



These minutes summarize the key issues discussed at the Early Learning Coalition Board of Directors' meeting on July 14, 2010.

Mr. Pruitt called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. Board members present were: Dr. Hugh Brockington, Ms. Marie Carlberg, Mr. Hays Ginn, Mr. Oscar Palau, Ms. Michele Rawls, Ms. Kimberly Grabert (via phone), Dr. Barbara Howard, Ms. Maureen Jergins, Ms. Melissa Lyford, Ms. Dawn Mainville, Ms. Sherry Olszanski, Mr. Will Pruitt, Ms. Kathryn Sutherin, Ms. Jeanie Rowin, Ms. Linda Stewart, Mr. B. E. Thompson, Ms. Jennifer Walz and Mr. Eddy Workinger. Board member absent were: Ms. Marsha Carpenter, Mr. Eric English, Ms. Sabrina Ciceri, Ms. Porcha Green and Ms. Cheryl Ridley. Staff members present: Ms. Lesha Buchbinder, Executive Director. Guests present were: Ms. Denise Lancaster, Ms. Rebecca Foley-Kearney, Mr. Howard Wiener, Mr. Jon Cherry, Ms. Emily Lee and Mr. Bill Hartman.

CONSENT CONSIDERATION:

Ms. Buchbinder established that a quorum was present. Ms. Buchbinder reported there were no minutes for review at this time. The only item for consideration/discussion is the ITN/Budget Negotiations Subcommittee Update. Mr. Pruitt commented that Mr. Jon Cherry, was invited to do a presentation to the Board. Mr. Pruitt reminded Board members that this was a very important meeting and that after the presentation whatever decisions are to be made, they should be made for the sake of the children and we need to do so with that in mind. Mr. Pruitt commented that members of LifeStream stated that regardless of the outcome of today's meeting, the partnership between the two organizations will continue. Mr. Pruitt stated Mr. Cherry will accept questions at the end of his presentation, and asked members to keep their questions on task.

Mr. Cherry began his presentation with a history of LifeStream and commented on the issues of the seven year partnership with the Coalition. Mr. Cherry stated that the ELCLC/LifeStream have been significant stakeholders in Lake County. He added that the delivery of the SR and VPK programs exemplifies the definition of the collaboration. Mr. Cherry reminded members that they took over the program from Marion County with very little problems or turmoil, and initially did the job for a lot less than any other contractor. Mr. Cherry also commented that during the past seven years, LifeStream has exceeded outcome measures.

Mr. Cherry continued his presentation referring to advance payments for providers, cost comparisons over the years for providing administrative functions for SR & VPK. He shared information regarding the number of grant requests for match dollars that had been submitted by LifeStream. He talked about match dollars from KCI and Children Services Council. Mr. Cherry also shared information relating to new programs developed by the organization that provided higher quality and increased the number of children served. Mr. Cherry also commented on the enhancement of the Behavioral Specialist program that included early prevention and drug programs.

Mr. Cherry commented that if the Coalition takes services in house, the internal support of all LifeStream still will be extensively utilized but the administrative and professional staff will not be accessible as in the past. He further commented that LifeStream's strengths provides more intensive services as a partner, but separately, the relationship will not be the same. Mr. Cherry stated that the decision should not be made lightly and ELCLC Board shares in responsibility to ensure that the organization can fully meet the requirement and obligations. Mr. Cherry shared his concerns that the ELCLC Board may not fully

understand the costs required to provide the services and that LifeStream has a proven track record. If ELCLC can answer all the questions related to the costs, etc. then they should consider taking the services in-house. Mr. Cherry asked that if the Coalition makes the decision to do it in a thoughtful manner. He suggested that the Coalition extend the LSCB contract to allow enough time to do a transition plan to ensure the least amount of problems possible. Mr. Cherry suggested that to do the transition correctly, it should be completed by next year, July 1, 2011.

Mr. Pruitt thanked Mr. Cherry for his presentation and stated that LifeStream had done a great job with the transition from Marion County.

Mr. Pruitt opened the floor to all board members to share the concerns and ask questions.

Commissioner Stewart asked about timely payments to providers and if there was a process to advance payments to providers. Ms. Stewart also inquired about any potential loss of LifeStream employees. Ms. Buchbinder informed the Board that there is an ongoing process already in place to ensure timely payments to all providers. Ms. Buchbinder commented that if services brought in house, staff from LifeStream/Child Care Choice Services will be invited to come to the Coalition and keep their current positions. Ms. Buchbinder commented that an IT person will be needed and transition dollars may be available for that purpose. Ms. Buchbinder added that having an IT person will increase response time whether it is a part time position or contracted services. Commissioner Stewart also asked if the Coalition would need to hire someone to write grants. Ms. Buchbinder replied that the Coalition already has two staff members who regularly do grant requests for match dollars and/or funding for the big blue bus program. Mr. Hartman, Program Outreach Coordinator, works part time and attends various community meetings to do presentations regarding the Coalition programs. If the Coalition brings all services in-house, that position could possibly become full time.

Ms. Mainville inquired about needing to hire additional staff to perform the fiscal functions. Ms. Mainville commented that we may need one additional staff to assist the CFO. Ms. Buchbinder commented that even if additional fiscal staff is needed it would not equal the entire \$175K administrative budget currently being proposed. Ms. Olszanski commented that staff is needed to do oversight and do backup checks for fiscal functions. Ms. Buchbinder commented that due to the resignation of Ms. Cynthia Taylor, Education Specialist, that position will be filled with someone who can provide administrative assistance as needed.

Ms. Jeanie Rowin inquired about the budget and if the LifeStream contract were to continue, how would we find dollars to cover their increase each year. Ms. Buchbinder commented that the Coalition has not received an increase for several years and will not this year so the costs will have to come from the bottom line of the current budget. Ms. Buchbinder further commented that if we continue to expend ARRA dollars at the current rate then we are projected to run out by the end of December 2010, further creating a deficit or decrease in funding.

Ms. Sutherin reported that discussions were held at the ELAC meeting regarding transition of services in-house, stating that though the process is challenging, it is not impossible. Ms. Sutherin commented that based on the timing, the Coalition is in a good position to transition. Ms. Sutherin also commented that with the transition, the EFS accounts is a good opportunity for the Coalition and providers to learn more about the ELIS system; with the efficiency of the state system, the Coalition will save about \$28 million dollars when it is implemented. With that amount of savings, there could be an additional 7,000 kids served across the state. Ms. Sutherin commented there are a lot of changes coming in the next 2 years that will assist the Coalitions in being more effective.

Ms. Olszanski reported that she serves on another Board in Lake-Sumter County and they board was faced with a similar situation and had to make a difficult decision that caused a lot of turmoil. Ms. Olszanski commented that the Board decided to look at the strengths of the service provider and whether or not to keep that provider. Ms. Olszanski asked if the ELC Board chooses to do services in-house, that transition needs to be made safe and a successful process. Ms. Olszanski commented that the suggestion made by Mr. Cherry about continuing the LifeStream contract for another year while doing the transition was a good solution to providing assistance to the Coalition to build a transition team and do a good job for the families and providers.

Other Board members made comments about the budget, and asked what line items could be reduced to cover the \$46,000 increase requested. Ms. Buchbinder commented it could come from salaries, benefits, IT, and other areas without affecting child slots or provider rates. Dr. Brockington reminded members that the Coalition did approve a rate increase for providers last year even though the Coalition's budget did not increase.

Mr. Workinger asked why LifeStream would want to keep the contract with the Coalition if they continually lose dollars. Mr. Cherry's response was that it was because of their commitment to community service. Mr. Cherry stated that the Coalition doesn't understand the full cost of operating the programs and will be searching for additional dollars down the road. Mr. Cherry stated it would make sense now to make things as seamless as possible, but LifeStream cannot maintain as is without an increase. Mr. Cherry commented that in reality the Coalition, due to limited funding, is a burden on LifeStream. He stated that without the contract LifeStream staff would be able to focus on securing other grants. He stated that it would be advantageous to ELCLC if LifeStream were to continue the contract, but if not, he wants to maintain a good partnership with the Coalition.

Ms. Rowin expressed her concern about LifeStream staff being laid off if they lose the contract. Ms. Buchbinder commented that LifeStream would have to make up the dollars somehow or reduce employees.

Mr. Ginn commented that if LifeStream continued the contract for another 3 years, with a loss of \$175,000 it would be inevitable that somewhere down the road they would save they can no longer do the programs and the transition would still take place. Mr. Ginn commented even if the Coalition can save 1%, more children would be served. Commissioner Stewart commented that she feels the Coalition is not ready to bring services in-house and if we do it at this time, there could be more long term effects down the road. Dr. Howard asked if it was possible to extend the contract for an additional 3 months to allow more time. Ms. Buchbinder commented that the contract is already in a three month extension period to September 30th and that is the maximum allowed by regulations. The Coalition would be required to implement another new procurement process and have it completed by September 30, 2010. The procurement would be a three year cycle and would be reviewed annually.

Mr. Ginn asked Ms. Buchbinder, if the board decides to bring services in-house, can the Coalition do it? Ms. Buchbinder commented yes with the proper transition team in place. Ms. Buchbinder commented to the Board members that they need to give themselves more credit and know that they have people who are experienced, know and understand the programs and have been responsible for the oversight and monitoring of LifeStream/CCCS. Ms. Buchbinder commented that if the Board decides to do the transition, the staff at Child Care Choice Services who are currently performing the tasks of operating the programs,

will be given the opportunity to come to ELCLC and continue doing the work. Mr. Cherry commented that CCCS has a staff now that do the job and do it very well.

Dr. Brockington asked Ms. Buchbinder if she felt that the Coalition could make the transition and her reply was yes, the Coalition could accomplish the transition. Mr. Pruitt recognized the quality of work that is accomplished by Coalition staff each day. Mr. Pruitt stated that he believes in what LifeStream has done over the last 7 years, and has faith in what he knows the Coalition staff can do going forward.

Mr. Pruitt reported that on June 30 a recommendation was made by the ITN Committee to the Board to bring services in-house. However, that recommendation was tabled to allow Mr. Cherry to come and do one last presentation to the full Board so all board members would be aware of and understand the issues.

Ms. Rowin made a motion the following motion:

1. Ms. Buchbinder be authorized to bring services in-house effective October 1, 2010 and that a transition team is developed with the support of LifeStream.
2. Ms. Buchbinder should be given the authority to approach staff at CCCS to give them the opportunity to interview for the positions that will be needed.

The motion was seconded by Dr. Brockington.

Before calling for a vote, Mr. Pruitt reported that effective July 1, 2010, based on new state guidelines, all members of the Board now are voting members, except in the case where there may be a conflict of interest. Ms. Olszanski and Mr. Thompson abstained from voting on this issue.

Ms. Buchbinder did a roll call to determine votes. When all have given their responses, the final outcome of the vote tallied as follows: 18 members present, one left prior to the vote, 2 abstained, 10 voted yes and 5 voted no.

There was no further discussion. Meeting adjourned at 10:25 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Patricia Pierce
Executive Assistant

Approved August 4, 2010