

**Gateway School Readiness Coalition Meeting Minutes  
Columbia County School Board Meeting Room  
Lake City, Florida  
June 28, 2004**

**Members Present:** John Burns, Randy Cox, Kathy Daugherty, Jeanne Duffy, Hugh Giebeig, Ray Logan, Sandy Looney, Carol Milton, Richard Mitchell, Pam Norman, Nancy Roberts, David Rountree, and John Wheeler.

**Others in Attendance:** Prudence Pate (Executive Director), LaShone Surrency (Deputy Director), Shannon Bryant (Finance Director), Leesa Lynn (Data Management Specialist), Heidi Moore (Executive Assistant), Carrie Cox (Program Manager), Betty Wallace (FPSR Coalition Analyst) and Michael Reneke (Coalition Analyst).

**Members Absent:** Chris Bond, Mike Deming, Carlton Faulk, John Pierce, Gil Roser, Sheryll Walker and Paula Williams

**Welcome and Call to Order**

Randy Cox called the meeting to order at 9:07 a.m. Mr. Cox recommended the Board review the packet for a moment due to its length and numerous Action Items.

**Minutes**

Randy started the meeting with a review of the minutes from the previous board meeting. He wanted it notated that the Executive Director was absent from the board meeting on approved leave. Hugh Giebeig motioned to approve the minutes and Carol Milton seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

**Financial Report**

John Wheeler reported that there are consistencies in the income statements with regard to March, April and May. His only concerns are with Professional Fees, Program Enhancements and Office Supplies. Professional Fees have decreased since consulting contracts are no longer in effect with Evelyn Perkins and Blackbaud. The increase in Program Enhancements is due to the cost of the items for the Literacy Grants. The office supplies are increasing due to the cost of the production of the STEPS directory, which is being produced in-house.

- Proposed Budget – Shannon Bryant presented the Proposed Budget for FY 2004-2005. Supporting documentation included the Spending Analysis with explanation of each OCA, Grant Award, and the breakdown of required earmarks of the funding. Upon board approval, the budget will be presented to the Partnership. Prudence wanted the Board to understand that there are certain requirements that have to be met. A maximum of 5% is to be spent on administration, a minimum of 4% on Quality. 85% of the Quality money is earmarked for Infant/Toddler (this refers to the \$35,000 per county). Inclusion dollars are allocated to the Coalition this year instead of through the R&R Contract. Prudence wanted to Board to understand that the Coalition is well within all of our required percentages, minimum and maximums and the earmarks thereof.

- Quality Service Agreements - Last year we had approximately \$240,000 that were utilized through four service agreements; Columbia County School, Suwannee County Schools, Union County Schools, and Happy House. For the new fiscal year, the Contract Committee recommended the distribution of mini-grant applications to all providers for the allocation and distribution of quality dollars through a grant process. The notice and application were distributed to all providers and are due back to the Coalition by July 9, 2004. A Grant Selection Committee will be established for the purpose of reviewing and awarding the Quality dollars. The Program Department will develop a screening matrix and process for awarding the mini-grants. The amount has been reduced from \$240,000 to \$180,000 for FY 2004-2005.

Prudence stated that Shannon has done a fabulous job on the budget. Shannon informed the Board that 82% of the money will go to the children. John Burns clarified that the percentage was based on the budget and did not include quality money and inclusion which would make it more like 86%. Randy Cox asked Michael Reneke for his comparison to previous years. Michael's response clarified that the Partnership looks only at the percentage of the base allocation (excluding the quality dollars, etc.) and based on Gateway's numbers, would indicate an even higher percentage of slot expenditures. Michael further stated that some coalitions are spending around 78% on slots, and Gateway has done a great job decreasing overhead and utilizing the dollars for the children.

John Burns made a motion to approve the budget as presented. Nancy seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

## **Staff and Committee Reports**

### *Executive Director's Report*

Prudence Pate reviewed her report with Board members regarding the following topics:

- Enrollment – Prudence reported that she resigned from the Coalition.
- Personnel Update
  - Four employees no longer with GSRC
    - Prudence C. Pate, Executive Director
    - Sequeta Camiel, Analyst
    - Melissa McGee, Program Manager
    - Tina Summers, Technical Assistant
    - Leesa Lynn, Data Management Specialist
  - New employees
    - Nikki English – Analyst
    - Julia Koberlein – Analyst
    - Michele Cobb – Analyst
  - Promotions
    - Mary Gamble, Analyst to Infant/Toddler Specialist
    - Carrie Sapp, Quality Services Specialist to Program manager
    - Melody Mathis, Analyst to Senior Analyst

Prudence expressed her confidence in the staff and their ability to maintain the work of the Coalition, and publicly noted her appreciation for their hard work. She recognized them for their accomplishments and dedication to this organization.

- Even Start Grant – The Coalition was denied, though the reason is unknown. Michael has requested information via email regarding the denial, but has not gotten a response.
- Staff and Provider Training – There were numerous trainings offered throughout the past several months.
- Resource Directory – Due to the excessive costs of printing, the directory process is being completed in house. Leesa and Heidi are working diligently completing the project. They will produce 5000 copies to be distributed in the community through all our collaborative partners and through our Resource and Referral Department. John Burns requested copies be distributed to the Chamber of Commerce.
- Enrollment Update – As of May 31, 2004 BG1 Enrollment was 193 up from 176 due to 28 new enrollments. Overall enrollment was 1828 which allowed us to open enrollment of 100 children. LaShone reported that this was accomplished.
- Annual Training Report – Randy had asked for this report in an Executive Committee meeting and was amazed at the amount of training provided to and attended by staff.
- Early Steps - Prudence informed the Board of a live meeting conference call with Early Steps on June 30, 2004 from 3:00pm-5:00pm. Additional information is available upon request.
- Hamilton County Publication – Prudence wanted to acknowledge the wonderful presentation of the Pre-K Press newsletter.

#### *Deputy Director's Report*

The Resource and Referral department was monitored by the Florida Children's Forum. There were only two findings for corrective action related to the availability of voice mail at our satellite offices. The second finding regarded a misspelled word in the Provider Packet. LaShone would like to thank Sandy Looney for her comments to them on their interview with regards to our contacts with licensing and collaboration. Technically, Gateway was not due to be monitored again this year, because we were monitored last year. (Monitoring is completed every three years.) John Burns commented that this was a very good result. Randy wanted to address their statement regarding turnover of staff. Randy stated that there will be turnover in the beginning and that it has slowed down now. He stated he is more than please with the level of staff that is in position. He complimented the staff of GSRC and is confident that they are the reason we get positive monitoring results.

#### *Program Manager's Report*

Carrie Sapp presented the Program Manager's report to include activities and updates on all the quality activities the Coalition has been working toward. John Burns asked how many providers were completing the A.P.P.L.E. Accreditation process. Carrie referred him to her report where 10 centers were awarded this accreditation and 5 more were reimbursed. Prudence clarified the continued increase in the number of providers who have increased their credentials since the inception of School Readiness and the Gateway School Readiness Coalition; however, she wanted the board to understand that by increasing the number of centers that are accredited, the cost of care will also increase due to a higher reimbursement for being accredited. Randy inquired about the monitoring process for providers receiving financial assistance through the Coalition for the accreditation process. Carrie noted that a monitoring process is being developed; however, the current action is only the application process. John Burns clarified that the Coalition is only

providing assistance with the costs associated with accreditation, not the actual act of accreditation.

#### *Partnership Coalition Analyst Report*

The minutes from the Partnership meeting was enclosed in the packet. Michael stated that we still have no signature on the bill that the Governor has on his desk. Rumor has it that he will sign. The Partnership will hold its board meeting on July 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> at which time he hopes questions will be addressed. The last action of the Partnership was to release the Sumter County Coalition and have it absorbed by another agency. Michael stated that there are several coalitions willing to assume the services of Sumter County. Randy asked what some of their problems were. Michael stated that they hadn't had a quorum in over nine months, no general ledger, and no allocation methodology.

#### *Executive Committee Report*

Randy referred to the minutes from the meeting held on May 21, 2004. The Executive Committee asked LaShone to assume the duties of Interim Director until a new Executive Director is hired. Randy informed the Board concerning a complaint written to the Governor about GSRC. He reported that the committee outlined a response, which was then referred to the Coalition Attorney, Leandra Johnson. The committee requested that she respond directly to the Governor and the person that wrote the complaint. Randy wanted a copy of the response attached to the minutes. He encouraged the Board to go to GSRC's office and read the documentation. Basically, it stated that the Coalition did not allow people to speak at our meetings, had no single point of entry, no voucher system, and no family child care homes. John Burns reiterated that these were all the things we were recently monitored on with no findings. The Partnership was copied on the response and replied that the matter was closed.

#### *Finance Committee Report*

John reported the main initiative of the finance committee meeting was to approve accounting procedures. John asked Shannon to summarize some of the procedures. Shannon explained that the policies are related to cash disbursements, authorized signatures, payroll processes, and procedure on reimbursing providers. John stated she obtained this info from other non profits and changed some verbiage to meet the needs of the Coalition. The committee adopted these procedures.

#### *Program Quality Committee Report*

Nancy Roberts reported that there were two quality meetings. The first was to discuss the expenditures of the remaining Infant/Toddler quality dollars. Shannon provided the with a budget that reflected approximately \$10,000 which had been reallocated from the Quality improvement Grant. The money was utilized for accreditation, FCCH memberships and the other programs Carrie mentioned. LaShone is now certified to teach the 3 hour Fundamentals of Child Care. An additional \$5,000 was budgeted to update the Resource van and the lending library. The remaining money was spent on the needs assessment provided by the providers. The items will be available to be picked up on July 2, 2004. The Coalition is providing scholarships for tuition costs for 19 participants in the CDA program, which is also a way to promote literacy. The committee did not feel that purchasing furniture or computers was an appropriate way to spend the money; however they did agree to purchase a file cabinet for the IACET materials. The committee agreed to expend some funds on the publication of the STEPS Directory. Seven providers have made application for

accreditation and 17 more have expressed interest. John Burns clarified that A.P.P.L.E. is recognized and accepted. Some DLM kits are available for centers that were interested in them. The committee agreed to give the kits to those centers. Love N Learn was sold and their DLM kit was given to the Douglass Center. The committee clarified that the literacy grants were for centers, because they will touch more children. The optimal ratio is 15 books per child. Prudence wanted to acknowledge the hard work and commitment of Sheryll and Nancy.

#### *Contract Committee Report*

John Burns reported that the provider contract was extended for 30 days until such time pending legislation is enacted. The committee will be making a recommendation to approve the new provider services agreement as reviewed and edited by the contract committee. It was decided that in the proposed voucher agreement, the Coalition will not reimburse for holidays or excused absence, but pay for care when the child is actually present. This was implemented to provide some incentive to providers for contracting with the Coalition. Voucher care is not monitored, but is required to be in compliance with parental choice laws. The minutes need to be corrected with regard to the last paragraph on page one. The "Family Child Care Home" needs to be specified as *informal*. Last year there was only one agreement; however, this created confusion; therefore, this year the services are being offered through contracts and vouchers. The contract extension is on a tight deadline but will be accepted by fax. Carrie is monitoring the status and will do what is necessary to make sure they are all returned. There were no changes to the market rate with the exception of the informal provider reimbursement at 50% of the registered family child care home rate. The board recommended the Coalition staff make an added effort on post attendance monitoring. Prudence informed the board that there is a staff meeting tomorrow and they will have to supply a written report on how they conduct post attendance monitoring. John wants the board to understand that there is a lot of room for "creative" attendance. The Committee unanimously agreed to present the quality dollars to providers through a mini-grant process instead of the Quality Service Agreements.

#### **Proposed Board Action**

##### *Item # 2004-008 Provider Services Contractual and Voucher Agreements FY 2004-2005*

The committee has reviewed both these agreements. Nancy Roberts would like to know the changes that were made. Page 6, letter D was more explicit on "E" days and how they were processed. Letter B, number VII, Inclusion was added under technical assistance and training. The providers cannot hold a parent liable for fees in excess of 30 day. A page for direction on how to get to their facility was added to the packet. Voucher providers can only submit attendance sheets with "X", "N" or "T". The terminology for age groups was defined. The Committee made a motion to approve these documents; second by Hugh Giebeig. Discussion: Nancy wanted to clarify that the school boards are not required to keep sign in and out sheets do to the fact that they maintain school rolls, not sign-in, sign-out sheets. Prudence agreed. Motion approved unanimously.

##### *Item #2004-009 Process for Implementing Provider Agreements*

Prudence informed the board that this was a draft process. She stated the Coalition would require each provider to make application for contract (1 Page). There will be a 90 day probationary period on the contract. After 60 days, staff will be required to assess the provider to ensure they are abiding by the terms of the contract. Prudence is recommending to the board that this process be approved. Discussion: Sandy Looney was concerned about repayment of fraudulent information.

Prudence stated this is a pre-application and fraud is covered in the actual contractual agreement. John Burns made a motion to approve; second by Sandy Looney. Motion approved unanimously.

*Item #2004-010 Proposed Slate of Coalition Officers for FY 2004-2005*

Carol stated the nominating committee made this determination as best they could with pending legislation unknown. In order to keep continuity in the board, they needed two things; private sector members and officers that had knowledge from the past. The nominating committee is recommending John Burns as chair, Ray Logan as Vice-Chair, John Wheeler as Treasurer and Richard Mitchell as Secretary. At the current time each of the individuals has accepted the nomination. The nominating committee makes a motion to accept these officers. Hugh Giebeig seconded the motion. Carol Milton wanted to let the board know that there may be a need for the Executive Committee to appoint a Program person to help the private sector members with decision making. Prudence indicated this issue is included in another action item. Motion approved unanimously.

*Item #2004-011 Membership*

Prudence included the membership roster if HB821 is signed. She stated that if we stayed under 411, which no one anticipates, we will have a lot of vacancies. When HB821 is signed, the Coalition will be under a new name and all members become eligible. New legislature requires one third private sector. Randy stated that as of June 30 he will no longer work for the state and he will be going private, thus making him eligible to serve on the board. Pam Norman made a motion to accept the membership composition and the approval of Prudence Pate and Randy Cox as private sector. The private sector is classified by the residency of the member. Seconded by Ray Logan. Motion passed unanimously.

*Item #2004-012 Standing Committee*

Prudence stated that the Nominating Committee recommended some adjustments to the standing committees. The Program and Grant Writing committee were combined. Ray Logan made a motion to approve the committees as presented; second by Pam Norman. Discussion: Randy asked about Gil Roser being on the committee. Prudence said that was an error and should have been stricken. John Burns suggested that David Rountree be assigned to either the finance committee or the contract committee. Randy requested that he be removed from the contract committee and be replaced by David Rountree. The composition was not changed so a new motion was not needed. The motion passed unanimously.

*Item #2004-013 Proposed Board Meeting Schedule*

The Executive Director recommends the monthly Board meetings be held on the second Thursday of the month to ensure real time data. The finance department and enrollment will have more accurate information available at this time. Prudence asked the Board to decide if there was a need for a July meeting. Many members could not do the second Thursday. It was suggested the meetings be scheduled for the second Wednesday of each month at 1:30 p.m.. The board believes it would be more convenient for the private sector members. Ray Logan made a motion that the Board meet on the second Wednesday at 1:30 pm and postpone the July meeting to August 11, 2004 at 1:30. John Wheeler seconds the motion. Motion passed unanimously. Please note all the meetings will be at the Gateway School Readiness Coalition office in Suite 140.

*Item #2004-014 Proposed By-Laws Revisions*

The Executive Director presented two sets of proposed By-laws revision. One is for revisions under 411, the other for revisions under HB821. Prudence's recommendation to the Board is to approve both sets as presented with implementation of the one that is appropriate at the time of legislation. Ray Logan made a motion to accept both sets of By-laws with changes based on the signing of HB821. Hugh Giebeig seconds. John Wheeler requested the term "CEO" be stricken. Motion passes unanimously.

*Item #2004-015 Proposed Policy for Utilization of Inclusion Allocation*

LaShone detailed the recommendation of the use of funds converted by the Partnership for Inclusion. The amount of this funding is \$45,000. The Coalition would rather utilize these dollars to benefit many centers as opposed to hiring an Inclusion Specialist. Hugh Giebeig made a motion to accept the policy. Carol seconds the motion. The motion carries unanimously.

*Item #2004-016 Proposed Policy for Wage Actions Against Employees/Independent Contractors*

The committee and the attorney have recommended the Board adopt this policy. John Burns moves to approve the policy. Ray Logan seconds. Motion passes unanimously.

*Item #2004-017 Proposed Policy for Garnishment & Tax Levy Emergency Plan*

The committee and the attorney have recommended the Board adopt this policy. Hugh Giebeig moves to approve the policy. Carol Milton seconds. Motion passes unanimously.

*Item #2004-018 Proposed Inter-Agency Referral Form*

This form would ensure a back up policy to the Single Point of Entry to serve as documentation when referrals are made at the Coalition level. Ray Logan made a motion to accept this form and Sandy Looney seconds. Motion passes unanimously.

*Item #2004-019 Proposed Policy for Seasonal Care Due to Court-Ordered Residence of Children*

A proposed draft policy was developed by staff to accommodate those families receiving school readiness services whose children are under court-order to reside in more than one geographical area during certain times of the year. Prudence explained that often custody is awarded to both parents. If this is the case, the child may not attend the usual center when changing residence at certain times of the year; thus being terminated from school readiness enrollment and placed on the waiting list. The Coalition wants to be able to suspend the enrollment of these children, and reinstate them upon their return. It will be left up to the provider as to whether or not the slot will be available at the provider level. The Coalition can only guarantee school readiness enrollment, even though it may not be at the same center. John Burns and Randy Cox agree that there should be a time limit not to exceed 10 weeks. The family must provide legal documentation.

Hugh Giebeig made a motion to approve this policy with the change to include *not to exceed 10 weeks*. Pam Norman seconds. Motion passes unanimously

*Item #2004-020 Proposed Policy for Internal Audits*

The Partnership requires there be an internal audit for final review. The draft policy will serve as meeting such requirement. It was agreed that under item "p" the word certificate needs to be replaced with *verification*. Randy stated this can be in the form of a passport or Military ID. A discussion ensued and it was determined to table this issue until a Federal description could be obtained. Michael Reneke will supply that information. This will be placed on the Agenda for the August meeting.

**Information and Discussion Items**

Prudence addressed the board regarding the need to continue having provider meetings on a monthly basis. In the beginning, providers came to the meetings; however, the last two meetings have had only one provider in attendance. Prudence requested the Board form a consensus regarding the need for provider meetings. The Board decided that the meetings should be quarterly and as needed to include training.

The general consensus of the Board was not to participate as a vendor at the Columbia County Fair this year.

**New Business**

Prudence wanted the Board to know that Wee Care center sent us a basket of cakes and a lovely card in appreciation of the work of the Coalition.

Leesa Lynn, Data Management Specialist, submitted her resignation.

**Comments**

Randy indicated that quality service has been one of our greatest accomplishments. He expressed his appreciation to the staff and a job well-done; specifically, the work of the finance director. The transition was successful and Shannon has done an outstanding job. Additionally, he expressed his appreciation to the Board for their participation in the Coalition and attendance at the board meetings.

Motion to adjourn by Hugh Giebeig; second by John Burns.  
Meeting adjourned at 11:50 a.m.