



Board of Directors Meeting  
March 5, 2012; 8:00 a.m.  
ELC Board Room

**Board Attendees:** Octavio A. Verdeja, Jr. (Chair); Modesto E. Abety-Gutierrez; Magaly Abrahante; Daniel Armstrong, Ph.D. (Treasurer); Yolando Borroto; Gina Cortes-Suarez, Ed.D.; Alan Eckstein, Esq.; Shaleen Fagundo; Yvonne Johnson, M.D.; David Lawrence, Jr.; The Hon. Cindy S. Lederman (Vice Chair); Jane McQueen; Harve Mogul; Yesenia Perkins; Lucy C. Pineiro, Esq.; Gerald K. Schwartz, Esq. (Secretary); Ann Karen Weller (R.N., B.S.N.); David William, Jr.; Santiago Echemendia (Board Attorney)

**Board Absentees:** Theresa Axford; Rick Beasley; Esther Jacobo; Commissioner Barbara Jordan; Lisa Martinez

**Staff Attendees:** Evelio Torres (President/CEO); Blythe Robinson; Angelo Parrino; Ana Rodriguez; Christina Vila; Pamela Hollingsworth; Nicole Lopez-Bardin; Fred Hicks; Carol Brogan; Eileen Martinez; Bethany Sands; Humberto Franquiz; Sandra Gonzalez; Jackye Russell; Mercy Castiglione; Georgia Thompson; Oderay Veliz; Melody Thelwell; Fiorella Altare; Yasmin Wong-Peraza; Natalia Delgado; Mary Williams, (via conf. call); ELC Monroe (attended via conference); Milton Silvera

**General Attendees:** Beth Davis, Kids for Kids Academy; Gail Gregg, Florida International University; Rochelle V. Borland; Ana Sejeck, Florida International University; Juliette Bernard, Miami-Dade County; Evelyn Jordan, Miami-Dade County; Rick Signori, Miami-Dade County; Linda Carmona, AECE; William de la Sierra, Kidworks USA; Meagan Heller, United Way Miami-Dade; Brian Sheaffer, YMCA; Arlene Estrada, Miami-Dade County; Wendy Salomon, Family Central; Lisa Pittman, The Children's Trust; Rolanda Scott, HeadStart; Phyllis Saunders, Miami-Dade County

<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.
- Ana Rodriguez called roll and a quorum was established with fourteen (14) voting members.



- O. Verdeja congratulated Dr. Cortes-Suarez on the renaming of the Miami Dade College pre-school lab. The official new name is the Exploration Station. The school is the only science technology engineering mathematics (STEM) focused pre-school in Miami-Dade County. The center houses 100 children from ages 1 to pre-kinder and serves as a demonstration site for students pursuing degrees in childhood education.
- O. Verdeja mentioned Alan Eckstein who was honored as ELC's volunteer of the year at a community foundation of the Florida Keys Annual Unsung Heroes.

## II. Approval of Minutes

Octavio A. Verdeja, Jr., Chair

- O. Verdeja called for the approval of the meeting minutes from 12/05/12.
  - Motion was unanimously passed.

## III. Kids for Kids Academy

Beth Davis

- B. Davis is here to give us a brief PowerPoint presentation. As an elementary science teacher for 17 years, she runs a great base program where she teaches kids about science, math and the environment. The school library has 450 different titles; the school has a vegetable garden, different kinds of animals and the kids do hands-on experiments.

## IV. Read to Learn

Modesto E. Abety-Gutierrez

- M. Abety-Gutierrez stated that he is very proud of the partnership with the Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe; The United Way; The Children's Movement; Miami-Dade College and a host of other partners to launch our "Read to Learn" campaign. It began in September with 180 people coming together.

The issue is that children should be learning to read by third grade, and then in third grade they need to make that transition so that they are reading to learn. Kids who do not make the transition in the third grade to the fourth grade, 88% of them do not graduate from high school.

This is to prepare all children to read at grade level by the 3rd grade. It involves 4 different strategies in the area of school readiness. We are looking at preparing kids by giving them the foundation of early literacy; phonetic awareness; really getting them ready to enter school.

It involves preparing parents and getting them to read to their children and engage them in their children's education.

Then it moves to getting kids ready during the summer, kids who are in Pre-K or Kindergarten, kids who transition in the summer from kindergarten to first grade, those that are low-income kids are generally 6 months behind their middle class cohorts. Those kids who have fewer opportunities for summer programs will fall another three months behind. And so, at the end of one year as they transition into a new grade, they



are one year behind. Getting quality summer programs for kids who are 5-8 years old becomes very important for us.

As part of this effort, we have launched a book club for all three-year-olds in collaboration with the Early Learning Coalition and the Family Learning Partnership. All kids who sign up for the Book Club will receive one book a month. It will come with instructions. So the first book that comes out this month, "Big Dog, Little Dog", comes with tips for the family in reading the book to really engaging parents in reading the book and what kind of activities you can do around the theme of the book.

The Book Club has launched for three-year-olds. We hope that businesses and others will help support the book club, but we are also working with the United Way and The Children's Movement to create an army of volunteers that will come out and read in child care centers and provide reading coaches to children Pre-K to third grade. And what we are looking for is an 8-year campaign that increases the number of children both ready for school and reading at grade level by 3rd grade.

We hope to make an impact with children, parents, schools, child care faculties to really get all of our kids reading. If we can make a difference in this one indicator, we can turn around a lot of bad things that happen to kids.

We are going to focus the campaign on those schools that have the biggest problem with 3rd grade reading. We know where they are; the data is very clear. We are going to attempt to make a difference in those schools first and focus on the neighborhoods that have the greatest needs.

#### **IV. Early Literacy Initiative**

**David Lawrence Jr.**

- D. Lawrence referred back to M. Abety-Gutierrez's conversation regarding the Read to Learn campaign stating that it's a national problem not just a problem in Miami-Dade and it's something that has the attention of lots of people in this County. There is a Statewide effort going on with this same subject.

D. Lawrence mentioned Carol Jenkins Barnett who runs the Publix Supermarket Charities and has long time been identified more than a quarter of a century with the United Way and Success by Six. Publix, which has thousands of stores in the South East, it's single biggest market happens to be in Miami-Dade. Carol Barnett has long been interested in the subject of Early Childhood; Early Learning; Early Literacy and she and her husband have put up personal resources, not Publix resources, over the next three years to do something with The Children's Movement and Women's Leadership Council.

In Lakeland, Publix is an enormous support of the United Way and in other counties as well. We will launch this year in 10 communities in conjunction with the United Way, Woman's Leadership Council, Florida Library Associations, Early Learning Coalitions and those counties that have Children Services Councils, we will launch an initiative over the next three years for starters that will bring volunteers of the nature Mo has talked about. This is a very similar process and very much aligned with what Modesto has already



said. Everyone will have to go through training; everyone will have to go through a Level 2 background check. Everyone will go through the same computer portal and everyone will have to contribute a minimum of 25 hours and the ratio will be one adult to three children.

The vision is 25 one-hour sessions. We need to expect that all children with disabilities or without can reach their potential. Understanding that the potential of one child will be different from the other. All of this is a nationally important effort. I really worry about the future of this country. It is a stunning number of people who are unable to compete and you can see it at an early age. If we are to ever have a shot, it has to be by the end of third grade. What Modesto didn't tell you is that in 10<sup>th</sup> grade in Florida, about 60% of children cannot read at grade level. We need to catch kids much earlier.

#### IV. Finance Committee Report

Octavio A. Verdeja, Jr.

- D. Armstrong reviewed the financial statements.
- Motion to approve Resolution 022312-01 authorizing the President and CEO to execute the first amendment to contract C11-119 with the Children's Forum, Inc. to provide an additional career advisor position that would service early care and education providers enrolled in the Quality Counts Program. The amendment requests an additional \$43,000.00 for a new total amount not to exceed \$211,715.00, subject to approval for legal sufficiency and form.
  - C. Lederman moved to approve the motion.
  - Motion was seconded by H. Mogul.
  - Motion was unanimously passed with Modesto Abety-Gutierrez's recusal
- Motion to approve Resolution 022312-02 authorizing the President and CEO to receive and execute the first amendment to the Department of Children and Families (DCF) refugee subsidized childcare services grant/contract. This amendment adds an additional \$379,000.00 for a new total amount not to exceed \$1,895,000.00, subject to approval for legal sufficiency and form.
  - C. Lederman moved to approve the motion.
  - Motion was seconded by Y. Johnson.
  - Motion unanimously passed with Esther Jacobo's recusal



- Motion to approve Resolution 022312-03 approval of budget amendment #2 increasing the approved annual budget for fiscal year 2011-2012 of \$172,950,778.00 by \$352,262.00 for a new budget total of \$173,303,040.00.
  - Y. Perkins moved to approve the motion.
  - Motion was seconded by C. Lederman.
  - Motion unanimously passed

<b>VI. Enrollment Priorities</b>	<b>Jackye Russell</b>
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- J. Russell commented on Evelio's presentation of the Auditor General's report. A finding on the report was that we as a Coalition are out of compliance with the mandates of Chapter 411 in terms of our enrollment priorities and how we select children to enroll them from the waitlist. We need the Board to make a determination about approving a new policy in order to bring us into alignment with Chapter 411. What I've done is that I've provided a matrix that shows a breakdown of what the priorities mandates are in Chapter 411 and what our current policy is.

J. Russell reviewed on page 60 the Statute Requirements and the ELC Policy. On the left hand side are the requirements for Chapter 411 and on the right hand side is what the ELC's current policy mandates us to do in terms of enrollment priorities.

E. Torres stated that the motion should be contingent upon getting policy guidance from the Office of Early Learning as to whether we should change now or wait until July 1<sup>st</sup>.

H. Mogul asked about the consequences to the Coalition.

E. Torres said that we would be out of compliance with the interpretation of the State Statute and under the law, a Coalition who is out of compliance and the OEL, they could actually pull the funds from the Coalition that is substantially out of compliance. This is what is in writing. What will actually happen, we don't know.

Also, we had a Bill in this session that the Executive Branch would have the ability to remove Board Members, Board Chair and Executive Directors from the Coalitions. That did not actually make it into the Bill, but it was in a bill this session.

- D. Lawrence moved to approve the motion.
- Motion was seconded by Y. Johnson.
- Motion was passed with M. Abety-Gutierrez opposing.



## VII. CEO Report

Evelio C. Torres, CEO

- E. Torres gave the Board a Legislative update that included the following:

March 31, 2012 is the deadline for Probationary VPK Providers to acknowledge probationary status on VPK Readiness Rate website.

The State Board of Education voted to set the minimum VPK Provider Readiness Rate at 70%.

Florida Statutes 1002.69 states that a private prekindergarten provider or public school that remains on probation for 2 consecutive years or more can request an exemption from being determined ineligible to deliver the VPK Education Program and receive State funds for the program.

VPK Good Cause Exemption: Each one must be granted a good cause exemption; Learning Gains; Health and Safety Requirements; Individual Circumstances; adhere to an approved provider improvement plan.

This is the first time Monroe County will have Providers under probation.

The number of Coalitions remains at 31. Because the spending cap was changed, some Coalitions might not have a choice but to merge. There is a two-year waiver process to avoid the mergers for Coalitions that are not able to meet the new spending caps.

New eligibility guidelines are established. It focuses on birth to five; siblings allowed after serving children in other categories; children currently in care will be grandfathered in so that no school-agers are disenrolled.

Statewide Provider Rates with a 3-year phase established by OEL; Parent fees at 10%.

Quality is defined in Statute; definitions are broad; may include most if not all of QRIS activities. There is little or no support for quality activities funded with dollars appropriated by the State. 4% is what the State expects us to spend.

New spending cap of 18% reduces administrative expenses from 5% to 4% and the rest to be used for quality and non-direct expenses.

On Early Learning Information Systems, OEL has fallen behind and we still don't have a system. Once the system is implemented, we will be saving a lot of money. This is for the Coalitions that contract services. Also, contracts will be reduced.

Next slide is on Savings and Reinvestments: Reinvestments is to reduce the waitlist.

Bottom line on the legislative update is to Reduce provider payment rates; Reduce Gold Seal reimbursement rates; Reduce investments in childcare quality; Increase parent co-pay; Increase number of children served in any type of legally operating childcare setting and decrease local control.



**VIII. Public Comments**

**Octavio A. Verdeja, Jr.**

- L. Carmona stated that Miami-Dade County children, families and childcare providers are clearly under attack in Tallahassee right now. As Modesto said, we need to look at it in all perspectives and strategize effectively for what we are going to do in the future.

Mr. Martinez, the Vice Chair of the Board of Education, invited providers to come and speak, present and perform a budget to understand the impact of their underfunding services. 45% of the Providers will be on probation. On probation has some serious consequences, how can we prove that we can still meet the standards. If the student is a VPK student, there is a home language survey, which we don't have on the private sector side.

L. Carmona requested that the Early Learning Coalition work with Providers in developing a form they can all use. There are no accommodations on the testing protocol at all. Asked for suggestions to start attacking this strategically.

L. Carmona also spoke about fair rates/high-end private providers. Raise the market rate in our community.

Frank from the YMCA stated that we'll be affected by a lot of this, on our side. We will do our part and take our responsibility to make sure that.....Thanked the Coalition on behalf of the YMCA.

No other public comments made.

**IX. Adjourn**

**Octavio A. Verdeja, Jr.**