

**GATEWAY SCHOOL READINESS COALITION, INC.**  
**Thursday, October 3, 2002**  
**Minutes**

**Members Present:** Chris Bond, Hugh Giebeig, Carol Milton, Pam Norman, Jeannette Peters, Nancy Roberts, Gil Roser, Sheryll Walker, John Wheeler, Sandy Looney.

**Members Absent:** Mike Deming, Brenda Graham, Jean Graham, Marilyn Rossborough, Randy Cox, John Burns, Francesca Whitener.

**Others Present:** Lisa Holliday (SV4Cs), Michele Ward (SV4Cs), Prudence Pate (Executive Director, GSRC, Inc.), Roger Williams (Contract Manager/Fisc. Administrator, GSRC, Inc.), Kelli Strawder (Fisc./Admin. Asst. GSRC, Inc.)

**Providers/Representatives Present:** Sherry Bullard (Children's Workshop), Danette O'neal (Green Acres), Kim Scott (Green Acres), Kristen Brown (Green Acres).

**Welcome:** Sheryll Walker, Vice-Chair, welcomed members and guests. **A quorum was declared** and the meeting was called to order at 9:08 a.m.

**Approval of Minutes:** The minutes from the regular board meeting held Thursday, September 5, 2002 were submitted for review and approval along with the minutes for the Provider Assessment Tool meetings held on September 9, and 16, 2002, and minutes from the Ad Hoc committee meeting held on September 30, 2002. The motion to approve the minutes was made Hugh Giebeig, and seconded by Jeannette Peters. **The motion passed unanimously.**

**Financial Report:** The Financial Report was unavailable at this point of the agenda. Fiscal Administrator not yet present.

**Executive Director's Report:** The monthly report was presented by Prudence Pate to include the following information:

- The Coalition's conduction of Unified Waiting List Training, September 10, 2002 at 4:00p.m.
- Completion of Assessment Tool Draft for Coalition approval and adoption.
- The Coalition Plan Amendment has been tabled pending receipt of additional information requested by the Partnership.
- Coalition Staff meetings are every third Wednesday of the month. The September meeting, however, was cancelled due to prior engagements.
- Executive Director reported attendance at a two day Grant Writing/Fund-raising Workshop.
- Executive Director reported attendance at the September's Monthly Directors' Meeting.
- There is progress regarding the Coalition Website. The Website is currently under construction, by Brent McNeal, located in Tallahassee.
- Executive Director reported attendance at the Florida Partnership for School Readiness Board Meeting. Also representing the Coalition were the Coalition Chair, John Burns, Coalition Vice-Chair, Sheryll Walker and Coalition Contract Manager/Fiscal Administrator, Roger Williams.

- Executive Director also attended the Head Start Workshop conducted on September 25, 2002 the day before the Partnership Board Meeting. Coalition members in attendance were Jeannette Peters, Sheryll Walker, and John Wheeler. Mychelle Ward was also in attendance representing the Central Agency, SV4Cs.
- The Coalition plans to participate in a state wide Coalition Network Group.
- Contract Committee unable to meet in September. The committee meeting will be rescheduled this month to consider provider re-negotiations in regards the new market rate.

**Coalition Contract Manager Report:** Unavailable at this point in the Agenda. Contract Manager not yet present.

**Central Agency Spending Trend and Enrollment Report:** In the absence of Francesca Whitener, the report was presented by Lisa Holliday, to include the following information:

- A general overview of spending trends.
- Report (1), second page, reflecting a projected Child Care cost increase for September '02 through June '03. was due to fixed cost amounts which allow for the cost increase per child, while the number of children enrolled decreased during October, November and December. Lisa also stated that once the issue of the children receiving PSN services in error is resolved, it should help balance things out.
- Report (2) reflected actual expenditures indicate a surplus of \$38,887.00 for the 60-day contract. Lisa said that this money needed to be rolled back into the (10) - month contract. At that time the Coalition Executive Director indicated that the issue would need to be addressed by the Contract Committee.

**Monthly Program Reports:** The Monthly Program reports were presented by Kelli Strawder. At that time the school districts and the Central Agency were reminded that the Monthly Early Intervention, Head Start, and Subsidized Monthly Program Reports are due by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month, following the month being reported.

**Florida Partnership Contract Manager Report:** No report available. FPSR Contract Manager was not present.

**Coalition Contract Manager Report:** This report was moved along in the agenda, to await the arrival of Roger Williams, Coalition Contract Manager/Fiscal Administrator. He presented the report and provided copies of the reports to Coalition Staff and Board Members. The report contained the following information:

*Rules Development Update*

- The Department of Management Services printout of Proposed Rules addressing definitions, eligibility, and waiting list procedures.
- There is still confusion regarding acceptable reimbursement processes. Roger reported that due to separate streams of funding (state/federal), with different regulations and guidelines for different entities, there is still much confusion. The subject is still under discussion in Rules Development.

- Eligibility questions continue. While there has been headway in rule making regarding eligibility, certain issues remain unresolved.
- Jeannette Peters requested guidance from the Coalition as to what position to take on a specific case which she was involved with. The case involves a (1) parent family in which eligibility status has changed due to a change in the mother’s work schedule to allow for college classes. This has put the family’s eligibility status in question.

The questions at hand are:

1. *Can we continue to fund childcare, even though the parent is not working the required amount of hours to be considered eligible?*
2. *Should going to school be considered a work activity?*
3. *Does the Coalition have the flexibility to allow services under these conditions?*

Although education is clearly the best way to become self-sufficient, there are no clear answers to these questions. It was the Contract Manager’s suggestion to let the Finance Committee plan a session for review of this subject, and perhaps set a policy in place for hardship cases. It was determined by the Coalition that it would be best to refer the mother to the WAGES Program and if she is then determined not eligible through that program, she could be referred to the Coalition Executive Committee for review of her hardship circumstances. In the future, cases such as this, should be directed to WAGES first, if not eligible, then the Coalition Executive Committee, would determine eligibility.

The Executive Director informed the board that she had requested that the Contract Manager draft a form for hardship cases to be used by the Central Agency. This form would be submitted to the Coalition Executive Committee for review on a case-by-case basis.

It was further stated by Sheryll Walker, Vice-Chair, that her interpretation of State and Federal statutes/legislation is that there was flexibility for the Coalition’s to make some decisions based on their communities’ specific needs. However, the Coalition still seems to face opposition from the Partnership each time it makes a change or modification to a current procedure of method of operation.

Other Topics:

- Roger also reported attendance at the Public Hearings.
- At the September Partnership Meeting, the board voted to reduce the Coalition’s funding agreement by the amount of dollars unexpended in the prior fiscal year. For GSRC that amount was \$137,864.00. Additionally, the Partnership approved the release of the hold-back dollars which was \$149,410.00 for GSRC. These changes amend the Coalition’s Funding Agreement with the Partnership to \$7,202,807.00.
- There were no rewards, benefits, or stipends for Coalitions who maintained excellent financial record keeping, or for spending within the 2% allowed by the Florida Partnership.
- The Partnership currently has around \$7,000,000.00 in reserve money.
- We will see a substantial increase in TANF funds this FY Year.

Chris Bond, Columbia County School District, stated that her office still needed some clarification on financial data processing, and requested that Roger Williams meet with the Finance Director/representative

on a one-on-one basis, to clear up any questions they may have regarding financial data. Roger then stated that he would be making calls to set up meetings with Finance Directors in all five counties.

Coalition Executive Director, Prudence Pate then added, as a reminder, that the Early Intervention Parent Fee payments were due by the 5<sup>th</sup> of each month.

**Financial Report:** In Randy Cox's absence, Roger Williams, Fiscal Administrator submitted the report for July through August 2002-2003. The report included the following information:

- **Florida Partnership** Finance Committee Briefing which included:
  1. Required holdback uncontracted from current allocation
  2. Funding agreement allocation as of July 1, 2002
  3. Actual Partnership expenditures for FY 2002
  4. Funding Agreement Reduction \$137,864.00
- **GSRC, Inc.** Budget Summary for 2002-2003
- **GSRC, Inc.** P&L Detail July through September 02-03, reflecting actual income and expenditures
- **GSRC, Inc.** Expenditure Projection for 2002-2003, (Yr. to Date, July and August)  
At that time Nancy Roberts asked that the school districts receive a list of OCA account definitions.
- **GSRC, Inc.** Expenditure Trend Report and Gateway Expenditure Line Graph

The motion to approve the financial report as presented was made by Hugh Giebeig, and seconded by Gil Roser. **The motion passed unanimously.**

**Interim** – At this time Sheryll Walker, Vice-Chair, reminded the Contract Manager that in order to allow ample time for Coalition board member/staff review, the Financial Report and Contract Manager Report are due to the Executive Director on Tuesday prior to the monthly Coalition Board Meeting. She further stated that these instructions were given to the Contract Manager at the Executive Committee Meeting held in August.

**FDLRS Screening / Child Find Results :** Carol Milton presented the report, providing detailed explanations for columns representing each of the four counties served. Carol stated that there are still children not accounted for through this screening process.

Chris Bond asked if there would be more funding for the Child Find program. Carol replied that she was not aware of any forthcoming money for Child Find at this time.

Carol added most of the funding for the program is Federal, and that very few funds are derived from the State, which also require State Match.

**Action Items:**

- Proposed Provider Assessment Tool – Proposal # 2002-033

The recommendation is to approve documents drafted by the Provider Assessment Tool Committee for use as assessment tools for all School Readiness programs within the Gateway Coalition five-county area.

Michelle Ward of SV4C’s pointed out a few typos/errors, that were acknowledged and noted by Coalition Executive Director.

Motion to approve drafted Assessment Tools and recommended corrections was made by Chris Bond and seconded by Pam Norman. **The motion passed unanimously**

**Comments:**

New Business:

Sandy Looney informed the Board that since the Coalition’s decision to lower the pay rates of registered Childcare homes, thirty-one (31) homes have now applied for licenses at DCF. The decision was made in hopes of prompting registered homes to become licensed homes and improve the quality of care in the Coalition area.

Sandy stated that Childcare Licensing at DCF is swamped and they do not have the staff to bring thirty-one registered homes up to licensing standards before the rate increase in January 2003.

Many of the registered homes are going to require a significant amount of time to meet requirements for licensing and some may never be licensed, due to requirements they simply cannot fulfill.

Sandy proposed an idea for enlisting the help of SV4Cs’ staff, to perform a general *Pre*-Prescreen of the home to help DCF distinguish between registered homes that do not require much improvement, and those that face significant obstacles. This should help in moving things along much faster for homes that are ready, while freeing up staff to deal with the more challenging registered homes.

Sheryll Walker stated that the question of using Central Agency staff for this process needed to be discussed first with Francesca Whitener (CEO, SV4Cs and Coalition Member). If an agreement is reached between the Central Agency and DCF, it will then go before the appropriate Coalition Committee for review and consideration.

Pam Norman (Union County SB) inquired about receiving some informational flyers, or posters on Resource and Referral through the Central Agency for distribution to qualified applicants.

Jeannette Peters (Head Start) referred Pam to Joyce Van Goiter (SV4Cs) for those requests.

Nancy Roberts stated that the UWL is extremely difficult to work with and would like to see a more efficient way of reporting removals and additions from/to the Wait List.

The meeting adjourned at 10:55 a.m.

***The next meeting will be held, Thursday, November 7, 2002 at 9:00 a.m., at the Columbia County School Board Administrative Office, SOS Building (Student Outreach Service Center), Room 153, 528 West Duval Street, Lake City, Florida.***