



**BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING AGENDA**

**Monday, January 28, 2008**

**8:00 - 10:00 AM**

**Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe, Board Room**

**BOARD ATTENDEES:** Roderick E. Beasley; Alan Eckstein, Esq.; P. Morgan Hill; Dr. Yvonne T. Johnson (Vice Chair); David Lawrence; The Hon. Cindy Lederman; Octavio A. Verdeja, Jr. (Chair); Yesenia Perkins (Treasurer); Ann Karen Weller; Jane Robinson; Dr. Daniel Armstrong; Gerald K. Schwartz; Betty Key for Dr. Clarence Jones; Dr. Silvia La Villa; Alan Abramowitz; Phyllis Tynes for George Burgess

**BOARD ABSENTEES:** Sara B. Herald (Secretary); Harve Mogul; Dr. Dabney Park; The Hon. Natacha Seijas; David Williams, Jr.; Dr. Gina Cortes; Connie Chapell;

**STAFF ATTENDEES:** Walter Harvey, Esq. (Coalition Attorney); Evelio Torres; Angelo Parrino; Aileen Martinez; Blythe Robinson; Tabatha Cullen; Bruce Carrick; Claudia Mason; Jackye Russell; Jerry Pirri; Melody Thelwell; Alina Soto; Mary Williams; Lauren Cortinas; Bethany Sands; Vivian Wright; Teri Carbajal; Mary A. Williams; Roseline Philippe, Nadira Ali

**GENERAL ATTENDEES:** Edith Humes-Newbold, MDC/DHS/CDS; Ana M. Faraci, MDC/DHS; Patricia Granda, RCMA; Marie Woodson, DHS/CDS; Jane W. McQueen, Miami-Dade Headstart; Gilda Ferradaz, DCF; Modesto Abety, The Children’s Trust; Sara Marales, MDC/DHS/CDS; Doug Blomberg, Wesley House Family Services; Ana Sejeck, ECLF; Maritza Alonso, DHS; Eddie Rivera, AWI; Linda Carmona Sanchez, (A+ Early Learning Center); Rick Signor, Miami-Dade County; Rosemary Moreno, Ramiro Moreno, REM Learning Center; Ileana Acosta, Miami-Dade County, DHS; Daisy Hensley, Miami-Dade County, DHS; Evelyn Borrell, FIU; Jesse Leinfelder, The Children’s Trust; Gail Gregg, FIU; Smilling Y. Rodriguez, FIU; Manuel Fermin, Healthy Start Coalition of Miami-Dade; Ana Perez, FIU; Tessa Villarreal, Villa Learning Center

- I. Welcome and Introductions..... *Octavio A. Verdeja, Jr., Chair*
  - A. Roll Call..... *Nadira Ali*

**The Chairman welcomed Betty Key representing Board Member Dr. Jones and new Board Member Alan Abramowitz from the Department of Children and Families.**



B. Approval of Agenda ..... *Octavio A. Verdeja, Jr*

A Motion was made to approve the Agenda. It was seconded and unanimously approved.

c. Opening Remarks ..... *Octavio A. Verdeja, Jr.*

The Chair welcomed all in attendance to the first meeting of the New Year. The Chair mentioned the Quality Counts kick off tomorrow evening and hopes all present will attend. He mentioned that ELCM-D/M had two positive audits and thanked the County for their assistance with that. He stated that the financial situation looks very positive for this year.

Chairman Verdeja mentioned that ELCM-D/M is proud of the relationships formed with their partners, and the Coalition looks forward to continuing to work with these partners who include AWI, FIU, University of Miami, Family Central, Miami-Dade County, United Way, The Children’s Trust, The Children’s Forum and the Early Childhood Initiative Foundation.

The Chair requested that the May Board of Directors Meeting be move to the 27<sup>th</sup>.

Dr. Armstrong spoke of a study University of Miami, University of Florida, University of South Florida and the University of Central Florida application for the National Children’s Study. One hundred thousand (100,000) children would be enrolled into a 25-year longitudinal cohort to identify all phases of healthcare and development, social, environmental, family - all aspects would be included in this study – the NIH pre-selected a number of counties and among them is Miami-Dade County, Hillsborough, Orange. 7,000 women will be screened before they get pregnant and followed over 25 years. We hope this will change the face of children’s health. We are very excited and welcome the community’s involvement. Coalitions of Community Advisory Board will be formed and we will be asking support from the ELC Board and Evelio Torres to serve in capacity on that Board and on the State Advisory Board. We feel we have a very good chance at getting funding. We hope this will change the face of children’s health.

II. Approval of Minutes ..... *Octavio A. Verdeja Jr.*

Motion to approve December 03, 2007 Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

A Motion was moved, seconded and passed unanimously.

III. CEO Report..... *Evelio Torres*

Movement in VPK has not moved much and is not expected to. We will continue our marketing efforts for next year. We expect enrollment this summer to be the same as last summer. Low summer enrollment is expected state wide. Although the summer term offers longer hours it has not caught on. It is either or either the children are in the regular school year or in the summer program.



For the Providers the summer program is difficult for the Early Learning because they are attempting to squeeze 9 months into 3 months. We could extend the VPK through the summer which would extend what they retain.

Mr. Torres said we 3,100 children have certificates that they are not using. We are contacting each family and those certificates not used will be deactivated in the system. We are following Orange County with this as they've been very successful.

There was an Enrollment and Eligibility event held on Saturday by Miami-Dade County. It was very organized at the MLK centers. They had greeters, and 70 staff members to look after the people. They scheduled appointments for 500 people.

The numbers were 1,200. There were 632 Families. Miami-Dade County interviewed 365, enrollment exceeded 265 for one day. Miami-Dade data indicates 29,747 clients enrolled. We pay about 95% so we have a huge liability also we had 471 late Provider payments.

There has been an increase in mostly Apple Accreditation. The Accreditation Audit highlighted that 91 centers in Miami-Dade were Accredited by did not have a Gold Seal Certificate. With that Seal they would receive the 20% differential. Those serving School Readiness children are on their way to getting their Gold Seal Certificate.

The Funding Formula has been agreed on for one year. The AWI has requested \$15 Million which is a minimum of 1% of the base per coalition. For us it will a little over \$1Million. AWI has for us as an unmet need is \$150 Million but some other counties are in worse shape.we have an unlimited number of VPK children we can enroll.

#### IV. Assessment Program 2007/2008 Presentation

- A. Coalition ..... *Bethany Sands*
- B. Miami-Dade County ..... *Daisy Hensley*

The Inclusion Program includes Assessment. The goal of ELC is to provide Assessment to our children. We want to identify children at risk for delays and provide follow up strategies in a timely manner.

The new program builds capacity into our teachers. We will form an Inclusion Task Force. The AWI requires that we provide a pre-test to a percentage of children when they enter a program and a post-test when they leave a program.

Assessment is an ongoing in depth process. A 'Red Flag' indicates 'A Concern' for a child in any of the development areas. Two or more 'Concerns' indicates there are usually more concerns.

The Task Force should generate community interest and input which benefits the coalition.



The Task Force recommended particular protocols that will assist us in improving the life of these children. It helps teachers to know where the child should be and so the teacher can then target the child's areas of need. It's building capacity.

### The Process of Assessment

1<sup>st</sup> step was to train providers how to administer the test  
Every month Miami-Dade County receives a list of children that enroll that month  
Miami-Dade County provides every Provider with a child on the list with two packets with the questionnaire (one is for the Provider the other copy is for the parent).  
Once the questionnaire has been filled out, CDS calls Miami-Dade County  
Miami-Dade County picks up the questionnaires and reviews them for errors  
Once reviewed by Miami-Dade County they are scanned over to FIU  
FIU reviews them again to ensure they are scan able  
FIU then scores them and the results are placed on the website  
If Miami-Dade County sees that that 25% of the children show 'Concerns' MDC looks at the teacher who may need re-training  
100 centers will be participating  
We will provide six family training sessions  
Everything is documented in the child's fold  
We meet with the parent and teacher and with their input we develop strategies  
We follow up to ensure they are responding  
We provide strategies to the teachers  
Sever cases we will refer  
We have 700 children in 100 centers  
We are working closely with FIU to form our strategies  
Parents are encouraged to work with children at home

FIU's Dr. Gail Gregg stated that even though her contract with FIU and ELC ended in June 30, 2007 she continued to work with us from Michigan trying to accomplish 10 to 11,000 ASQs by end of October. She introduced her workforce who continued to work with Dr. Gregg. CDS was able to train about 2,500 teachers in a condensed short period of time. From August 28<sup>th</sup> to October 31<sup>st</sup> 11,132 ASQs were completed during 70 hour work weeks.

Dr. Gregg said it is a measure of one's dedication to this community. She said there are 1,550 ASQ identified children that need some follow up. CDS has been able to accomplish 514 to 520 which is about 35% as of Friday. FIU remains committed as long as Dr. Gregg is there, to help this coalition. Dr. Gregg shared that CDS and FIU hold meetings regularly to look at which assessment instrument is a better tool.

A member asked information is being gathered for known pre-determined risk such as violence exposure, divorces in place, whether the child was a 30 week baby? Also there is a connection between the screening and the teachers, but what about the home and the child's pediatrician? Moving forward what is the faults negative on ASQs for example if you assess at 20 months you may have a normally developing child but at the 28 months the child may have Autism.



FIU's Dr. Manfry spoke about FIU's involvement in the ASQ Screening and gathering and evaluation of the Assessment Data.

He said that ASQ Screening Data looks at the whole child over months so that a child is not missed for services that may be needed. We are following the child from 3 months to 60 months.

As teachers are assisting parents with filling out the ASQ it is hoped that it educating the teacher as to the developmental milestones. Hopefully by next year with a consistent outcome measure we will see if the teachers in the county have over all learned, by learning about development that their knowledge will result in improved readiness skills for children countywide. It is hoped that this assessment will also be a county wide intervention that may raise the knowledge county wide. We also want to explore the number of children identified in kindergarten so are these measures doing a good job, is the education of teachers improving the identifying of children early on.

It was asked if the data is being gather as to how many of these children who you have identified as having problems actually receive services and how long will these children be followed.

Miami-Dade County confirmed that this data is being gathered. FIU is now following these children up to the fourth grade now.

#### Assessment Data

FIU believes the random sampling of the county answers only one question which is 'how is the county doing?'. To answer how individual centers are doing FIU set up stratified groups related to important issues we determined. FIU is looking at whether children who attend accredited centers have higher learning skills than those who don't and does the type of accreditation make a difference. They are also looking at whether children attending higher environmental rating system have higher developmental skills than children who attend a lower environmentally rated system. The ASQs are continuously updating the data and continuously adding the longitudinal look.

Bethany Sands shared that Assessment goals include the assessment of all 18,000 School Readiness children. We are performing to screen children with concerns as a followup, we are continuing the initial ASQ screening to reach all SR children, and to continue the follow up of all children.

#### Inclusion

Our goal is for the inclusion of children with disabilities with all children. Typical children jump in from the children we're including. We look to the unique qualities of each child.

The best we can do is to provide families with information. We are looking to identify and provide services to 100 centers with children with 2 or more concerns. We provide interventions based on the child's individual needs.



Partners are really reaching out and we are receiving a welcome response from other agencies in the community.

220 Providers have been trained as of December 31<sup>st</sup>. We have had 13 Multicultural inclusion ratings, training is offered on week nights and weekends and Providers have asked for an increase in frequency.

A member asked if the children who are identified as special needs and subsidized childcare paid at a different rate.

Evelio explained the rate was the same. However it was being looked into.

A Provider commented that she is grateful that the Task Force is going to be used. She also said that we are assuming that using the ASQ will educate the teacher. She asked if that could be measured. She also asked if the 'At Risk Indicator' could be broken down by billing group categories to see what the impact of the services is, based on the billing group. She also said that we identify children with special needs and provide some classroom support services but we have no real mechanism to get real services to them. Maybe we should look into in connection with QRIS.

Another Provider suggested that if the rate is looked at for Inclusion than that rate should be tied into improving the ratios in that classroom so that the dollars are not misused and used for that child.

V. Audit Committee Report ..... *Octavio A. Verdeja, Jr.*

A. Motion to approve Resolution 012808-09 to accept the Audited Financial Statements and Reports on Compliance and Internal Control for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2007.

The Chair stated it was an excellent Audit. Congratulations were given to Evelio and his staff, Finance Committee Chair Jessie Perkins and the Central Agency. The Chair said he looked for to a repeat next year.

A Motion was made to approve Resolution 012808-09. The Motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

VI. Finance Committee Report..... *Yesenia Perkins*

Everything was on Budget. There is a 4% surplus because at the beginning of the year Evelio made a concerted effort to cut expenses which was held back according to the State request. That leaves a reserve of \$2 Million.

The only thing that stands out is the Ready Pool and Wait List. The Ready Pool is those children that have been determined eligible and they just need to select a center. The Wait List is some what of an inquiry list. The County and ELCM-D/M are working to



ensure that all the children in the Ready Pool will be enrolled very soon so this number will go down.

A member requested that Mr. Doug Blomberg be permitted to speak when Motion E and G were to be read. The Finance Chair stated Motions E and G would be pulled out, so Mr. Blomberg could speak about them. The Finance Chair then stated Resolutions A through F and H would be approved as a block.

A member requested that each Resolution be read individually instead of as a block even though a block reading would save time, he felt each Resolution required separate reading.

- A. Motion to approve Resolution 012808-01 to ratify the President/CEO's decision to execute Contract PSA07-119 with Gray Robinson, P.A. for the provision legal services.

A Motion was moved by the Chair. The question was posed as to all members in favor and all members opposed. The Motion passed unanimously.

- B. Motion to approve Resolution 012808-02 to ratify the President/CEO's decision to execute Contract 817-165 with The Children's Trust for the provision of funding for a quality rating improvement system.

A member requested that Evelio Torres mention at this point the Quality Rating System. Evelio stated that 725 RSVPs confirming attendance of the Quality Counts Program Launch at Jungle Island tomorrow evening. It is funded by The Children's Trust for \$12 Million over three years. This has been in the planning for three years which has led what we believe will be one of the best Quality Rating Systems in the State. This five star program offers incentives to Providers. In the first year we will service 100 Providers and scale up the second and by the third year get to 600 Providers. It will require additional funding. We could not do this without The Children's Trust because the Coalition does not have the resources to implement such a system. We count on The Children's Trust being re-authorized this year so we can continue to implement this system. This has been a very inclusive process with Providers involved in the focus groups and in the planning process with us. We plan to begin to implement it in Monroe County this year. Everyone is welcome to attend the Launch tomorrow evening.

A Motion was made and the question posed as to all members in favor and all members opposed. The Motion passed unanimously.

- C. Motion to approve Resolution 012808-03 to authorize the President/CEO to negotiate and execute the First Amendment to contract C07-117 with The United Way of Miami-Dade County for the provision of additional quality improvement services.

A Motion was made and the question was posed as to all members in favor and all members opposed. The Motion passed unanimously.



- D. Motion to approve Resolution 012808-04 to ratify the President/CEO's decision to execute a contract with Miami Dade County for the provision of Teen Parent Program Child Care Services for children who meet legislative eligibility requirements for the 2007-2008 school year. The contract term is January 1, 2008 - December 31, 2008.

A member asked whether former Foster Children who have babies and are not in the system are eligible.

Evelio Torres explained that they are eligible if they are attending Miami-Dade County Public Schools. It is a small group of children that we are trying to address. The dependent teens in the Foster Care system that have babies, their children are not dependent because they have not been adjudicated. So those children fall into the same BG8 category of the working poor. We have been trying to address this for a couple of years. This is a small group and a very high risk group. We have a large group of teens who may not necessarily be involved in the Miami-Dade County Public School System but are in the Foster Care system. That's the population we are concerned about. Right now we have open enrollment so we can get them into care but it becomes a problem when we have closed enrollment.

A Motion was made and the question was posed as to all members in favor and all members apposed. The Motion passed unanimously.

- E. Motion to approve Resolution 012808-05 to ratify the President/CEO's decision to execute Amendment #2 to contract with the School Board of Miami Dade County for the provision of Teen Parent Program Child Care Services for children who meet legislative eligibility requirements for the 2007-2008 school years. The contract extension term is January 1, 2008 - December 31, 2008.

A Motion was made and the question was posed as to all members in favor and all members apposed. The Motion passed unanimously.

- F. Motion to approve Resolution 012808-06 to Authorize the President/CEO to execute the First Amendment to contract with Wesley House Family Services Inc., for the provision of School Readiness and Voluntary Pre Kindergarten Services in Monroe County.

A Motion was made and the question was posed as to all members in favor and all members apposed. The Motion passed unanimously.



- G. Motion to approve Resolution 012808-07 to Authorize the President/CEO to execute and implement a Provider Rate Increase for Monroe County effective February 1, 2008.

A Motion was made the question was posed as to all members in favor and all members opposed. The Motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Blomberg stated that these two Resolutions help Monroe County. He said that the YMCA that closed recently has a \$40,000 debt and in a negative cash position will not be re-opening according to some of their Board members. They had 34 children in their after school program, 9 were School Readiness children and have found other services within the community and/or being taken care at home. In the upper Keys Island Preschool closed last week with 78 children, of which 67 were School Readiness which, in Monroe County is nearly 10% of the population we serve in SR. We have another Provider that gathered teachers from other Providers and had space to add 40 more children. We're helping them to secure cots and equipment.

A member asked Mr. Blomberg what we can do to assist. He mentioned that we are going into a recession and it's only going to get worse in Monroe County as they have a declining population, people who are not making enough, who can't afford housing anyway.

Mr. Blomberg said we have to move to figure out how to help the lower income. We can't find enough childcare workers, social services workers, enough housing or enough staff. It's throughout the county. It comes down to dollars. \$10-11 is not enough. They're leaving the county. Overall the school board had more enrollment this year. Families have lost their family support - the family support, aunts, uncles, grandparents are leaving the area. There is no money for anyone to open up childcare in Key West, Marathon or the upper Keys. Mr. Blomberg added its Faith Based and those still holding on. It's the same as other businesses in the Keys. Receptionists are moving around for more money, more benefits...etc.

A member mentioned that Quality Initiative will bring stipend to Providers when it is implemented in Monroe.

Another member said that the cost of living in the Keys is extremely high. To craft a QRIS solution would require money other than from The Children's Trust because by law The Trust cannot give money. Collier County is very seriously moving toward dedicated funding source led by Mr. Goodlet, Leon County and Volusia County are talking about this.

A member asked if Monroe County is looking to businesses outside the county for a business contribution to this infrastructure issue for employees. This might be done without a tax issue.

Mr. Blomberg spoke with major employees within the Keys and said that they look at their global business and these issues in the Keys are just a blip to them. So they have



to run up the price a bid but it isn't a concern to them. Their Boardrooms are looking at the bottom line. A large company bought a couple of hotels and were going to take out all the employee housing because they saw it as square footage for nice condos but who is going to work there with no housing.

A member mentioned the Keys was looking at a study done in Vail, Co allowed a tax abatement decrease if people who prove they're primary residence was in that county for at least two years. In Sun Valley, ID employers built housing. Employees stayed there for the week then returned to their primary homes which were nearly 3 hours away in Boise on the weekends. That was the only way they could keep this resort open. For us in Monroe we are looking at the worker.

Another member from Monroe mentioned that there is more affordable housing coming along. The rents will run from \$600 to \$800. These are communities with parks, and meeting rooms. The cost of living is 12% higher than anywhere else in the State.

H. Motion to approve Resolution 012808-08 to approve Budget Amendment 2008-02.

A Motion was made and the question was posed as to all members in favor and all members apposed. The Motion passed unanimously.

VII. Legislative Advocacy Committee Report ..... *Dr. Daniel Armstrong*

Dr. Armstrong shared with the Board that the first Legislative Advocacy Committee, Chaired by Sara Herald met on January 15<sup>th</sup>. We discussed increased funding, supporting QRIS and supporting Early Steps. The staff has done an impressive job in gathering data and producing single page handouts and creating snap shots for the Legislators of their districts. I give a lot of praise to the ELC staff for the professional work they have done and the amount they have accomplished. We scheduled a meeting with House Minority Leader Dan Gelber. We met with Representative Gelber and Louis Garcia last week. The focus has been on the unmet need - the Waiting List. Both Representative understood that and offered to provide us with in put on Legislation that might be pending that might have input on what we are doing. We will continue to meet with Representatives in the House and Senate to educate them about our Committee. We will launch into our next steps once the session starts. This year is the ground work to introduce ourselves and our needs to the Legislators. Representative Gelber provided some of the private thoughts and intents of other Legislators from other parts of the State to create language to ensure the failure of VPK. We may not have support from VPK from the northern part of the State.

A member mentioned the Committee met with two Democrats, and that State is facing a \$2 Billion deficit and a 2 to 1 majority in the House and the Senate. He went on to say that this Committee needs to reach strong Representatives that work across the floor.



A Provider complimented the Board for putting this Committee together. She asked that the Board educated the community better. So Providers can work with this Committee and carry the message with the coalition.

VIII. Program & Strategy Committee ..... *Dr. Silvia La Villa*

Dr. La Villa informed the Board that the Committee discussed the Enrollment Process. Providers and Committee members raised some questions on how some things can be made better. The Committee asked staff to provide information for the next meeting. The second item is that Committee is going to tackle the Provider Agreement

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

X. Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 2 hours, 9 minutes and 21 seconds.