



Minutes

Program Policy & Strategy Committee Meeting
March 29, 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: The Hon. Cindy Lederman; David Williams, Jr.; Shaleen Fagundo (via conference call); Roderick Beasley; Modesto Abety; Jacqui Colyer; Ramiro Moreno (via conference call)

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

General Attendees: Linda Carmona (AECE); Edith Humes-Newbold (Miami-Dade County); Susan Tucker (YMCA of Greater Miami); Luisa Sanchez (YWCA of Greater Miami); Suzette Frazier (Department of Children and Families)

I. Welcome and Introductions

- C. Lederman welcomed the committee, staff and attendees.
- A quorum was established with six (6) voting members.

II. Approval of January February 22nd Minutes

- D. Williams moved to approve the February 22, 2011 minutes.
- R. Beasley seconded the motion.
- Motion was unanimously passed.

III. CEO Update

- E. Torres shared the CEO Update.
 - The biggest concern was a projected budget deficit of 3.75 billion dollars. Last year, there was a deficit of \$38 million to School Readiness which was supplanted with ARRA dollars. This year the base budget is the same as last, however there are no ARRA dollars to make up for the deficit.
 - The VPK base student allocation will be retained for both summer and the school year. There was a slight reduction from \$2562 to \$2555. In the house, reductions are about 7%. VPK program support and administration dollars are now reduced to 4% from 4.5%.
 - There is a government reorganization bill that has the Office of Early Learning overseeing both School Readiness (SR) and VPK. There is also some discussion about sending SR to DCF and VPK to the Department of Education (DOE). It is believed to be more expensive this way. The preference would be to create an agency for Early Learning or to place all programs under the new jobs agency.



- We are also keeping a close eye on class size. There is a proposal to increase the ratio for VPK to appease providers who are losing on the base student allocation.
- Employment statistics are better overall, in the state.

IV. Monroe Performance Report

- M. Williams shared details from the Monroe performance report.
- Timely ASQ's are a challenge that Wesley house is addressing.

V. Miami-Dade Performance Report

- J. Russell gave highlights from the Miami-Dade performance report.
 - B. Sands explained the ASQ process for SR children. Hiring staff for the inclusion program has been a challenge for Citrus.
 - C. Lederman requested that an update from Miami-Dade County regarding the number of referrals completed for children whose ASQ's indicated concerns is added to the next agenda.
 - C. Lederman stated that these children should be a priority and asked how we are going to make up for lost time.
 - R. Beasley stated that there needs to be a corrective action plan put into place.
 - E. Torres stated that the coalition has already requested a corrective action plan.
 - D. Williams asked if there was a penalty for not complying with the contract.
 - E. Torres responded that the penalty is that the service provider would not be able to bill the coalition for services. There is no way that the coalition is going to be able to pay \$1.1 million on this contract, so an amendment for \$300,000 was submitted to reduce the contract to \$800,000. Now we are looking at possibly reducing the contract further.

VI. Provider Minimum Standards

- J. Russell stated that new minimum standards for providers are being considered. Some of the potential requirements include:
 - Providers must submit attendance and contract electronically.
 - Conduct an assessment on all providers. Providers will be required to have a minimum score on the Environmental Rating Scale (ERS) and an identified CLASS score.
 - Providers would need to obtain a star rating, even if they did not participate in the Quality Counts program.
 - Family literacy activities would need to be implemented.
 - Providers would be required to provide proof of financial stability.
 - As opposed to only submitting a contract, providers should also submit an application that would precede the agreement to be reviewed by the coalition to make a determination whether or not a provider could then submit an agreement.
- R. Moreno asked J. Russell to elaborate on how a provider would provide proof of financial stability.
- J. Russell responded that a provider could demonstrate that they were financial stable by providing an audit from a firm or other financial statements.
- E. Torres added that these are only suggestions. Many of these suggestions have come from childcare providers who have expressed their concerns that anyone can have a contract with the coalitions without having to meet a minimum quality



standard. However, most of the providers that we are currently working with would meet these standards. We need to give some thought as to what the standards should be. The idea is that all SR children would be placed in the highest quality providers possible. E. Torres added that a workgroup is being put together to look at the potential requirements. We are trying to elevate the quality of programs in the community and are particularly concerned about some of the underserved areas. We are trying to focus on these areas where children perhaps do not have the same opportunities and would provide additional resources to those centers and families.

- S. Fagundo asked who would be conducting the ERS and CLASS assessments.
- E. Torres responded that as of yet no decisions have been made. If this requirement makes it to the final cut, then this would be discussed since there is a cost involved.
- R. Beasley stated that requiring providers to submit contracts and attendance electronically will impact smaller organizations who may not have the capabilities to do so.
- E. Torres stated that we would identify these individuals and assist them so that there is a level playing field.
- R. Beasley stated that while he does not object to implementing these quality standards we need to make sure that they do not put a hardship on some of these providers.
- S. Fagundo stated that this is a good effort on the part of the coalition to support providers.

VII. Enrollment Update

- E. Humes-Newbold stated that it is anticipated that the number of excess children receiving SR services will reduce through attrition.
- E. Humes-Newbold stated that a tiered approach is being used for VPK registration this year. This year there will also be an expedited service offered for providers who have 35 or more VPK children to register. It has been done with Head Start and has worked very well.
- S. Fagundo asked who a provider can contact in order to take advantage of this.
- E. Humes-Newbold responded that center should e-mail the eligibility manager in their corresponding office and the manager will send out a packet.

VIII. Provider Repayment Update

- E. Humes-Newbold stated that to date we have recuperated \$105,310 from providers who were serving children under five and were not authorized to do so.

IX. Old Business

- S. Fagundo asked for an update on the training on licensing requirements.
- S. Frazier responded that a training session for the Board members is taking place on April 4th. Provider trainings will also be provided in three weeks.

X. Public Comment

- L. Carmona stated that at last board meeting, there was a motion to approve the new parent payment scale. L. Carmona asked if it had been revisited. In modifying the financial eligibility for the BG8 category, the parent copayment did not change.
- J. Russell stated that the board made the decision not to increase parent fees because of the economy.



- L. Carmona stated that we've adopted new criteria but no new copayments. It is important that the finance committee consider this. We are allowing parents to pay less and the coalition will end up having to pay the difference.
- S. Fagundo asked if the committee can see what the anticipated cost to the coalition would be.
- J. Russell stated that this can be provided to the committee.

XI. Adjourn.

- C. Lederman adjourned the meeting.