

**Early Learning Coalition of Florida's Gateway
Board Meeting Minutes
Coalition Training Room, Suite 140
Lake City, Florida
April 13, 2005**

Members Present:

Chris Bond, John Burns, Charles Carroll, Hugh Giebeig, Ray Logan, Sandy Looney, Carol Milton, Richard Mitchell, Pam Norman, Prudence Pate, John Pierce, Jennifer Roberts, Sheryll Walker and John Wheeler .

Others in Attendance:

Sam Sweazy (AWI-OEL), Marion McCray (Lafayette Elementary), Marge Campany (DOE VPK) Thomas F. Logan, Ph.D. (Executive Director), LaShone T. Surrency (Deputy Director), Shannon Bryant (Finance Director), Carrie Sapp (Program Manager), Jamie Witzman (Enrollment Manager), Jessie Tampoc (IT Manager) and Heidi Moore (Executive Assistant) and Dottie Stone (Inclusion Specialist).

Members Absent:

Mike Deming, Jeanne Duffy, Anita Franklin, Nancy Roberts, David Rountree and Paula Williams.

Welcome and Call to Order

John Burns called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m. Mr. Burns welcomed everyone and introduced our visitors. Dr. Logan explained that Marge Campany will be one of six regional specialists working with the VPK program and being a liaison with the DOE in Tallahassee.

Minutes

John Burns started the meeting with a review of the minutes from the previous board meeting. Ray Logan made a motion to accept the minutes with the correction on page 2 in the last bullet. The word *on* needs to be changed to *of*. Hugh Giebeig seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Financial Report

- John Wheeler reported on February and March, 2005. John explained that some month will show a deficit and some months a surplus because we get our revenue in the form of reimbursements. We incur our expenses and then bill the AWI Office of Early Learning. Shannon broke out a few key points to highlight.
 - One such expense is the acquisition of a storage unit to house records and surplus office equipment.
 - The travel expenses are increasing due to much training to keep staff well informed.
 - The interest figure is a negative amount due to the fact that OEL requested repayment of a disallowable expense. The only Coalition funds that are not

derived from state funds is interest income. Therefore, \$19.20 of our interest was used for repayment of a clerical error found on the audit.

- Some of the items are typical expenditures that happen on a quarterly basis.
- Professional fees are being spent on our new Inclusion person who is helping us catch up on some necessary screenings. The remainder of Professional Fees was spent on our annual audit of \$11,000 to Powell and Jones.
- The expense for the advertisement in the phonebook is required by Tallahassee for CCR&R. The monitors in the Enrollment Department were old Central Agency equipment and needed to be replaced.
- The Insurance figure was to make sure the members of the Board are protected.

Staff and Committee Reports

Executive Director's Report

- Amending the Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws – These were rewritten in response to the VPK legislation and could not be voted on last month due to lack of a quorum. Once we get the approval from the Board, we will submit them to the State and then have our name legally changed to Early Learning Coalition of Florida's Gateway, Inc. Richard Mitchell made a motion to approve the By-Laws and Articles of Incorporation as amended. Sandy Looney seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- Proposed Change to the Organizational Chart – The revised Organizational Chart reflects three changes.
 - The Child Development and Inclusion position is one that was approved as a contract position, but Dr. Logan would like it to be considered as a full time position. This position is designed to facilitate the completion of all the developmental screenings and to act as a liaison with FDLRS and Early Steps. This position will be a direct report to the Executive Director. Beginning the first of the next fiscal year, the position would be paid partially out of Inclusion funds and partially paid out of other Quality dollars as well as Eligibility dollars. The job description is attached.
 - The second position is Family Services Specialist. Dr. Logan explained to the Board that the Enrollment Department has gone through an evolution in the last several months. This is a collaborative effort between Dr. Logan, LaShone Surrency and Jamie Witzman. This is not a current position. We currently have two positions named *Senior Analyst*. Senior Analyst's do not have any management or administrative function. The new position was created to have a second-in-command in that office. The plan is to eliminate the two Senior Analyst positions and create an entirely new position called Family Services Specialist. The job description is attached. There has been a lot of administrative function added to that position. The focus of that position is basically as a special projects manager working under the Enrollment Manager. Sandy Looney asked what would happen to the current positioned employees and it was stated that they could apply for a Family Services Analyst position. The department is aware of the change.
 - The final position would be that of an additional Family Services Analyst. We anticipate in May and June to be enrolling 300-400 children in VPK and are booked up with our current staff in enrollment. This position is not currently funded

but we will be receiving VPK administrative dollars that will allow us to fund this position.

Richard Mitchell moved to accept the proposed changes in the organizational chart to include the job descriptions. Carol Milton seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

- Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program (VPK)
 - \$2500 (+5%?) – As far as Dr. Logan has heard, the \$2500 figure is the only figure. The House and the Senate Bills differ. Some counties may have a slight variation depending on their public school funding differential. One of the Bills adds 5% admin dollars to the \$2500 and the other Bill includes the 5% admin into the \$2500.
 - Gubernatorial Board Appointments – Fourth Nomination – Dr. Logan explained that we have not heard about our Governor appointed chair or two other private sector appointments. John Burns remains interim chair until a decision has been made. It was suggested that we send a fourth nomination. Ray Logan will be submitting his nomination. Some Coalitions have had their chair named this week but not ELC-FG.
 - School Board participation – Dr. Logan was notified that the School Boards that had gotten their class size reduction for 2004 accepted would be permitted to do VPK school year. The only one of our counties to not qualify was Union County. Existing Readiness programs can continue so all five of our counties can also participate in School Readiness.
 - Amendment addressing Coalitions' ability to provide services – An Amendment to the legislation that set up VPK and School Readiness last January was entered into the Senate this session. Some of the central agencies from South Florida got with a lobbyist and had the lobbyist write an Amendment to the Amendment that would forbid Coalitions from doing indirect services. It would require Coalitions to contract out all of their indirect services to Community agencies. Dr. Logan was called by The Children's Campaign in Tallahassee to work with a group of central agency people and Coalitions. They came up with some compromise language.
 - New Program Instruction VPK – Dr. Logan supplied these PI's for the members to read. These were sent out in final form. The first one deals with private sector members. The second refers to substantial financial interest. The third one relates to the Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws. The fourth one is a VPK pre-application for parents and providers. The last one explains what providers can and cannot do in terms of requiring families to sign up for additional programs at cost when they are doing VPK. The basic prohibition is that the 540 hours of VPK are free.
- Possible Merger Request – Dr. Logan received a call from Gladys Wilson, Winston Croft and Tom Imholt from AWI-OEL. They wanted to inform him that Taylor County and the four counties that make up AMC (Madison, Jefferson, Wakulla and Liberty) applied for a waiver because even with the merger, they still only had about 1000 children. The legislation required each Coalition to serve at least 2000 children. OEL has recommended that the waiver not be granted which means that these counties will have to make other arrangements. They wanted to know if our Board would be open to the possibility of merging with other counties. Since then, Dr. Logan got a call from Taylor County asking if we would be open to the possibility of merging again. Taylor County Board is meeting

tomorrow. He also got a call from Madison County asking if we would be open to a merger and the AMC group is meeting today in Tallahassee. They were asking if we would take all four counties and Dr. Logan told her he did not think the geography would be conducive for that. John Burns explained that the Executive Committee was given this information at yesterday's meeting and had a similar reaction. The Committee decided that we still have a responsibility to those children in those counties to which we can make a difference. It would be a challenge for the staff. Initially we did talk to Taylor and ultimately they declined. John believes that there are more challenges involved with Madison County than with Taylor. If AWI approaches ELC-FG and says that Taylor County needs Gateway and possibly Madison County needs Gateway, it would be very difficult to turn our backs on that situation. John feels that it might enhance our presence in Lafayette County if we had Taylor County; then we could coordinate efforts between those counties. John explained to the Board that Taylor and Madison are run very similarly to Gateway. They have met with Taylor and are familiar with the way they do business however would like to do some investigation into Madison. He cautions the Board that even though these counties would benefit from joining our Coalition, it would not be at all costs and we would not do anything that would jeopardize Gateway. Chris Bond told the Board that she is aware of other effective collaborations with Madison County. Hugh Giebeig mentioned that the other counties in question are not being considered. It is agreed that due to the geography of the other counties that it would be prohibitive. Sheryll Walker asked if the Board needed to give Dr. Logan formal direction on what the Board would even consider. The Executive Committee has already informally recommended Taylor County. Dr. Logan has a meeting in Tallahassee and will meet with Ramona Guess on his way back in Madison County. Carol Milton encouraged the Board to take a strong look at Madison County as they have very good collaborative relationships there. She would advocate on behalf of Madison County.

John Wheeler made a motion to respond to AWI-OEL, telling them that we are most receptive to our closest neighbors which would be Madison and Taylor Counties. Ray Logan seconded the motion. The motion carried. John Wheeler moved to reconsider the vote. Hugh Giebeig seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously. John Wheeler moved to respond to the Office of Early Learning and communicate through our Executive Director that we are most receptive to our immediate neighbors, which are Taylor and Madison Counties, for a possible merger and if possible to have a special Board meeting to discuss the issue. We would also like to respectfully decline to consider Jefferson, Wakulla and Liberty Counties due to their geographic location. Ray Logan seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Deputy Director's Report

John Burns wanted to thank the Board members who participated in Children's Day. He commended LaShone and Carrie for the wonderful job they did.

- Rilya Wilson Act - LaShone T. Surrency reported on the collaboration with Partnership for Strong Families to comply with the Rilya Wilson Act. We received the first BG1 At Risk case report and have submitted our report back to them. This is to ensure that these children do not have a gap in services.
- Columbia County School Board Even Start Family Literacy Presentation – Janora Crow will present our staff with information about this program

- WellFlorida Council - Dr. Logan and LaShone will be meeting with Wendy Reid to discuss a possible collaboration.
- CCHD/Infectious Disease and Confidentiality – This training (May 6) will prepare our staff to handle client health issues with confidentiality.
- Kindergarten Roundup – Paula Williams invited our Resource and Referral staff to provide parents with educational materials.
- Children’s Week – LaShone shared pictures from the event for the Board to see. It was a spectacular event. The Coalition received a proclamation from Vice Mayor George Ward. She thanked the Board members for their participation in making Children’s Day a huge success.

Finance Director’s Report

Shannon Bryant reported that after looking at the February numbers she was anticipating a large surplus, approximately \$600,000-\$800,000. When the March numbers (the slot costs increased 30%) were taken into consideration after the enrollment had increased and all of the infants had been enrolled, which are reimbursed at a higher rate, the straight-line surplus projection fell to approximately \$75,000, which is well within the 1.5% surplus that is allowed by AWI. The Executive Committee approved the enrollment to continue on a one out/one in basis. There is no longer a waiting list. All infants and toddlers have been placed in care.

Program Manager’s Report

- Carrie Sapp reported that her department had completed four provider trainings in the month of April. The Dial-3 training trained our staff as well as the providers on how to use that screening tool. The Infant/Toddler Creative Curriculum training went well with approximately 35-40 participants. The Recycle IT Into Artwork was the second training due to the huge demand in the first session. Andrea and a former staff member Claudia Zamora held a Multicultural workshop which was a success.
- The entire Program department went to a Leadership Conference sponsored by the NCCA. It had a lot of information that had never been conveyed before.
- Carrie shared some things that her department is working on, one of which is a grant that will give the family child care home providers the opportunity to attend the FCCHA conference in June.
- The center owners were offered the opportunity to attend the One Goal Summer Conference in June and July.
- Carrie was pleased to announce that her department has been working on monitoring and have only three centers left. The staff has been providing a lot of technical assistance and the providers have been very receptive to the information.

Dr. Logan congratulated Carrie on the monitoring since we had been sited by the auditors on monitoring in the past.

Enrollment Manager’s Report

- Jamie Witzman reported that the enrollment count was 2354 as of Monday, April 11, 2005. Jamie reported that even though enrollment has been closed, they will continue to serve the clients that already had appointments through the first week of May. 162 children have been enrolled since February 28, 2005.
- Jamie invited the Board to see the play area for the children in the Enrollment Department.

- The At-risk enrollment count is 176. The VPK count of parent applications is 303. The provider count is 45. Dr. Logan expects to be enrolling VPK children by sometime in May and certifying VPK providers by early May.

IT Manager Report

- Jessie presented his website statistics. There are many more people visiting the website than previously due to in part of VPK.
- Purchase of
 - New Phone System
 - New Server – John Burns explained that because of VPK and increased enrollment, it has been determined and recommended by AWI that we upgrade our server. Covansys is still the sole provider for the services needed until the in-house technical team enacts ELIS (Early Learning Information System) which will be approximately 2 years. Prudence Pate asked if this \$11,200 fee was for ongoing support as well as the initial installation. Sam Sweazy stated that there will still be an ongoing fee for support for the next two years. Hugh Giebeig made a motion to incur these costs. Carol Milton seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Inclusion

Dottie Stone reported that 1620 screens have been completed and 381 children left to screen. We have made 90 referrals to FDLRS and 63 to Early Steps.

Quality Committee Report – This meeting was held to discuss what to do with the surplus; however, we no longer have a surplus. The new monitoring tool was discussed at that meeting and was presented to the Board by Carrie Sapp. There was a conversation with regard of the Inclusion budget and the Inclusion position has been approved.

Quality/Finance Committee Meeting – This meeting also discussed the Inclusion position. They also had conversation with regard to Marge Company, the DOE-VPK Liaison. The surplus was also discussed in this meeting. Dr. Logan stated that they did approve School Board programs extending into the summer which will utilize some of the remaining surplus. The Committee reviewed the rules for provider charges with regard to VPK.

Action Items

2005-005 Policy on Attendance/Absence and Amendment – This was a policy that had been previously submitted to the Board. Prudence Pate made a motion to accept the policy as written. John Wheeler seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

2005-006 Policy on Parent Fee Waivers – Jamie Witzman explained that there are some families, especially migrant farm workers who have trouble paying even a minimal amount. In certain circumstances the Coalition wanted the flexibility to waive the parent fees to families with a hardship. These will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and the final approval would be made by the Executive Director on a written form. Hugh Giebeig made a motion to approve the policy. Carol Milton seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

2005-007 Policy on Reimbursement for Children with Special Needs – Sheryl Walker had some concerns with regard to the documentation requirements. She stated this was tried before but they ran into confidentiality issues. Chris Bond agreed that there are confidentiality issues but stated that it could be remedied with a Mutual Exchange of Information form. The criteria on this form are not practical. The numbers may not adequately reflect the child's needs. Sheryll Walker suggested that if a child is a full time ESE student than they would qualify. Dr. Logan explained that this would only apply to pre-school and school age children and would not serve children from birth to 36 months. Dr. Logan suggested this policy be tabled so that the Board member with background in this field can modify the language. John Burns tabled this action item.

2005-008 Eligibility and Sliding Fees based on the 2005 Federal Poverty Guidelines – The Coalition has used Option B in the past due to lower parent fees on that scale. Dr. Logan explained that this Guideline went into effect Federally March 1, 2005. The Coalition will make it effective when the Board approves it. Prudence Pate made a motion to approve Option B. Raymond Logan seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

John Burns asked if there were any items for the May Agenda. Dr. Logan wanted the Executive and Quality Committee meetings to be scheduled prior to the next Board meeting.

John Pierce made a motion to adjourn the meeting.
Meeting adjourned at 11:35 a.m.