

Early Learning Coalition of Florida's Gateway, Inc.
Board Meeting Minutes
Coalition Resource Center, Suite 140
Lake City, Florida
May 11, 2005

Members Present:

Chris Bond, John Burns, Charles Carroll, Ray Logan, Carol Milton, Richard Mitchell, Pam Norman, John Pierce, Jennifer Roberts, Nancy Roberts, David Rountree, Sheryll Walker and John Wheeler .

Others in Attendance:

Sam Sweazy (AWI-OEL), Marion McCray (Lafayette Elementary), 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).

Members Absent:

Mike Deming, Jeanne Duffy, Anita Franklin, Hugh Giebeig, Sandy Looney, Prudence Pate and Paula Williams.

Welcome and Call to Order

John Burns called the meeting to order at 9:08 a.m. Mr. Burns welcomed everyone and introduced our visitors. Dr. Logan reminded the Board that we cannot conduct business without seven of our thirteen voting members and we have precisely seven currently.

Minutes

John Burns started the meeting with a review of the minutes from the previous board meeting. John Wheeler made a motion to accept the minutes. Richard Mitchell seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Financial Report

- John Wheeler explained that there are increased expenditures in April due to increased payments to providers. This was due to an intentional increase in enrollment to utilize the slot surplus. This is good news.
- Professional fees have increased temporarily due to the acquisition of the Inventory/Fixed Asset module and the fiscal software trained received from Traci Rinoldo.
- Our expenditures for telephones and postage are back to normal.
- Information and Technology expenditure is the annual maintenance agreement for Blackbaud (Financial Edge software). The copier category contains an invoice that is paid on a quarterly basis. The legal fees were for changing the Articles of Incorporation to reflect the new name and are expensed under Subscriptions and Memberships.

Action Items

- 2005-009 Revised Provider Contract – John read the background information to the Board. Dr. Logan asked Carrie to highlight some of the changes that were made in the proposed 2005-2006 provider contract. Carrie pointed out that the Screenings and Pre and Post Assessments were separated on this contract. These items are clearer as to the expectations of the providers. The reimbursements to the providers will be made on the 22nd of the month instead of the 20th of the month. [John Burns noted that by the beginning of the next fiscal year the providers will be eligible for direct deposit at a cost to the Coalition of \$100 a month for that service.] The new contracts included a separate form for private rate sheets that needs to be signed and notarized. The holiday table was clarified to make it easier for providers to choose. There are more options for technical assistance. There has been a section added on the Rilya Wilson Act so the providers are clear on their responsibilities. Sheryll Walker asked about the reporting time for missing children being one day, because the current contract is two days. Dr. Logan informed her that the law states one day, and this will be what we will follow. John Wheeler would like the word changed on the required documents, as it relates to insurance, to read “certificate holder” instead of “policy holder”.

Richard Mitchell made a motion to approve the new Contract. John Wheeler seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

- 2005-010 Revised Enrollment/Disenrollment Priorities – Dr. Logan explained that when we were discussing the fluctuation in attendance and how there is a possibility of deficit, a policy needed to be created to decide in what order we would disenroll, if necessary. The current policy was not explicit enough on how to enroll or disenroll. John Wheeler clarified that the priority one category would be the last to be disenrolled. [Note: The Board Action addressing reimbursement of special needs children is still being discussed as to the documentation necessary.]

Carol Milton approved the policy. Ray Logan seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Staff and Committee Reports

Executive Director's Report

- Personnel changes –
 - Melody Mathis was hired as Family Services Specialist as per the organizational chart changes from the last Board meeting.
 - Melody and Carla Eatmon no longer hold the title of Senior Analyst which was eliminated according to the new organizational chart. Carla will now be retained as a Family Services Analyst.
 - Nancy Hernandez was released in her 90 day probationary period from the Program Department.
 - Carrie reported that one of her Program Specialists has been hired by the Enrollment Department. There are two openings in her department and Jamie's department is complete with the transition of Tangela Bell.

- VPK –
 - Marge Company and Sam Sweazy were here last week training the managers and the Program staff on the VPK provider enrollment process. There is a provider meeting tomorrow at 6 pm.
 - We have been issued the final version of the official provider verification forms from AWI. It is a fairly complex process of two forms, one that certifies the provider as a licensed provider eligible to do VPK and the other which sets up their classroom structure so that we can provide parents a profile of the kind of VPK program the providers will provide. By May 27th we hope to have provider profiles available for everyone in the five counties.
 - We will begin to enroll parents by May 31st. LaShone and Carrie and Jamie will coordinate this effort. Jessie will work with Lafayette County to allow Gateway to enroll remotely.
 - The budget at the state level passed with the figure of \$2500 per child per year plus an additional 5% allowance for admin at the Coalition level. There is a calculation for county school board differentials. The state average is 1 and if you are a low-cost-of-living county, you get less than 1. The counties in our Coalition will all be receiving a little less than the \$2500. The average is \$2333 per child per year. We are scheduled to get a quarterly advancement. The details are still being created.
 - Sheryll Walker asked about combining VPK with school readiness with regard to part time and full time hours and the rules have not been given as yet.

- Gubernatorial Board Appointments – The appointments have been chosen but we do not know who they are because the names are being run through FDLE before they are announced. Four counties have been released and most retained at least one of their current members and at least one was new. Sheryll Walker reiterated that even if the current members are not appointed by the Governor that they can remain on the Board as a private sector and Dr. Logan agreed.

- School Board participation – Columbia, Hamilton, Lafayette and Suwannee school boards will participate in both programs. Union will only be participating in School Readiness.
- Head Start – AWI is still working on how to coordinate Head Start with VPK and will provide guidance when available.
- Amendment 1756 – This was the amendment that was to limit Coalitions from providing services. It has appeared to have died in the Senate and has not gotten to the House. Dr. Logan believes it will be back next year.
- VPK Coalition Plan Amendment – This has been taken verbatim from the one that was sent to us from AWI. It will be given to Sam Sweazy and then he will review it and forward it to AWI.
- AWI Program Instructions – Dr. Logan provided the Board with the current PI's from AWI. One of the PI's references the procedure for correspondence and dissemination of the information memoranda and program instructions. They may be disseminated to the executive directors, and the ED's will have three days for review and comment. Most are sent as final versions.
- Coalition name change – As of April 25, 2005 the name of Early Learning Coalition of Florida's Gateway, Inc became official. Shannon is working with the bank and IRS to change the name.
- AWI Monitoring Response – We got monitored in December by the AWI team. We have some disagreements with the findings. We submitted a lengthy response, and then Sam Sweazy submitted a summary response. We have received a letter saying all the issues have been resolved to AWI's satisfaction.
- Merger update – Dr. Logan explained that the mergers got wrapped up in the politics of the last day of the general session. A bill was introduced to the House as a rider on an unrelated Bill that would have exempted the AMC-Taylor group from having to merge. On a Senate Bill there was a rider on an unrelated Bill where other counties in a similar situation got an exemption from merger. The Senate Bill passed and so those counties did not have to merge. The one for AMC-Taylor did not pass. AMC-Taylor will still have to do what AWI tells them to do since they were not exempted. The most likely scenario is that AWI will dissolve their Coalition and contact other Coalitions about mergers.
- Government in the Sunshine Law – AWI sent a memorandum reminding Board members about the law with regard to meetings.
- Vacation – Dr. Logan informed the Board that he will be on vacation for the next two weeks. LaShone T. Surrency will be the interim director.

Deputy Director's Report

- Rilya Wilson Act – The Coalition has submitted our report but has yet to receive feedback from Partnership for Strong Families. LaShone believes this is due to the fact that they are still in their start-up phase and are unsure as to their responsibilities.

- Cell Phone Usage/Safe Driving Policy –
 - LaShone drafted a policy with regard to cell phone usage on company time whether it is a company phone or a personal phone. Each employee was required to sign the form and the document was placed in their personnel file. This policy will be placed in the new HR manual.
 - Dr. Logan informed the Board that we have purchased an HR software program which LaShone is utilizing to prepare the new HR manual. Upon completion the manual will be distributed to the Board for approval.

- DCF Child Care Information System – We received an email informing us that staff will have access to the DCF website so that they can verify teachers' qualification for potential VPK providers.

- Positive Parenting Meeting with Tina Roberts – Dr. Logan and LaShone met with Tina Roberts. She works with the Parent Involvement division at the Columbia County School Board. The Coalition is looking into collaboration with her program.

- Resource & Referral Regional Training – Most of the staff including Jessie Tampoc (IT Manager) attended this training in Tallahassee. They were supposed to talk about EFS but LaShone reported that nothing was confirmed at that time. The main focus was dealing with parent and child interactions in your office. The Florida Children's Forum will no longer hold the Resource and Referral services contract.

Finance Director's Report

- Shannon reported that the Office of Early Learning has suspended the rule, which had previously restricted Coalitions to a 1.5% surplus, for this fiscal year only because so many Coalitions had a surplus due to the hurricanes.

- The April attendance numbers have shown the Coalition with a surplus on a straight line projection or average of \$300,000-465,000. We have also freed up some admin and eligibility surplus dollars and moved them to quality to be utilized by the Program Department. Dr. Logan explained that because of the fluctuation in attendance, we are not going to know until June regarding the surplus. [John Burns explained that there had been discussion about purchasing vehicles with the surplus dollars for the staff to go to the out-lying counties. We have been told that we are not allowed to buy vehicles because they are not being used to transport children.]

Program Manager's Report

- Carrie Sapp reported that she and Heidi Moore attended the "Rally in Tally". It was an amazing experience.
- The Program department held several workshops.
 - One was "Defining Quality Early Literacy". Linda Stoler, a speech pathologist, presented this workshop.
 - Another workshop was "Starting Out Right" which was presented by the Program staff. This was to promote reading to children.
 - The other workshop was "Play to Learn" which was presented by Ramona Phillips. This promoted how play affects children's ability to learn.
 - Diane James continues to do a wonderful job training the providers' staff on CPR/First Aid.
- Postcards were sent out to the providers to let them know they are appreciated especially on Provider Appreciation Day.
- The Program Department has several upcoming events.
- Carrie reported that we have decided to proceed with the Summer Conference which will be held at Lake City Community College on June 18, 2005 from 7:45- 3:30.
- The Coalition will be providing 10 scholarships for those teachers in our early learning centers that have already signed up for the CDA class waiting list at LCCC. The cost of the scholarship is \$850 per person.

Enrollment Manager's Report

- Jamie Witzman reported that the unduplicated enrollment count was 2425. 71 children have been enrolled since the last report on April 13, 2005.
- The VPK Parent Pre-Application count is at 443. The VPK Provider Pre-Application count is at 48.
- The protective services count is 197.

IT Manager Report

- Jessie Tampoc reported that according to the webstats we may have reached a plateau. The Provider application is posted on the website. There are several new pages that were developed such as the Photo Gallery which currently has pictures of Children's Day.
- The new EFS server has been purchased and delivered to Covansys. They are going to schedule a date when they will bring it down to implement it.
- The phone system upgrade purchase will be finalized by the Finance Committee immediately following this Board meeting.
- The VPK Provider Profiles and VPK Eligibility Certificates will be custom-made for the enrollment department to give to the parents to take to providers.

Inclusion

Dottie Stone was not present but John Burns instructed the Board to read her report.

Quality/Finance Ad Hoc Committee Report

John Wheeler reported that many of the issues discussed in this meeting have already been presented earlier in this Board meeting. Much of the meeting centered on the surplus, which is not as much of an issue as it once was. In this meeting, John Burns moved that we move \$23,000 to Quality. Carrie had a list of ways to spend the money; however, they are also waiting for a final figure for final dissemination.

Executive Committee Meeting

John Burns reported that, again, most of the issues discussed in the Executive Committee meeting have been discussed at this Board meeting.

John Burns called for any new business. There was no response. John Burns asked if there were any items for the June Agenda.

John Wheeler made a motion to adjourn the meeting. John Pierce seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned at 10:40 a.m.