



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

These minutes summarize the key issues of the ELCLC Board Meeting on March 10, 2010.

Board members present: Ms. Nancy Allison, Mr. Hugh Brockington, Ms. Sabrina Ciceri, Mr. Eric English, Mr. Hays Ginn, Ms. Porcha Green, Ms. Dawn Mainville, Ms. Sherry Olszanski, Mr. Will Pruitt, Ms. Michele Rawls, Ms. Cheryl Ridley, Ms. Jeanie Rowin, Ms. Linda Stewart, Mr. B.E. Thompson, Ms. Latricia Eastes for Kimberly Grabert and Ms. Daphine Harvey for Ms. Marsha Carpenter. Board members absent: Ms. Marie Carlberg, Ms. Maureen Jergins, Dr. Barbara Howard, Ms. Donna Gregory and Mr. Eddy Workinger. Staff members present: Ms. Lesha Buchbinder, Ms. Patricia Pierce, Ms. Laura Close, Ms. Patsy Grant, Ms. Cynthia Taylor, Ms. Lisa West, Ms. Jennifer Harrison, Ms. Simone Hilton-Ellis, Ms. Tameka Mays, Ms. Noelle Nicolas, Ms. Gail Adderley and Ms. Teressa Parrish. Guests present: Ms. Cindy Winkle, Ms. Amanda Cypret, Mr. Wesley Paul, Ms. Denise Lancaster, Ms. Renet McCall, Ms. Marilyn Veldor, Ms. Ruth Ferguson, Ms. Cheryl Brown, Ms. Doreen Chatelier and Ms. Kathryn Sutherin.

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Pruitt called the meeting to order at 9:20 a.m. A quorum was determined present.

CONSENT CONSIDERATION

Mr. Pruitt asked if anyone had questions or wanted to discuss items 542-545. Mr. Thompson requested to pull item Action Item 543 for discussion and Ms. Buchbinder asked to pull Action Item 544 for discussion. A motion was made and seconded to approve Action Items 542 and 545. Motion carried.

Mr. Thompson reported that the Nominating Committee met via teleconference on March 9, 2010 to ratify the nomination of Ms. Kathryn Sutherin as the new Private Provider representative on the Board. Mr. Thompson also reported that an application for membership had been submitted for Ms. Jennifer Walz, of The Chiropractic Center in Leesburg, to fill the remaining seat as a Private Sector member. There were no questions. A motion was made and seconded to approve Ms. Kathryn Sutherin as Private Provider Representative as of May 1, 2010 and Ms. Jennifer Walz as Private Sector member effective April 7, 2010. Motion carried.

Mr. Pruitt asked Ms. Buchbinder to proceed with Action Item 544, ITN Services Procurement document. Ms. Buchbinder asked anyone present in the room who intended to submit a bid on the ITN to leave the room during the discussion. Once all persons had left the room, Ms. Buchbinder continued with the discussion.

Ms. Buchbinder commented that during the December 2009 board meeting, a discussion took place on how the Coalition could provide additional services that were not part of the regular scope of assistance for providers. Ms. Buchbinder commented that there were several ideas proposed that the ITN Committee agreed warranted consideration for incorporation into the services for the new ITN. Mr. Pruitt added that the Board previously discussed expanding the behavioral services program as there are only two behavioral specialists currently providing services for the entire County.

Ms. Buchbinder reported that a few additions to the ITN were made to improve upon existing services, but no additional services were added. Ms. Buchbinder commented on a statement made in December regarding making the process for parents easier and more accessible to complete the eligibility process. Ms. Buchbinder stated that the ITN specifically requires that bidders must have the means to reach out to parents who are going through the eligibility process. Ms. Buchbinder also stated that she enlisted the help of staff to review the content of the Behavior Specialist and Inclusion section of the ITN and that Ms. Nicolas suggested a couple of good ideas to enhance the behavioral program that were also incorporated into the ITN. Ms. Buchbinder commented the majority of the ITN remained the same for all services (ELC 1, 2, 3, and 4). There were no other issues for discussion regarding the ITN procurement process. A motion was made and seconded to approve Action Item 544 as presented. Motion carried.

Ms. Buchbinder asked to present another item for discussion that may require a vote from the Board. Ms. Buchbinder reminded the board of previous discussions held regarding the requirements of SR providers to attend a specific number of meetings. Ms. Buchbinder reminded the board of the discussions that were held last year regarding providers that were not meeting this requirement. Ms. Buchbinder reported that currently they are five providers who have not and cannot meet the meeting requirements of the 2009-2010 SR Provider Agreement. Three of the five providers were in the same situation last year when additional meetings were scheduled to allow those providers the opportunity not to lose their contract. Ms. Buchbinder stated that there will be no make-up meetings scheduled this year and requested guidance from the Board as to whether or not the providers' contracts should be terminated and whether or not the providers should be permitted to submit an Intent to Contract for the upcoming program year. Ms. Buchbinder stated that at this time she does not know exactly how many SR children would be affected if the contracts are terminated, but will research the information and inform the Board. Ms. Buchbinder added that there are 19 providers who need to attend two additional meetings and 36 who need to attend one additional meeting. Ms. Buchbinder stated that the next opportunity for providers to attend a SR meeting are in April and she would inform the board at the May board meeting if any of the 19 did not meet the requirement. There was discussion among board members and guest regarding the decision to terminate the contracts based on the failure to adhere to the meeting requirements. Mr. Brockington stated that he felt it was important that providers are held accountable. Ms. Rawls commented that the Coalition goes above and beyond to notify and remind providers of the meeting requirements. Ms. Brown requested that the Educational Specialist present be able to comment on whether or not they felt there were any extenuating circumstances that prevented the providers in question from attending the meetings. The Educational Specialist present stated that they were not aware of any circumstances, and Ms. Parrish stated that she had reminded her providers of the meeting requirement. After a lengthy discussion a motion was made and seconded to terminate the five contracts immediately and to give parents a 30 day notice to find alternate care. Motion carried.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

Ms. Buchbinder proceeded to review the legislative update that was included in the board packet stating that there is information included regarding potential bills that effect early education in Florida. Ms. Buchbinder specifically referred to the bill proposed by Senator Wise stating that the bill had been changed from last year. Ms. Buchbinder stated that the language of the current bill doesn't refer to reduction of Coalitions, but does recommend changes that could possibly reinstate voting rights that which would include representatives from the school board, Head Start, provider representatives (private and faith based) and IDEA. The language of the bill does cause some concerns regarding the intent to reduce local control as it is related to contracts for SR providers. Ms. Buchbinder commented that a synopsis is included that shows the status of the all the bills relating to early learning, a brief explanation of what they are, and how many stops they are scheduled to make in the process.

Ms. Buchbinder discussed another bill proposed by Representative Evers which proposes the allowance tiered reimbursement for providers. This process would allow providers to receive payment based on the quality of care. Currently the state does not allow tiered reimbursement, but it is allowed at the Federal level. Also, if passed, the bill would allow Coalitions to refrain from doing the required procurement process and to continue with the same agency if they are successful in providing services.

Ms. Buchbinder referenced another bill regarding DCF that would prohibit counties from requiring that all family day care homes be licensed. The bill states that if a County wants to pass a local ordinance requiring family homes to be licensed, the county would have to contract with DCF for the cost incurred. Ms. Buchbinder commented that if passed, this bill could possible create a challenge for the Coalition's desire for Lake County to adopt such a requirement. Ms. Buchbinder commented that a director of one of Lake's licensed family day care home has been requested by USDA to help facilitate the USDA Food Program in Lake County. Ms. Buchbinder stated that this provider is also informing family home providers about the advantages of being licensed and not registered.

Ms. Buchbinder reported that KCI had approved a grant for \$60,000 for federal match funds. Ms. Buchbinder reported on the meetings in Tallahassee on March 10 stating the directors of the Early Learning Coalitions throughout the state had met with the Governor and that she received a letter thanking the Coalitions and the directors for their unwavering support for education for children. The letter stated the Governor was recommending \$615.4 million dollars to preserve the school readiness program which includes \$42.8 million to increase VPK.

Ms. Buchbinder informed the Board that Mr. Ginn had approached her with an opportunity regarding photo ID cards for children. Mr. Ginn commented that organizations will elect to sponsor the ID cards (with their company logo on them) which are free to parents. The ID cards include a photo of the child, address, etc. and will be used in the event that the child is ever missing. Ms.

Mainville commented that Lake School Board does something with ID cards as well. Providers also commented that they too use a local vendor for ID cards for the children in their facilities. After a brief discussion Ms. Buchbinder stated that she would make arrangements for a presentation at the April Board meeting. Mr. Thompson stated that maybe this is something that can be incorporated in the Big Blue Bus program.

Ms. Buchbinder referred to the draft SR contract and reviewed the changes that are proposed for 2010-2011. Ms. Buchbinder commented that the contract will be submitted to the board for final approval at the April Board Meeting and will be given to providers at the April SR provider meeting. Ms. Buchbinder stated that in previous years the June Provider meeting was scheduled for contract signings, but this year this will not be the case. Ms. Buchbinder stated that the contract will be reviewed with providers in April and when the provider is ready they can arrange for a time to come in and complete the necessary paperwork prior to June 30. Ms. Buchbinder asked if Ms. Allison and Ms. Rawls would review the document prior to April and advise her of any concerns they may have.

Ms. Buchbinder informed the members that the Kindergarten Readiness rates are now online. Ms. Buchbinder stated that we have seven providers who scored a perfect 200; Ms. Renet McCall Director at First Presbyterian Church in Mount Dora had a perfect score two consecutive years. Of the seven, one center was in the summer program and six were school year programs. Ms. Buchbinder commented that at first look there are 66 providers scoring within the top quartile, from 150-200. Ms. Buchbinder commented that the expected Low Performing Provider (LPP) rate is 138 and those providers who scored below 138 will be required to complete the improvement process. Ms. Buchbinder commented that it looks like six providers are on the LPP list this year; one provider was on the LPP list for three years but was not on the list this year, therefore they will have the opportunity to continue offering the VPK program.

Ms. Buchbinder reviewed the upcoming activities stating that the Uniting for Children Conference will be held on Saturday, April 17 at Leesburg High School and flyers will be distributed. Children's Week is scheduled for April 11-17th in Tallahassee. Also, Ms. Buchbinder stated that KPMG submitted their final report and there were no changes from the draft that was previously submitted.

Ms. Buchbinder stated that with the approval of Ms. Walz to the Board, there is only one vacancy remaining and that is the IDEA representative. Ms. Buchbinder stated that it was discussed and suggested by the Nominating Committee that Coalition advertise for the vacancy. Advertisement could include an ad in the Daily Commercial, as well as sending emails to other agencies to recruit candidates for the position. The Board agreed this was a good idea. There was no further discussion on the Executive Director's Report.

Mr. Pruitt shared his thoughts with Board members regarding the vote to terminate contracts for noncompliance and the potential tiered reimbursement. Mr. Pruitt stated that he would like to have a group of board members and providers come together to discuss the importance of running a good business. Mr. Pruitt remarked that perhaps someone from the Business Resource Center or SCORE, and CPAs or Chamber members could be invited to participate in trainings or seminars for providers on how to advertise, grow and prosper as a business. Mr. Pruitt commented that we have tried to impress on providers that they should think of the centers as a business and not just serving children to get a paycheck. Mr. Thompson commented that perhaps we could incorporate mentoring incentives to members to serve as mentors.

Mr. Pruitt further stated that legislation does not always work and legislators don't understand the inner workings of businesses and are bogged down in government mode. Mr. Pruitt reminded the board that the Governor has pledged to ask for more funding for early education. Mr. Pruitt also stated that the tiered reimbursement is needed; if schools can use funds for teachers and benefits, we should be able to use funding for our centers to grow our industry. Mr. Pruitt asked if Ms. Cheryl Ridley would lead the group and asked Ms. Buchbinder assist with getting a group together in the next two-three months.

Ms. Winkle shared her commented on the tiered program stating that she would pass any incentives received on to her parents to help them with child care expenses. The tiered reimbursement could result in parents moving children from their current center to a higher quality center. Mr. Pruitt said that in VPK, teachers within the school district get a higher standard of pay and feels that private center teachers should get the same rate and benefits. Mr. Pruitt said there may be ways take quality funds and use for pilot program to keep teachers in private centers with better pay and benefits. Many teachers don't have funds to continue their education and get a degree that may be required in future years. The Coalition's scholarship program continues to help but the state doesn't have funds to assist teachers with education. Ms. Buchbinder commented that the Provider Growth

and Development committee has faced some challenges this year in developing mini grants, therefore, there may be some funds available to bring in a professional consultant or trainers to assist with tying this initiative together. Mr. Pruitt asked Ms. Buchbinder to take the lead on this endeavor.

Ms. Buchbinder offered a brief review of the fiscal report in the packets. Ms. Buchbinder stated that we are at 41% of the fiscal year remaining and the budgets, both Coalition and CCCS are above levels on the majority of line items. Ms. Buchbinder commented that due to the growth over the last three years, of both staff and data, we are currently looking at upgrading the Coalition's IT server. Ms. Buchbinder commented that the Quality funds show 54.9% left; however reminded board members that provider mini grants are being processed at this time. Ms. Buchbinder reported that SR shows no wait list at this time and providers need to send parents to CCCS for eligibility determination. Utilization reports indicate that in January we had 2,067 children enrolled in the SR program. 1221 were served by our BG8 or working poor category and 256 were served by our ARRA category. In January there were a total of 223 first time certifications and 163 terminations. The board discussed the terminations which could be due to loss of a parent's jobs, parents not keeping their appointments or parents no longer meeting the requirements. The group discussed ideas on how to decrease the number of terminations, including extending opportunities to meet parents, make the process more efficient and possible extending services. There were a total of 1904 children served in VPK.

Ms. Buchbinder provided updates on the round robin discussion from December. A discussion was held regarding the DCF meeting that was held recently attended by Coalition staff and the new guidelines for posting the square footage per classroom. Ms. Winkle and Ms. McCall shared their concerns on how the new classroom guidelines negatively impacted their centers during a recent inspection. Ms. McCall commented they have enrichment programs and that there are areas within her center that are intended for all children and if they follow the new guidelines, Ms. McCall stated they could lose up to 10 children, with all but one being VPK children. Ms. McCall further commented that there is no appeal process for providers to address their concerns. Ms. Winkle also shared her concerns relating to the new guidelines. Ms. Winkle commented that she also uses common areas that are intended for children's use throughout the day. Ms. Harvey, representing Ms. Carpenter from DCF, commented that the changes to overall capacity would only go into effect when there was a change in ownership of the center. She mentioned that if a classroom had to remove a child based on size, then there would be an allowance that another classroom could be over by one child. Mr. Pruitt asked Ms. Buchbinder to contact DCF and schedule a round table meeting, which would include all interested parties, to discuss this issue further. Ms. Buchbinder stated that she contacted Ms. Carpenter who stated that she does not expect this to have a big impact in Lake County.

Due to the length of the meetings, Mr. Pruitt asked to table the remainder of the items on the agenda. A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting at 10:40 a.m. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted by
Patricia Pierce
Executive Assistant

Approved April 14, 2010