



Minutes

Program Policy & Strategy Committee Meeting
January 25, 2011; 3:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.
Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe
Board Room
2555 Ponce De Leon Blvd Suite 500
Coral Gables, FL 33134

Committee Attendees: David Williams, Jr.; The Hon. Cindy Lederman; Shaleen Fagundo; Ramiro Moreno (via conference call); Lucy Piñeiro; Elizabeth Bezos; Roderick Beasley; Modesto Abety; Jacqui Colyer

Staff Attendees: Evelio Torres (CEO); Blythe Robinson; Tabatha Cullen, Angelo Parrino; Jackye Russell; Sandra Gonzalez; Mary Williams (via conference call); Kristina Alonso; Leana Pena; Milton Silvera

General Attendees: Linda Carmona (AECE); Edith Humes-Newbold (Miami-Dade County); Maritza Alonso (Miami-Dade County); San Juanita de la Cruz for Marisel Elias-Miranda (Miami-Dade County Public Schools); Suzette Frazier (Department of Children and Families); Evelyn Jordan (Miami-Dade County)

I. Welcome and Introductions

- D. Williams, Jr. welcomed the committee, staff and attendees.
- A quorum was established with seven (7) voting members.

II. Approval of Agenda

- C. Lederman moved to approve the January 25, 2011 agenda.
- R. Beasley seconded the motion.
- Motion was unanimously passed.

III. Approval of November 30th Minutes

- C. Lederman moved to approve the November 30, 2010 minutes.
- S. Fagundo seconded the motion.
- Motion was unanimously passed.

IV. CEO Update

- E. Torres stated that a legislative budget request submitted by the Agency for Workforce Innovation (AWI) to try to restore some of the funding that would be lost starting July 1st.
 - \$29 million dollars were made up of ARRA dollars which were received when our base allocation was reduced. These were not additional dollars.
 - There is a request from AWI for approximately \$45 million dollars in general revenue. These are essentially the dollars necessary to restore each coalition's School Readiness allocation to last year's level; not even to the level of three years ago.



- We also have a request for an additional \$4.8 million dollars for the VPK program because continued growth in the program is expected. The total request for VPK is close to \$80 million dollars.
- There was also a discussion that took place at a meeting for the Transportation and Economic Development Committee which covered a preliminary proposal of a reduction of approximately \$20 million dollars in general revenue. If we see a reduction of \$20.7 million dollars in the School Readiness (SR) budget, we will also lose \$24.3 million dollars of federal funds because the general revenue dollars must match the federal dollar for a total of \$44.9 million dollars this year.
- There is also another reduction of approximately \$579,000 with \$700,000 in federal dollars for a total of \$1.2 million dollars. This will be posted on the ELC website.
- We have been attending committee meetings and are trying to reinforce the value of education and illustrate how childcare supports the workforce and economic development which is one of the governor's primary goals. We are hoping that this tie-in to workforce will help us. We are also trying to get more added to the Base Student Allocation (BSA) for VPK so that there is a higher provider reimbursement rate.
- E. Bezos asked if the dollars for CCEP will remain the same or can we make a request for more dollars since we may be able to persuade businesses to participate.
- E. Torres responded that there is no status update on CCEP as of yet. Funds for CCEP are part of the SR budget. However, in this economy businesses are hesitant to offer any additional benefits to their employees. Businesses participating in CCEP would pay for half of their employees' childcare costs.
- D. Williams, Jr. conceded chairmanship to C. Lederman

V. Child Safety Licensing Policy (Recommendation)

- J. Russell discussed the Child Safety Licensing Policy as approved by the Board on December 6th.
 - A recommendation from the workgroup that worked on the development of the operating procedure is that opposed to now where it says that a provider would be suspended if they obtained two Class II violations of the same type in a twelve month period, the recommendation is that the language be changed to read "two repeat Class II licensing violations." This would allow providers to get a Class II licensing violation that they would only be suspended in the event that they received another Class II violation of the very same type as opposed to receiving two separate and distinct violations.
 - We did some research and found that when Department of Children and Families (DCF) gives a provider a Class II violation, the provider has already received that violation once. The first time a provider receives a Class II, it is considered a technical assistance. We would really be looking at three instances of the same violation.
- L. Piñeiro stated that at their workgroup, they were waiting for someone from DCF to attend the meeting. There was significant concern as to what really constitutes a Class I, II or III in that the imposition of the violation is frankly quite subjective. The workgroup wanted to know what training the DCF staff receives, what tools are used to assess a facility. When a provider is faced with a Class I or Class II, it is a significant issue. In some situations, licensing, at least in other



counties, does not even take into consideration what the child protective investigator has found. The workgroup wanted more guidance. The group felt that this recommendation was fairer than the policy the board had approved.

- S. Fagundo added that this recommendation is more consistent with what APPLE and NAEYC uses as guidelines for accreditation.
- After sharing her concerns that there was no limit on the number of different violations a provider could receive, C. Lederman moved to disapprove the recommendation.
 - As Chair, C. Lederman noted that she cannot make a motion; motion withdrawn.
- S. Frazier of DCF stated that training is in order for the members of the committee, which DCF is willing to provide. The law is not subjective, but rather very prescriptive. The definitions of what constitutes Class I, II and III violations are also posted on the DCF website. S. Frazier clarified that Class I violations are the most egregious; where children are absconding or children are without supervision and other issues of that nature. Class II violations are generally paperwork in nature, which are a little more serious than Class III that include violations for paperwork for example; immunization information. In order for DCF to go into progressive enforcement mode, the first occurrence of a Class I violation would be immediate grounds for a possible imposition, which is a fine that ranges from \$100 to \$500. It will take two instances of a Class II violation to go into progressive enforcement mode, and three instances for Class III. There are 64 different site inspection elements in the licensing rules.
- L. Piñeiro asked if it was possible for a provider to essentially pass all inspection points except one piece of paperwork and receive a Class II.
- S. Frazier responded that the provider would receive the violation. Some examples of a Class II violation include not having the licensed capacity posted, missing items from a first aid kit and improper hand washing.
- J. Russell clarified that the definition of a Class II violation is the second or subsequent incident of noncompliance with an individual Class II standard. Class II violations are less serious in nature than Class I violations and could be anticipated to pose a threat to the health, safety or wellbeing of a child although the threat is not imminent.
- E. Torres suggested that another consideration, since an operating procedure to accompany this policy is being written, is to include language to soften the Class II section of the policy because what will happen is if we run into any of these situations, there will not be an automatic suspension of the SR program. The provider would get a letter from the ELC and then the grievance process would begin. The committee could waive the suspension if the violations are not serious.
- M. Abety asked for how many Class II violations would be found in a typical month of inspections.
- S. Frazier replied that in the last month there were approximately 200 violations that would require reinspection with the majority being Class II violations.
- L. Piñeiro asked if the providers have been given training in reference to Class I, II and III violations and their implications.
- S. Frazier stated that the department has periodic provider meetings that include training and are held twice a year.
- L. Piñeiro asked on how many occasions was training on Class I, II and III on the agenda.
- S. Frazier responded that at one meeting it was offered. S. Fagundo disagreed and stated that she has attended those meetings and they might discuss only a change to a standard or a specific item. In the last year that she has attended the



meetings she has not participated in a childcare licensing training. She stated that given the amount of questions the committee has in regards to violations, it is extremely important that the committee and full board in general have a full understanding of what the intention of certain violations are.

- C. Lederman asked S. Frazier to provide training for the board to which S. Frazier replied that DCF would conduct such training.
- C. Lederman recommended to table this item for the time being.

VI. Provider Services Committee Membership

- J. Russell stated that there was a recommendation that additional board members be added to the Provider Services Committee. The Provider Services Committee will be responsible for hearing the appeals that the providers bring. Currently, the committee only has 3 voting board members on it. The suggestion is that we look at asking the Board Chair to add additional members to the committee in order for more members to hear the appeals that the providers may bring forth.
- D. Williams Jr. moved to increase the number of members of the Provider Services Committee.
 - R. Beasley seconded the motion.
 - Motion was unanimously passed.

VII. Provider Repayment Policy

- J. Russell stated that one of the requirements of providers that participate in SR is that parents are supposed to sign their child in each day. Upon monitoring centers, we find that some parents are pre-filling the sign-in sheet for the entire month. We have provided technical assistance to these providers and it does not seem to be making a difference. Since it is an audit finding, we are now at the point where we are proposing that we recoup payment from those who pre-sign their attendance sheets.
- E. Bezos stated that she cautions the committee to be practical. There are several practices in place, such as for the food program, where providers are taking attendance every day and we should not rely solely on the parent's signature for keeping attendance.
- E. Torres responded that it is one thing to forget to sign a child in one day and then sign it the next day, than to sign for the entire month in advance.
- S. Fagundo added that honest providers are very upset about this practice. If the ELC is serious about saving money, we need to check on these providers who are not following the attendance procedure and free up some slots in the process. One suggestion is to look at providers who are reporting a 70% or higher rate of perfect attendance. S. Fagundo stated that there are providers who have volunteered to assist the coalition to audit attendance. Providers in the practice of fraudulently pre-filling the attendance sheets are basically stealing and in turn taking money away from what could be potential slots.
- E. Bezos added that when she first took over her center there were parents who would show up at the end of the month and sign for a child that didn't even attend. She immediately put a stop to it. E. Bezos illustrated how this costs the program money and is keeping SR readiness from the ability to open slots for those children who will attend year round.
- S. Fagundo stated that she would lead a task force of providers to discuss the sign-in process.



VIII. Quality Assurance Monitoring

- S. Gonzalez presented the Quality Assurance Services Monitored quarterly report.
 - One major change that has taken place is that the yearly monitoring that was taking place in the past is now done quarterly. This provides ongoing feedback to our contractors which will allow us to correct any deficiencies.
 - The three VPK monitors are now part of the Quality Assurance unit. There are also currently two Quality Assurance monitors that provide the monitoring for the service contracts. Eventually, the goal is to have a streamlined service where all five of the monitors will all do both VPK and Quality Assurance monitoring.
 - We have added the monitoring of the curriculum of SR providers to the VPK monitoring tool.
 - FIU has 100% compliance with all performance objectives with the exception of having an improvement plan within the established timeframe for participating early care and education programs. The cohort whose work was out of compliance has been giving technical assistance in regards to this finding.
 - FIU surpassed its compliance goals in the area of accreditation.
 - All of FIU's contractual requirements are in compliance.
 - The Devereux Foundation has met or exceeded all of their performance objectives as well as their contractual requirements.
- J. Colyer requested that in the future definitions of acronyms be added to the report.
- M. Abety also suggested that it would be helpful to add the contract period, the program outcomes, and amount of money involved to the report.

IX. Old Business

- J. Russell stated that AWI has sent a draft of the Childcare Development Block Grant Fund (CCDF) plan. Just as the coalition has to submit the plan on it will use the CCDF dollars, AWI as the lead agency for the state also has to submit a plan to the federal government notifying them how they will use that funding. They are working on the 2012-2013 plan and they've sent a draft of some of the items that they expect coalitions to provide information on.
 - They asked if the state implemented a quality rating and improvement system or other program quality improvement activities. Miami-Dade County has a Quality Counts program which we will be able to provide them with quite a bit of information. However, around the state there is not a standardized quality rating improvement program.
 - They have also asked for information on how many programs received onsite technical assistance in the quality rating improvement system.
 - They requested the number of programs that received financial support to achieve and maintain quality and how many programs have moved up a star level since they've been in the program.
- J. Russell stated that basically, the new CCDF is heavily based on spending the dollars on quality as opposed to the past when it has been more of a focus on slots. The coalition spends more than the required 72% of our budget on slots, currently. We may have to make an adjustment and shift more dollars towards quality as the federal government moves more in that direction.



- S. Fagundo asked C. Lederman for her thoughts on the Child Care Standards and Improvements Work Group that she participated in.
- C. Lederman stated that it was a wonderful experience. There was a clear consensus of the decisions being made. On the first day, within an hour they voted almost unanimously to erase all exemptions and change ratio size. The biggest discussion was on pre-training requirements. They are hoping that some legislative action will result from this.
- E. Torres added that the group worked very hard to make sure that they generated a report quickly. The theme of the workgroup was collaboration and they really want us to work with accrediting agencies to incorporate accreditation into the quality rating system. This means that the accreditation agencies will need to elevate their standards as well so that we are on the same page. The most important issue that came up in this workgroup was the licensing for all providers in the state.
- M. Abety asked for an update on the Strategic Planning Process.
- E. Torres stated that there will be a short Board Meeting on February 7th immediately followed by a meeting covering strategic planning. There will also be an all-day planning meeting on Saturday, February 26th at United Way to finalize our strategic plan.

X. New Business

- E. Bezos stated that it has come to her attention that the largest provider of SR, Lincoln Marti School, is denying reasonable access to coalition representatives and staff. E. Bezos stated that she knows it to be the case that there is one central agency for this provider and visitors need to get permission ahead of time to come into the other schools. E. Bezos stated that she feels it is important to look at this process with this provider very closely because reasonable access is an issue with not only SR contracts, but DCF licensing as well. If we are talking about holding people accountable we need to look into this.
- E. Torres stated that the last time this issue came up, he spoke with Dr. Perez personally who assured him that he would allow access, but was requesting that staff come with identification. According to Dr. Perez, staff was arriving at the center without proper identification and his staff had been instructed not to allow anyone into the centers without it. E. Torres stated that he will contact Dr. Perez to address it again. E. Torres asked S. Frazier if licensing counselors were having the same issue in regards to access.
- S. Frazier indicated that the counselors did not have any problems. However, her agency did receive complaints from parents who were denied access.
- J. Colyer stated that Secretary Wilkins will be visiting Miami and the ELC will be invited to the meeting.
- L. Carmona stated that she supports the stance on accountability the coalition is taking in regards to the sign-in/sign-out sheets. However, she cautions that even in her own center often times, despite how many times she tells parents not to pre-date anything, they will still do so anyway. L. Carmona suggests that the proposed consequences are a good idea, but parents should also be notified that they will be held responsible for paying the full tuition rate should reimbursement be denied for any days that the parent pre-signed. If a parent signs in advance and it gets denied by CDS for payment, the provider should



have the right to charge the parent the full cost of the tuition for those days not being reimbursed.

- L. Piñeiro stated that this issue squarely falls on the school administrator and/or director and not the parent. The bottom line is that the provider is the one receiving payment and therefore, is the provider's responsibility.
- L. Carmona recommended that when the group convenes to talk about the school licensing policy, that the committee consider a recommendation that there be a minimum 5-hour DCF training on the classification standards that can be integrated into the required training modules that must be taken on a yearly basis. It would be very useful for providers to know exactly what is it that the licensing inspectors are looking for.

XI. Adjourn.

- C. Lederman adjourned the meeting.