



# Minutes

Board of Directors Meeting  
March 7, 2011; 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); Modesto E. Abety; Marisel Elias Miranda on behalf of Magaly Abrahante, Ed.D; Daniel Armstrong, Ph.D.; Roderick Beasley; Connie Chapell; Gina Cortes-Suarez, Ed.D.; Alan Eckstein, Esq. (attended via conference call); Shaleen Fagundo; David Lawrence, Jr.; The Hon. Cindy S. Lederman; Jane McQueen; Harve Mogul; Lucy C. Piñeiro, Esq.; Ann Karen Weller, R.N., B.S.N.; David Williams (attended via conference call)

**Board Absentees:** Yesenia Perkins (Treasurer); P. Morgan Hill; Jacqui B. Colyer

**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

**General Attendees:** Santiago D. Echemendia (Board Counsel); Doug Blomberg, Wesley House (attended via conference call); Gail P. Gregg, FIU; Magda DeMauro, Get Smart Kids Academy; Eryn Prizur, UWMD; Ligia Estrada, Grace Lutheran; Maria Reyes, Grace Lutheran; Juanita Walker, Sheyes Of Miami; Claudia Uribe Orrett, Cherry Blossom; Suzette Frasier, DCF; Linda Carmona Sanchez, AECE; Eve Miranda, Tiny Tykes; Paula Moujalli, United Way; Armando Guerra, AECE; Jackie Perdomo, La Petite Academy; Bill De La Sierra, Kidsworks; Marla Alpizar, City of Hialeah; Steve Steiger, Steve's Academy; Matty Loret De Mola, Learning Care Group; Alfred Sanchez, YMCA; Marcia C. Rodriguez, Just Kids Centers; J. Leinfelder, The Children's Trust; Rolanda Scott, Head Start; Yaneiris Cepeda, Miss Carusi Learning; Isabel G. Perez, Just Kids; Lynne Katz, UM; Rachel Grant, HYCCF; Maria Elena Delgado, Victoria's Playhouse; Brian Sheaffer, YMCA; Jennifer Leon, Kids Kollege; Maria Napoles, Kids Kollege; Jorge Napoles, Kids Kollege; Marie Napoles, Kids Kollege; Gladys R. Montes, UW; Roxana Besu, La Petite Academy; Tania Diaz, Little Promises; Ardene Estrada, Miami-Dade; Meagan Helln, UW; Lourdes Ramos, Little Promises; Carmen M. Morrino, Miami-Dade; Phyllis Tynes-Saunders, Miami-Dade; Maritza Alonso, Miami-Dade; Dr. Howard Piper, Miami-Dade

## I. Welcome and Introductions

Octavio A. Verdeja, Jr., Chair

- Chairman Octavio A. Verdeja, Jr. called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone.



- Leana Pena called roll and a quorum was established with 15 voting members.

## II. Approval of Minutes

Octavio A. Verdeja, Jr., Chair

- O. Verdeja called for a motion to approve the February 7, 2011 minutes.
  - Jane McQueen moved to approve the minutes.
  - Motion seconded by Harve Mogul.
  - Motion unanimously passed.
- O. Verdeja thanked G. Cortes-Suarez for leading the Strategic Planning and stated the five (5) strategic planning goals: 1) serve the neediest children and improve the outcomes for children in the most distressed communities; 2) offer effective and appropriate finance continuum of care for the youngest children; 3) educate all - conduct a campaign to educate all families and children about the benefits of early learning; 4) provide standards - establish high-quality standards to support positive outcomes for children; and 5) funding - pursue public and private funding.
- David Lawrence stated that he met with the President of the United States and 15 others to discuss education, children with special needs and the power of early investment.
- O. Verdeja stated that L. Pena has Conflict of Interest forms and to see her to fill them out.

## III. Providers Services Committee Report

Gina Cortes-Suarez, Ed.D.

- Gina Cortes-Suarez began by stating the Provider Services Committee met with the Monroe Advisors Committee in Islamorada. Providers in the Upper Keys expressed difficulty in getting background checks on their employees. Wesley House said it will take care of it. There was another discussion regarding the possible mandate for all providers to get licensed. Some Monroe providers said there is difficulty meeting the costs; they are in rental spaces and landlords are not willing to do remodeling and renovations. A couple of announcements included a Valentine's Day gala which raises funds for Wesley House and A. Eckstein said he will be giving Monroe providers a legislative advocacy training. It was a good meeting.
- Blythe Robinson discussed the visit from Wes Moore and his book, The Other Wes Moore, about a young man who had an interesting upbringing and another man with the same name who had a very different life experience. One is now a remarkable young leader and the other is serving life in prison for murder. It chronicles both their lives over time and highlights the important work the ELC can do to serve the young people in our community.

## IV. Program & Strategy Committee Report

David Williams Jr.  
The Hon. Cindy S. Lederman

- Cindy Lederman stated the Program Committee had two full meetings debating the Child Safety and Licensing policy and came up with this suggestion-- that a suspension or discipline can result after a program receives one Class 1 licensing violation during a 12-month period. The suspension can be up to a year. In addition if a provider receives three Class 2 licensing violations during a 12-month period a suspension can be up to



six months. When the decision is made the many different considerations and factors will be taken into account and that is seen on the second licensing amended language. The second item was to approve the 2011 sliding scale fee for Dade and Monroe.

- Evelio Torres stated the revised policy which has been approved by the Program Committee begins on page 54.
- Lucy Piñeiro stated her amendment begins on page 57 highlighted in yellow. It does not restrict the ELC from moving forward but puts providers on notice, clarifies more what is going to be considered and goes a bit more to the intent. The language is directly taken from F.S. 402310.
- Motion to approve the amendment.
  - D. Lawrence moved to approve the amendment.
  - Motion seconded by Gerald Schwartz.
  - Motion unanimously passed.
- E. Torres stated there is another policy which he has received some calls about that requires providers to become licensed and some of the municipalities are concerned and have come to the Program Committee to discuss the requirement. Summer and afterschool programs at the parks are not going to be able to get licensed so it will affect the municipalities but the Coalition is hearing from licensed child care providers that they do not see that as a concern because they have sufficient space in their programs to absorb any children that may not be able to attend the municipalities' programs. It is actually two municipalities that have gotten in touch with the ELC.
- D. Lawrence stated he believed one was the mayor of Hialeah who was concerned about the policy and asked E. Torres to talk about that and his own sense of what he thinks should be done now.
- E. Torres said the mayor of Hialeah was concerned for some of the families that currently place their children in afterschool and summer programs and will no longer be able to do so because the city is not going to be able to go through with the licensure. The mayor was more concerned about the families and how they will be affected than the revenue the city will lose which in reality is not that much because they have so few children in the School Readiness program. The Program Committee decided there should be one policy that applies across the board to everyone. There is an exemption already for the Miami-Dade County Public Schools and the general feeling is that if the ELC continues to make exemptions it always alienates one group and creates more difficulty than what it solves.
- D. Lawrence inquired about the other municipality.
- E. Torres replied it was North Miami. The Program Committee has deliberated long and hard on this issue and their recommendation for one rule that applies across the board to everyone is a good one.
- D. Lawrence inquired if these were the only two municipalities that provide these programs.
- E. Torres responded that there are a number of other municipalities in the community and they have all been sent a letter letting them know of the requirement.



- E. Torres stated the policy is already in effect.
- E. Torres stated the sliding fee scale for all families reads a higher threshold for families to qualify for the School Readiness program. The option this board has, not necessarily today, is to increase the parent co-pay. That is always an option but there has been some hesitation to do this because of the economy and \$4 a day makes a big difference to families living below the federal poverty level.
- D. Lawrence asked about the poverty level.
- Jackye Russell stated that to qualify for the School Readiness program families had to be at or below 150% of the federal poverty level. Once they are in they can stay in the program at or below 200% of the federal poverty level. What has changed is the amount that family can make in a year and on the qualifying.
- Motion to approve the sliding fee scale.
  - C. Lederman moved to approve the sliding fee scale.
  - Motion seconded by Yvonne Johnson.
  - Motion unanimously passed.

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

**Yesenia Perkins**

- Angelo Parrino reviewed the financial statements and began with the statement of revenue over expenditures. The total budget is a negative 4 variance which is fine as far as the budget goes. There is 46 percent of the budget remaining and the target is 42 percent so there is a little bit of a surplus right now. The total budget for School Readiness is the same 4 percent. VPK is also at 4 percent and the final section shows the other three major funds: The Children's Trust for Quality Counts, DCF for the Refugee program, and the School Board for the Teen Parent program. There is a 13 percent variance because the ELC is on a different fiscal year and those dollars overlap.
- A. Parrino stated Resolution 030211-01's fiscal impact is an amount not to exceed \$100,000 and the funding source is the School Board of Miami-Dade County through the TAPP contract.
- E. Torres added as part of the work with the TAPP contract the Coalition now requires that all children participating in TAPP be in accredited centers; this is going to enhance the program. If the Coalition contracts with the Linda Ray Intervention Center, with their particular expertise they will work directly with parents and children to provide them with the types of support they need.
- E. Torres invited Dr. Lynn Katz to say a few words about her work with teenage parents.
- L. Katz stated that she works with teen parents both at the Linda Ray Center in the early intervention program and with them as part of the Tough Parents Psychotherapy program for the juvenile courts. The eight early intervention specialists through TAPP will make ongoing personal contact, visit the classroom teachers where the parents' children are enrolled, provide developmental information, and give a better understanding of who teen parents are to the teachers in the classroom.



- E. Torres stated that the program has changed from what was essentially child care slots for children and turned it into a high-quality program with supports.
- Motion to approve Resolution 030211-01 to authorize the President and CEO to negotiate and execute a contract with the University of Miami's Linda Ray Intervention Center to provide coaching, mentoring and educational services to teenage parents and their children enrolled within the TAP program.
  - Harve Mogul moved to approve Resolution 030211-01.
  - Motion seconded by Y. Johnson.
  - D. Armstrong recused himself.
  - Motion was unanimously passed.
- A. Parrino reviewed the snapshots. The school-age percentage is slowly coming down; it was at 29 percent and is now down to 27 percent with a directive to 25 percent. It is not as fast as they would like but it is coming down. Monroe County's actual paid is 730 children. The VPK numbers are also shown. There is no waitlist and they are working to maintain it at zero. The final item is regarding audits received from both Miami-Dade County and Wesley House.
- E. Torres discussed Miami-Dade County's own audit in which they contracted with KPMG. There were a number of qualified opinions and significant findings not only having to do with the funding received from the ELC but also from some of the County's other state and federal funding sources. E. Torres stated he wrote a letter to the County Manager requesting their corrective action plan. A conference call was held with County staff and they assured the Coalition that all of the concerns have already been addressed and appropriate processes have been put in place to make sure there are no recurrences. Since this was mid-way through the year there may be one other audit where some of these issues may come up. Dr. Howard Piper representing the County Manager is present and wanted to say a few words.
- H. Piper stated he wanted to reassure the Board that action was taken and appropriate procedures have been put in place and they do not expect any reoccurrences.
- E. Torres stated that when the findings were reviewed at the Finance Committee they were very concerned; this was not a good audit. There is concern about the impact it may have on the funding the Coalition receives from the state and federal government. The County will provide the Coalition with their corrective action plan this week and it will be forwarded to AWI as they begin an audit also with KPMG. The Coalition wanted to ensure that all of the concerns were addressed prior to the commencement of AWI's audit.
- O. Verdeja added that the Finance Committee decided the Coalition's own internal auditors would also check to see that the corrective actions are put into place.
- E. Torres stated in solving the financials the surplus may actually change because the enrollment is now at 29,000 children. When the Coalition receives Miami-Dade County's February invoice the Coalition will probably start forecasting a deficit. There are three forecasting models and there is a difference of opinion. The County is forecasting a bit of a surplus while the Coalition is forecasting a



significant deficit. The numbers remain the same through the end of the fiscal year; the difference has to do with attrition. The Coalition is not forecasting the same level attrition the County is forecasting. While the County is forecasting 400 drops every month the ELC is not seeing that attrition at all. The Coalition's target was 26,900 children for the fiscal year and it is currently at 29,000. Right now it is too early to tell but a better and more accurate report will be presented at the next Board meeting.

<b>VI. VPK Provider Kindergarten Readiness Rate Overview</b>
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<b>Stuart Greenberg FL DOE</b>
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- Please refer to [www.elcmdm.org](http://www.elcmdm.org) for presentation.
- D. Lawrence stated that there is evidence everywhere that says quality makes a significant difference. There is an assumption that public school providers may have some quality advantages because they use significantly credentialed people but that is not known until information is given on private and faith-based providers.
- E. Torres stated that as FLDOE is developing quality standards, because VPK is provided by a number of different providers throughout the State (85 percent are private and faith-based providers) the right type of supports need to be in place and do not currently exist in VPK.

<b>VII. CEO Report</b>
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<b>Evelio C. Torres</b>
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- Please refer to [www.elcmdm.org](http://www.elcmdm.org) for presentation.

<b>VIII. Public Comments</b>
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<b>Octavio A. Verdeja, Jr., Chair</b>
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- M. Alquizar, Director of Education and Community Services for the City of Hialeah, thanked D. Lawrence and E. Torres for referencing the conversations that occurred. She would like to ask for more consideration for the fact that the City has 700 children in afterschool and summer programs. The City charges very low fees to its residents and provide quality programs while urging other governmental and private partnerships to help make services available and easy for parents. She would like to ask the Board to reconsider the one rule that applies to all.
- M. Delgado stated in reference to the VPK presentation that if 85 percent of providers are private the Board needs to know about the importance of funding. Providers care about quality but staff with credentials requires funding. If 85 percent are private providers then most if not all do not have funds to afford teachers with credentials if they are being paid at a rate of \$4.79 for VPK. Funding is important to acquire quality.
- L. Carmona Sanchez from the AECE thanked the Board for allowing the public to participate in the Strategic Planning meeting. It is important for the public to see the earnest effort in discussing several initiatives that would improve outcomes for children but the 800-pound gorilla in the room needs to be pointed out; there were very few Board members sitting at the table discussing reimbursement rates for providers. Please revisit that again more carefully. Also, regarding the parent-fee schedule--as the eligibility threshold is increased for parents to become eligible for care that will also



increase the waiting list which is huge as it is. It will also affect the parent-fee scale and co-payment scale. The co-payment is in the Coalition's hands to determine. If providers are asked to do more and the Coalition is asked to do more, then parents need to do more. Everything is more expensive. Finally for S. Greenberg and the Board to consider: if OEL should move completely over to the DOE providers should be able to access some of the resources that are readily available to public schools like Title I money, ESE money and extra supports.

- B. De La Sierra from Kidsworks U.S.A. stated that he hopes the Coalition focuses on whether a school is a good one or just a school that really does not care and deserves to be shut down. He is all for quality but does not want to see good schools get shut down because someone that a provider has no control over makes a mistake.

**IX. Adjourn**

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

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