



**ELC Board of Directors Annual Meeting
Monday, October 2, 2023; 10 A.M.- 12 P.M.
Keys Mosquito Control Building
503 107th St. Gulf, Marathon, FL 33050
Meeting ID: 886 2783 0731
Passcode: 407894**

MINUTES

Board Attendees: Matthew Bruno; Loreen Chant; Jenni Roig; Dr. Lawrence; Laurie Joasil
Richie Tandoc; Denisse Barrera; Sandi Bisceglia; Dr. Eileen Fluney; Chuck Mohr; Iris Strachan; Gilda Ferradaz;
Chereen Coile; Lisa Taylor; Aaron Slavens; Alfred Sanchez; Holly Raschein; Dr. Riestra; Rick Beasley; James Haj

Board Absentees: Dr. Daniel Armstrong; Lynn Maceyras

Staff Attendees: Evelio Torres; Angelo Parrino; Mercy Castiglione; Sandra Gonzalez; Michelle Meilan;
Jacqueline Dominguez; Ahmed Mitwalli; Miguel Alfonso; Paloma Lopez-Barcena;
Anabel Espinosa; Ana Sejeck; Belkis Torres; Ana Rodriguez; Aileen Suazo; Alex Sanchez; Laurie Dunn; Lissandra
Curbelo; Iliana Vallejo; Ahmed Mitwalli; Cindy Cabrera; Jose Hernandez; Victor Caballero; Miguel Alfonso,
Michele Morgan; Karel Davila; Dessiree Aguilera, Yunely Perdomo;

General Attendees: Bob de la Fuente; SueEllen Bennett; Michelle Lane; Leanna Woods; Jeff Hurst; Elizabeth
Brown, Elizabeth Jolin, Captain Ed; Daniel Samess; Judy Hull; Molly Grant; Leah Stockton; Clayton Lopez
Theresa Axford; Carol Wick

I. Welcome & Introductions

Matthew Bruno

- A. M. Bruno called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone.
- B. Quorum was established with 20 voting members.

II. Approval of Minutes

Matthew Bruno

- Motion to approve the September 11, 2023 board of directors meeting Minutes.
 - L. Taylor moved to approve the minutes.
 - Slavens seconded the motion
 - Motion passed unanimously

Mission: To promote high-quality school readiness, voluntary pre-kindergarten and after school programs, thus increasing all children's chances of achieving future educational success and becoming productive members of society. The Coalition seeks to further the physical, social, emotional and intellectual needs of Miami-Dade and Monroe County children with a priority toward the ages before birth through age 5.

III. Chairman's Report

Matthew Bruno

M. Bruno thanked everyone for attending the ELC Annual Board of Directors meeting meeting in the Keys and explained that the focus will primarily be on the challenges faced by families in Monroe and to discuss potential solutions. He thanked Jody Davis with the Florida Keys Mosquito Control District for allowing the ELC to conduct the Annual Board of Directors meeting at their location in Marathon.

M. Bruno reported that Board Member, Dr. Daniel Armstrong, Director of the Mailman Center for Child Development announced that the center is celebrating its 50th year in operation. The Mailman Center for Child Development has grown into the 3rd largest center of the University of Miami and one of the largest University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities in the United States. The impact the center has made on children and families. The board congratulates Dr. Armstrong!

E. Torres and L. Chant recognized S. Bisceglia for all her hard work and dedication on the Board and for her tireless efforts in supporting the needs of the children and families in Monroe County.

S. Bisceglia thanked Lourdes Berg for bringing the lovely shell decorations. She also thanked Judy Hull for attending today and joining in on the discussion; as well as other guests. She also thanked Evelio Torres for all his hard work helping the families and children in Miami-Dade and Monroe. The Monroe Board members presented Evelio with a token of thanks.

IV. Chairman's Partner Spotlight

Laurie Dunn

- Ms. Leeanna Woods, Director of First Baptist Church – Jack Hill Childcare Learning Center was presented with the Chairman's Partner Spotlight recognition.

V. Chairman's Distinguished service award

Matthew Bruno

This recognition will be presented at a later date.

VI. Committee Reports

A. Finance Committee Report 9/28/2023

Loreen Chant

Resolutions

- **10022023-01 Families Experiencing Homelessness Grant**
Authorize the President and CEO to apply, receive, and implement funds for the ARPA Early Learning Discretionary Grant Program – Families Experiencing Homelessness.
- **10022023-02 RFP Early Literacy Tutoring Program (Award)**
Approval of the Evaluation Committee's award recommendation for Request for Proposal (RFP) #ELCMDM2023-02 (Early Literacy Tutoring Program), and authorize the President and CEO to negotiate and execute a contract with the selected vendor.



- **10022023-03 Professional Development & Resources**

Authorize the President and CEO to release a Request for Proposal (RFP) for professional development resources to offer an array of Classroom Scoring System® CLASS®-based training and materials. This resolution also requests authorization and approval for the President and CEO to negotiate and execute a contract(s) with the selected vendor(s) recommended by the Evaluation Committee and reviewed by the Board Counsel.

- **10022023-04 EHS Self-Assessment Plan**

Authorize the President and CEO to proceed with the implementation of the Early Head Start 2023-2024 Self-Assessment Plan.

- L. Chant asked for a motion to approve the resolutions.
 - Motion to approve by H. Raschein
 - C. Coile seconded the motion
 - Motion passed unanimously

B. Program Committee Report 9/25/2023

Chereen Coile

Chereen Coile provided more detail of the resolution approved by the board. 10022023-04 EHS Self-Assessment Plan which Authorizes the President and CEO to proceed with the implementation of the Early Head Start 2023-2024 Self-Assessment Plan.

The Early Head Start program had three incidents that were reported to the Regional Office. In two of the incidents, teachers were working alone in the classroom and left the classroom while children were napping. In one of the incidents, the teacher went to throw out the trash and in the other incident, the teacher went to open the center's main door. In the third incident, staff reported that a teacher was alone in the classroom sleeping in a chair while the children were napping. All three incidents were reported to the Child Abuse Hotline. The Child Abuse Hotline recorded the incidents but did not conduct an investigation.

C. Provider Services Committee Report 9/28/2023

Dr. Fluney

Dr. Fluney provided the board with the updates from the Provider Services Committee meeting that took place on September 28, 2023. The latest American Rescue Plan Act ARPA updates were provided. We had round table discussions as with every meeting. The committee held 2 Provider Hearings. There are more hearings to be scheduled, but they are pending DCF determination.

D. Strategic Planning Committee Report 9/13/2023

Loreen Chant

L. Chant Provided the board with the latest Strategic Plan Initiatives. She thanked Sandi Bisceglia, member of Strategic Planning Committee for her valuable contribution to the committee.

VII. Introduction of Monroe County Community Partners

Sandi Bisceglia

S. Bisceglia recognized and introduced the following guests from Monroe County Florida:

- Molly Grant---Exec. Director Association of Early Learning Coalitions
- Leah Stockton--- FL Keys Area President United Way
- Theresa Axford---MCSD Superintendent
- Judy Hull--- Exec Director Islamorada Chamber of Commerce
- Daniel Samess- CEO Marathon Chamber of Commerce
- Clayton Lopez-County Commissioner
- Mariane Finizio- VP of Community Relations Community Health
- Erika Goodman—With the Marathon Chamber of Commerce
- Elizabeth Jolin—Council member Islamorada Village Council

VIII. Panel Discussion

Carol Wick

- **Carol Wick President, Sharity Global**

Carol has worked in the nonprofit field her entire career. First, as a therapist for abused children and later as the CEO of one of the nation's top domestic violence centers. She became an expert in turning around struggling organizations, using her business acumen to achieve financial stability and her advocacy to engage the community as partners in the mission. Utilizing this wealth of experience, Carol has spent the past decade developing a model to assist nonprofit organizations in assessing their ability to take their organizations to the next level. Her services focus on creating dynamic fundable plans, and developing outcomes the community will care about and fund.

Carol Wick introduced the Panel Speakers and guided the discussion.

- **Molly Grant, Executive Director, Association of Early Learning Coalitions**

Stated that the importance of early care and education has come to the forefront in the last 5 years. The change in funding for the School Readiness program has to go through the state. Coalitions are no longer allowed to set their own reimbursement rates. Provider reimbursement rates are high but not high enough. Consider setting them based on local market rates.

- **Theresa Axford, Superintendent, Monroe County Schools District**

The #1 problem in Monroe County is the lack of work force housing. She stated that 33 teachers were ready to go but could not find housing once they arrived in the Keys.

The school district is trying to adjust salaries and currently a starting salary is \$61,500. The goal is to get it up to \$80,000.

There is a currently a 50% turnover in staff every year due to the cost of living and housing. Only 30% of all homes in the Keys are homesteaded and in Key West that number is 16%. Stability is a challenge.

Daycare is also a problem now in the schools leaving parents with few choices where to place their children after school.

Attendance of children slipped during Covid but it is now climbing back up.

- **Leah Stockton, Florida Keys Area President, United Way**

She shared the ALICE report (Asset Limited Income Constrained, Employed) a national study conducted by United Way that looks at the cost of living in the community. She explained that “this is who makes paradise possible”.

The ALICE threshold is the bare minimum needed to just get by. Monroe has the highest survival ALICE budget in the state. A single person would need to make \$41.76 an hour to survive in Monroe County.

The breakdown of poverty level throughout the Keys: Stock Island, Marathon and Tavernier have the highest poverty rates. Housing is the #1 challenge faced by or residents.

- **Judy Hull, Executive Director, Greater Marathon Chamber of Commerce**

Workforce, childcare, housing are the biggest problems. Part of our work force has 1 parent staying home due to cost of childcare and transportation issues.

Traffic is a problem and lack of public transportation systems.

She commended our efforts and will support us any way she can. It is important to get businesses to understand the importance of affordable childcare and increasing the income thresholds. Need to develop more education and instructions on what we need to do and how to get there.

- E. Torres reported on the status of the Coalition’s critical planning. Enrollment in school readiness must increase. VPK is where it was this time last year.

We need to increase awareness of the school readiness program. We are the largest voucher program in the State of Florida.

The ALICE report states that a family of 4 needs to make \$83,500 just to get by in Monroe County but to apply for School Readiness funding you have to make below \$45,000. No amount of advertising will help when they can’t qualify based on income. Raising the income threshold is very important.

IX. Next Steps

Carol Wick

Carol Wick divided the audience into groups to develop next steps with 2 questions:

- Where do we want to be in 1 year and steps to get help for families who are over income.

Ideas: We have to ask the Community Foundation of the Florida Keys about setting up an endowment or scholarship to help pay for children over income. We need to explain clearly what we are looking for.

- What needs to happen in the next 12 months to work on the threshold change (by December for legislative session)

Ideas: ELC can craft a blueprint explaining for the challenges are and what potential solutions could be. Make this is a legislative priority. Municipalities adopt legislation to show how important affordable child care is for working families. Check with Community Foundation of the Florida Keys, United Way and more stakeholders to join in so we are all on the same page

- The Monroe Action Plan will be created with the two initiatives taken from the meeting:
 1. Fiscal Cliff Collaborative with Advocacy Partners
 2. Develop Scholarship Fund

X. Public Comments

Matthew Bruno

XI. Adjourn

Matthew Brun

