



Early Learning Coalition of Southwest Florida

Executive Director's Report for Coalition Board Meeting— 1/24/2007

Office of Early Learning Updates

1. **Board Chair and Executive Director Meeting:** Ms. Sabra Cecil and Ms. Barbara Saunders attended the Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC) meeting on December 8, 2006; Ms. Saunders attended the Executive Director meeting as well on 7th. The ELAC meeting featured a Board Orientation as well as a Board Assessment presentation by Charlie Waters. Ms. Cecil and Ms. Saunders felt that this would be an appropriate presentation for the full board, including new members, at the March Coalition Meeting. Ms. Saunders will inquire with AWI staff to get AWI representation for the Board Orientation at the March Meeting.
2. **Governor Crist Names New Secretary of AWI :** Governor Charlie Crist names Ms. Monesia Brown, Secretary of the Agency for Workforce Innovation. Ms. Brown convened a conference call with all 31 ELC Executive Directors for a brief introduction and promised to visit all 31 Coalitions to get to know their programs and communities served.

Senate President Ken Pruitt released the Senate committee chairs and membership for the 2006-2008 term. (For a list of Senate committee assignments and the Press Release, see pp. 49-57A.)

3. **Agency for Workforce Innovation (AWI) Fiscal Monitoring:** AWI has assigned the agency of S. Davis & Associates, P.A., to monitor each School Readiness Coalition for fiscal management quality assurance. The ELC of SWFL Fiscal Monitoring visit for the FY2006-2007 program year will be from January 29th through February 7, 2007. (See letter of engagement and required document listing on pp. 58-59).
4. **Two statewide early childhood initiatives received “yes” votes in the most recent election** (Education Week, November 15, 2006; edweek.org):
 - In Arizona, voters approved a tobacco tax for child development programs. Arizona smokers will now pay an 80-cent tax on cigarettes to fund the Arizona Early Childhood Development and Health Initiative, which will raise about \$150 million a year for local and regional services for preschool children.
 - In Nebraska, a new early childhood endowment fund gained voter approval. This new fund directs \$40 million in state education money to services for at-risk infants and toddlers. The measure requires \$20 million in private matching funds.

- 5. Statewide Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screener (FLKRS) Results:** The 2006 FLKRS Results by District were released to the Coalitions on December 8, 2006. Ms. Saunders will give a presentation on the Statewide Data by School District; the VPK Provider Improvement Plan; and the VPK Provider Readiness Rate at the January 24th meeting. (See DOE Press Release from Education Commissioner John L. Winn on pp. 60-64) ; (See Memorandum from Commissioner John Winn regarding results of 2006 FLKRS by District on pp. 65-70).
- 6. Proposed FY2007-2008 School Readiness Equity and Performance Allocation Formula:** As required in Florida Statutes 411.01(9), AWI presented the proposed FY2007-2008 School Readiness Equity and Performance Allocation Formula to the Governor, and Senate and House Appropriations Committees on Dec. 28th, 2007. The formula was developed based on projected need in each respective Coalition community as well as Coalition performance. According to the proposed allocation formula, the ELC of SWFL would receive a 9.78% increase. Currently, in FY2006-2007, the Coalition receives \$20,039,048 for School Readiness funding; with the new allocation, in FY2007-2008, the ELC of SWFL would receive \$22,998,578. This is a *proposed* allocation formula and must be approved by the appropriations committees. (See Letters to Governor, Senate, House and allocation formula and methodology on pp. 71-79)
- 7. Statewide Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK) Eligibility Enrollment Pilot:** Our Early Learning Coalition was selected to participate in a Statewide VPK Eligibility Enrollment Pilot designed to make the VPK enrollment process and enrollment locations more convenient for families. Private VPK providers were invited to register for the Pilot project, based on good standing and a variety of eligibility requirements as identified in Rule. There will be three Pilot Project Orientations in Lee, Hendry/Glades and Collier counties and five region-wide VPK Parent Round-Ups. We feel that with the additional enrollment locations and authorized enrollment agents for the Coalition, we will be able to attract more families for the VPK Education Program in the upcoming Summer and Fall sessions. (Refer to the Coalition Component section, under VPK updates, for further information.)
- 8. AWI Approval of Early Learning Plan—**The ELC of SWFL Early Learning Plan, with all recommended revisions was fully approved by AWI on November 22, 2006. The Agency for Workforce Innovation identified the following “strengths” in the EL Plan:
- Through community assessment that supports service priorities
 - Evidence of a planning process that looks at “the big picture”
 - Many well written policies and procedures
 - Demonstrates understanding of the plan as a living document
 - Strong commitment to health screening for all children
 - Comprehensive program evaluation for school readiness

(The AWI approval letter and ELC Plan Review can be found on pp. 80-82)

- 9. Infant and Toddler Rate increase for Collier Licensed Family Child Care Providers**—We are awaiting a response from AWI on our request to increase infant and toddler provider reimbursement rates for the Collier Licensed Family Child Care providers. Our Collier Family Child Care Home (FCCH) licensed providers did not receive a rate increase for Infant and Toddler care when all other providers received a rate increase because of the disproportionate Market Rate survey in Collier County. An approval from AWI requires a waiver that stipulates that a provider's reimbursement rate cannot exceed the annually determined 75th percentile of provider rates in the geographic child care market.
- 10. Quality Counts 2007**—A National Policy Group is conducting research on factors that affect educational outcomes for children from “Cradle To Career”, connecting American education from Birth to Adulthood. The study shows that children's chances for success don't just rest on outcomes from the K-12 years; The are also shaped by experiences during the preschool years and opportunities for continued training and education beyond high school. It is hoped that this research will influence education policy and investment, especially in the early years.

Excerpts from the study: Looking Through a Wider Lens”; Breaking the Cycle of Poverty; Paying Attention Earlier On” and “Early Intervention on a Large Scale”, (showing the economic benefits of ensuring good early-childhood development are clear and now is the time to design and implement a system to do it), are on pp. 83-98 ; Florida Results from Quality Counts 2007 report is on pp. 99-106' Additional information on the study can be accessed from the Education Week publication at <http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2007/01/04/17execsum.h26.html>

- 11. Children's Week: A Statewide Celebration of Parents and Children:** The purpose of Children's Week is to create a statewide shared vision of Florida's commitment to its children and families and to collectively develop and implement strategies for moving the vision forward. In order for us to be successful in this task, it is critical that we coordinate and implement these strategies at both the local and statewide levels. This year, Children's Week has teamed up with the Association of Early Learning Coalitions, the Health Department's *Step Up Florida* program and Prevent Child Abuse Florida's *Winds of Change* campaign to expand the network of community involvement and advocacy on a wide array of children's issues at the local level in each of Florida's Counties. (See pp. 116-124 for more information on State and Local Children's Week Events as well as a sample Proclamation (p. 125) that we will present to each of our County Boards of Commissioners; and Children's Week Partnership Packet on pp. 107-118).

Coalition Updates

- 12. DOCS FOR TOTS: Southwest Florida Doctors Advocate for Children!!**— Congratulations!!! to the Coalition Health and Development Committee, Shirley Losch and staff of the ELC of SWFL for producing the 2007 SWFL Docs for Tots event! This will be one of the highlights marking the success of FY2006-2007 and will become an annual event! Over 80 health care professionals and early learning Directors and Teachers attended the luncheon, and heard our guest speaker, Dr. George Askew, Dr. Askew, the national spokesman for Docs For

Tots. In addition, over 30 physicians, DFT partners and Board Members attended the evening dinner event. Six physicians signed up as DFT advocates that evening and we heard from FGCU and Children's Hospital staff that they will sponsor this event again next year. (See Docs for Tots local organization resource guide and Physicians Guide in Coalition Portfolio!)

13. Happy New Year Calendar from ELC of SWFL! In an effort to address the parent education; professional development and education goals in the ELC of SWFL Early Learning Plan, the Coalition produced a 2007 Calendar called, "How Does Your Garden Grow?". The calendar has information on the Coalition, School Readiness and VPK Programs, Resources and Contact information for Parents and Teachers, as well as National/State Children and Family Celebrations and Early Childhood Conferences. 600 Calendars were purchased and mailed out to every SR and VPK Provider in our SW Florida Counties in January! See Calendar in side pocket of Coalition Portfolio.

14. Local Children's Week events: The Docs For Tots event for all 4 Counties was our big Kick Off event for the Children's Week Celebrations, which happen locally between the months of January through March. The day designated for Children and Family Day in Florida is Sunday, April 1st.

The Hendry/Glades Children's Week Celebration will be held on Saturday, February 10 at Labelle Elementary from 10:00AM to 2:00PM. Approximately twenty different community agencies will participate in the event, hosting dozens children's activities. Among the activities offered are making of the handprints to be sent to the Capitol and hanged during Children's Week. There will also be a reading corner, door prizes, and free bike helmets! The day will also include involvement with the Step Up Florida program which will end their route at Labelle Elementary. Children will then walk with the Step Up Florida flag and participate in fun physical activities outside! For questions, contact Judy Paskvan Phone: (863)674-4056 ext. 116, email: Judith.Paskvan@doh.state.fl.us

15. Faith-Based Child Care Conference: The State Board of the Child Development Education Alliance (CDEA) would like to invite two ELC of SWFL Board Members to the 13th Annual CDEA Conference to be held on March 1-3 in Jacksonville, Florida. CDEA will pay the registrations of the Board Members who are selected. (See Memo from Ellen McKinley, President of CDEA on p. 126).

16. Statewide/Local Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screener (FLKRS)

Results: Ms. Saunders will give a presentation on:

- Parent Responsibility for VPK Children Screened –FLKRS Flyer; (p. 127)
- VPK Provider Readiness Rate Presentation; (pp. 128)
- Calculating the Readiness Rate—Background/Formulas; (pp. 133-138)
- VPK Provider Improvement Plan Presentation; (pp. 139-145)
- VPK Provider Improvement Process (Online-4 Steps) (p. 146)
- 2005-2006 DIBELS Results per County; (pp. 147-148)
- 2006-2007 DIBELS Results per County; (pp. 149-150)
- 2005-2007 DIBELS Percent Change per County; (pp. 151-152)
- Comparison of 3-year DIBELS data; (pp. 152A-D)
- 2005-2006 Percentages of Kindergarten LEP Students Whose Native Language is Spanish; (pp. 153-155).