



Minutes

Program Policy & Strategy Committee Meeting
August 31, 2010; 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; Roderick Beasley; Modesto Abety; Elizabeth Bezos; Ann Karen Weller; Ramiro Moreno (via conference call)

Staff Attendees: Evelio Torres (CEO); Blythe Robinson; Angelo Parrino; Jackye Russell; Melody Thelwell; Roseline Philippe; Fred Hicks; Jose Hernandez; Ana Pizano; Pamela Hollingsworth; Natalia Delgado; Kristina Alonso; Leeana Pena; Mary Williams (via conference call)

General Attendees: Edith Humes-Newbold (Miami-Dade County); Linda Carmona-Sanchez (AECE); Ian Fleury (DCF); Ginette Rigaud (Our Little Ones); Willie Innis (Golden Glades Elementary)

I. Welcome and Introductions	The Hon. C. Lederman
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- The Hon. C. Lederman welcomed the committee and attendees.
 - A quorum was established with five (5) voting members.

II. Approval of Agenda	The Hon. C. Lederman
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- C. Lederman called for the approval of the agenda.

III. Approval of July 27th	David Williams, Jr.
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- C. Lederman called for the approval of the minutes.
 - M. Abety asked for the following corrections:
 - On page 5 to change “designation” to “distinction”.
 - On page 7 to change the mission statement to say “from birth to age eight” and not “five.”
 - R. Beasley moved to approve the minutes.
 - M. Abety seconded the motion.
 - All committee members in attendance were in favor.

IV. CEO Update	Evelio Torres, CEO
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- E. Torres presented information discussing what other coalitions are doing in terms of which provider types are allowed to provide School Readiness services and how quality is managed.
 - Coalition # 1 is currently not accepting new providers. All new providers must be assessed and must meet an Environmental Rating Scale (ERS) average of 4.0. If minimum is not met, provider is required to meet with



coalition to develop a Corrective Action Plan (CAP.) Directors and teachers must attend all recommended trainings and implement all changes as directed and participate in all quarterly CAP progress reviews. Providers with two stars are not eligible to receive new School Readiness (SR) children. Children already enrolled with these two star providers can remain until next year's reassessment. If there is no progress at the time of assessment, School Readiness children will be removed and provider will be unable to serve School Readiness students for a minimum of one year. If providers do not implement the CAP, they will not be eligible to serve School Readiness children. There is a curriculum requirement which is the same requirement as Miami-Dade. All SR providers are expected to engage in continuous quality improvement to achieve the minimum level of quality defined as a three-star level.

- Coalition # 2 suspends payments to providers for any days out of compliance with adult/child ratios. No referrals are given to providers with repeated instances of non-compliance with childcare licensing. Providers who receive two or more administrative actions from childcare licensing are ineligible to receive SR funding for twelve months. Providers of afterschool programs must complete and pass Part I of the 40-clock-hour Introductory Child Care Training course. They must also pass the Health, Safety and Nutrition checklist.
- E. Torres stated that we do not necessarily have to implement these regulations but they serve as an example of what is taking place across the state. Some of the higher quality providers have demanded that we take another look at the entire provider community and set some minimum standards.
- R. Moreno asked if in Coalition # 1, providers who have not participated in Quality Counts are still eligible to serve SR children.
- E. Torres stated that the star system in Coalition # 1 was based off of the Environmental Rating Scale. They have closed new provider enrollment in the SR program in order to manage the quality of providers currently offering service and because they do not have enough children for all of the providers that are wanting to apply. The challenge with this policy is if you close the doors to any new providers you may be keeping out higher quality providers that may want to start participating in School Readiness.
- C. Lederman asked E. Torres if assuming that we would want to implement this, what would be the process.
- E. Torres responded that we would need to develop a proposal, take it to the board, and as part of the Strategic Planning Process, take it to the community forum to insure that we receive input, and have the community review the proposal, then move it to the board for approval.
- C. Lederman requests drafting a proposal for the implementation of standards for measuring quality and maintaining quality childcare including criteria for becoming and/or continuing to be a SR provider.
- E. Torres agreed to start drafting such a proposal.
- E. Torres discussed the three providers that have been disqualified from the VPK program by the Florida Department of Education (DOE).
 - Bright Start Educational Center, Precious Years Christian Preschool and New Sunrise Day Care have all been Low Performing Providers (LPP) for 4 consecutive years.
 - The question to this committee at the request of the Chair is if these providers will be allowed to continue to provide services to SR children or will the board make the decision to disqualify them from providing SR services.



- E. Bezos asked if these providers were disqualified from SR because of their kindergarten readiness rate for VPK services even though there is no link between the kindergarten readiness rate and the quality of the center.
- E. Torres responded that the DOE has determined that because they have been LPP's for four years these providers are not up to the standards for providing SR services.
- E. Bezos stated that these children do not rank in a certain percentage, but because we do not have any comparison if those children had gains or not throughout that year, there might be certain issues with this.
- E. Torres responded that the DOE provided an opportunity for appeal to a number of providers. If they were able to show that children had made progress in their centers, DOE granted waivers for another year of services. There are flaws with the system that the DOE uses to label a provider as Low Performing.
- E. Bezos stated that having gone through the appeal process herself, this process is also somewhat flawed. There is not a clear delineation as to what the measure is. Working with at-risk children who are recently migrated and English language learners, there are a lot of ways to work with these children to get them up to par that may not be measurable. She states that she is hesitant to say that a LPP indicates that they are a low quality provider. We would be discrediting her center, Dr. La Villa's center, and a lot of people that serve these at risk populations where children perform below the mark, despite having made significant gains in literacy or social skills.
- R. Moreno stated that FLKRS does not directly take into account those children that may have special needs that were not identified prior to entering the public school system.
- M. Abety asked for the recommendation of the CEO,
- E. Torres stated that because he has not personally visited these sites he cannot speak for the quality. Perhaps we would need to go out and conduct an assessment in order to make a recommendation on whether they should continue to provide services or not.
- D. Williams, Jr. asked if these providers have complied with their School Readiness provider agreement.
- E. Torres stated that they have complied but C. Lederman stated that they have licensing requirement issues.
- J. Russell clarified that the reason the DOE denied their appeals was because they had a number of licensing violations in the previous two years based on both the quantity and severity of the violations. One part of the SR agreement does require them to be in compliance with licensing regulations.
- R. Beasley moved to deny approval for these individuals to continue as School Readiness providers based on the information provided regarding licensing violations.
 - M. Abety seconded the motion
 - Motion was unanimously passed.

V. Curriculum Learning Communities

Ana Pizano

- A. Pizano presented her update on Curriculum Learning Communities.
 - The goal is to build capacity in the learning programs that their own staff can support other staff in the center. The other goal is to improve fidelity and accountability in terms of curriculum implementation and provide professional development.



- Throughout the training process an improvement in terms of curriculum implementation is noted. The participants work with other teachers in their center which increases reflective practice, improves curriculum implementation, and creates a shared commitment to quality.
- This past year, the program committed to provide curriculum training, peer facilitation, materials and support. 74 teachers from 37 centers worked with 22 community members such as Quality Counts technical assistants, Miami-Dade College professors, Miami-Dade County assessment specialists.
- D. Williams, Jr. asked how these 37 centers were chosen to participate and what is the cost of the program to the coalition.
- A. Pizano stated that letters were sent to providers using a curriculum in all areas, asking them to participate. Those that submitted a pre-application were then invited to a meeting and where they had the opportunity to sign up if they chose to participate. The cost is \$273,000 and there is also support from the Early Childhood Initiative, which is contributing about half of the amount.
- C. Lederman asked how fidelity is measured.
- A. Pizano stated that last year the program began with pre-assessments and classroom observations in a sample of the centers participating and also in a control group. Post assessments will begin in September to measure progress. The curriculum tools from High Scope and Creative Curriculum are being used to conduct these assessments in the classroom. Centers are also being taught how to conduct their own self-assessments.
- E. Bezos asked if the 20 training days were throughout the school year only or year round and if they were conducted after hours or during school hours.
- A. Pizano stated that there are 2-3 days each month of the school year. Trainings are full-day and the program provides incentives to the centers to help cover staff time.

VI. VPK Update

Roseline Philippe

- R. Philippe presented her update of the VPK program.
 - There are currently a total of 955 VPK Providers that have fully met the requirements set by AWI. 714 are private, 203 are Miami-Dade County Public Schools and 38 are Head Start centers. 65 Sites met the summer VPK requirements.
 - 18,109 certificates of eligibility were issued for the 2010-2011 school year. 8,188 children have been enrolled in EFS. Approximately 5,000 more certificates from MDCPS will be enrolled shortly.
 - Last year, 704 sites were monitored of which 559 were private and 149 were MDCPS.
- R. Moreno asked if there is any correlation on assessment for children that attended a summer VPK program and the FLKRS scores. R. Philippe replied that there was no particular trend in scores for children that attended a summer program.

VII. New Business

- C. Lederman discussed the letter from MDCPS that expressed that the children in the TAPP program will not be required to be in an accredited center. She expressed that this is not acceptable to the Early Learning Coalition and she will be attending the next public school board meeting to educate the board about the importance of accreditation.



VIII. Old Business

- J. Russell stated that staff was requested by this committee to look at the cost and feasibility of implementing standards and inspection for unlicensed providers that we currently contract with.
 - Currently working with AWI to modify the inspection tool that DCF uses to monitor licensed providers so that it can be used for unlicensed facilities to ensure that they meet, at a minimum, health and safety standards.
 - There are currently 342 unlicensed providers. In order for the coalition to conduct inspections, we would need to add six additional staff members; four monitors, one quality assurance monitor, and one supervisor for a cost of approximately \$500,000.
- E. Torres added that this is consistent with national licensing standards. The ratio of monitors to centers is 50 to 1 for childcare centers and 100 to 1 for family child care centers.
- M. Abety asked if the cost will be paid by the Early Learning Coalition or the unlicensed provider. J. Russell responded that the coalition will have to absorb the cost.
- D. Williams, Jr. asked if all of this was part of DCF's budget. J. Russell replied that no one has been monitoring these sites, which is the issue at hand.
- J. Russell stated that there is a statewide work group working on taking the 26-page tool of information that DCF currently uses to inspect licensed facilities and modifying it to be used for unlicensed providers. This information would then be uploaded to the DCF website just as the information obtained from the licensed centers is uploaded. This information would be maintained by DCF. In consideration of the fact that all coalitions statewide contract with some kind of provider that may not be licensed, AWI has decided that there is a need for someone to look at what is going on in these programs.
- E. Bezos stated that the YWCA and YMCA do a marvelous job and go above and beyond the state standards and uphold national standards for afterschool care. The conversation regarding unlicensed and enrichment providers was initiated because the coalition was exposed to a liability and we wanted these children to be at a quality center. The measurements should be across the board. To eliminate these programs because they are unlicensed can create an issue with parental choice. Are we taking enrichment programs out of areas where there is a need for these at-risk populations? Monitoring needs to happen and it may mean the unlicensed providers will pay a nominal fee to help cover this unfunded mandate.

IX. Public Comment

- L. Carmona expressed that the fact that a center may not be accredited does not necessarily make it a bad center. It is important to make this statement. There are many centers that do deliver high quality, but are not accredited for a number of reasons. If a center does not own the property on which it is located, there is no real incentive to become accredited, beyond providing high quality care. Accreditation allows you to eliminate your property taxes. Accreditation is expensive and time consuming and is difficult to attain during these difficult economic times. There are many providers in the community that feel this way



even though they support high quality and support accreditation. However, the finances do not make it possible at this time.

X. Adjourn

- C. Lederman adjourned the meeting.