



**Policy Council Meeting Minutes  
September 21, 2022 (English and Spanish)  
5:30 p.m.**

**I. Call to Order**

Dr. Mara Zapata presided over the meeting. The meeting was called to order at 5:41 p.m.

**II. Roll Call**

The following participated in the meeting:

<b>2021-2022 Members</b>	<b>Representing</b>
Dominique Reardon	It's A Small World II
Maria Rodriguez	New Aladdin Learning Center
Maria Soto	Springview Academy
Dr. Mara Zapata	Board Member
<b>2022-2023 Members</b>	<b>Representing</b>
Monica Symonette	B&G Preschool
Dominique Reardon	It's A Small World II
Naomie Morency	Jitta Bug
Cheryl Donalson	Jitta Bug
Jaleesa Barlatier	Little Ones Academy Corp
Astry Lugo	Little Red School House
Wilmy Similien	Lord's Learning Center, Inc.
Quintiesha Charles	Miami Gardens Learning Center
Maria Cristina Nunez	My Little Angels
Carry Floriant	Pink and Blue Children's Academy
Betty Pierre	Shores School
Arletis Gonzalez Perez	Springview Academy
Denise Fernandez	Tiny Tikes
Dr. Mara Zapata	Board Member
<b>EHS Staff</b>	<b>Position</b>
Angelo Parrino	Chief Operating Officer
Belkis Torres	Vice President for EHS
Casie Haines	Deputy Director of Finance
Cecilia Nariznis	Mental Health Manager
Elicenia Del Rio	Fiscal Analyst
Evelio Torres	President and CEO
Dr. Frederick Hicks	Sr. Vice President of Technology and Cyber Security
Jacqueline Dominguez	Human Resources Director
Jessica Dittmar	Administrative Coordinator
Lisney Badilla	Director of Contracts and Procurement
Lissandra Curbelo	Deputy Director of Contracts
Mercy Castiglione	Chief Financial Officer
Sarahi Rivera	Director of Child Development and Education Support Services
Otilia Gonzalez-Varese	Disability Manager
Pamela Hollingsworth	Sr. VP for Strategic Initiatives and Program Development
Roseleen Hurtado Rodriguez	Health Manager
Salvatore Martorano	EHS Compliance Manager
Thalia Daumy	Contract Manager
Vanessa Bongiorno	Vice President for EHS
Yissel Morales	Contract Manager
Yanila Matos	EHS Family Advocate

### III. **President and CEO Report**

Mr. Torres started by thanking the 2021-2022 Policy Council members for their service to the Policy Council. He welcomed the new members as the 2022-2023 representatives of their school.

Mr. Torres thanked the Early Head Start team for their efforts in attaining enrollment. He informed the members that the challenge is now teacher shortage which is preventing some partners from opening the classroom to enroll children. He encouraged parents to refer anyone who is looking for a career in early learning education to contact Early Head Start staff to connect them with centers that have staff vacancies.

Mr. Torres acknowledged that though the Early Head Start program is making progress towards full enrollment, the Early Head Start at the Early Learning Coalition is in much better shape than many other programs across the nation. Many programs are 50% under enrolled.

Mr. Torres shared that the Early Learning Coalition Executive Committee approved a resolution to provide teachers with hiring and retention bonuses. These bonuses will be approved by the full Board in October.

Mr. Torres made emphasis on Early Head Start being a partnership between the program, the Policy Council and the childcare partners with a common goal of serving children and families.

While enrollment has been a major focus, the program continues to work with families in providing comprehensive services. Mr. Torres acknowledged the great work Family Advocates have done not only with enrollment but also meeting the needs of families.

### IV. **Action Item (2021-2022 members only):**

#### **A. August 17, 2022 Meeting Minutes**

Dr. Mara Zapata asked for a motion to approve the August 17, 2022 meeting minutes.

- Motion made by Dominique Reardon
- Motion seconded by Maria Rodriguez
- No discussion
- Motion passed in 4 favor and 0 opposed

### V. **Elections (2022-2023 members only):**

#### **A. Overview of Officer Roles and Responsibilities**

Ms. Torres reviewed each of the roles and the responsibilities of each officer position. As each role and responsibility was discussed, nominations were accepted.

#### **B. Nominations and Elections**

Each position only had one nomination. Nominees were unanimously voted in their new position. Results were as follows:

- Board Member Representative - Dr. Mara Zapata
- Chair - Maria Cristina Nunez
- Vice Chair - Dominique Reardon
- Secretary - Naomie Morency
- Assistant Secretary - Cheryl Donalson
- Treasurer - Monica Symonette
- Parliamentarian - Betty Pierre

**VI. Action Item (2022-2023 members only):**

**A. Resolution 09212022-01: Bonus for Childcare Teachers**

Ms. Bongiorno explained that the resolution was requesting approval for a revision to the fiscal impact of the “Bonus for Childcare Teachers” policy and procedure retroactive to the date originally approved and authorized by the President and CEO.

The original policy and procedure capped the total annual amount of bonuses disbursed at 5% of the total annual budget, excluding Training and Technical Assistance budget.

The proposed revision would allow the total annual amount of bonuses to be based on the availability of funds and local factors, including the cost of living and the local job market not to exceed \$2,000,000.

Dr. Zapata asked for a motion to approve Resolution 09212022-01: Bonus for Childcare Teachers.

- Motion made by Monica Symonette
- Motion seconded by Wilmy Similien
- No discussion
- Motion passed 12 in favor and 0 opposed

**B. Resolution 09212022-02: Funding Flexibility**

Ms. Bongiorno explained that approval of this resolution would authorize the President and CEO to adopt and implement if needed, the fiscal flexibilities granted by the Office of Head Start as per the Information Memorandum ACF-IM-HS-21-01, Updated Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Fiscal and Administrative Flexibilities.

Due to the under-enrollment and staff shortage the program faced throughout the 2021-2022 program year, budget transfers between direct cost categories have been made in response to the changing program needs in relation to COVID-19 in an aggregate amount not exceeding \$1 million.

This would normally require prior approval from the federal government.

Information Memorandum ACF-IM-HS-21-01 specifically waives the prior approval requirement for budget transfers between direct cost categories for an aggregate amount not to exceed \$1 million.

Dr. Mara Zapata asked for a motion to approve Resolution 09212022-02: Funding Flexibility.

- Motion made by Cheryl Donalson
- Motion seconded by Monica Symonette
- No discussion
- Motion passed 12 in favor and 0 opposed

**C. Resolution 09212022-03: Self-Assessment**

Ms. Torres shared that annually the program is required to conduct a self-assessment. During the self-assessment, the program reflects on how the program is providing services and considers recommendations for continued program improvement. To conduct the self-assessment the program creates a plan. Approval of the resolution would allow the President and CEO to implement the plan for this program year. Ms. Torres reviewed the timeline for the self-assessment and who would participate in the self-assessment.

Dr. Mara Zapata asked for a motion to approve Resolution 09212022-03: Self-Assessment.

- Motion made by Maria Rodriguez
- Motion seconded by Naomie Morency

- No discussion
- Motion passed 12 in favor and 0 opposed

## **VII. Reports**

### **A. Expenditure Report and Credit Card Reports**

#### **i. July 2022 Expenditure Report**

The total monthly expenses for the month of July 2022 were \$983,500.79. Fourteen (14%) of total monthly expenses were used for salaries and fringe; A total of \$727,930.39 or seventy two percent (72%) went to contractual services. An amount of \$708,419.51 went to childcare partners for direct services and 4th quarter partner performance bonuses. Ten percent (10%) covered other expenses, which includes rent and utilities. The program has used ninety-four (94%) of the budget to date and has \$666,914.20 remaining.

Final July numbers will be reported in October.

#### **ii. June 2022 Credit Card Report**

There were \$1,028.19 in credit card expenses for the month of June for travel expenses registration to attend conferences

#### **iii. July 2022 Credit Card Report**

There were \$3,664.87 in credit card expenses for the month of July for lodging and travel for staff who attended the one Goal Conference.

### **B. August 2022 Meal Report**

Number of meals served in August:

- Breakfasts - 12,262 (99.38%)
- Lunches - 12,312 (99.79%)
- Snacks - 12,200 (98.88%)

At several schools, none of the meal services reached 100% due to children either being dropped off late or picked up early, or both:

- My Little Angels Day Care Center
- Rainbow Intergenerational
- Springview Academy
- Tiny Tykes

### **C. August 2022 Enrollment Report**

During the month of August, there was a total of 750 allocated slots and 675 enrolled. The program had 74 vacancies. The vacancies were predominately from new partners who were contracted at the end of July.

### **D. August 2022 Attendance Report**

During the month of August, the program offered only in-person services to children. The average monthly attendance was 85.38% which increased from last month's 76.21%. The top reasons for absences were children being sick, doctor's appointments, and families being on vacation.

## **VIII. Board Meeting Updates**

An Executive Committee meeting took place on September 12, 2022. The Executive Committee had a special presentation from Ms. Val Ortega from Legacy Retirement Plan Advisory. Ms. Ortega presented information on recruitment and retention and its impact on the Early Learning Coalition.

Members were apprised of a new Early Learning CEO Evaluation form. Although the evaluation is normally due in August, the Division of Early Learning is extending the due date to October. The Early Learning Coalition is requesting that the Board complete the evaluation as early as possible.

Four resolutions were approved and will be ratified at the October Board Meeting. The resolutions included:

- Approving the Second Amendment on the Early Learning Coalition's Annual Budget for fiscal year 2022-2023. The amendment adds \$11,042,573 in additional funding.
- Authorizing the President and CEO to negotiate, execute and receive funds from the United Way of Collier and the Keys. The amount would be \$26,500 to implement a program called "Success by Six" which would increase access to affordable, early childhood education for local families.
- Authorizing the President and CEO to proceed with the implementation of the Early Head Start 2022-2023 Self-Assessment Plan.
- Authorizing the President and CEO to execute a settlement agreement and approve the settlement from insurance proceeds in an amount not to exceed \$200,000 and without admitting any liability as previously authorized by the Executive Committee, the Litigation Committee and the Coalition's insurance carrier. This settlement is for a lawsuit related to fatal incident involving a child in a center.

Finally, Ms. Loreen Chant, Board Member, provided an updated on the progress of the Early Learning Coalition's Strategic plan. All items in the plan are progressing well and on target.

## **IX. Updates/ Information**

### **A. Program Information Report (PIR)**

Mrs. Torres gave an overview on how the program performed the past year. Mrs. Torres shared highlights from the 2021-2022 PIR.

### **B. Health and Safety Screener**

Mrs. Torres shared results from the Health and Safety Screener that were completed during the first 45 days of the school year. The reports included a breakdown of the items that were found as non-compliant for more than 25% of the partners. Also included was a graph of the number of non-compliant findings per partner.

### **C. Staff Updates**

Mrs. Torres informed everyone of two new members to the Early Head Start Leadership team:

- Ms. Roseleen Hurtado Rodriguez, Health Manager
- Ms. Sarahi Rivera, Director of Child Development and Education Support Services.

## **X. Reminders**

Next meeting will be a training on October 8, 2022 at 9:00 a.m.

## **XI. Adjournment**

Dr. Mara Zapata asked for a motion to adjourn.

- Motion made by Naomie Morency to adjourn.
- Meeting adjourned at 6:44 p.m.