



EARLY LEARNING COALITION OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA

BOARD MINUTES

Wednesday, March 17, 2021

9:00 a.m.

Board Members Present: **Marshall Bower**, *Interim Board Chair, Chair-Events Committee, President and CEO, The Foundation for Lee County Public Schools*; **Douglas Szabo, Esq.**, *Board Treasurer, Henderson, Franklin, Starnes and Holt P.A*

Board Members Present via ZOOM: **Nate Halligan**, *Vice Chair, Asst. Vice President/Small Business Portfolio Manager, Busey Bank*; **Selina Jefferson**, *Board Secretary, Director, Mount Hermon Ministries/Dew of Hermon Early Learning Center*; **Jeff Alluri**, *Principal, VP Consulting, Element Technologies, LLC*; **Dr. Beth Barfield**, *Superintendent, Glades County Public Schools District*; **Rita Dellatore**, *Owner/Director, Kid City Early Learning Academy, LLC*; **Brooke Delmotte**, *Provider Liaison/Operations Manager, Early Steps, SWFL Health Planning Council*; **Michele King**, *Director Child Advocacy Program, Golisano Children's Hospital of SW Florida*; **Joe Paterno**, *Executive Director, Southwest Florida Workforce Development Board*; **Jim Palmer**, *Child Care Regulations Supervisor, Department of Children and Families*

Board Members Absent: ; **Damaris Boone**, *Chair-Program Committee, Early Education Outcome Analyst, Redlands Christian Migrant Association (RCMA)*; **Jason Himschoot, Esq.**, *Chair-Human Resources Committee, Maughan, Himschoot & Adams Law Group*; **Dr. Beth McBride**, *Director, Early Learning, Designee-Collier County Public Schools*; **Roger Mercado**, *Director, Lee County Human and Veteran Services, Designee-Lee Board of County Commissioners*; **Kimberly Ross**, *Owner, Ross Dynasty Care*; **Dr. Kelly Roy**, *Chair-Nomination & By-Laws Committee, Professor/Coordinator of Early Childhood Education, Florida Southwestern State College*; **Shay Smith**, *Executive Community Health Nursing Director, Designee-Florida Department of Health Lee Count*;

Staff Present: **Susan Block**, *CEO*; **Kim Usa**, *Chief Program Officer*; **Leona Adkins**, *Chief Quality Officer*; **Lugeenya Blackstock**, *CFO*; **Ginger McHale**, *Executive Coordinator*; **Andres Reyes**, *Chief Information Officer*; **Cheryl Carpenter**, *Director of Early Childhood*; **Bronwyn Gogia**, *Director of Screening and Assessment*; **Gayla Thompson**, *Director of Professional Development*

Presenter via Zoom: **Ed Moss**, *Moss, Krusick & Associates*

(*) *Materials included in Board packet*

(**) *Materials posted on SharePoint for Board Members' access*

Agenda Items	Discussion	Action/Assignments
Welcome and Introductions A. Board Approval of Amended 3-17-21 Agenda, (Items 1B and 4 added)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr. Bower called the meeting to order at 9:01 am. A quorum was established. Mr. Bower presented the updated agenda, adding items -1B and 4. 	Motion made to accept the updated agenda made by Mr. Halligan and seconded by Mr. Paterno. Motion approved.
Public Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None 	
1. Executive Committee Report* A. Welcome New Board Member, Dr. Beth Barfield, Glades County Public Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr. Bower welcomed Dr. Barfield, Superintendent of the Glades County Public Schools District, to the Board. 	
B. Approve: Sliding Fee Scale**	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ms. Usa explained the Office of Early Learning (OEL) requires all Coalitions to review and submit their Sliding Fee Scale Annual. This year, it is due to OEL by April 1, 2021 with an effective date of July 1, 2021. The staff recommendation is not to increase the Sliding Fee Scale (parent co-pays for childcare). 	Motion to maintain the current Sliding Fee Scale made by Mr. Szabo and seconded by Mr. Paterno. Motion approved.
2. Consent Agenda (Vote required)* Note: Any item on the Consent Agenda can be withdrawn by a Board Member for full Board consideration Approval of Meeting Minutes of the January 27, 2021 Board Meeting**	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The January 27, 2021 minutes presented for approval. 	Motion to approve the 1/27/21 minutes made by Mr. Paterno and seconded by Mr. Halligan. Motion approved.
3. Finance Committee* A. Discuss SR & VPK Utilization Forecast**	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr. Szabo reported the First Responders Referral program for childcare ends March 31, 2021. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are continuing to enroll off the Waitlist. This number of children on the Waitlist is ever changing, as we enroll children more children are added. At the present time in Glades and Hendry Counties there is no Waitlist. Families applying for childcare receive services immediately. The ELC goal is to enroll all children off the Waitlist. • Childcare capacity is a challenge to 100% enrollment from the Waitlist. The lack of available slots, especially for infants and toddlers, is hindering enrollment. Providers who might want to open additional classrooms are challenges with recruiting and hiring teachers. The issue of teacher shortages is being shared statewide. 	
<p>B. Review of Utilization Reports and Statements of Revenues and Expenditures**</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Szabo discussed the financial reports ending January 2021. Mr. Szabo addressed the summary reports for School Readiness (SR) and Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK) identifying the current year expenditures and administrative costs. • Staff continue to watch VPK Administrative costs carefully. 	<p>Motion from this standing committee presented for a vote. Motion approved.</p>
<p>C. Status Report: FY18-19 Provider Payments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Szabo reported one-hundred and seventeen (117) providers reconciliation letters have been mailed. Fifteen (15) providers have paid in full. The Office of Early Learning (OEL) has accepted eighty (80) provider payment plans for a total of \$736,000.00. Twenty-two (22) providers are pending negotiations. The amount owed is over \$400,000.00. • ELC staff have communicated six (6) times to with providers who have not responded yet. The ELC will initiate a 12-month repayment plan in April 2021 unless 	

	contacted by the provider to discuss the amount owed to the ELC	
D. Accept and Approve: FY19-20 Single Audit – Moss, Krusick & Associates**	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr. Ed Moss, Moss, Krusick & Associates, discussed the FY19-20 Single Audit. The audit contains standard language in accordance with Government Auditing Standards. The ELC of SWFL received the best possible review from the auditors including, status as a low-risk auditee. 	Motion to accept the FY19-20 Single Audit made by Mr. Paterno and seconded by Ms. Delmotte. Motion approved.
E. Update: OEL Monitoring Report**	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr. Szabo reported there were no findings for the OEL monitoring report period of Sept. 1, 2018 to Oct. 31, 2020. Mr. Szabo stated there were two observations relating to the Portal (EFS Mod) and Employee Compensation. OEL is developing new guidance related to employee compensation. The Association of Early Learning Coalitions (AELC) has established a workgroup to address the compensation observation. 	Motion from this standing committee presented for a vote. Motion approved.
F. Update: Implementation of SR Rate Increase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr. Szabo presented OEL's statewide \$50M rate increase to provider rates for infants, toddlers, and 2-year-olds. The increase for SWFL was included in the providers' January 2021 payments. This rate increase brings SR payments closer to private pay rates. There was a discussion about private pay and rates among other coalitions. 	
G. Update: Budget Work Group: FY21-22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr. Szabo announced Mr. Halligan and Ms. Delmotte agreed to be on the FY21-22 Budget Workgroup. The Workgroup will review the proposed budget, in detail, and present a draft for consideration by the Finance Committee's April 21, 2021 meeting. 	
Committee Reports		
4. 3/9/21 Appeal Hearing Finding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr. Paterno presented the appeal hearing committee's finding for the March 9, 2021 appeal hearing. The 	

	committee upheld the Coalition’s termination of SR services.	
5. Events Committee A. Update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ms. Block stated we have a couple of August 2021 possible dates for the business breakfast. More details to follow. 	
6. HR/Personnel Committee A. Complaint Update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr. Bower presented a recap of the investigation process including the Executive Committee’s special meeting to discuss the report findings. The Board took this matter quite seriously and responded with the counsel of an attorney who investigated the matter and a second attorney, who advised the ELC on employment matters. The Board was satisfied by Ms. Block’s response to the report and her plans to deal with remaining issues. Mr. Szabo, board liaison to the investigation, also commented on the completed investigation and considered the need to communicate the conclusion of the complaint to anonymous complainant. Though the source of the complaint is unknown to the ELC, there was general agreement that the resolution was known to all staff and that no further action was needed. Ms. Block provided a draft response plan with the meeting materials for March 17, 2021. Staff input is reflected in this plan that will address the internal staffing issues and improve the workplace environment. Mr. Paterno thanked the Executive Committee for their work on this matter 	
7. Nominations & Bylaws Committee A. Board Development: Program quality**	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ms. Block introduced the Quality Department’s staff Ms. Gogia, Ms. Carpenter and Ms. Thompson to conduct the mini training. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Gogia presented the Ages and Stages Questionnaire process and development screening for children. She also provided the number of children screened during FY19-20 and FY20-21. • Ms. Carpenter explained the Early Childhood Specialists: recruit providers; initiate the SR and VPK contracting process; complete program assessments; interact between teachers and children; ongoing provider trainings and individual coaching when needed. • Ms. Thompson discussed professional development includes provider trainings and Continuing Education Units; VPK scheduling and updating the VPK calendars in The Portal (EFS Mod). Portal supports for providers is accomplished via individual technical assistance, social media, constant contact, quarterly newsletter, and monthly town hall meetings. • Ms. Adkins reported the Quality team managed the \$3.2M paid to providers through the CARES Act. • Mr. Bower stated he appreciates all the Quality department does for the providers and children. 	
8. Program Committee A. Update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Block stated a provider survey including COVID-19 questions has been sent out and results are coming in. 	
9. Report of the CEO** A. Executive Director's Report**	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Block announced our United Way site visit will be held virtually in April. It will be a Zoom meeting with a provider testimony, client testimony and board members present. An appointment will follow, and all members are encouraged to attend. • The 2021 Legislative Session is underway. House Bill 419 would have a tremendous impact on the early 	

	<p>learning system. Ms. Block included a document that highlighted the major proposed changes from HB 419.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional federal funding is coming to Florida for childcare stabilization to be distributed largely through direct grants to childcare providers. OEL must submit a plan for approval by the federal government prior to distribution and guidance on spending of these newly allocated funds. We anticipate having more information at the May 5th Board Meeting. 	
10. Adjournment	The board meeting adjourned by acclamation at 10:35 am.	
Next Meeting	May 5, 2021, 9:00 am – 11:00 am, via Zoom	