



**BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**

**April 28, 2008**

8:00 - 10:00 a.m., Board Room

**MINUTES**

**ATTENDEES:** Octavio A. Verdeja, Jr., (Chair); Roderick E. Beasley; Alan Eckstein, Esq.; P. Morgan Hill; Yvonne T. Johnson, M.D. (Vice Chair); David Lawrence, Jr.; The Hon. Cindy Lederman; Yesenia Perkins (Treasurer); Ann Karen Weller; Dr. Daniel Armstrong; Dr. Dabney Park; The Hon. Natacha Seijas; Gerald Schwartz, Esq.; Dr. Clarence Jones; Dr. Silvia La Villa; Connie Chappell; Harve Mogul; David Williams, Jr.; Jane W. McQueen;

**BOARD ABSENTEES:** Sara B. Herald (Secretary); Alan Abramowitz; George M. Burgess; Gina Cortes-Suarez, Ph.D.

**STAFF ATTENDEES:** Walter Harvey (Coalition Attorney); Evelio Torres; Angelo Parrino; Blythe Robinson; Tabatha Cullen; Jackye Russell; Melody Thelwell; Alina Soto; Mary Williams; Bethany Sands; Vivian Wright; Teri Carbajal; Nadira Ali; Pam Hollingsworth; Nicole Lopez; Dr. Silvia Palenzuela; Sandra Gonzalez, Fred Hicks; Esther Young

**GENERAL ATTENDEES:** Linda Carmona Sanchez, (A+ Early Learning Center); Eddie Rivera, AWI; Doug Blomberg, Wesley House; Irene Taylor-Wooten, MDC; Maritza Alonso, MDC; Maria E. Binelo, Miami Dade County DHS/CDS; Sue Loyzelle, YMCA; Gilda Ferradaz, DCF (on behalf of Alan Abramowitz); Phyllis Tynes-Saunders, MDC (on behalf of George M. Burgess); Edith Humes-Newbold, MDC/DHS/CDS; Jesse Leinfelder, The Children’s Trust; Ana Sejeck, ECIF; Rick Signori, DCS; Ramiro Moreno, REM Learning Center; Gladys R. Montes, CFE United Way; Daisy Hensley, Miami-Dade County

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

The Chair requested that the Agenda items be moved around. Therefore the Resolutions will be dealt with opening sufficient time for the Board to continue their discussion from last meeting regarding ‘School Age Children’.



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C. Opening Remarks .....Octavio A. Verdeja, Jr., Chair

The Chair thanked all those involved in the Legislative Advocacy efforts on behalf of the ELC. He stated that had it not been for those efforts to educate Legislators the Coalition may have ended up in a much worse position. He continued that ELC still faces a significant cut from \$5M to \$3M. We need to be prepared that there may be changes at the last minute which could mean more cuts. The Chair asked the President & CEO to look into reducing Administrative costs. AWI and the Auditors cautioned that as a \$180M organization we cannot reduce our costs more.

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

Motion to approve March 24, 2008 Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Motion was moved by Cindy Lederman, seconded by Harve Mogul and passed unanimously.

III. Executive Committee Report Octavio A. Verdeja, Jr., Chair

IV. Finance Committee Report .....Yesenia Perkins

The Finance Committee Chair went over the Financials with the Board highlighting the Budget with a slight surplus which will be used by the end of the year because invoices for the Curriculum fair have not been paid yet. School Readiness will be reduced by \$3M as required by the State.

The President & CEO added that ELC will be asking AWI for more dollars.

The Committee Chair confirmed that the President/CEO and the CFO have taken steps necessary to reduce the budget to prepare for the following year and cutting our expenses to accommodate for this and be prepared for this new Budget.

The President & CEO reminded the Board that the allocation for Administration for VPK is set based on the number of children ELC serves. All the dollars to manage the VPK Program are based on the number of children – the less children the less dollars in our grant, the less Administrative dollars ELC has. The President added, ELC was looking for an increase for next year through an increase in the number of kids and an increase in a higher rate per child which isn't going to happen.



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- A. Motion to approve Resolution 042808-01 to authorize the President and CEO to execute the first amendment to contract C07-122 with Devereux Foundation Inc., for conducting environmental assessments and validating self-study profiles of the Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS) program.

Motion was moved by David Lawrence, Jr., seconded by Alan Eckstein and carried unanimously.

- B. Motion to approve Resolution 042808-02 designating Blythe Keeler Robinson as a check signor on the Coalition's operating account at City National Bank.

Motion was moved by Octavio A. Verdeja Jr., seconded by Harve Mogul and carried unanimously.

President and CEO Evelio Torres noted that there is a \$10,000 check amount limit for signers and two signatures are still required.

- C. Motion to approve Resolution 042808-03 to authorize the President and CEO to execute the first amendment to Professional Services Agreement PSA07-118 with Non Profit Technologies Inc., for providing auditing and general consultant services until June 30, 2008.

Motion was moved by Harve Mogul, seconded by Gerald Schwartz and carried unanimously.

Committee Chair Perkins read through the Snap Shots. She explained the Waitlist/Inquiry list which will flow into the Ready Pool & and the School Age number which are down.

- V. Governance & Bylaws Committee Report .....Alan Eckstein

Committee Chair Eckstein explained that the Nominating Committee has requested a change to Bylaws 'Section 5.11 Vacancy'. This change would add language which would seek nomination recommendations from more entities such as peer groups of childcare providers, and programs for children with disabilities.

The Nominating Committee would utilize that list in the nomination process. Neither the Board nor the Committee would be compelled to take anyone from the list however it offers a wider range of candidates.

The Governance and Bylaws Committee will review this and any other matters that come before the Committee on Friday May 2<sup>nd</sup> at 3:30 P.M. The Committee will seek a vote at the next Board meeting regarding this change.



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### VI. Nominating Committee Report .....Silvia La Villa

Stepping in for Committee Chair Johnson, Silvia La Villa explained that the following Motions are for the re-appointment of two Board of Director members and the appointment of new member.

- A. Motion to approve the re-appointment of the Honorable Commissioner Seijas to the Early Learning Coalition of Miami Dade/Monroe Board of Directors. Appointed by the Miami-Dade Board of County Commissioners, this position is that of a voting member, as required by Chapter 411.01, Florida Statutes. The 3-year term of this position expires on April 30, 2008. The new term will expire on April 30, 2012.

Motion was moved by Silvia La Villa, seconded by Alan Eckstein and carried unanimously.

- B. Motion to approve the re-appointment of Gina Cortes-Suarez, Ph.D., to the Early Learning Coalition of Miami Dade/Monroe Board of Directors. This position is that of the President of Miami Dade College or designee. This is a voting member, as required by Chapter 411.01, Florida Statutes. The 3-year term of this position expires on April 30, 2008. The new term will expire on April 30, 2012.

Motion was moved by Alan Eckstein, seconded by Gerald Schwartz and carried unanimously.

- C. Motion to approve the appointment of Irene Wooten-Taylor to the Early Learning Coalition of Miami Dade/Monroe Board of Directors. This position is that of the Administrator of a central child care agency or designee. This is a non-voting member, as required by Chapter 411.01, Florida Statutes. The 3-year term of this position expires on April 30, 2008. The new term will expire on April 30, 2012.

Motion was moved by Rick Beasley, seconded by Harve Mogul and carried unanimously.

- D. Motion to approve the re-appointment of Gerald K. Schwartz, Esquire, to the Early Learning Coalition of Miami Dade/Monroe Board of Directors. This position is that of a private sector voting member, as required by Chapter 411.01, Florida Statutes. The 3-year term of this position expires on April 30, 2008. The new term will expire on April 30, 2012.

Mr. Schwartz's term will continue until a letter from the Governor arrives. A Board member requested that a Motion be moved at this present meeting instead of having to wait for the Governor's letter and voting at the next Board meeting. Attorney Walter Harvey confirmed it is acceptable for the Motion to be made at this meeting.

Motion was moved by Bud Park, seconded by Harve Mogul and carried unanimously.



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Since Sara Herald has been able to attend the last 4 Board Meetings including this one, under the ELC Bylaws Ms. Herald is unfortunately officially off the Board. It was noted that Ms. Herald was ELC's representative on the Board of Directors for The Children's Trust. Therefore a new representative to The Children's Trust Board would need to be named. Ms. Herald's term ends April 30, 2011.

Board was invited to apply to Nominating Committee Chair, Dr. Johnson, should they wish to sit on the Board of Directors at The Children's Trust. The new member would begin sitting on The Children's Trust Board As of July 1, 2008. This board meets monthly and members sit on a regularly meeting Committee as well.

The Nominating Committee discussed the 'absence' policy in the Bylaws and agreed that they must be upheld. Absence from three (3) meetings within the fiscal year will be accepted as a resignation. Also, members may attend three (3) meetings by conference call which do not register as a quorum but do register as being present.

### VII. Program & Strategy Committee Report.....David Williams, Jr.

Motion to approve Resolution 042808-04 which authorizes the President and CEO to amend the Coalition plan to adopt the 2007-08 parent sliding fee scale for Miami-Dade and Monroe counties and to increase the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) for Monroe County from 200% to 225%, pending the Agency for Workforce Innovation's (AWI) approval from the Federal Government.

Motion was moved by Alan Eckstein, seconded by Rick Beasley and carried unanimously.

### VIII. CEO Report .....Evelio Torres

The cuts must come from School Readiness (SR). This is not per child diminishing. If approved there will be a reduction of the per child allocation of \$45.00, which keeps changing. The State has an obligation to serve all the children in the VPK program however there is no set dollar amount in the Statute that the State must pay. The State sets the rate. Should we have more children the State's solution may be to pay less per child.

The Board agreed at a previous meeting that the numbers be increased. At present we are at 30,800 children. So School Readiness enrollment has been taken up as high as we can keep it so there will be no deficit problems this year and no annualization problem next year. Keep in mind we have to carry children over from this all of next year and we know



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we won't have the dollars to do that next year. Through attrition we will be able to address that next year. We are serving 29,338 at present.

The Federal Government reduced the State's allocation for the current fiscal year by \$3.9M without notice. If the cuts take place ELC will go from \$610M to \$595M.

The surplus (not utilized) VPK dollars returned to the State from the VPK Program's beginning, include, \$22M the first year with a utilization of 63.7%, the next year was \$7M with 85.5% and last year \$5.7 with 89.3%.

One Board Member added that this was based on a 70% take up rate which Georgia only achieved after ten (10) years compared to ELC which is at 59% presently. He stated that he does not see these as the most valuable numbers.

We are beginning to see a decrease in childcare resource and referral. The center has been moved to MLK. The staff takes all incoming calls. They are familiar with state requirements. The numbers should begin to rise. Recently two locations saw over 1,000 people. VPK is a different client. Anyone is eligible. By the end of the day 950 vouchers were given out. Those who did not receive vouchers either didn't have the proper documentation to receive a voucher or did not qualify. The community is aware. They want their vouchers for the School Board Lottery. Feedback was positive.

President and CEO, Evelio Torres said this took incredible organization and coordination. The Chair thanked Phyllis and her staff for all their hard work in this area.

The President and CEO, Evelio Torres said there has been a tremendous effort during this legislative session in our legislative advocacy effort. He mentioned that ELC has been in Tallahassee and working closely with community partners leading the charge up in Tallahassee.

The Children's Trust and the Children's Services Counsel state wide have done an incredible job. They have kept ELC informed and have been advocating very hard on behalf of School Readiness. They have been working to ensure we loose as little as possible. Diana Ragbeer who works for The Children's Trust has been instrumental.

The Association of Early Learning Coalitions, the Early Learning Advisory Counsel, The Children's Cabinet and The Agency for Workforce Innovation have been excellent. Evelio Torres would like to recognize their efforts at an upcoming board meeting after the session ends. The early care and education providers have also been in Tallahassee.



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ELC had three Resolutions in Tallahassee. One was from the City of Hialeah and we thank the Mayor and Councilmen for that. There was one from City of Miami. Evelio Torres and Chair Verdeja met with Mayor Manny Diaz who sponsored a Resolution. Natacha Seijas and Chairman Barreiro were very helpful in getting a Resolution.

Commission Seijas noted that Isis Garcia-Martinez. She is a private sector business woman and use to be a Councilwoman. She has never given up her interest in the children. Even though most of you have never heard of her, she has been there on our behalf. When she went to Tallahassee she fought for the Coalition like she was a member. She was there to represent City Hialeah. There's a lot of child care in Hialeah. She took her time to advocate for us.

The Chair suggested a thank you letter be sent to her from the board. Evelio Torres said he will be meeting with her next week and she will be invited to an upcoming board meeting. He added she has been in touch with him and updated him on who she had met with and what she had been doing.

The cuts represent 2.45% for every Coalition. It is an across the board percentage instead of going into the Funding Formula which would have meant Miami-Dade/Monroe would have lost a lot more than we are losing now.

Evelio Torres suggested The Mission of the Coalition be read, to remind everyone what the Coalition's mission is.

A Board member requested a motion be made to change the wording of the 'Mission' in the Bylaws, to include the word '*high*' before the word '*quality*', in the first paragraph of the Mission.

The Chair read the Mission as... "*To promote 'high quality' school readiness and voluntary pr-kindergarten...*"

A Motion was made and moved by David Lawrence, seconded by Gerald Schwartz and carried unanimously.

With the motion carrying, this will be reviewed by the Governance & Bylaws Committee at the upcoming May 2<sup>nd</sup> Committee meeting.

Evelio Torres spoke about managing enrollment and the importance of moving children from the Ready Pool as soon as possible. If in the Ready Pool 6 months or longer eligibility of those in the Ready Pool must be re-determined. He also spoke of other Coalitions suggestions as to how what restrictions they use for School Age children.



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Evelio Torres said that this Coalition's Program & Strategy Committee recommends that children 6 to 8 years of age continue to receive School Age care. At present we are up to 13 years of age.

Children receiving care now will continue to receive it until their 9<sup>th</sup> birthday at which time they will become ineligible and terminated. Parents of children turning 9 will be notified by letter 60 days in advance of their 9<sup>th</sup> Birthday.

It is recommended that this would be implemented July 1, 2008 and once implemented the enrollment numbers would be reviewed by the Program & Strategy Committee monthly. This does not affect the 'At Risk' BG5.

Evelio Torres explained that this will be a staggered termination just due to the fact that the 9 to 13 years will become ineligible as different times – it will be a natural staggering.

Board Member Seijas stated that parents may not read the letter or may not understand it. She also said that children between the ages of 9 and 13 are vulnerable and some will become at risk as we put them out there. She would like develop some sort of options to at least discuss it.

Board Member Perkins said she had done some research on the Internet and there are a lot of after school programs. She suggested a meeting between the Program Committee and the Research & Referral through the County since the County is going to have to refer out these 3,400 children to other programs.

Committee Chair Williams said it was very difficult to come to these suggestions.

To recap, ELC will serve children who are eligible only up 8 years of age. If a 10 year old in the Program he will be terminated when his/her eligibility expires. Eligibility is for a period of 6 months. They will be given 60 days notification.

Board Member Eckstein asked in terms of dollars what it means to ELC. ELC Interim CFO explained that at present, there are 3,378 children between the ages of 9 and 13 which equates to \$9M per year. The cost per child is \$2,698 per year. The monthly savings is \$600,000 plus. We are mandated to spend 70% of our dollars on slots.

President and CEO added that with this savings the Coalition will service more of the younger children.

Board Member Armstrong asked if we will lose younger children if their older siblings are dropped. He was told it could happen.



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Board Member Lawrence mentioned that other Coalitions have varying age cut offs. He reminded the Board that we are Early Learning. He feels AWI and the State must do something about this since the Legislature has slid in after school care.

Board Member Lederman said as painful as this is we have to do it. She went on to say this money needs to be spend where it will be most effective and where it can have the most impact in changing a life and that is with early intervention.

Cindy Lederman made a motion to approve the recommendation of the Program & Strategy Committee with the addition of what Board Member Seijas said, that a along with a letter, information be included of other options, phone numbers and information on what is available for these children.

Harve Mogul seconded the motion.

Evelio Torres stated that there are 800 children in Monroe County.

Board Member Parks stated that this has to apply to Miami-Dade and Monroe.

Board Member Chappell stated it is extremely difficult for children to move to another facility in Monroe County.

Cindy Lederman re-stated the motion she had made moments earlier to include the approval of the recommendation of the Program & Strategy Committee, which recommends that children 6 to 8 years of age continue to receive School Age care and children turning 9 years of age and older be ineligible. With the addition, that along with the letter the Coalition will send to parents informing them that their 9 to 13 year old ineligibility, be included information regarding other options available for these 9 to 13 year old children. This motion is to assign the authority to the Executive Committee to determine the length of deferment not to exceed one year.

Seconded by Board Member Seijas

Board Member Armstrong asked that a Motion be made that ELC take leadership The Children's Trust and other organizations in this community and have a summit to discuss what happens to these children. They are not disconnected. They do not disappear when they turn nine. The issues are profound. Just because we don't have initial responsibility for them doesn't mean we don't have a moral obligation for what happens.

Board Member Lawrence added that Monroe Members would be surprised at how un-different Monroe and Miami-Dade are. He said it isn't as if The Trust has a lot of money sitting around. There just are not the dollars. He supports the Motion only because it



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speaks most closely to the Mission of the Early Learning Coalition. He also knows there are consequences and supports Board Member Armstrong’s suggestion.

Board Member Eckstein said the Coalition is spending 15% in Monroe County on school aged children so the budgetary percentage is substantially different than what is spent in Dade County.

Board Member Lawrence will support a deferral only to wrestle to the ground what maybe unique about Monroe’s situation.

The Motion would be to convene a working group to address the issues of Monroe and Dade to address the issues of what happens to school aged children who are dropped. This would include the School System of Dade and Monroe Counties. Once Monroe presents its case the possibility of up to a one year deferral is possible.

Board Member Seijas made the Motion. She suggested it go back to the Executive Committee.

Evelio Torres suggested it go back to the Program & Strategy Committee. Chair of the Program & Strategy Committee Williams agreed.

Board Member Eckstein stated that all Monroe Board Members would like to part of this working group that the Program & Strategy Committee would convene.

The Chair stated that the Monroe Board Members would be a part of this Committee. He then asked if all were in favor. It was unanimous.

The Program & Strategy Committee will arrange for a meeting.

**IX. Public Comments .....Octavio A. Verdeja, Jr., Chair**

Sue Loyzelle with the YMCA of Miami made a presentation in Tallahassee that if children had younger siblings in the program that the entire family would be protected and that included all children school aged through the age of thirteen (13). She said that was a promise given in Tallahassee by Brittaney Birken, Director of AWI’s Office of Early Learning. Ms. Loyzell stated that their idea was not to disrupt the family. If they had an early aged child under the age of five (5) and also had a school aged child, that school aged child would remain. She was assured of that.

Sue Loyzelle asked of the 3,400 on the Wait List how many are school aged and how many are early childhood?



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She added that summer starts on June 9<sup>th</sup> and the children will be a part of the program and coming to the school camps on June 9<sup>th</sup> and dropped on July 1. She said that phasing is an important thing. Ms. Loyzelle stated that if they knew of other resources they would look to them. But it is a very difficult year. The Early Learning Coalition and subsidized child care has always served school aged children. She said that The Early Learning Coalition needs to look at a way to have a separate pot to look after school aged children and make sure it is funded in some way.

Board Member Lawrence agreed that it is an important point. He added that Brittaney Birken who heads the Office of Early Learning can't say what Sue Loyzelle says Brittaney said. If Dr. Birken is saying this, then this there is an enormous number of people out of compliance. When the School Readiness Act was set up in 1999 and subsequent, it was very clear that the Coalitions, until the Legislature says otherwise, make the policy for their community. Mr. Lawrence said that Sue Loyzelle will have to wrestle this to the ground. He added that June 9 to July 1 was a very short time frame.

Jackye Russell stated that summer care for the most part would not be effective due to the 60 day notice and an average 3 month eligibility period which staggers. The majority of the children will get through the summer.

Linda Carmona-Sanchez asked if the financial targets would be met if this is delayed until after summer, for the safety of the children because children are in subsidized care for a reason because their parents don't have the discretionary cash to put them in summer camp somewhere else.

Board Member Perkins explained that this doesn't happen until July 1 and then there is the 60 days notice.

The Chair confirmed this will get the children through August.

Evelio Torres noted that the Program & Strategy Committee worked to ensure that this would not disrupt the summer care.

Board Member Seijas reminded everyone that all the hats, the mother's hat, the social worker's hat, father's hat have to come off. We have to deal with it. We don't have the money. It's not easy but we just have to deal with it.

Evelio Torres mentioned that Adam Winsler gave presentations to Providers. The Quality Materials fair was very successful. Thank you to Fio and Karen and staff. It was very well done. Take your Child to Work Day was very successful and we attended a picnic that Miami-Dade County organized at the Miami Zoo with more than 2,500 children. It was a great success.



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Evelio Torres added that he had attended a conference with Miami-Dade County Public Schools, the United Way Center for Excellence, the Early Childhood Initiative Foundation, sponsored by the Kellogg Foundation. Four states attended including, Washington State, Mississippi, Florida and Hawaii. It was held in Hawaii for four days and was very productive. The President of the University of Hawaii and high level administrators and school teachers from Miami-Dade County also attended.

Board Member Lawrence said that Kellogg is investing million in Florida and over the next 4 year more than 200 elementary schools as a continuum from early childhood through the third grade using professional development curriculum. It is a very big deal.

X. Legislative Advocacy Committee Report .....Tabatha Cullen

Tabatha went through the Legislative update hand out and gave a brief on each the pending business. The higher education for Providers has not moved and the assumption is that it will not move. The 5 year finger printing of Providers has been removed. There is an ethics bill and a maximum class size bill. Tabatha asked that should anyone have questions about the items before the Legislature they please contact her and she would be more than happy to go over it with them.

XI. Adjourn .....Octavio A. Verdeja, Jr., Chair

Meeting adjourned at 1 hour, 34 minutes and 36 seconds.