



# Minutes

Board of Directors Annual Meeting & Retreat  
October 6, 2008; 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.  
Key Largo Grande Resort

**Board Attendees:** Octavio A. Verdeja Jr.(Chair); Yesenia Perkins (Treasurer); Yvonne T. Johnson, M.D., (Vice Chair); Alan Abramowitz; Rick Beasley; Gina Cortes-Suarez Ed.D.; Alan Eckstein, Esq.; The Hon. Isis Garcia-Martinez; P. Morgan Hill; David Lawrence, Jr.; Harve Mogul; Dabney G. Park, Ph.D.; Gerald K. Schwartz, Esq.; The Hon. Natacha Seijas; Ann Karen Weller, R.N.; David Williams, Jr.; Valtena G. Brown; Connie Chapell; Silvia La Villa, Ed.D.; Irene Taylor-Wooten; Jane McQueen; Walter Harvey (Board Attorney)

**Board Absentees:** The Hon. Cindy Lederman; Esq.; Daniel Armstrong, Ph.D.

**Staff Attendees:** Evelio Torres (President/CEO); Angelo Parrino; Blythe Robinson; Tabatha Cullen; Leeana Pena; Nadira Ali; Diana Lane; Gabriel Carreras; Alina Soto; Fiorella Altare; Melody Thelwell; Jose Hernandez; Fred Hicks; Mary Williams, ELC Monroe; Amber Eby, ELC Monroe

**General Attendees:** Eddie Rivera, AWI; Doug Blomberg, WHFS; Diana Ragbeer, The Children's Trust; Sue Ellen Bennett, St. James Children's Center

## I. Welcome and Introductions

Octavio A. Verdeja, Jr., Chair

- Chairman, Octavio Verdeja called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone.
- Leeana Pena called roll and a quorum was established with sixteen (16) voting members.
- E. Torres introduced the new Board Liaison, Leeana Pena.
- O. Verdeja congratulated David Lawrence, Jr. and The Children's Trust. He recognized the tremendous job and incredible work The Children's Trust has done in the community. He recognized all the officers and board members of ELC for the tremendous work they do for ELC. He thanked all the partners and providers of ELC, stating they are the reason the coalition exists. He also thanked the ELC staff for their dedication throughout the year and Evelio Torres for his leadership.
- The University of Miami was awarded with the center for the National Children's Society and funded for all four Florida counties: Miami-Dade, Hillsboro, Orange and Baker. He stated that the 55 million dollar award would be over the next 5 years



and would bring about \$400 million dollars of new jobs to Florida, as well as focus on the children. He thanked the ELC board as well as the 150 partners that made it possible.

## **II. Approval of Minutes**

**Octavio A. Verdeja, Jr.**

- O. Verdeja called for the approval of the meeting minutes from 08/04/08.

A. Eckstein pointed out a paragraph on page 7 of the meeting minutes, regarding Dr. Silvia La Villa and her position on the board. He stated that the Governance and Bylaws Committee used the reposition of Dr. La Villa as an example and this was no reflection of Dr. La Villa. The committee praises her for the work she's doing.

- A. Eckstein moved to approve the minutes of 08/04/08.
- Motion was seconded by P. Hill.
- Motion was unanimously passed.

## **III. Executive Committee Report**

**Octavio A. Verdeja, Jr.**

- O. Verdeja stated that since there were a number of resolutions and the Executive Committee had already approved the resolutions, he would like the resolutions to be passed in blocks of three.

E. Torres informed the board that on page 11 of the board binder, a resolution summary had been provided.

O. Verdeja addressed Resolutions A, B, and C of the meeting agenda:

- Motion to ratify the approval of the Chairman of the Executive Committee to approve Resolution 090408-01 which authorizes the President and CEO to execute the First Amendment to contract PSA08-147 with Teaching Strategies, Inc., for curricula materials and training.
- Motion to ratify the approval of the Chairman of the Executive Committee to approve Resolution 090408-02 which authorizes the President and CEO to execute the First Amendment to contract PSA08-145 with Leapfrog School, a Division of Leapfrog Enterprises, Inc., for curricula materials and training.
- Motion to ratify the approval of the Chairman of the Executive Committee to approve Resolution 090408-03 to authorize the President and CEO to release a Request for Proposal ("RFP") for Performance Management & Software Services for enhancement to the Coalition's Scorecard and Dashboard.



- A. Eckstein moved to approve Resolutions 090408-01, 090408-02, and 090408-03.
  - Motion was seconded by P. Hill.
  - Motion was unanimously passed.
- O. Verdeja addressed Resolutions D, E, and F of the meeting agenda:
- Motion to ratify the approval of the Chairman of the Executive Committee to approve Resolution 090408-04 to authorize the President and CEO to release a Request for Proposal (“RFP”) for The Early Literacy Book Distribution Program.
  - Motion to ratify the approval of the Chairman of the Executive Committee to approve Resolution 090408-05 to authorize the President and CEO to release a Request for Proposal (“RFP”) for Printing.
  - Motion to ratify the approval of the Chairman of the Executive Committee to approve Resolution 090408-06 to authorize the President and CEO to release a Request for Proposal (“RFP”) for Office Supplies.
    - A. Eckstein moved to approve Resolutions 090408-04, 090408-05, and 090408-06.
    - Motion was seconded by Y. Johnson.
    - Motion was unanimously passed.
- O. Verdeja addressed Resolutions G, H, and I of the meeting agenda:
- Motion to ratify the approval of the Chairman of the Executive Committee to approve Resolution 092908-01 to authorize the President and CEO to execute the Second Amendment to contract C07-122 with Devereux Foundation, Inc. for providing assessments for the QRIS program.
  - Motion to ratify the approval of the Chairman of the Executive Committee to approve Resolution 092908-02 to authorize the President and CEO to execute the Third Amendment to contract C07-125 with Florida International University Board of Trustees for providing technical assistance and accreditation services for the QRIS program.
  - Motion to ratify the approval of the Chairman of the Executive Committee to approve Resolution 092908-03 to authorize the President and CEO to execute the First Amendment to contract C07-121 with University of Miami for providing technical assistance and accreditation services, specifically to family child care homes for the QRIS program



- A. Eckstein moved to approve Resolutions 092908-01, 092908-02, and 092908-03.
- Motion was seconded by Y. Johnson.
- Motion was unanimously passed.

O. Verdeja addressed Resolutions J, K, and L of the meeting agenda:

- Motion to ratify approval of the Chairman of the Executive Committee to approve Resolution 092908-04 to authorize the President and CEO to execute the Third Amendment to contract LK809 with the Department of Children and Families for providing Refugee childcare services.
- Motion to ratify the approval of the Chairman of the Executive Committee to approve Resolution 092908-05 to authorize the President and CEO to execute contract C08-120 with Miami-Dade County for providing Refugee childcare services.
- Motion to ratify the approval of the Chairman of the Executive Committee to approve Resolution 092908-06 to authorize the President and CEO to execute the First Amendment to contract C08-114 with Miami-Dade County for providing School Readiness services.

S. La Villa asked for additional information on Resolution 092908-04, with questions in regards to what criteria were to be met.

E. Torres stated that they have very specific criteria. The dollars are provided directly from DCF and they are providing a little over \$500,000 to the contract. He stated that this was for one particular group; the concern being ELC had more dollars than children to serve. He stated that ELC is meeting with the Department of Children and Families and their group of refugee service providers to come up with a way to enroll additional children. He stated that many of these children are Cuban refugee and a portion of Haitian population, confirming that it is a very specific criteria.

- A. Eckstein moved to approve Resolutions 092908-04, 092908-05, and 092908-06.
- Motion was seconded by N. Seijas.
- Motion was unanimously passed.

O. Verdeja addressed Resolution M of the meeting agenda:

- Motion to ratify the approval of Resolution 092908-07 which authorizes the President and CEO to amend Resolution #060707-07 for contract C07-106 with Miami-Dade County for the FY 2007-2008 School Readiness Program.



- A. Eckstein moved to approve Resolution 092908-07.
- Motion was seconded by Y. Johnson.
- Motion was unanimously passed.

O. Verdeja addressed Resolution N of the meeting agenda:

- Motion to ratify the approval of Resolution 092908-08 which authorizes the President and CEO to amend Resolution #060707-08 for contract C07-107 with Miami-Dade County for the FY 2007-2008 Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten Program.

E. Torres explained that this was not a lawsuit, but a settlement agreement with Miami-Dade County for a contract. He explained that when the last invoice was received in September from Miami-Dade County for the VPK program, it exceeded the contract amount and that the contract closed on June 30, 2008. He continued to explain that in order to make payment the BOD must authorize the settlement agreement since Miami-Dade County has already paid the providers for VPK services.

- A. Eckstein moved to approve Resolution 092908-08.
- Motion was seconded by G. Schwartz.
- Motion was unanimously passed.

#### **IV. Finance Committee Report**

**Yesenia Perkins, Treasurer**

- Motion to approve Resolution 100608-01 which authorizes the President and CEO to negotiate and execute a settlement agreement as per the Procurement Process outlined in Florida Statutes, Chapter 287, with Miami-Dade County for providing Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten program services.
  - A. Eckstein moved to approve Resolution 100608-01.
  - Motion was seconded by G. Schwartz.
  - Motion was unanimously passed.

Y. Perkins went through the financial statements, noting to the board that the majority of the statements are as of August 31, 2008.

Y. Perkins stated that in the breakdown of restricted and unrestricted amounts, the amount of \$1,050,000 of the \$1,298,000 Total Temporarily Restricted amount is being reviewed since the State is requiring ELC to spend. She stated that close to \$800,000 of that amount were parent fees that were collected in the previous year. She explained that the State does not want to hold the amount in reserves any longer and ELC is being asked to use the amount. She stated that E. Torres is putting a plan together on how to use this amount.



E. Torres explained that ELCMDM is not the only coalition that has these dollars and that this is the only reserve that ELC has and intended to use in case of a major catastrophe. He stated that the \$800,000 of temporarily restricted dollars could only be used for slots, and that ELC was working with the State so that the dollars would not have to be spent. He explained that this was considered program income by the State, as it was generated through parent fees.

Y. Perkins addressed Eddie Rivera of AWI. She stated that in order for this plan to work the other coalitions in the state would need to come together to keep these dollars in the reserves. She asked Mr. Rivera what he had been hearing from the other coalitions.

E. Rivera stated that the AWI's position is that these parent fees were collected but that program funds were used in lieu of the fees, stating that it is a copayment situation as the state pays but the parents are supposed to pay for the cost of care. He stated that when these fees were collected, ELC made up the difference to the providers with program funds. He stated that AWI's issue is that ELC used program funds, and that those dollars should still be spent. He continued to state that he believes the state's position is that with cutbacks anticipated, ELC could possibly end up losing these funds.

A. Parrino asked if the state was asking for these funds to be returned, to which the reply was no.

E. Torres explained that the state is asking that before ELC drops from the grant reward, that the \$800,000 be spent, and reiterated that the dollars could only be used for slots.

Y. Perkins stated that it must be kept in mind that with the size of this coalition, spending those dollars would mean not having a significant reserve for a future emergency. She explained how this all came about several years ago, describing how copayments were made from payments and the other amount was provided by the coalition. She explained that the coalition kept what was collected of the parents in the coalition's reserve, explaining that in fact this should have been given to the providers. The funds were drawn down from the state to cover what was collected. She reiterated that efforts were being made to have the other coalitions in the state support not spending those dollars and that although it may take a while; it was being brought to the board's attention so it wouldn't be a surprise in the future.

Y. Perkins continued to go through the financial statements. She stated that the coalition was in alignment on where they should be on their budget. She stated that at the beginning of this year, the state directed



the coalition to do a 4 percent hold back of which administration was given the authorization to reduce the budget by \$1.9 million and that another \$900,000 was deducted from slots.

E. Torres explained that last year the coalition was facing a \$3,000,000 reduction and that the state only reduced the budget by \$1.9 million, in hopes that there would be a surplus in the grants awarded to the coalition. At the time of the Finance Committee Meeting, the state had not yet received the invoices from the last fiscal year from coalitions so they were not able to tell ELC if they had been able to make up the rest of the hold backs. If the state has not been able to make that up then ELC would have to absorb the rest of their cut from last year which would amount to another \$1,000,000.

A. Parrino went through the Budget Reduction Analysis report.

Y. Perkins explained that in the next two board meetings ELC might be at a slight deficit, but that would be because of the budget cuts. She also explained that staff was making an effort to keep the spending low through management of the children to bring the numbers down to avoid an immense deficit at the end of the fiscal year.

Y. Perkins moved on to explain a new financial statement report that she had requested. She explained that the board had never been able to look at a final fiscal 2007-2008 report of where ELC stood with their final numbers. She stated that with the efforts of the administration, the directive of the board, and the efforts of E. Torres and ELC staff, this was the first time that ELC had gotten this close to hitting their budget.

O. Verdeja stated that it was an incredible effort of the ELC staff as well as Y. Perkins to make it happen.

Y. Perkins continued to explain the last two financial statements. She explained the financial snapshots of Miami-Dade and Monroe. She stated that G. Schwartz had identified the Ready Pool and Waitlist numbers as the "No Child Left Behind" number, and that it could possibly be used for a slogan for the Legislative committee. She also explained that we would see the Age Break Down School Age percent go down in the next few months as the School Age resolution up to the age of 9 is implemented. She stated that Monroe had a waiting list which was put together.

*\* At this time the board took a small intermission. Mary Williams introduced The St. Justin Martyr Preschool who performed for the board. The children then presented the board with gifts from ELC; umbrellas with the ELC logo which were purchased with unrestricted dollars. The children were then rewarded with new backpacks.*



#### **V. Nominating Committee Report**

**Yvonne T. Johnson, M.D.**

- Motion to approve the recommendation of Yvonne T. Johnson, M.D. for Vice Chair, Yesenia Perkins for Treasurer, and Gerald K. Schwartz for Secretary.
  - A. Abramowitz moved to approve the recommendation.
  - Motion was seconded by H. Mogul.
  - Motion was unanimously passed.

#### **VI. Governance & Bylaws Committee Report**

**Alan Eckstein, ESQ.**

- Motion to approve the recommendation of the revised bylaws.
  - D. Lawrence, Jr. moved to approve the recommendation.
  - Motion was seconded by G. Schwartz.
  - Motion was unanimously passed.

#### **VII. Program & Strategy Committee Report**

**David Williams, Jr.**

- Motion to approve the recommendation to approve the Monroe Provider Agreement, effective Jan. 1, 2009.
  - A. Eckstein moved to approve the recommendation.
  - Motion was seconded by D. Lawrence, Jr.
  - Motion was unanimously passed.
- Motion to approve the recommendation to suspend the collection of parental sign-in/sign-out sheets by CDS.

Maritza Alonso explained that the providers would collect the sign-in sheet and keep it on record but would not have to forward it with the reimbursement packages for payment. It would always remain as a backup for any audit purposes. She confirmed that after inquiring with the other coalitions in the state that ELC is the only coalition that requires that of the providers.

O. Verdeja asked how often the providers are checked on. E. Torres responded that it's a combination of the state and ELC. He stated that we can never monitor all the providers but when the sampling is done that would be part of the monitoring.

O. Verdeja expressed that he felt it was ELC's responsibility and not the state to monitor this. E. Torres explained that one of the things the coalition has done is contracting out. When they go out to do the monitoring this is part of what they will be checking on. Furthermore, they are addressing with the state a paper requirement that they require original signatures. However, that it is being addressed with the state as everyone including the courts are now going digital. ELC is working with the state to try to get approved for that as well.



Y. Johnson asked what was being done and what would change. E. Torres explained that the sample that is being done right now is done by the county. The difference would be that now someone would actually go out and monitor the provider. He stated that ELC has the attendance records on hand, which parents are required to submit to the providers every month. However, now we would be relying on a third party to keep those records in accordance with the provider agreement. He also stated that the providers had been asking for this for quite some time, and that there would be less paperwork to process. He explained that the monitoring is done once a year but different years, but not all at the same time. He stated that they would never monitor every single provider, but that it would be done by sampling.

O. Verdeja asked that assuming in worse case scenario, if a provider were paid and then later a sample is done and find that they owe ELC money, how would the money be collected. E. Torres explained that the coalition is currently going through that now with the Gold Seal reconciliation that was completed. He explained the Gold Seal spreadsheet, noting that they were several providers that were no longer Gold Seal yet still receiving the Gold Seal payment and never notified ELC. Bottom line being that they were overpaid.

- A. Eckstein moved to table the recommendation.
- Motion was seconded by H. Mogul.
- Motion was unanimously passed.

#### VIII. Public Comments

**Octavio A. Verdeja, Jr.**

- O. Verdeja confirmed that there were no members of the public present.
- A. Abramowitz recognized E. Torres and presented him with a community partnership award. He stated that everytime he mentions to E. Torres how proud he is for having such a partnership, E. Torres speaks about his staff at the ELC, which speaks volumes of him.
- E. Torres thanked him for the award, and stated that he wanted to recognize the staff of ELC. He thanked the board for supporting the work that the ELC staff does, stating that the work could not be done without the support of the board, ELC partners, Miami-Dade County and Wesley House.
- N. Seijas requested an updated Gold Seal report at the next board meeting in addition to seeing which providers have/haven't signed an agreement for a payment plan.
- Y. Perkins requested explanation of the change to the bylaws regarding calling in by phone conference to meetings. A. Eckstein explained that



the board had just approved calling in by phone conference to count towards a quorum for committee meetings, but not for board meetings. W. Harvey confirmed.

IX. Adjourn

**Octavio A. Verdeja, Jr.**