



# Minutes

Board of Directors Meeting  
August 2, 2010; 8:00 am  
ELC Board Room

**Board Attendees:** Octavio A. Verdeja, Jr. (Chair); Yvonne T. Johnson, M.D. (Vice Chair); Gerald K. Schwartz, Esq. (Secretary); P. Morgan Hill.; David Lawrence, Jr.; Harve Mogul; The Hon. Cindy Lederman; Lucy C. Piñeiro, Esq. (attended via conference call); David Williams, Jr. (attended via conference call); Magaly Abrahante, Ed.D.; Daniel Armstrong, Ph.D. (attended via conference call); Jane McQueen; Alan Eckstein, Esq.; Gina Cortes-Suarez, Ed.D.; Rick Beasley; Modesto E. Abety; Jacqui Colyer; Santiago Echemendia (Board Counsel).

**Board Absentees:** Yesenia Perkins (Treasurer); The Hon. Natacha Seijas; Ann Karen Weller, R.N., B.S.N.; Connie Chapell

**Staff Attendees:** Evelio Torres, President & CEO; Leeana Pena, Board Liaison; Angelo Parrino; Tabatha Cullen; Blythe Robinson; Mary Williams, ELC Monroe (attended via conference call); Jackye Russell; Fred Hicks; Mercy Castiglione; Jose Hernandez; Michelle Wenleder; Milton Silvera; Nicole Bardin; Fiorella Altare; Diana Lane; Bethany Sands; Melody Thelwell;

**General Attendees:** Doug Blomberg, Wesley House (attended via conference call); Vanessa Vasquez; Alfred Sanchez, YMCA; Eileen Melanie Simon, YWCA; John Knight, Children's Movement of Florida; Abilio Rodriguez, Centro Mater; Ana Sejeck, ECIF and Ready Schools Miami; Linda Carmona-Sanchez, AECE; Juanita de la Cruz, Miami-Dade County Schools;

<b>I. Welcome and Introductions</b>	<b>Octavio A. Verdeja, Jr., Chair</b>
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- Chairman Octavio A. Verdeja, Jr. called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone back from their summer vacations.
- Leeana Pena called roll and a quorum was established with 14 voting members.

<b>II. Approval of Minutes</b>	<b>Octavio A. Verdeja, Jr., Chair</b>
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- O. Verdeja called for the approval of the meeting minutes from 05/03/10 and 06/07/10.
  - C. Lederman moved to approve the motion.
  - Motion was seconded by A. Eckstein
  - Motion was unanimously passed.



### III. Executive Committee Report

Octavio A. Verdeja, Jr., Chair

- O. Verdeja stated the Executive Committee has begun planning the Board Retreat for September 7<sup>th</sup> and recommended that Bud Park be selected as the strategic planning facilitator as he knows the Coalition and its history. Three proposals were then presented for review and/or comments.
- O. Verdeja made a motion to approve the selection of Bud Park as the Board Retreat strategic planning facilitator.
  - Motion seconded by A. Eckstein.
  - Motion unanimously passed.
- The Board Retreat will be coupled with the September Board meeting on September 7<sup>th</sup> and will take place in the ELC Coral Gables office this year, not in the Keys.
- Three Board members resigned: Irene Taylor-Wooten, who resigned from the County after many years and thus can no longer serve on the Board; Silvia La Villa, Ed.D., Senate Bill 2014 requires that the appointed Board member be a for-profit provider and she is a non-profit provider—her resignation was effective July 1<sup>st</sup>; and Bud Park who has already resigned.
- O. Verdeja stated that a joint Governance & Bylaws and Nominating Committees meeting will take place on August 3<sup>rd</sup> to discuss and comply with Senate Bill 2014 in order to select someone for the Board.
- E. Torres stated that back in February the Board made the decision that the Teenage Parent Program (TAPP), would no longer make payments or determine eligibility for any child that is not in an accredited center. TAPP came to the Coalition as a result of an RFP that was released by the school system. The ELC applied for the grant and was awarded \$1.2M to serve children of teenage parents. The last RFP led the Board to decide that children from high-risk parents should not be placed in non-accredited centers. Based on discussions with the school system, it has committed to including an accreditation provision in its next RFP. The ELC will apply like any other bidder for the grant.
- A. Eckstein asked when the next RFP will be released. E Torres answered that the projected release will be this fall with an effective date of January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2011 but that is not guaranteed.
- E. Torres stated that the decision-point now is whether the Board wants to reconsider its earlier resolution for the ELC to continue partnering with the school system and work with TAPP children. The ELC will work towards placing TAPP children in accredited centers but not all of them will be.
- Y. Johnson asked if we have the support of the school system.
- E. Torres replied, absolutely. The big concern is that if the program is made too difficult for the parents, they will drop out of school. So part of the RFP contains an education component for them and a mandate that children will benefit from placement in high-quality settings.
- D. Lawrence asked if the Board could hear from the school system.



- M. Abrahante stated that Dr. Connelly was appointed to oversee TAPP and invited him to speak.
- Dr. Connelly stated that the current contract will expire December 30<sup>th</sup> and it will be allowed to lapse. The new RFP will be issued effective sometime around October. It will have the provision for a push towards accredited centers but it cannot be guaranteed at 100% because of the component that is tied to the parent.
- J. Colyer stated if the provision says that children will attend accredited centers, then the choice will be an accredited center.
- Dr. Connelly agreed but there is a caveat that one, two or three students may not be placed in an accredited center where one is not available. The school system's job is to provide the best available services and where it cannot, still provide a service to the parent. He does not anticipate that it will be more than a few children but does not want to tell the Board that it will be 100% when it may not be doable.
- C. Lederman stated, so your prior contract required accredited centers but the future contract will not. There is no legal term for "push for." You're either doing it or you're not. What is the contract going to say?
- Dr. Connelly replied that the previous contract also had that provision in place—that if a parent could not be accommodated, the child would still be placed in a center, not necessarily an accredited center. He cannot really speak to the language because the RFP has not been written yet but the system is aware of the direction in which it is going, the type and quality of services the students need to receive and that is what the RFP will need to speak to.
- C. Lederman responded that she does not think it is good enough.
- O. Verdeja added that it seems as if the language is going to be the same as before and if it is then at least 39 kids were not in accredited centers; so why is that going to change?
- M. Abrahante said she does not think the current language addresses accredited centers at all. It is her understanding that what is being proposed is returning to the language prior to this contract which does speak to most of the children. What Dr. Connelly is alluding to is one or two children who are not matched based on very specific reasons—that we cannot say we are going to place all children in accredited centers because it has not been done, but the intent is definitely that the great majority of the children, hopefully all, will be in accredited centers.
- D. Lawrence stated that he has known Dr. Connelly and M. Abrahante for a significant time and thinks they are honorable people that will make this work. He would be disappointed and angry if 39 children or anything like that number were not in accredited centers a year from now. He assumes that the number will be a handful or fewer and if at any point a young person cannot be accommodated, a conversation will take place with the CEO of the ELC to find a solution.



- E. Torres agreed and stated that if there are any exceptions they will be well documented as to the reason why the child could not be placed in an accredited center.
- D. Lawrence reiterated that not only that, E. Torres will sign off on it as well, and come to a judgment that this other path is the only way to do right by that young person.
- E. Torres said he is not sure if that will be a requirement in the RFP but the ELC will certainly include it as they negotiate the contract if the grant is awarded.
- D. Lawrence stated he wants a commitment from the school system that there be no exceptions or the fewest possible.
- G. Schwartz wanted to clarify that the children who do not go to accredited centers are unable to go because there is no such school in the proximity where the parent can get the child there.
- Dr. Connelly affirmed that is correct. The ultimate goal is to make sure the parent is conveniently acquiesced so that she can get to school so that is why the vicinity placement is addressed.
- G. Schwartz inquired why transportation is not provided for these kids.
- Dr. Connelly responded that they do in certain cases.
- D. Lawrence reminded everyone that 12 years ago there were 17 accredited sites total in Miami-Dade County and now there are about 400. It is stunning growth that this Coalition has presided over but that is still only 1/3 of all centers.
- C. Lederman stated that staff did a study to see if accredited centers were in these neighborhoods and the answer was yes, more than needed; so that is not an excuse anymore.
- A. Eckstein said his concern is the variables of the discussion—proximity, what does that really mean? And that any contract will not be iron-clad in getting these children into these centers. That is what the Board was dealing with when they made the initial decision and now it is being asked to change its point of view but has the change of view really changed on behalf of all the parties?
- O. Verdeja inquired about the number of children in total and the number of children not in accredited centers.
- J. Russell responded that there are between 250 and 260 children in TAPP and 2/3 were not in accredited centers.
- E. Torres stated that enrollment has dropped to 39 because of the summer months.
- M. Abrahante stated that those numbers represent the picture when the school system did not have language in the contract that required a child to attend an accredited center. If that language was there, the numbers would be different. It



is 100% that may not be doable but there is a commitment to do as high a percent as possible and be honest and straightforward about it.

- Y. Johnson wanted to clarify that what is being asked today is to decide on a change of motion from what had been voted on earlier--that within six (6) months these children needed to be placed in accredited centers.
- E. Torres affirmed that yes, it was a reconsideration of the motion.
- Y. Johnson stated that since the ELC has not been awarded the RFP for next time, when that comes up and the language is in place, that will be the time to decide. Today what she needs to understand is that the spirit of what was decided before is being adhered to and that the 2/3 of children are being moved from non-accredited centers into accredited ones.
- S. Echemendia stated C. Lederman is scheduled to make a presentation to the school board on this item. Maybe one choice is to leave the resolution as is and attend the presentation to get some clarification and hear what the school board has to say.
- C. Lederman asked how many children in the summer session are in accredited centers.
- J. Russell responded that there are 39 children enrolled in the summer, of that 39, about 23 are not enrolled in accredited centers.
- C. Lederman asked if the school system will commit to the fact that the language in the prior contract will be the same as in the future contract.
- Dr. Connelly replied that it was his understanding that the language did not require children to be placed in accredited centers—that is the position the school system is taking now, to require it with the caveat that 100% may not be done.
- O. Verdeja asked if the school system would also commit to language that if a child is not placed in an accredited center that it will be brought to E. Torres's attention and every effort would be made to admit that child or at least have it brought to the Board explaining why it could not happen.
- Dr. Connelly said that it would be brought to the attention of all the centers so they are aware and can provide better guidance regarding placement. One reason why a child would not be placed in an accredited center is parental choice.
- A. Eckstein said that if the variable is parental choice we do not know to how many that applies. If you leave the door open for those exceptions then we are not willing to achieve what was planned.
- D. Lawrence stated that to him it is all about collaboration and trust. He cares about quality more than most and understands the value of accredited care. He hears the school system say they can manage this to almost nothing but there may be a handful of situations where the parent or her parents insist on going to a center that is not on the list. It is not fair to dump the child.



- D. Armstrong stated he is concerned with unintended consequences if the ELC does not have a contract with the school system, how it will be handled, and if the number of children served will change by choosing to go in a different direction. It might be helpful to have a simple form with a checklist of reasons for the parent of a child who is not in an accredited school, and obtain her reasons for making the choice, and using that information to help parents reconsider in the future.
- S. Echemendia offered up a compromise that maybe the effective date of the resolution could be abated to the next Board meeting on September 7<sup>th</sup>. Further clarification could be given by the school board and between now and then the language can be reviewed with a final vote on September 7<sup>th</sup>.
- M. Abrahante wanted to caution the Board that the situation with the current contract must be resolved prior to the RFA being issued in regards to the Coalition's ability to bid on the next contract. The school system understands the parameters and is committed to doing its best to meet the Board's intent.
- S. Echemendia stated an amended resolution would be needed to change the effective date to September 7<sup>th</sup>.
- E. Torres stated that effective almost immediately the ELC can no longer serve the 23 children in TAPP and cannot make payments to the providers. Any new children enrolled in the program the ELC would not be able to determine eligibility or make payments. Miami-Dade County is well aware of this. Accredited centers are the only ones that would be served. December 31<sup>st</sup> is when this contract expires with the school system.
- O. Verdeja asked, so as of now we will not be able to pay those 23 children?
- E. Torres responded yes.
- D. Lawrence said to let that happen is tragic and not right.
- E. Torres stated that the challenge with an effective date of September 7<sup>th</sup> is that a number of the kids will be enrolled in the program but it does not give the ELC time to stop the payment process if the issue is not resolved by September 7<sup>th</sup>. It cannot be done from one day to another—there is notification to the parents and providers.
- E. Torres stated the recommendation from staff is to continue working with the school system until a new RFP is released and then bid on it if it is decided that the language is appropriate. It will not serve the children well if they are not being served now because they will not necessarily end up in accredited centers although the ELC and school system will work to do that. Staff can provide monthly reports at Board meetings as to how many children are in accredited centers and how many are not.
- M. Abety made a motion to move forward with E. Torres's recommendation and continue its partnership with the school system in administering TAPP.
  - Motion seconded by Y. Johnson.
  - Motion unanimously passed.



- Y. Johnson suggested that C. Lederman keep her appointment to speak with the school board and the Board will receive her direction at the September meeting as to the level of commitment of the school board regarding this effort.
- A. Eckstein stated he is in favor of not cutting off the funding.
- C. Lederman responded that TAPP staff is adamantly opposed to what is being suggested which gave her great concern. She would like the caveat that if a child cannot be placed then allow the Board to help. That would be the perfect solution and she and the others would be satisfied and have no problem deferring the other motion.
- M. Abrahante concurred with the caveat and said having access to additional resources would be a great help.
- E. Torres said the ELC does have an experienced infant and toddler specialist on staff who is assigned specifically to work with TAPP children.
- M. Abety said he knows priority is given to children in the welfare system but is there a way to place more priority on the placement of TAPP children in so they are given first crack at accredited centers that have available slots?
- E. Torres replied that the way it works now for children in welfare programs is that there is a court order that mandates they be placed in accredited centers. In addition to that there is a commitment from DCF, Our Kids, and case management agencies that the kids be placed in accredited centers even if there is an absence of a court order.

#### **IV. Children's Movement of Florida**

**David Lawrence, Jr.**

- D. Lawrence stated that children are in substantially poor shape in Florida although significant progress has been made in Miami-Dade County. Still, we are nowhere near the 'promised land.' A year and a half ago, a group of 15-16 Floridians gathered to talk about this bipartisan movement in the wake of the election for The Children's Trust including Sergio Bendixen, pollster and strategist; Roberto Martinez, former U.S. Attorney; Bob Butterworth, former DCF Secretary and Attorney General; Toni Jennings, former Lt. Governor; Alan Bense, former House Speaker. The website [www.childrensmovementflorida.org](http://www.childrensmovementflorida.org) will provide more details and answer questions. The Movement has already visited 11 Florida cities and shared its results and prepared five (5) white papers with costs on pre-K quality, health insurance for all children, screening and treatment for special-needs children (e.g., autism, cerebral palsy), high-quality parent skill-building, and high-quality mentoring. Six (6) organizers were hired and \$400,000 was raised for a test-market in Palm Beach County, a county with 1.3M people. Pre- and post-polling was completed with both Republican and Democrat pollsters. Florida is genuinely a purple state with Democrats, Republicans and Independents. The Children's Movement is a movement, not a program—it should be long-term and sustainable. On September 6<sup>th</sup> the Movement will launch in 15 Florida cities beginning in Pensacola and ending in Key West. It will be announced in a four-city fly-around on August 9<sup>th</sup>. \$1M is needed to launch the September phase and \$800,000+ has already been raised at this point. The Movement will hold "milk parties," serving milk and cookies to adults. There are



24 bipartisan members on the steering committee. This is not about raising taxes but about making our children a priority.

#### **V. Finance Committee Report**

**Yesenia Perkins, Treasurer**

- O. Verdeja stated that Y. Perkins's father is gravely ill and to please keep him in your prayers. He invited A. Parrino to present the Finance Committee Report in Y. Perkins's stead.
- A. Parrino stated the ELC is at an unusual point as it was not able to make a full-close for the fiscal year. An outstanding invoice is remaining in what is called a 13<sup>th</sup> invoice. The budget variance sheets show only a partial-close. The ELC will fully close the fiscal year at the September meeting and give a full accounting then. The only significance was a projected \$6.6M rollover of stimulus dollars which is right on target.
- Motion to approve Resolution 072810-01 to authorize the President and CEO to receive and execute the Children's Trust Leverage and Local Match grant/contract.
  - A. Eckstein moved to approve the motion.
  - H. Mogul seconded the motion.
  - Motion was unanimously passed.
- Motion to approve Resolution 072810-02 to authorize the President and CEO to execute a first amendment to contract, PSA10-164 with Scholastic, Inc. to provide additional books to early care and education providers throughout Miami-Dade and Monroe counties.
  - C. Lederman moved to approve the motion.
  - A. Eckstein seconded the motion.
  - Motion was unanimously passed.

#### **VI. Program & Strategy Committee Report**

**David Williams, Jr.**

- D. Williams stated the Committee was presented with a quarterly monitoring report on SR and VPK programs. The Committee is taking staff's recommendation and presenting it to the Board to reduce the number of children participating in SR back to 25% which was set by the Board. The current number is 28.53% with 8,084 total in the program. No child will be disenrolled and they will reduce the number back down to 25% through attrition.
- A. Eckstein made a motion to move forward with the Program & Strategy Committee's recommendation to reduce the number of children participating in SR down to 25%.
  - C. Lederman seconded the motion.
  - Motion was unanimously passed.

#### **VII. Centro Mater West**

**Dr. Abilio Rodriguez**

- A. Rodriguez introduced himself and stated that Centro Mater West is concerned about the proposal before the Board regarding limiting the age of children in afterschool programs. His plea and he does not think it is limited only to Centro



Mater, is for the Board to take into consideration the needs of the family. Centro Mater West has a moral obligation to serve the needs of the entire community rather than limiting its service to only a segment of the population. He understands it is a very difficult decision for the Board to make.

<b>VIII. YMCA/YWCA</b>	<b>Alfred Sanchez</b>
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- A. Sanchez from the YMCA introduced himself and his counterpart from the YWCA, Eileen Melanie Simon. He appreciates the invitation by the Board to hear providers' concerns. The critical period in children's lives is not just 0-5 but their entire childhood. The YMCA/YWCA protect children and keep them secure and have done so for 30+ years but through the help of TCT and UW they have enriched the programs so they are not just babysitting but meeting developmental goals educationally, socially and physically. He knows it is a difficult choice, almost a "Sophie's choice" but is encouraged by D. Lawrence's Children's Movement and hopes the State provides proper funding for children throughout their entire years of development.
- O. Verdeja stated there are unintended consequences by eliminating certain age groups and the Board is clear on that and will not make decisions without at least knowing the repercussions. There will be more opportunities for other individuals and organizations to present during strategic planning.
- V. Vasquez stated she is a local attorney who does pro-bono work for children in the foster care system. Her sister has been on a CDS waiting list for three (3) years and has spent over 40% of her income (\$500) on quality care for her 3-year-old. She has been applying for assistance since her child was born but because she receives disability and is in school she has to apply as a regular member of the public and the list has now been closed for three (3) years even though she's called every six (6) months. While she strongly believes afterschool care is important, children under five (5) do not have the same options and where do their parents go when they do not have the resources but want accredited care? Parents are going to give up.
- D. Lawrence reiterated that the struggle cannot be between afterschool and early childhood. Both should receive honorable funding. It is set up now that both are competing for funding.
- H. Mogul stated that some of these frustrations can help guide us past our own mission and work. D. Lawrence's opportunity provides a way to move our citizenship beyond simply being a part of the Coalition.
- J. Colyer stated that you have to put your money where your mouth is. She hopes everyone will contribute to the Movement.

<b>IX. CEO Report</b>	<b>Evelio C. Torres, CEO</b>
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- Presentation is available on [www.elcmdm.org](http://www.elcmdm.org).

<b>X. Public Comments</b>	<b>Octavio A. Verdeja, Jr., Chair</b>
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- L. Carmona-Sanchez stated the AECE has been granted funding by the Women's Fund of Miami-Dade County to bring the Midwest Academy to Miami August 11<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup>. It is the premier organization conducting community-organizing training.

<b>XI. Adjourn</b>	<b>Octavio A. Verdeja, Jr., Chair</b>
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