



Early Learning Coalition of Lake County
Innovative Services for Lake County's Children

**Approved Board Meeting Minutes
October 1, 2008**

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.

Mr. Pruitt called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m.

The following members were in attendance: Mr. Will Pruitt, Mr. B. E. Thompson, Ms. Nancy Allison, Ms. Sandra Stura, Ms. Cynthia Freeman, Ms. Jeanie Rowin, Mr. Hays Ginn, Ms. Darnell Stewart, Ms. Peggy Campbell, Ms. Andrea Edgington, Dr. Barbara Howard, Ms. Sherry Olszanski, Ms. Cheryl Ridley and Ms. Michele Rawls. **The following members were absent:** Mr. Hugh Brockington, Mr. Jeff Biddle, Ms. Linda Stewart, Ms. Marsha Carpenter, Ms. Porcha Green and Ms. Gayla Clark. **The following staff was present:** Ms. Lesha Buchbinder and Ms. Patricia Pierce. **Guests present:** Ms. Marie Carlberg, Ms. Doreen Chatelier, Ms. Cindy Winkle, Ms. Betsy Harrington, Mr. Bill MacNeil, Ms. Carol Hoban, Ms. Canarissa Elliott, Ms. Margaret Hill, Ms. Ginger Babb and Ms. Michele Reid.

Mr. Pruitt asked Ms. Buchbinder if a quorum was present and it was determined that a quorum of voting members was present. Mr. Pruitt presented the Draft Minutes of the September 3, 2008 Board meeting and the Draft Minutes of the September 10, 2008 Board Teleconference, Action item 321 on the agenda. Mr. Pruitt asked for questions or discussion on the Action Item, but there were none. Mr. Thompson moved to approve Action item 321 seconded by Ms. Rowin. Motion carried.

Mr. Pruitt asked Ms. Buchbinder to proceed with the Executive Director's Report. Prior to the report, Ms. Buchbinder briefly explained the name change was the result of recent marriage which had all been planned by family members and her fiancé prior to leaving on a weekend cruise with friends. Everyone expressed their congratulations and best wishes to the couple.

Ms. Buchbinder started her report with ELCLC updates, commenting that she had attended the County Commissioners' final budget review on September 23 in which the County Commission had decided that CSC would receive \$20,000 of the initial \$108,000 that was requested. Mr. Pruitt asked Mr. Thompson to provide an update on the various motions made by the Commissioners and recommendations that had been made to the Commissioners for full funding to the Children Services Council. After some discussion, Mr. Thompson commented that the CSC Board would be meeting to go through the RFP process to determine who would receive grants from the funds that were approved by the Commissioners. Relating to other grants, Ms. Buchbinder commented that the Coalition is now in phase two of the Mattel Foundation grant request for \$25,000 that had been submitted previously in the year. Ms. Buchbinder reminded the Board that the South Lake Community Foundation has granted the Coalition \$5,000 for the Big Blue Bus program, which will help make up for the funds lost through CSC. Ms. Buchbinder asked members to keep their eyes open for other potential grants that the Coalition may be able to submit a request for other match dollars. Ms. Edgington and Ms. Winkle commented on other foundations in the Clermont area that could be investigated. Mr. Pruitt commented that everyone needs to find ways to speak out and find advocates for our Pre-K children. Mr. Pruitt stated that at several meetings he has attended the majority of the people are focusing on funding for K-12. Ms. Buchbinder commented that Representative Kurt Kelly, who spoke at the Coalition's annual dinner, is one of the only advocates visibly speaking out at this time for early education.

Proceeding with the Executive Director's report, Ms. Buchbinder stated that two people had been hired as Early Education Specialists, Ms. Tameka Mays and Ms. Lisa West, and there are two remaining vacancies and there are still several good candidates to select from. Regarding the SR/VPK Compliance Coordinator vacancy, Ms. Simone Hylton-Ellis, who had been doing the job for several months as a Kelly Services employee, applied and was selected from several applicants for the SR/VPK Compliance Coordinator position.

Ms. Buchbinder reported that the FACCM vs. ELC Duval County conflict has not been finalized as FACCM filed an appeal to the finding. Ms. Buchbinder will keep the Board informed as the issue progresses.

Ms. Buchbinder reported that following the September 10, teleconference the Board decided to approve the recommendation of Greenlee, Kurras, Rice and Brown to conduct the upcoming audit for the Coalition. The 2007-2008 Audit Engagement letter was sent to the auditing firm on September 25, 2008.

Ms. Buchbinder also reported that she had met with Mr. Steven Lee, an attorney in the Ocala area who had been highly recommended from ELC of Nature Coast. Mr. Lee works with several other Coalitions and has considerable experience and works and is very familiar and understands the demands as well as the needs of Coalitions. Mr. Lee is retired and is agreeable to serve the Coalition on an as-needed basis for a predetermined hourly fee. Ms. Buchbinder stated that Mr. Lee could serve as our attorney as Mr. Tom Lang who has been the Coalition's attorney for several years had moved on. A resume and sample letter addressing what services Mr. Lee would be available to do was provided to the members for review. Ms. Edgington commented that Mr. Lee's rate is very low compared to others in the area. Ms. Buchbinder stated that if the Board is agreeable, she would like a motion to approve Mr. Lee as legal counsel or proceed to look for other opportunities. Mr. Pruitt asked if it was necessary to do go through an official procurement process. Ms. Buchbinder stated that there is a budget line item for legal services and Mr. Lee would only be engaged on an as-needed basis at the agreed rate. Ms. Rowin moved to approve and go forward with the recommendation of Mr. Steven Lee to serve as ELCLC's on-call attorney, based on his experience. Ms. Edgington seconded the motion. Motion Carried.

Ms. Buchbinder proceeded with the VPK news update, commenting that the 2008-2010 new VPK Standards is scheduled for release in mid October. One important change to the standard is a focus on math skills and the Coalition is encouraging both new and seasoned VPK providers to attend the scheduled training sessions. Ms. Buchbinder mentioned the upcoming "Day in the Park" event to be held on October 31st at Hickory Point in Tavares. Ms. Buchbinder stated that if any Board members would like to volunteer and help out with art stops or other duties, to contact herself, Ms. Sandy Stura, Ms. Pat Pierce, or Ms. Laura Close to sign up for this activity. The ELCLC training calendar is posted on the website and Ms. Buchbinder encouraged those providers who were present at the meeting to review the trainings for October through December which include several First Aid/CPR dates, SR/VPK provider meetings, new provider orientations and ITERS/ECERS training.

Ms. Buchbinder moved on to the OEL/AWI correspondence and deadlines. Ms. Buchbinder made reference to correspondence from Mr. Bill Ammons at AWI regarding possible ways to safeguard ELC SR/VPK dollars due to the state of the economy. Ms. Buchbinder commented that there is a period of time when state funds are received at the Coalition and prior to being paid out in which the funds could be at risk. Ms. Buchbinder commented that she is currently researching the options that SunTrust as well as other banks have for safeguarding Coalition dollars. Ms. Buchbinder asked Ms. Rowin to assist in the research to see what other banks are doing. Ms. Rowin stated that she will talk to some of the people she knows and asked Ms. Buchbinder if it was alright to provider her name so they can contact her directly. Ms. Edgington asked if we have an interest bearing account and Ms. Buchbinder commented that the funds are in an interest bearing account and all of the interest earned is paid back to the state. Ms. Buchbinder commented that several other coalitions are researching ways to protect their funds including possible sweep accounts which are backed by US Treasury bills. Ms. Buchbinder commented that security and liquidity are the most important issues.

Ms. Buchbinder commented that the remainder of the Executive Director report includes the 4th Quarter desk review that was completed in June 2008 with the preliminary results and announced that there were "no questioned costs". The 2007-2008 financial monitoring results were included as well. The ELCLC/CCCS correspondence is included in the board packet along with the 3rd Quarter Completion Response for September 3, 2008. Ms. Buchbinder reported that the review went well although there were some disallowed costs which will be paid back to the Coalition. The 4th Quarter monitoring was completed and the initial response identified issues regarding predetermined trainings that were required that had not been completed. The Coalition is presently working with CCCS to correct the issue.

Mr. Pruitt asked Ms. Buchbinder to proceed with the fiscal analysis and the utilization reports. Ms. Buchbinder commented that overall, we are doing well and we are being conservative in our spending pending possible budget cuts later in the year. Ms. Buchbinder encouraged members to review the information and to contact her if they have any questions. Ms. Buchbinder also commented that if members would like to see this information in a different format to contact her to discuss their ideas for this report.

Mr. Pruitt asked for the Committee reports. Mr. Ginn commented that the Professional Development Committee did not meet in September but a meeting is scheduled following the Board meeting.

Ms. Edgington commented that the Screening & Assessment Committee, which was combined with Professional Development Committee to form the Provider Growth & Development Committee, did not meet in September but the group is getting together after the Board meeting. This committee will review the 27 surveys that were received resulting from a previous mailing to over 100 providers to determine what type of assistance they would like to have from the Coalition.

Ms. Buchbinder reported that there has been no movement with Curriculum Advisory Committee due to the busy schedules of committee members. Ms. Buchbinder commented that she would like to get Dr. Barbara Howard involved with the group as well as Dr. Joanne Greata and bring them up to speed on the work that has been done regarding curriculum. Ms. Buchbinder commented the next challenge for the committee is to build a rubric to measure curriculum to determine whether or not it is developmentally appropriate.

Mr. Pruitt asked Ms. Buchbinder to continue with the Quality Program Reports beginning with the Big Blue Bus. Ms. Buchbinder commented that over 1,200 children and parents had been seen by the Big Blue Bus by mid September and during the last two weeks the numbers went up to approximately 1,300. Ms. Buchbinder commented that the program has exceeded the annual goal of serving 1,200 children and adults. Ms. Buchbinder also commented that all of the CSC dollars have been expended. The Eagle bus traveled to the annual Kids Fest event in Clermont in which 60 children were able to visit the bus.

Ms. Buchbinder continued with the Quality report and reported that the Education Specialists have been in the field completing required site visits. The providers have been made aware that the Education Specialists are coming to their facilities with guidance and assistance to prepare them for the ERS assessments. Ms. Buchbinder encouraged those providers present that if they have any suggestions regarding trainings or policies and procedures, please contact Ms. Buchbinder with their ideas.

Ms. Winkle asked about VPK trainings on the new Standards that are in draft format and the upcoming math skills training for SR and VPK providers. Ms. Winkle also inquired about the date for training by Ms. Sandy Waiman. Ms. Buchbinder commented that Ms. Close will be attending the Breakthrough Parenting training at the end of the month and the date for Ms. Waiman is pending.

Mr. Pruitt asked if there was any old business. Ms. Carol Hoban reported that three Behavioral Specialist trainings had already been held during September with over 140 providers in attendance. Some of the trainings were in the evening and on a Saturday. The providers commented that the majority of their problems in the centers are behavioral issues with the children. Ms. Hoban said that she has a training date scheduled for Magic Moments and there are about 45 people signed up to date. Mr. Pruitt asked if the providers thought the behavioral specialist program was working as a result of the change a year ago. Ms. Allison commented that she thought it was working better as providers are able to get the parents involved, and providers are getting involved in the preventative piece. Ms. Allison said she thinks we are on the right track now. Ms. Hoban commented that she has devoted her time to make this program a success. Mr. Pruitt asked if it would be possible to have volunteers work in this program. Ms. Olszanski said that she felt this would not be possible due to the responsibility and other issues of having non staff around the

children. Ms. Buchbinder added that the Education Specialist are also involved and using the same language as the Behavioral Specialists with the providers to help with the children. Ms. Buchbinder commented that Ms. Rissa Elliott through the CCR&R provides referrals for parents and their children. Ms. Hoban followed that it is difficult to get parents to night trainings as they work and there is not child care available at these trainings.

There was no new business.

Mr. Pruitt reported to the Board members that the Villages Sun has requested several public documents from the Coalition which include board minutes (written and recorded), attendance sheets as well as other documents. Mr. Pruitt commented that they have also asked Lake-Sumter Community College for documents and other items as well. Mr. Pruitt said he feels it is politically motivated and directed at him. Mr. Pruitt also stated that things have been reported about him and his family that are not true. Mr. Pruitt commented that Ms. Buchbinder has complied with all the requests in a manner required by state guidelines. Ms. Buchbinder has communicated with legal counsel and the State as to what the Coalition is required to do. Mr. Pruitt stated that he has his own legal counsel that is working with him. Ms. Margaret Hill said in her experience that typically Board's purchase bonding insurance and suggested that Ms. Buchbinder may want to check into bonding insurance for the ELCLC Board members. Mr. Pruitt said Board members and the Coalition should remain focused on serving the children. Ms. Buchbinder commented that there is a process in responding to the requests which includes the request being reviewed to determine if the information is public, if so, what expenses are involved in allowing access, making copies, staff time involved, etc. Once determined an estimate is submitted to the requesting party stating that the information will be prepared when payment is received and a delivery date is indicated.

There were no other items for discussion.

Mr. Thompson moved to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Rowin. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 10:26 a.m.

Submitted by:
Patricia Pierce
Executive Assistant

Approved Nov 5 2008