



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

### MINUTES

**Monday, February 25, 2008**

**8:00 - 10:00 AM**

**Board Room, Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe**

**BOARD ATTENDEES:** Alan Abramowitz; Roderick E Beasley; Alan Eckstein, Esq; P. Morgan Hill; Dr. Yvonne T. Johnson (Vice Chair); David Lawrence, Jr.; The Hon. Cindy Lederman; Octavio A. Verdeja, Jr. (Chair); Yesenia Perkins (Treasurer); Ann Karen Weller; Dr. Daniel Armstrong; Gerald K. Schwartz, Esq.; Dr. Clarence Jones, Jr.; Dr. Silvia La Villa; Phyllis Tynes-Saunders (for George Burgess); Dr. Gina Cortes-Suarez; Connie Chappell; Harve Mogul; David Williams, Jr.;

**BOARD ABSENTEES:** Sara B. Herald (Secretary); Dr. Dabney Park; Jane McQueen; The Hon. Natacha Seijas

**STAFF ATTENDEES:** Walter Harvey, Esq. (Coalition Attorney); Evelio Torres; Angelo Parrino; Blythe Robinson; Tabatha Cullen; Jackye Russell; Melody Thelwell; Alina Soto; Mary Williams; Bethany Sands; Vivian Wright; Teri Carbajal; Roseline Philippe; Ury Vegara; Karen Molinario; Diana Lane; Fiorella Altare; Lillian Amador; Nadira Ali

**GENERAL ATTENDEES:** Maria E. Binelo, Miami Dade DHS/CDS; Edith Humes-Newbold, MDC/DHS/CDS; Eddie Rivera, AWI; Linda Carmona Sanchez, (A+ Early Learning Center); Modesto E. Abety, The Children's Trust; Sara Marales, Miami-Dade DHS; Ana Sejeck, ECLF; Maritza Alonso, DHS; Rosemary Moreno, Ramiro Moreno, REL Learning Center; Jesse Leinfelder, The Children's Trust; Manuel Fermin, Healthy Start Coalition of Miami-Dade; Dr. Alonso, Miami-Dade, DHS; Taria E. Alvarez, Family Center; Matty Loret de Mola, La Petite Academy; Rhiannon S. Flick, Alliance

- I. Welcome and Introductions..... Octavio A. Verdeja Jr., Chair
  - A. Roll Call..... Nadira Ali
  - B. Approval of Agenda .....Octavio A. Verdeja Jr.

**Motion to Approve the Agenda was moved and unanimously approved.**
  - C. Opening Remarks ..... Octavio A. Verdeja Jr.

**Welcome to Dr. Gina Cortes our member from Miami-Dade College. Dr. Cortes expressed that she looks forward to being on the Board.**



The Central Walker Park in Hialeah is incredible with four classes and approximately 80 children. It is a beautiful facility. Congratulations to Commissioner Seijas for bringing that together. The Chairman also attended the Quality Counts Kick Off Event as did Dr. Johnson. Attendance at the Event was incredible with approximately 700 people. It was held at Parrot Jungle/Jungle Island and was a fantastic Event. The Chairman congratulated David Lawrence Jr., for his speech, Modesto E. Abety for his continued push of the Quality Counts, ELCM-D/M staff, Karen Molinario, Ana Pizano, Fio Altare and Dr. Leinfelder and Abby Thorman from the Children's Trust for their contributions. Evelio is now reporting to the Chairman every month as to how this proceeds.

Congratulations ELC. This Coalition received recognition at the Board of Directors meeting. The Coalition was recognized with the Trailblazer Award at the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Spirit of Excellence.

II. Approval of Minutes.....Octavio A. Verdeja Jr.

- Motion to approve January 28, 2008 Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
  - Motion was moved by Cindy Lederman, seconded by Alan Eckstein and passed unanimously.

III. Finance Committee Report..... Yesenia Perkins

A. Motion to approve Resolution 022508-01 to Authorize the President/CEO to negotiate and execute a settlement agreement with Media Counselors, Inc., for Billboard Services in Miami-Dade County.

Motion was made by Gerald Schwartz, seconded by Harve Mogul and unanimously approved.

B. Motion to approve Resolution 022508-02 to Authorize the President/CEO to issue a Request for Proposal for providing Quality Materials.

Motion was made by Alan Eckstein, seconded by Octavio Verdeja and unanimously approved.

C. Motion to approve Resolution 022508-03 to Authorize the President/CEO to negotiate and execute the first contract amendment to contract C07-119 with PC Depot, Inc., for additional information technology support and services.

Motion was made by Alan Eckstein, seconded by Rick Beasley and unanimously approved.



- D. Motion to approve Resolution 022508-04 to accept the procedure on the use of unrestricted funds.

Harve Mogul made the motion with the condition that the word 'moderate' be removed from the text.

David Lawrence, Jr. added that a monthly list of what the unrestricted funds are spent on be sent to the Board even though these spent funds will be approved by the Chair and the Finance Committee.

Finance Committee Chair Yesenia Perkins reminded the Board that once the \$61,000 is spent, it is not replenished unless ELC has a Fund Raiser.

Motion was made Harve Mogul, seconded by Gerald Schwartz and unanimously approved.

Items for discussion:

The Finance Chair confirmed the remaining Budget is exactly where it should be at 42%.

With the approval of the 3.2 Motion everything is in ailment now.

A. Slot Utilization Management

26,310 actual paid children in January which was a jump of 2,143 from December.

The Board asked the President/CEO to decide on the percentage of funds to be spent on after school age children. The Board agreed with the President's decision of 25%.

All names on the Ready Pool list have an appointment to come in. The County makes three attempts to reach them. The number will drop as many are unreachable.

B. Discussion regarding School Age Kids

A few years ago the Board was asked by the State to look at the percentage of school aged children and limit the percentage. ELC started to limit it at 25% but the State backed down and did not require ELC to put it into a Motion. Over the past year and one half it has hovered between 30 - 33% of the children. The Chair of the Finance Committee asked the Board to give a percentage to the Present/CEO.



The Board discussed that 33% of the children is 26% of the dollars spent on children. There is a difference in cost between school aged children and the pre-school children.

The Board felt 25% was a comfortable percentage but wanted the President/CEO's opinion.

The Board stated that although it is a tough decision, to hold at 25% (which is dollars) it is necessary to remain focused on our Mission of pre-school.

A Member reminded the Board that this is the EARLY LEARNING COALITION. He stated that when the School Readiness Act of 1999 was passed the engine that drove it was zero to five, school readiness, early learning. However there was no where for after school care and it was pushed into Early Learning facilities. In a State that deeply under funds children we have a terrible choice here. People will be hurt one way or another. We need to find some formula.

Although Board members agree it is important to offer services to all siblings, it was also agreed that the wisest investment is up front.

A Provider asked that ELC analyze how many school aged children have younger siblings. She commented that most families with school aged children in the system also have pre-school aged children. She said the majority of the children are not 12 year olds although they are in the school age category. She does not want to see siblings separated or denied.

A Board Member stated that siblings aren't necessary together in the same facility. Another Board Member confirmed this by stating that for a center to offer After School Care it is very specialized requiring the right people with the right qualifications, the right environment. A third Board Member stated that perhaps we are assuming that we are keeping the siblings together when in fact the school age children are in a separate center because of pre-school centers are not equipped to include the older children.

It was also mentioned that this affects Providers' economy. Committing to a specific percentage allows them to plan. Fluctuation is difficult for them.

The President/CEO confirmed that 25% was an ideal target. He reminded the Board that this number may change depending on what is happening across the State and would like to report back to them should this percentage need to be revised. In order not to disrupt families he would like to hold to the 25% for the next year. He said that ELC would like to coordinate with The Children's Trust and when ever possible take advantage of the many After School Care programs The Trust funds.



The Board requested that ELC show how they will reduce 26% down 1% to the 25% goal.

The Board requested an 'Age' breakdown list as soon as possible.

The Board requested a list of the number of Centers that serve pre-school children and a list of the number of Centers that serve 'After School Care' children

The Board was interested in how many of the families are single parent families.

#### C. Board Philosophy regarding Surplus/Deficits

Use all the funds or lose them. In the past we have been over. Last year 1.5% over. The State gave ELC the option to tap into this year's fiscal budget which we did.

It was explained by the President/CEO that although the goal is to bring the Budget in on target, it is impossible because of the many variables. It was explained that ELC can go over by 1.5% (\$1.785 Million of the School Readiness Grant) by taking from next year's budget. There is a danger in under spending.

The AWI representative shared that historically when Coalitions have surplus within the threshold they do not lose their allocation. They start the next year with the same allocation of the fiscal year that ended. When Coalitions overspend but are within the threshold they are allowed to use next year's. There is a movement to do Formula Reallocations and that may come into play vs how you end up with your spending.

A Board Member stated that these are dollars that go into services. Services that are used in May or October. Ultimately ELC's go is to meet the Budget. It is better to go into a deficit up to \$1.75 Million than to have a surplus and leave dollars on the table only to have to give it back to the State.

ELC has a 'hurricane cone' computerized models that will show the worst case scenario and best case.

A Board Member asked the AWI Representative if the State requires in writing that ELC to tap into next year's budget or does ELC still have the choice to go to the State if ELC goes over. He informed the Board that his office in previous years engaged in a 'Reobligation/Deobligation of Funds' which required all ELCs to identify whether they were surplus or deficit. As of the present time AWI has not conducted that exercise yet and it is not known if AWI will conduct that exercise this year. ELC would need to ask the AWI Office for authority to use next year's allocation.



The President/CEO mentioned that ELCs that surplus will give those dollars up to help ELCs in a deficit. The \$15 Million that AWI requested did not make it into the Governor’s Budget. ELC is looking at the same level of funding for next year. ELC is within 2% of the Budget right now.

A Board Member reminded everyone that the State will be in a \$2 Billion Deficit. He believes it will take a minimum of 2 fiscal years to pull out of this situation. He added it would be taking a scary path to operate under the belief that the State may give some money back.

The Motion was made that ELCM-D/M break even or go over rather than fall into a Surplus.  
  
This Motion was made by Yesenia Perkins, seconded by Morgan Hill and unanimously approved.

- IV. Legislative Advocacy Committee ..... Sara B. Herald
- V. Nominating Committee.....Yvonne T. Johnson
- VI. Program & Strategy Committee ..... David Williams, Jr.
- VII. Provider Services Committee..... Hon. Natacha Seijas
- VIII. CEO Report..... Evelio Torres

We have been working with the Children’s Task Force on some important things for Monroe County. The AWI granted an increase to the Federal Poverty Level to 225% instead of the \$200.00 limit, allowing families to stay in the program longer. This still requires approval by the Federal Government. Modesto and Evelio Torres are working to establish with the Children’s Task Force a ‘Children’s Services Council in Monroe County. There is a lot of progress being made in Monroe County

- IX. VPK Presentation.....Blythe Robinson/Roseline Philippe/Kerry Allen

VPK was created in 2002 by a Constitutional Amendment. It was created for 4 year olds in the State of Florida to give them a head start by preparing them for school. The program offers 540 hours during the school year and 300 hours during the summer. Summer attendance is low so there are fewer Providers offering the Summer program.

To measure the performance of Providers ‘The Readiness Rate’ method is used. FLKRS is administered to children within the first 30 days of kindergarten. There is no baseline on these children because the Legislature never mandated an assessment on VPK.

One Board Member suggested that parents who enter their children in VPK probably spend more time with them than those parents who’s children are non-VPK children.



The Board would like to see the demographics on VPK children.

A Board Member stated that ELC needs a database that describes who is in this program. The database should hold the following information: What kind of accreditation, what curriculum, mother's education, social economic status, teacher's credentials, etc.

The VPK program had 4,565 Providers serving 98,665 children in 2005-06. In 2006-07 it rose by 551 providers to 5,116 Providers serving 130,853 children (an increase of 7%).

The State Board of Education minimum Readiness Rate for 2005-06 was 201. The Minimum rate in 2006-07 was 211.

Providers that don't meet the minimum rate are considered 'Low Performing Providers (LPP). No more than 15% of Providers statewide can be in LPP status.

Low Performing Providers are required to go onto the DOE website and acknowledge their status as a Low Performing Provider. If they chose not to do that the ELC VPK cannot sign off and authorize them for the next school year. They also have to provide an improvement plan which ELC and the School District look at and approve.

ELC sends mentors out to assist LPPs with a focus on literacy and ELC purchases for the LPP supplies that the LPP may not have. These supplies are tools to assist in the improvement process. Training includes, phonemic awareness and literacy in the classroom, tying VPK standards with lesson planning. The impact will be seen in August from the training ELC has done. Intervention will begin in March (2008)

Low Performing Providers is 21.5% based on the number of Providers in Miami-Dade. Broward has 325 Providers and had 8%. In 2006-07 ELC Miami-Dade had 21.5%. ELC's LPPs are increasing but so is the number of Providers participating in the program. Last year was 201 and this year was 211. There were only 48 repeat LPPs from last year. If they repeat for another year they will no longer be VPK Providers.

One Board Member stated there are huge gaps in this program. He called for the Board to take a stance on what is good and what is not good for children and not just accept (VPK). He added that if the 20% are in the VPK classroom they are making progress.

Another Member stated she was horrified that almost 22% - a quarter of what ELC does is a waist of money. She understood there are issues about measuring it but said everyone should be horrified by this. She said ELC needs to concentrate on what is really happening out there. She said this is not remotely acceptable. She suggested that this be discussed every month until ELC can figure out what is going on. She had concern that if it was measured another way it could be more.

President/CEO said that it is due to the measurement.

A third Member said that something like mentoring, intervention, something has to be done and quickly.



One Board member suggested that the standards of accreditation and maybe not everyone needs to be accredited. There are reasons why there are minimum standards in each area. Accreditation is a huge commitment and it's costly. Perhaps incentives for those programs who are committed to being Accredited and have higher standards.

It was stated by another Member that although the Legislature said Accreditation is not needed, the laws need to be changed. The reasons there is a Readiness measurement is because Legislators believe this is a big FCAT.

The suggestion was made by a Board Member that ELCM-D/M is large and unique it should be able to develop a Readiness measurement tool.

The Board requested that a letter to the Governor and Legislators be prepared and signed by every Board member and business partners.

It was further suggested that ELC needs to generate publicity on this and build awareness among Legislators and the public.

Gap Update

An 3,100 children had certificates but are not showing up to be enrolled. 2,300 families could not be reached. 250 children are in centers in Miami-Dade, 125 children are enrolled in other counties, 110 parents don't plan to use the certificates, 40 children will be enrolled in summer enrollment, 25 children are in Head Start.

- X. Star Awards ..... Evelio Torres

ELCM-D/M President/CEO presented staff members Diana Lane, Fiorella Altare and Lillian Amador with Achievement Awards for their outstanding contributions to the Coalition.

- XI. Public Comments ..... Octavio A. Verdeja, Jr.

Linda Carmona Sanchez presented ELC Board of Directors Chairman Octavio A. Verdeja, Jr., two framed squares of the 'Worthy Wage Quilt'. The quilt is over 100' long with more than 2,500 hand prints and photos of Miami-Dade children. Linda has been asked to present it at the Capitol by Lieutenant Governor Kotcam.

- XII. Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 1 hour, 50 minutes and 34 seconds.