



**Early Learning Coalition of Southwest Florida Board Meeting
November 30, 2005
9:00 a.m. to 11:15 a.m. ~Three Oaks Banquet and Conference
Meeting Minutes**

Board Members Present:

Sabra Cecil, Phillip Keyes, Pat Gulley, Dr. Elizabeth Karas, Barbara Minster, Mary Lou Campbell, Laura Stacell, Rhea Mike, Alice Parrish, Joan Foss, Pat Cacho, Myra Shapiro

ELC Staff Members Present:

Barbara Saunders, Exec. Director; Dee Goforth, Office Manager; Peter Escayg, Director of Operations; Maggie Pointelin, Director of Early Learning Services; Melanie Holaway, Professional Development Coordinator; Shirley Losch, Director of Health Services; Jean Smith, PERKS Technical Assistance Specialist, Mike Kinney, Fiscal Agent; Cheryl Dromgoole, Admin. Program Assistant

Community Members Present: Nancy Coker, CCSWFL; Barb Peck, CCSWFL; Bronwyn Gogia, CCSWFL; Jennifer Smith, FDLRS; Dawn Miller, Hendry; Denise Giardina, Youth Haven; Debbie Johnson, CCSWFL; Jenn Faber, Children's Forum; Arlene Bettencourt, CCSWFL; Terri Konczak, DOE-VPK; Bonnie Clukey, CCPS; Gilda Duran, CCSWFL; Sharon Kirkpatrick, Early Years Ed.; Dorothy Ferguson, Private Sector; William A. Robinson, CCSWFL; Donna Philp, CCSWFL-Collier; Barbara Trani, LCAEYC

OBJECTIVES

1. To review and approve the minutes of the Sept. 28th meeting
2. To review and approve the August and September Financial statements
3. To hear a presentation on VPK Plans for 2006 Enrollment
4. To review Office of Early Learning and VPK/SR Coalition updates (ED Report)
5. To hear Committee Reports
6. To discuss "Good of the Order" items
7. To build the January 25th agenda and receive public input

Welcome and Agenda Review

Sabra Cecil called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m. Introductions were made of Board members and the public. One additional agenda item is to discuss locations of board meetings. Introduction of Alice Parrish – voting member. **A quorum was established. There were no changes to the agenda.**

I. Review and Approve Minutes of the September 30th Meeting

Myra moved that the minutes be accepted. Alan seconded. **APPROVED**

II. To Review and Approve the August and September Financial Statements

Michael reviewed the financial statements. Michael talked about the State checks becoming automated for electronic deposit. CCSWFL and RCMA also receive electronic deposit. There were 4515 SR children in September; and 2750 VPK children enrolled in our SWF counties. A few items on the financial report were noted for clarification: Identify the dollars in the non-restricted account as well as the PERKS grant. Phillip Keys made the motion to correct and Pat Gulley seconded. **APPROVED.**

III. To hear a presentation on VPK Plans for 2006 Enrollment

Barbara made a VPK presentation called: VPK 2006: Continuing the Journey Together.” 55% of projected children in all four counties are enrolled in a VPK program in our SWF counties. AWI and DOE, along with the coalitions, have been working together to develop policies and implement this program. A Coalition-sponsored VPK Strategic Planning Group was developed to address Summer VPK planning and enrollment. A Statewide VPK Planning Group hosted by DOE was held a week later. Statewide we are at 98, 035 enrolled as of 10/14/05. Barbara discussed possible reasons children are not enrolled: Parents have 4 year old children in non-VPK programs and are happy with them; there is no transportation to VPK programs; parents are waiting for the School District programs; or they don't know about the program. Barbara reviewed the aggressive public awareness campaign that will kick off right after Christmas beginning with a mass mailing (almost 5,000 VPK information tabloids) to every home with a 3 and 4 year old child. VPK brochures are being developed and the Coalition website is ready to be launched with a special section for VPK.

Kate Sroka added that she sees a great improvement, since VPK, in the attendance of the children, the involvement of parents, and the enthusiasm of the teachers to implement a high quality VPK program.

Bill Robertson (CCSWFL-Board Member) raised the concern over a lack of SR money to wrap around the VPK services. Bill feels that this may also be a reason why we are not enrolling all eligible children.

Barbara Mainster said that she thinks that Providers have been very smart to wait to join VPK until January and convert those children into VPK children. Kate mentioned that the manner in which children are taught is the prime interest.

B. Saunders referred to the Strategic Plan on page 131.

Bill Robertson (CCSWFL) asked if we have information on the school district providers that have not signed up?” Barbara said that the list will be on the website as soon as she receives confirmation from the school districts. Barbara Mainster said that parents might wait until March or April to register their children and school districts might HAVE to sign up these children. School Choice helps the school districts in identifying those Kindergarten children that might qualify as candidates for VPK. Barbara Saunders said that staff from the Coalition, CCSWFL and

The School District of Lee County will partner in staffing the School Choice offices in Lee County to register potential VPK children when they come to register for Kindergarten.

Pat Cacho said that in spite of Tallahassee's bumbling, a good job was done in enrolling VPK children. The parents need to be targeted as to WHY they have not enrolled their child and then approach them. Sabra said that maybe a way we can do that is to conduct a survey when they enroll for Kindergarten and then we can get a consensus of why they did not enroll previously. Myra suggested that all four counties should participate in the survey. Barbara said that the State is also sending out a survey to a sample number of parents in Florida and it would be good to use the same survey. Also, we shouldn't be so quick to ask why parents have not signed up when we still have the winter session and the summer session to go. Sabra said that a task force should be assigned to seek and analyze why parents are not enrolling in their location. Myra seconded. **APPROVED.**

ACTION ITEM: A task force will be created to organize and conduct a survey asking parents why they have not enrolled their child in VPK. All counties should be included to talk to the school districts and see if they will agree to survey the children they register. Barbara will find out what survey was used by AWI and get a copy.

IV. To review Office of Early Learning and VPK/SR Coalition updates (ED Report)

Barbara reviewed the ED Report. (See ED Report at the Coalition website, www.elcofswfl.org.) Barbara will attend the ED meeting in Orlando on Thursday and Sabra will attend a meeting with the Lieutenant-Governor in Orlando the following day on Friday.

Pat Cacho commented that Edison College may not be a good central location for the VPK Provider meetings. Barbara S. said that only the meetings for new VPK providers are held at the 4 Edison campus locations in Lee, Collier, Hendry and Glades counties as we did last year. This establishes a connection between the VPK initiative and professional development partnerships with the Colleges and Universities that are needed to get VPK teachers credentialed. Turnout to these meetings has been good and we have other Provider support meetings at YMCA and CCSWFL and other central locations in Collier County.

V. To hear Committee Reports

Peter Escayg reviewed the School Readiness Contract reports. At the next meeting, there will be a roll-up report on utilization of our Grant dollars as well as a report on the progress of our contracted service provider, CCSWFL.

Maggie reported on the efforts of the Quality Committee. (See notes from the Quality meeting at www.elcofswfl.org.) Alan Dimmitt expressed concern that the media is not grasping the VPK information. Alan's concern that the media is waiting for us to fail, and cited the recent Naples Daily News article referring to the State VPK initiative as a "train wreck". Barbara and Sabra saw that article and although the title is sensational, the article notes many positive outcomes and quotes from our VPK efforts in Lee and Collier counties. Barbara felt that we have had good and fair press in both the News Press and the Bonita Banner and will do the same with the Hendry and Glades papers. Myra suggested Editorial Review Board meetings with board members. Barbara M. suggested that Alan be a part of talking to the editorial review board. Myra suggested presenting a real life positive story from a parent who has a child in the program and is associated with the media. Phillip commented on the great work that has been accomplished with our VPK efforts thus far and sometimes we just need to put on our "Teflon Coat."

ACTION ITEM: Barbara and the Executive Committee will look into holding an editorial review board to circulate the Coalition's positive efforts to implement the VPK program in SWFL.

Shirley reported on the Health Services Committee, Friday Dec. 16th at All Children's Specialty Center, and reported that we have a new nurse for Collier County, Dana Breeden.

Myra asked if the Coalition is directly providing health services in Collier County or are they contracting with other providers to do so? Rhea Mike explained the structure of the relationships between the four counties and the health departments. In the past, Coalition health services were contracted out to the Health Depts. of Lee and Collier. Each health dept. provided a nurse and Lee had a nurse (Shirley Losch) and health screener. Last year, when the Collier nurse left the program, Shirley Losch was hired by the Coalition as the Director of Health Services to oversee and coordinate the Collier, Lee, Hendry and Glades screening efforts, provider health and safety training and parent/teacher consultations.

Collier still has a health nurse, Dana Breeden, that contracts with the Collier Health Dept., paid for by the Coalition, to screen children and educate teachers and parents. Screeners are also hired in Collier, Lee, Hendry and Glades to assist in screening children in those communities. Shirley coordinates all health training and screening events and provides education and consultation services for Lee and Hendry/Glades communities, and, if needed, in Collier as well. If the coalition is awarded the Health Screening Grant from the Collier Children's Foundation, the health screening efforts in Collier will be redoubled and coordinated with all of Collier County health screening partners.

ADDITIONAL AGENDA ITEM: Location of the board meetings: Sabra reviewed the reasons for having the meetings at different locations. The Executive Board discussed this option. The Coalition approved the change of day and time of the board meetings based on feedback from the Board at the Coalition Strategic Planning Meeting last summer. They also approved the reduction of meetings from monthly to bi-monthly at the last meeting. Phillip brought up the request at that time to consider having board meetings hosted by each county in order to fully involve all SWF Coalition communities and local constituents and educate the members on specific needs of each community. Phillip said that it was important to have local representatives present at the board meetings of each location to focus on local needs and gaps in services to children and families. This will give the Board members and coalition a better idea of what the needs of that particular community are and how they can help address the need.

Dan England said that it might be a good reason for the press to come and give us positive exposure. Alan D. said that after discussing at the Executive Comm., this was a good positive move.

Laura Stacell suggested that we monitor the attendance and also requested that the board be given job descriptions of the Coalition staff. Barbara will provide these in the January Board packet.

Pat Gulley made a motion to accept the schedule of the meeting locations for the year. Phillip seconded. Barbara M. said it was a great idea. But she said maybe we should consider only twice a year at remote areas.

It was suggested that the meeting in March be at the Krome Center – at the March meetings and lunch at Flora & Ella's.

APPROVED.

VI. To discuss “Good of the Order” items

VII. To build the January 25th agenda and receive public input

Board Input -

Barbara Mainster wants to work with Kate Sroka and Elaine Schaeffer to develop a presentation on the Benefits and Challenges of Professional Development of early childhood teachers. Bill Robinson will participate in this workgroup and Barbara Saunders will assist with the production of the presentation for the January meeting.

Phillip Keyes informed the members of the construction plans of the water management water retention area in Hendry County– recruiting over 400 employees. It will involve a need for child care. Phillip would like to discuss more of these efforts and possible Coalition involvement, in future board meetings.

Barbara Mainster will schedule a presenter from Immokalee.

Liz Karas asked to those talking to legislators that school districts are facing unique challenges to implement the summer VPK program and that the reimbursement given to the district will not cover the administrative costs to fund the program. Sabra will talk to the Lieutenant-Governor on Friday at her meeting and address this issue. Laura Stacell said that the school district’s concern is that they can only put 18 in a classroom. Barbara S. reminded that the law says that 1-10 children for the summer program for a total of 20 children. The class size amendment does not apply to VPK.

Public Input -

Bill Robinson’s concern is: Where will the VPK children be put in the school districts? Bathroom requirements, etc. School district is exempt for licensing.

Donna Philp said Collier County needs our support and help with the Silent Auction at the Naples Dinner Theatre on January 21st. Please send auction items to Donna or call for pick up, 643-3908. Tickets are also on sale (Featured play: “How To Succeed In Business Without Really Trying”) at CCSWFL office in Naples. Contact Donna to reserve your seat!

Nancy Coker asked that a correction be made to the R&R Report of providers in Glades Counties. Peter will make the correction.

Adjourn—Phillip made a motion to adjourn. Alan seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 11:40 a.m.

Next Meeting: January 25, 2006 at Immokalee One Stop Career Center — 9 a.m. to 11:15 a.m. Executive Board Meeting TBA.