



# Minutes

Board of Directors Meeting  
February 7, 2011; 8:00 am  
ELC Board Room

**Board Attendees:**

Octavio A. Verdeja Jr. (Chair); Yvonne T. Johnson, M.D. (Vice Chair); Yesenia Perkins (Treasurer); Gerald K. Schwartz, Esq. (Secretary); Modesto E. Abety; Magaly Abrahante, Ed.D. (attended via conference call); Daniel Armstrong, Ph.D. (attended via conference call); Roderick Beasley (attended via conference call); Connie Chapell; Jacqui B. Colyer; Gina Cortes-Suarez, Ed.D.; Alan Eckstein, Esq.; Shaleen Fagundo; P. Morgan Hill (attended via conference call); David Lawrence, Jr. (attended via conference call); The Hon. Cindy S. Lederman; Jane McQueen; Harve Mogul; Lucy C. Piñeiro, Esq. (attended via conference call); Ann Karen Weller, R.N., B.S.N.; Galia Pennekamp on behalf of David Williams, Jr.

**Staff Attendees:**

Evelio C. Torres, CEO; Leeana Pena; Angelo Parrino; Blythe Robinson; Tabatha Cullen; Jackye Russell; Mary Williams (attended via conference call); Fred Hicks; Milton Silvera; Melody Thelwell; Sandra Gonzalez; Nicole Bardin; Jose Hernandez; Aileen Martinez; Bethany Sands

**General Attendees:**

Santiago D. Echemendia (Board Counsel); Marisel Elias-Miranda, MDCPS; Linda Carmona-Sanchez, AECE; Edith Humes-Newbold, MDC; Ardene Estrada, MDC; Gail Gregg, FIU; Meagan Heller, UWCFFFF; Matty Loret De Mola, Learning Care Group; Evelyn Jordan, MDC; Steve Stezger, Steve's Academy; Lisa Pittman, Children's Trust; Marie Woodson, MDC; Joan Farr, MDC; Suzette Frasier, DCF; Rick Signori, MDC; Alison Gonzalez, FIU; Eryn Brizare, UWMD; Brian Shafer, YMCA; Irela Suarez, Watch Me Grow; Daisy Mendoza, Little Hands of America; Michele S. Kaplan, Dereux; Maritza Alonso, MDC; Phyllis Tynes Saunders, MDC; Alex Fagundo, Interamerican Learning Center

**I. Welcome and Introductions**

**Octavio A. Verdeja, Jr., Chair**

- Chairman Octavio A. Verdeja, Jr. called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone.
- Leeana Pena called roll and a quorum was established with 14 voting members.
- O. Verdeja stated they have back-to-back meetings. He asked they be efficient as possible. Public comments will be held until the very end of the meeting.
- G. Cortes stated the Strategic Planning Committee met last week and again on Friday. They are ready to proceed with today's exercise, which will prepare them for the 26<sup>th</sup>'s actual strategic planning retreat. After today's activity, they will get



detailed information from their consultant who will walk them through a little bit about process for them to be more informed for the retreat.

## **II. Approval of Minutes**

**Octavio A. Verdeja, Jr., Chair**

- O. Verdeja called for a motion to approve the December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2010 minutes.
  - H. Mogul moved to approve the minutes.
  - Motion seconded by A. Eckstein.
  - Motion unanimously passed.

## **III. Executive Committee Report**

**Octavio A. Verdeja, Jr., Chair**

- Motion to ratify the Executive Committee's decision approve Resolution 121610-01 to authorize the President and CEO to receive and execute the School Board of Miami-Dade County's Teenage Pregnancy Program (TAP) subsidized childcare services grant/contract.
  - A. Eckstein moved to approve Resolution 121610-01
  - Motion seconded by J. Colyer.
  - Motion unanimously passed.
- Motion to ratify the Executive Committee's decision to approve Resolution 121610-02 to authorize the President and CEO to negotiate and execute a sub-contract agreement for the Teenage Pregnancy Program (TAP) childcare services with Miami-Dade County.
  - A. Eckstein moved to approve Resolution 121610-02
  - Motion seconded by J. Colyer.
  - Motion unanimously passed.
- Motion to ratify the Executive Committee's decision approve Resolution 121610-03 to award RFP#ELCMDM2010-04 for Early Care and Education Providers Career Advising and Technical Assistance Services to the Children's Forum, Inc. to provide career advising and technical assistance to early care and education providers in Miami-Dade County.
  - A. Eckstein moved to approve Resolution 121610-03
  - Motion seconded by J. Colyer.
  - Motion unanimously passed.
- Motion to ratify the Executive Committee's decision to approve Resolution 121610-04 to award RFP#ELCMDM2010-01 for Enterprise Network Support and Hosting Services to provide support to the Coalition's technology infrastructure.
  - A. Eckstein moved to approve Resolution 121610-04.
  - Motion seconded by J. Colyer.
  - Motion unanimously passed.
- Motion to ratify the Executive Committee's decision to approve Resolution 121610-05 to award RFP#ELCMDM2010-02 for Provider Portal Hosting and Dashboard Hosting Services and Enhancement Services to provide support to the Coalition's technology infrastructure.
  - A. Eckstein moved to approve Resolution 121610-05.
  - Motion seconded by J. Colyer
  - Motion unanimously passed.



- Motion to ratify the Executive Committee's decision to approve Resolution 121610-06 to authorize the President and CEO to negotiate and execute a contract with WELS System Foundation, LLC.
  - A. Eckstein moved to approve Resolution 121610-06.
  - Motion seconded by J. Colyer
  - Motion unanimously passed.

#### **IV. Audit Committee Report**

**P. Morgan Hill**

- M. Hill stated she was very impressed at the Audit Committee meeting. The most impressive number she heard that day was the percentage of dollars that go to salaries. It is only at 4%, which is very impressive with the kind of budget that they run.
- O. Verdeja stated he was present at the meeting. He is very proud of the staff having clean audits for the past three years. They are doing an excellent job.
- O. Verdeja stated there is a letter to the editor included in the board packets.
- C. Lederman stated that she and her colleagues wrote a book about the guide to what they have been trying to do in the child welfare system in the past 10 years. There are three voices: an early intervention specialist, a well-known psychologist and herself. This is a guide to elevating the needs of maltreated infants and toddlers.
- E. Torres stated Chapter 5 is dedicated to early care and education. There is mention of the Coalition and a checklist that is provided to child welfare staff so they can help select quality childcare centers.
- E. Torres introduced Dr. Christine Hughes, the new Research Analyst for Quality Counts at ELC. She will be working very closely with the Universities and the researchers at the Trust to help ELC develop better policies and practices that are researched based.
- C. Hughes stated she is starting off with some assessment issues. They are looking at different assessments to measure classroom quality better. She is very excited to be part of this organization. She has worked with at-risk children in Miami-Dade through research with UM. She is excited to bring that research to what they do at the ELC.
- P. Hollingsworth commented on the newly released workforce study. The Children's Forum is the primary force behind The Quality Counts Career Center, funded by The Children's Trust as well as the Early Learning Coalition. The study is a result of two and a half years of work in Miami-Dade County. Their workforce is predominantly female. The average age is around 43. The workforce is largely Spanish speaking and of Hispanic origin. Unfortunately, they have relatively low education but they are working on that very diligently. 50% of the staff without a CDA at the start of Quality Counts now has their staff credential. 26% of their sites showed improvement in director credential. They either received a credential or got a received a higher level of credential. These increases speak directly to improve quality for children. 44% of the programs in Quality Counts have improved in their overall rating. 17% of the people enrolled in WAGES have also improved their educational level. They are very excited about what the first two and a half years have brought them. They have made a profound improvement.

**V. Finance Committee Report**

**Yesenia Perkins**

- Y. Perkins began with reviewing the financials. For School Readiness, they are at the halfway mark. They have a negative 3% variance, which should balance out at the end of the year. VPK is negative 7% variance, which should also be used by the end of the year.
- Motion to approve Resolution 013111-01 to authorize the President and CEO to release Request for Proposals (RFPs) for the services listed within the background section of this resolution.
  - C. Lederman moved to approve Resolution 013111-01.
  - Motion seconded by H. Mogul
  - Motion unanimously passed.
- Motion to approve Resolution 013111-02 to approve the Coalition's Second Budget Amendment for the fiscal year 2010-2011.
  - J. Colyer moved to approve Resolution 013111-02.
  - Motion seconded by A. Eckstein
  - Motion unanimously passed.
- Y. Perkins reviewed the snapshots for Miami-Dade County. The total children paid are 25,151, which is a net decrease of 255 from the previous month. The ready pool is 17,948 as of January 18. For VPK, they have 20,933 children served. For Monroe, there are 721 children served as of December. They have no waitlist. For VPK, there are 470 served.

**VI. Program & Strategy Committee Report**

**David Williams, Jr.  
The Hon. Cindy S. Lederman**

- C. Lederman stated they voted to increase the membership of the Committee. They tabled another issue, which was determining how many Class 1 and Class 2 violations would jeopardize your relationship with the ELC. It was tabled because it was a complex issue, which they needed more input from DCF on. Perhaps next month they will have a recommendation on that.
- M. Alonso stated their target of 26, 9000 has been surpassed by the most recent managed enrollment initiative. While they are higher, they are not that concerned because every week the average drop of children is about 250 children. The January expenditures will be significant. As soon as they close the month, they will know how much that number translates into dollars. The target number of 26,000 is a reference number because they need to consider the expenditures. There are different variables that figure into that formula. Once those numbers are in, they will be in a better position to predict for the remainder of the fiscal year.
- P. Tynes-Saunders stated they are working very hard to maintain the target that has been set. The job of trying to maintain that target is not an exact science. They rely on historical data to get them through and stay on the target. They will do their best to come within budget and they know it will be their responsibility if they exceed that. They continue to monitor it on a daily basis.



- E. Torres stated the County ended up enrolling over 2700 children in the School Readiness program. As of this morning they are at 28,168. Through attrition they will reach the target within a short time.

## VII. CEO Report

Evelio C. Torres

- CEO Report is available on [www.elcmdm.org](http://www.elcmdm.org).
- J. Colyer asked for an 8 million dollar shortfall, how many children would be affected?
- E. Torres stated about 2500 children. If that happens, it will be more than just children that will be affected. They will have to cut costs across the board and reduce costs at all levels. The governor releases the budget today so then they will have a better idea.
- E. Torres stated for VPK the request is for more dollars to increase the base student allocation. They are just trying to keep what they have plus a little bit extra for the additional children coming into the program. This is what they have been doing every single year. They are advocating besides what the agency is doing across the state to increase the base student allocation for VPK. That would be their preference but that is a challenge also.
- The Board approved outcomes that will be discussed at the strategic planning meeting are: child development; language and literacy; kindergarten readiness; program quality; third grade reading and math.
- M. Abety asked if this board should take a position on where childcare and other early learning programs might end up within the governor's reorganization efforts. The governor is talking about consolidating departments and reorganizing the state. It seems like a good time to take a stand on a position.
- O. Verdeja stated they could take a look at that later today at their strategic planning meeting.
- C. Lederman stated this issue was discussed at the childcare licensing taskforce. While there was a push from many of them to move this to the Office of Early Learning and many of them wanted it to move to Department of Education. They discussed it and didn't come to a consensus, but it is a great idea.
- E. Torres stated there are a lot of discussions already taking place. It is important that they get involved in that discussion early on to avoid a more fragmented system than what they have now.
- J. Colyer stated that there is like 5 different agencies trying to work together to make it all happen. Providers have all these different entities coming into their business.
- S. Fagundo commented on the enrollment period. She thinks overall they are so thankful they had this opportunity to enroll more families. It was nice to see families that have been paying privately for years and are just now getting their



CDS. A couple of other things that may have helped the situation at the MLK center. They heard about open enrollment first from families coming into the center. That is one area that they could help parents a little bit better if providers knew beforehand. The County did a great job of being responsive to families that did contact them. Another thing they heard from some families, was that even though there was a big push for enrollment, many did not find out until after the fact that there was no openings for school age children. If families knew that ahead of time, they could have been able to service the children they were targeting a little bit better had they not had the children they are not able to serve in that same pool. That is just a little bit of feedback they heard from the community.

- O. Verdeja stated they had a long conversation at the Finance Committee meeting on the MLK Center and the chaos that happened there.
- P. Tynes-Saunders spoke at length about what the County did. It was good to hear that from the County's perspective that they took care of matters as best as possible and didn't let the situation get worse.
- P. Tynes-Saunders stated in response to the comments just made, the Board set a policy last year that it would only enroll zero-five. That is something they do not control as a grantee. E. Torres clarified that the directive was because they want to maintain at 25% and they are currently at 29%. So it is just until it drops back down to 25%. P. Tynes-Saunders stated that never in the 30 years of her human services delivery has she witnessed such desperation from people needing care. Everyone assisting felt the aura from desperation from the crowd. If they take anything away from that event: is that more money needs to be given for the care of their children. They need to have a ground swell of support for that effort if the governor does not allocate more money towards this. Normally, they see a lot of women and children. However, they saw a lot of men that did not fit the profile of children needing care. Everyone had the opportunity to seek the service. They will be sending information to those who were not able to come into the building to be processed relative to what they need to do. They enrolled over 362 children on that Saturday. By 9:30 they had screened 150. Normally they have this process every year. They have reviewed their processes and will not be conducting that type of event for open enrollment. It will be on a more managed basis.

#### **VIII. Public Comments**

**Octavio A. Verdeja, Jr., Chair**

- L. Carmona-Sanchez commented that she went visit MLK when the enrollment initiative took place. There were a lot of desperate parents. Perhaps this is an opportunity to look at using providers to streamline the process. With technology the way it is today, it is very possible to emulate systems where they could fill out preliminary application and scan necessary eligibility forms and send them to eligibility offices. Many of these parents are already at their centers and paying for care and may be eligible for subsidized care once an opening is available. She would like to make that suggestion to think about ways to partner more effectively and streamline the process.
- A. Fagundo from the InterAmerican Learning Center stated that some things look good on paper. But when it is applied to a real life setting, it can't be executed.



He is referring to the recommendation for the background screenings. From his understanding and employee needs to have all of their background screenings before being hired by a center. In reality as a center, how is he supposed to hire an employee that has to have their FBI, State and Local background screenings before entering his center? FBI sometimes takes 3 months just to get the paperwork. If he is supposed to hire a qualified teacher that has it already, but how is that qualified teacher supposed to have that paper? She must have known 3 months ago that she needed that job and then he could hire her. If she were qualified today, he would have to turn her down for not having paperwork.

- G. Schwartz asked how that works. It appears to be a problem.
- J. Colyer stated that is not the case. New legislation was passed that requires background screenings for everyone. It does not take three months to get a background screening. Most times you can get it done online and most times in 72 hours. It does not take 3 months. It may have taken that in the past. But now with live scan it is really fast.

**IX. Adjourn**

**Octavio A. Verdeja, Jr., Chair**