



EARLY LEARNING COALITION OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA

BOARD MINUTES

Wednesday, January 27, 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; **Rita Dellatore**, Owner/Director, Kid City Early Learning Academy, LLC; **Brooke Delmotte**, Provider Liaison/Operations Manager, Early Steps, SWFL Health Planning Council; **Jason Himschoot, Esq.**, Chair-Human Resources Committee, Maughan, Himschoot & Adams Law Group; **Michele King**, Director Child Advocacy Program, Golisano Children’s Hospital of SW Florida; **Dr. Beth McBride**, Director, Early Learning, Designee-Collier County Public Schools; **Joe Paterno**, Executive Director, Southwest Florida Workforce Development Board; **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 County;

Board Members Absent: ; **Damaris Boone**, Chair-Program Committee, Early Education Outcome Analyst, Redlands Christian Migrant Association (RCMA); **Kim Jordan**, Director of Human Resources, Designee-Glades County School District; **Roger Mercado**, Director, Lee County Human and Veteran Services, Designee-Lee Board of County Commissioners; **Jim Palmer**, Child Care Regulations Supervisor, Department of Children and Families

Staff Present: **Susan Block**, CEO; **Lugeenya Blackstock**, CFO; **Ginger McHale**, Executive Coordinator

Staff Present via Zoom: **Kim Usa**, Chief Program Officer; **Leona Adkins**, Chief Quality Officer; **Nga Cotter**, Chief Operations Officer

(*)Materials included in Board packet

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

Agenda Items	Discussion	Action/Assignments
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<p>Welcome and Introductions A. Board Approval of Updated 1/27/2021 Agenda, Item 1B</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Bower called the meeting to order at 9:00 am. A quorum was established. • Mr. Bower presented an additional item on the agenda: item 1B, Approval of School Readiness Provider Rate Increase-SR Plan Amendment Authority 	<p>Motion made to accept the updated agenda made by Ms. Delmotte and seconded by Ms. King. Motion approved.</p>
<p>Public Comments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 	
<p>1. Executive Committee Report* A. Ice Breaker for New Board Members</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Block introduced the two new board members, Dr. Beth McBride and Shay Smith. • The ice breaker included all present to introduce themselves and share one important aspect of the Coalition for a new board member to know. The new board members were encouraged to ask questions about the ELC. 	
<p>B. Approval of School Readiness Provider Rate Increase-SR Plan Amendment Authority**</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Block talked about the 2020 Florida Legislature Appropriation 85: \$50M to the Office of Early Learning (OEL) to provide Coalitions with SR provider rate increase to reduce variance and inequities in provider payment rates across the state. The Legislature has charged OEL to complete a statewide analysis to identify the SR provider payment rates that will be increased and how the funds will be allocated to the Coalitions. OEL will finalize and announce rate increases by county and care level to meet the legislative charge. • The ELC will need to amend its School Readiness plan to implement the rate increases. 	<p>Motion to authorize the CEO to submit SR Plan amendment to include OEL determined rate increases made by Mr. Szabo and seconded by Ms. Jefferson. Motion approved.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To implement these provider rate increase, OEL will provide Coalitions with a simplified plan amendment form. 	
<p>2. Consent Agenda (Vote required)* Note: Any item on the Consent Agenda can be withdrawn by a Board Member for full Board consideration</p> <p>Approval of Meeting Minutes of the November 18, 2020 Board Meeting**</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The November 18, 2020 minutes presented for approval. 	<p>Motion to approve the 11/18/2020 minutes made by Mr. Paterno and seconded by Ms. Delmotte. Motion approved.</p>
<p>3. Finance Committee* A. Discuss SR & VPK Utilization Forecast**</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr. Szabo reported the First Responders' referral program ends in March 2021. Mr. Szabo stated 217 children were enrolled in November off the Waitlist. The Coalition is continuing the enrollment process. 	
<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 November 2020. Mr. Szabo addressed the summary reports for School Readiness (SR) and Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK) identifying the current year expenditures and administrative costs. The high VPK Administrative costs were noted and staff are carefully monitoring these costs. 	<p>Motion from this standing committee presented for a vote. Motion approved.</p>
<p>C. Status: 2018-2019 Provider Payments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr. Szabo reported the three-step process is completed with one-hundred and seventeen (117) providers identified as overpaid; thirty-nine (39) agreeing to re-payment plans within twelve months or less. Seventy-eight (78) providers are providing documentation to staff for reconsideration of the total amount owed to the ELC by the end of January. Of the 78 providers, forty (40) have agreed to a negotiation 	

	<p>plan. We are still working with thirty-eight (38) providers. The final recoupment amounts will be reported to OEL.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Should the Coalition not be able to arrive at a recoupment plan with any overpaid providers, guidance will be requested from OEL. 	
D. OEL Expenditure Validation: Jan. – June 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ms. Block stated there were no questioned costs. However, one technical assistance was noted for a travel expense incurred at the start of COVID-19 telework period that was submitted late for reimbursement. 	
E. Discuss Gold Seal Differential**	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr. Szabo explained Gold Seal providers currently receive a 15% differential. Twenty-eight of the thirty statewide coalitions provide a differential rate of 20%. Incentivizing the Gold Seal differential would allow providers an increased payment for their attention to quality. The estimated budget increase would be \$120,000 to \$150,000. The increase requires OEL approval to the SR Plan amendment. 	Motion from this standing committee presented for a vote. Motion approved.
F. Update on Audit and Monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ms. Blackstock stated the FY2019-2020 single audit is underway. The OEL fiscal monitoring for FY2018-2020 is complete with two items noted for the future. 	
Committee Reports		
4. Events Committee		
A. Update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is no update currently. The next meeting is Feb. 11, 2021. 	
5. HR/Personnel Committee		
A. Complaint Update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr. Szabo stated the internal investigation is ongoing. Upon completion, a written report will be submitted to the board with recommendations. 	
B. Compensation & Classification Study**	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ms. Block stated in Nov. 2020 voters approved an increase of the state's minimum wage until it reaches \$15.00 per hour in September 2026. In 2020 the Coalition started all entry level positions at \$15.00 an 	Motion from the Finance Committee presented for a vote. Motion approved.

	<p>hour or above.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A clear understanding of local market employment conditions is necessary for the ELC to remain competitive as an employer. Ms. Block requested a study of our present salary scale and job descriptions to analyze how we compare to the local job market and to remain a competitive employer. The financial impact for a study is not to exceed \$20,000.00. Depending upon the status of the FY 20/21 administrative costs, this project may be included in the FY21/22 budget if needed. 	
C. CEO Performance Assessment 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Himschoot stated Ms. Block’s performance assessment was completed and reviewed in December. 	
D. Request for Extended COVID-19 PLT**	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Block explained the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) expired Dec. 31, 2020. The Act required employers to provide paid sick leave or expanded family and medical leave benefits for specified reasons related to COVID-19. During 2020, two staff members requested paid sick leave under FFCRA at a cost of \$6,640. These qualified leave wage payments will be reimbursed by the government. • The Finance Committee’s recommendation to offer up to two weeks (up to 80 hours) of paid sick leave when staff are unable to telework due to the qualifying reasons of COVID-19 through March 31, 2021. This action would be retroactive to Jan. 4, 2021. 	Motion from the Finance Committee presented for a vote. Motion approved.
6. Nominations & Bylaws Committee A. Slate of Officers: 2021**	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Roy presented the Slate of Officers for 2021. 	Motion from this standing committee to approve the slate of officers presented for a vote. Motion approved.

B. Strategic Plan Update**	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ms. Block talked about the importance of updating the 2020-2022 Strategic Plan which was reviewed by the committee. The COVID-19 pandemic limited some activities of the plan approved by the Board in January 2020. 	Motion from this standing committee to accept the update presented for a vote. Motion approved.
7. Program Committee A. Request for Consideration Local SR Eligibility Priorities**	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ms. Block gave a brief history of the SR eligibility priorities and the impact of COVID-19 on our providers and families. The Program Committee’s recommendation is to maintain local eligibility priorities that include services to school age children until required to review priorities again as part of the SR Plan for 2021/2023. 	Motion from this standing committee presented for a vote. Motion approved
8. Report of the CEO** A. Executive Director’s Report**	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ms. Block reported on federal legislation approving additional funding for COVID-19 relief as well as a continuing resolution to maintain SR funding approved in late December. OEL must submit a plan for approval by the federal government prior to distribution and guidance on spending of these newly allocated funds. The Coalition is holding a blood drive Feb. 22nd from 1:00-4:00pm. 	
9. Adjournment	The board meeting adjourned by acclamation at 10:28 am.	
Next Meeting	March 17, 2021, 9:00 am – 11:00 am, via Zoom	