Committee Reports. Mr. Ginn, Chair, Professional Development Committee, reported that the members previously met to review the applications for reimbursement for the fall 2009 semester. There were seven applications approved and they are being processed for payment. Mr. Ginn also stated that the Committee will meet following the Board meeting to review the applications for the spring 2010 semester. In previous years, we had an average of 13 applicants. There was some dialogue regarding why the numbers are so low this year. Ms. Winkle commented that teachers feel that completing the required FAFSA document is a real challenge. Mr. Pruitt asked Mr. Ginn to look into developing some type of orientation setting for applicants who want to apply for the Professional Development Reimbursement Program. Ms. Winkle also felt that the reimbursement was an issue as teachers may not have the funds up front to apply for the courses. Ms. Winkle asked if there were any funds through the Professional Development Program that could be used to assist providers as a stepping stone in getting their CDAs prior to pursuing a degree. .

Ms. Rawls reported that there was no meeting of the Screening & Assessment Committee. Ms. Buchbinder reminded the board that the plan amendment to utilize the assessment results of our SR providers has been approved and that Coalition staff is currently working through the process of identifying those providers and collecting that information.

Ms. Carlberg reported that the Curriculum Advisory Council had met two times and is scheduled to meet immediately following the Board meeting. The Council has been looking at curriculum used by Montessori and Kids R Kids and members are close to completing that process. Ms. Buchbinder stated that several members of the Kids R Kids International from Georgia are coming to the Coalition and will meet following the Board meeting to discuss their curriculum. Ms. Buchbinder, Ms. Close as well as Committee members and representatives from other Coalitions have been invited to attend this discussion.

Mr. Pruitt asked about the round table discussion that was held at the December meeting and asked if there was any progress on some of the ideas. Ms. Buchbinder commented that forward movement on some of the ideas mentioned has already been made. Ms. Buchbinder commented that information has been received from Ms. Ciceri regarding opportunities for fencing and mulch resources for our providers. Another item on the round table discussion was from Ms. Carlberg suggesting that the Coalition streamline our outreach and eligibility processes to help parents. Ms. Buchbinder commented that Child Care Choice Services is already out posting in Clermont twice a month to provide eligibility services for the SR & VPK programs. Ms. Buchbinder commented that several of the ideas have touched on topics of where the Coalition wants to be and we will move forward to research those ideas. Mr. Pruitt stressed the importance of this process and stated that he would like to continue discussion at the March board meeting.

Ms. Buchbinder updated the board on another discussion from the December meeting regarding the concerns that had been raised about Registered Family Child Care homes. Ms. Buchbinder commented that she has received a copy of a local ordinance of Polk County which requires all Family Child Care Homes to be licensed and does not allow registered homes. Ms. Buchbinder stated that she received the documentation from Commissioner Steward and will be working with the County attorney to determine if this is something that Lake County has the authority to do.

Mr. Pruitt commented on an article that was in the Orlando Sentinel newspaper and how it could impact the Coalition and its programs. The article was entitled: "Pre-K Program in Trouble" and shared his thoughts and concerns regarding a couple quotes from Coalition executive directors including one from Ms. Buchbinder. Mr. Pruitt expressed the importance of continued support of the Pre-K program and the importance of remaining diligent at the local level.

Mr. Pruitt commented that Gov. Christ has publically voiced his commitment to providing the funding for early education. Mr. Pruitt commented that it is important that board members, providers and community leaders communicate with local and state representatives regarding funding for early learning programs. Mr. Pruitt stressed the importance that Lake County leaders focus on early education and continue to ensure forward movement with quality programs and adequate funding. Mr. Pruitt suggested that everyone contact their local delegate to solicit their commitment not to cut early education funding during the 2010 legislative session.

Ms. Sutherin commented on the upcoming FCAT and asked how we would address the continued success of children through the 3rd grade. Ms. Sutherin shared her concerns regarding being able to track the FCAT scores by VPK completers and non-VPK completers and commented that overcrowded classrooms could reduce the gains achieved by the VPK program.

Ms. Buchbinder asked to address the intent of the quote in the Orlando Sentinel. Ms. Buchbinder stated that the comment was to represent how the Coalition is being cost effective by reducing time and duplication of reporting by the Coalition; the desk monitoring is a piece of that effort to save dollars from the cuts that were handed down last year and were not intended to put any negative light on the VPK program.

Before closing the meeting, Mr. Buchbinder thanked Ms. Ridley for taking her time to do a presentation on the services provided by Workforce Central at a recent Coalition Enrichment training session.

Ms. Winkle asked to report on the recent Administrative Code that was been passed on January 13, commenting that DCF will be conducting training on the new guidelines. Ms. Winkle encouraged the Coalition and staff to attend the training. With no other business, Mr. Pruitt called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Motion made and carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Patricia Pierce
Executive Assistant

Approved March 10, 2010