



EARLY LEARNING COALITION OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA

Harvest International Academy: Appeal Hearing Minutes

September 28, 2016

11:00 am

Purpose: Review the Coalition's decision to terminate the School Readiness contract with Harvest International Academy, at 1201 Taylor Avenue Extension, Lehigh Acres, FL 33936

Executive Committee Members Present:

Ashley Houk, Appeals Committee Chair, Preschool Director, First Presbyterian Preschool (Board Provider Rep)

Dr. Joseph Pepe, Health Dept. Administrator, Florida Dept. of Health in Hendry/Glades Counties

Dr. Trina Puddefoot, Early Steps, Program Director

Appellant (s) Present: Harvest International Academy: Pastor Kevin Hall; Barbara Daring; Lisbey Garcia

Coalition Staff Present: Susan Block, CEO; Gayla Thompson, Chief Officer; Ginger McHale, Executive Administrative Assistant to CEO

Agenda Items	Discussion	Action/Assignments
Introductions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chairperson, Ashley Houk, led introductions. 	
Review of Hearing Procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ms. Houk reviewed the appeal hearing procedure, referring to the agenda provided to all participants. 	

<p>Presentation by Early Learning Coalition Staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gayla Thompson, Chief Quality Officer, reviewed the background of the Coalition’s Decision to terminate the School Readiness (SR) contract with Harvest International Academy. The basis for termination was two (2) Class I licensing violations by the Department of Children and Families. Class I Violations are the most serious in nature, pose an imminent threat to a child including abuse or neglect and which could or does result in the death or serious harm to the health, safety or well-being of a child. • Ms. Block explained the Coalition’s rationale for determining the 2 year period when Harvest International Academy would be unable to contract with the Coalition to provide SR services. The statewide contracts for SR allows up to a five year termination period for programs violating the contract terms. The Coalition implemented its procedure in response to Class 1 violations. The Coalition’s procedure, at the time of this incident, called for immediate termination of any contract with programs with two Class 1 Violations within one year. 	
<p>Presentation of Appeal by Advanced Learning Academy</p>	<p>Harvest International Academy (HIA) presented their appeal. The key points were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Pastor referenced the program’s relationship with families • The parent was notified by the injured child about the injury via cell phone. When the parent arrived to pick up the child, the program was notified of the injury. • HIA notified DCF immediately. • The staff member involved was asked to leave the facility immediately following the incident. • Following the incident, the director and office staff notified the ELC in person • HIA spoke with the mentor • ELC provided resources • Cameras were installed, a 2 way radio is now available in all classrooms. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HIA implemented stricter supervision methods by the office staff (informal) • DCF did renew the license (following the incident) 	
Conclusion of Appeal Hearing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All in attendance, except the three committee members, were excused and left the room. 	.
Committee Decision	<p>The Committee overturned the Coalition decision to terminate School Readiness contract with Harvest International Academy. The Provider is allowed to enroll children effective immediately.</p> <p>The Committee (instead) instituted a Corrective Action Plan, as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Director and Administrator will attend ELC approved guidance and discipline training; 2. The Director and Administrator will provide discipline training to staff; 3. The Director and Administrator will use formal assessment with teachers and classrooms to monitor the program. It was strongly recommended that the program participate in the Southwest Florida STARS program; 4. The program will develop a formal accident and incident plan in writing, to clarify roles and responsibilities. <p>The Committee specifically stated these reasons in support of its decisions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. DCF and the ELC were notified in a timely manner, as required; 2. Proper steps were taken in terminating the employee and implementing immediate corrective actions; 3. The negative impact of contract termination to the community was considered; 4. You are a long-standing provider in the community; 5. DCF felt it proper to renew facilities license following the incident; 6, The ELC Mentor was involved and provided resources to the teachers; 	<p>Motion to accept the committee ruling by Dr. Puddefoot; Second by Dr. Pepe/ Motion Approved.</p> <p>Ms. Block will communicate with the Provider within 24 hours. Ms. Houk will present findings at the September 14th Executive Committee and September 28th Board meetings.</p> <p>A letter will be sent to Ms. Garcia with the committee's determination by Ms. Block</p>

	<p>7. Cameras were installed, two-way radios were purchased for all classrooms;</p> <p>8. Stricter informal supervision methods from office staff have been implemented.</p>	
<p>Preparation of Appeals Hearing Committee Minutes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Committee prepared a final draft of the minutes of the appeals hearing and signed, following the motion to accept the minutes, as drafted. 	<p>Motion to accept the minutes by Dr. Puddefoot. Second by Dr. Pepe. Motion Approved.</p> <p>The Committee charged Ms. Block with typing of the minutes, as written. Ms. Block will post the approved minutes to the Coalition's website.</p>
<p>Adjournment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ms. Houk thanked the members for their participation and adjourned the meeting at 11:56 am. 	