



**ELC Board of Directors Meeting  
Monday, April 3, 2023; 9 A.M.  
2555 Ponce De Leon Blvd.  
Coral Gables Florida, 33134  
Meeting ID: 882 3461 6597  
Passcode: 463195**

## MINUTES

**Board Attendees:** Matthew Bruno; Rick Beasley; Dr. Daniel Armstrong; Loreen Chant; Jenni Roig; Richie Tandoc; Denisse Barrera; Sandi Bisceglia; Dr. Eileen Fluney; James Haj; Chuck Mohr; Iris Strachan; Gilda Ferradaz; Chereen Coile; Lisa Taylor; Marisol Diaz; Aaron Slavens; Alfred Sanchez

**Board Absentees:** Alex Soto; Marisol Diaz; Suzette Frazier

**Staff Attendees:** Evelio Torres; Angelo Parrino; Mercy Castiglione; Pam Hollingsworth; Sandra Gonzalez; Michelle Meilan; Jacqueline Dominguez; Ahmed Mitwalli; Miguel Alfonso; Paloma Lopez-Barcena; Anabel Espinosa; Ana Sejeck; Belkis Torres; Ana Rodriguez; Aileen Suazo; Lisney Badillo; Alex Sanchez; Larisa Salerno; Laurie Dunn; Vanessa; Aguilera-Viera; Lissandra Curbelo; Matthew Zaldivar; Lucy Schrack; Isabel Afanador; Thalia Daumy; Vernise Casimir; Dialina Quintanal; Jose Hernandez; Kristine Gregory; Jessica Parra; Laurie Bravo; Pamela Malval; Marisleydis Bruguez; Mayor Daniella Levin Cava; Sonia Grice; Commissioner Holly Raschein; Corie Abel; Dr. Maite Riestra-Quintero; Carlos De la Cruz

**General Attendees:** Bob de la Fuente; Priscila Hazrun; Adriana Del Zotto

### I. Welcome & Introductions

**Matthew Bruno**

- A. M. Bruno called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone.
- B. Quorum was established with 18 voting members.

### II. Approval of Minutes

**Matthew Bruno**

- A. Motion to approve the February 6, 2023 Board of Directors Annual meeting minutes.
  - o L. Chant moved to approve the minutes.
  - o J. Roig seconded the motion.
  - o 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 reported the following announcements:

At the last meeting we announced that Evelio is being recognized on April 27<sup>th</sup> as the David Lawrence Jr. Champion for Children Award honoree by The Children's Trust. We have the final count for board members attending, but anyone who is able to attend and has not yet RSVP'd please let Kristine Gregory know.

The Early Learning Coalition will also receive an award for Program of the Year for the Thrive by 5 Child Scholarship Program that we operate in partnership with The Children's Trust. The program is tremendously popular with families that face the benefits cliff because it provides them with a scholarship that allows their children to participate in a Trust funded high-quality early learning program.

- Continuing with our celebration, our Founding Chair Dave Lawrence recently celebrated a birthday, so we want to take a moment to wish him a belated very Happy Birthday!
- On page 30 of the board packet you will find a thank you letter sent to board member and Children's Trust CEO Jim Haj thanking him for the Thrive by 5 Scholarship the family received from The Children's Trust in partnership with the Early Learning Coalition. These scholarships make a world of difference to families and especially to the children that get to participate in high-quality early learning programs. Jenni Roig shared information about Isabel Torres.
- M. Bruno introduced two special guest speakers.
- **The Honorable Mayor Danielle Levine Cava**  
Mayor Daniella Levine Cava was elected Miami-Dade County's first-ever woman Mayor in November 2020. She enters the Mayor's office following a nearly 40-year career as a relentless advocate for South Florida families in public service and elected leadership.  
As Miami-Dade County's Mayor, she oversees a metropolitan government with nearly 30,000 employees serving nearly 3 million residents, managing an annual budget of approximately \$10 billion. A social worker, lawyer, and community activist, she was first elected in 2014, and re-elected in August 2018, to serve as the Miami-Dade County Commissioner representing District 8.
- **Carlos De la Cruz**  
Carlos de la Cruz, born in Philadelphia, but raised in Madrid, Spain, has years of experience in M&A, start-ups, and operations in the beverage and automobile industries in Florida and Latin America. For almost ten years, he was President of Eagle Brands, Inc., the exclusive Anheuser-Busch wholesaler for Miami-Dade and Monroe counties. He also became president of Miami Honda, Central Hyundai, Sunshine Ford, and Maroone Chevrolet.



Mr. De la Cruz is a founding member of the Americas Gateway Chapter for Young Presidents Organization. He has served as Chairman of the Board of Ransom Everglades School and Our Kids of Miami-Dade and Monroe, the community-based care provider for foster children with over 4,500 children in care. He obtained his B.S. in Accounting from Boston College and his M.B.A. from the University of Miami. Mr. de la Cruz is fluent in Spanish and French and has been a resident of Miami since 1975.

- **Alex Soto**

Board Member Alex Soto's second term is coming to a close April 16, 2023. Alex currently serves on the Legislative/Advocacy Committee and the Finance Committee. We thank you Alex for your service of the board. (We have a plaque for Alex).

- **Provider Site Visit**

We have an opportunity to visit Aguamarina Preschool to observe their PreK4 debate and elections. This event is an annual tradition where they teach children about civic engagement. After some fun campaigning the event concludes with elections for several mock offices. Mr. Torres has participated in the past and it is always fun to see how much children get into the process and how much they learn from this group activity.

IV. **Guest Speaker**

**Mayor Daniella Levine Cava**

Mayor Daniella Levine Cava spoke to the board in reference to the great work in Early Childhood Education and development.

V. **Guest Speaker**

**Carlos De la Cruz**

Carlos De la Cruz spoke about the importance of preserving South Florida's water supply. Mr. De la Cruz provided information on his program that educates children of the importance of conservation.

VI. **Chairman's Partner Spotlight**

**Kelly Patterson  
K.K.L.B. Learning Center**

Fiorella A. Christie introduced Mrs. Patterson's daughter who thanked the Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe for the support.

VII. **Finance Committee Report**

**Loreen Chant**

A. **Resolutions**

- **Contract Renewals 04032023-01**

Authorize the President and CEO to negotiate and execute the contracts listed within the background section of this resolution.



- **Grant Renewals 04032023-02**

Authorize the President and CEO to apply, negotiate, execute, and/or receive funds from the grantors listed in the background section of this resolution.

- **EHS Grant Budget 04032023-03**

Approve the Early Head Start budget and authorize the President and CEO to submit the Early Head Start budget as part of the 2023-2024 grant application.

- **Sliding Fee Scale Plan Amendment 04032023-04**

Authorize the President and CEO to submit a School Readiness Plan amendment to the Florida Department of Education Division of Early Learning (DEL) for approval to implement the 2023-2024 DEL Sliding Fee Schedule.

- **Teacher Incentive Payment 04032023-05**

Authorize the President and CEO to utilize School Readiness funding to initiate a one-time incentive payout to qualified contracted School Readiness providers to assist them with retention efforts of their instructional staff.

**B. Surplus list**

**Ahmed Mitwalli**

Ahmed Mitwalli reported on the equipment surplus and provided an itemized log. Mr. Mitwalli provided the board with the status and plan for distribution of such items.

L. Chant asked for a motion to approve the resolutions and Surplus List in a block vote.

- o Motion to approve by C. Mohr
- o Motion seconded by Dr. Fluney
- o Motion passed unanimously.

**VIII. Committee Reports**

**A. Nominating Committee Report 3/1/2023**

**Sandi Bisceglia**

Sandi Bisceglia reported the nominating committee meeting was held March 1, 2023 where the following was discussed.

Status of Board Vacancies:

- Monroe: College of the Florida Keys: Dr. Gueverra will let us know when he is ready to make the appointment.
- Monroe Health Department: Director Bob Eadie has been unable to make an appointment
- Miami-Dade Board of County Commissioners Appointment: In progress
- Miami-Dade or Monroe Gubernatorial Appointment: Pending appointment by Governor



- Monroe Board of County Commissioners Appointment: Commissioner Holly Merrill Raschein has been appointed. Holly Merrill Raschein served in the Florida House of Representatives from 2012 to 2020, representing the 120th District in Monroe County and southern Miami-Dade County and currently serves on the Monroe County Board of County Commissioners. Commissioner Raschein's appointment must be ratified by the board, so at this time I would like to make a motion to accept Commissioner Raschein's appointment to the board effective immediately.

Miami-Dade or Monroe Head Start/Early Head Representative: The committee interviewed 4 candidates on March 1, 2023. The committee discussed at length each candidate and a vote was taken. The committee was impressed with the qualifications, experience and desire to serve of each candidate, so the decision to recommend one of the candidates to the board was difficult. The final vote was to appoint Maurice Woods, CEO of Easter Seals. However, Mr. Woods resigned from Easter Seals of South Florida and as such no longer qualifies to fill the Early Head Start/Head Start position. There was general agreement between committee members that Dr. Maite Riestra-Quintero was a very close second. Dr. Riestra-Quintero runs Miami-Dade County's Head Start Program and by all accounts has done a phenomenal job improving the program's quality and performance. Under her leadership the program was just named the recipient of the National Head Start Association 2022-23 Edward Zigler Innovation Award. In addition, Dr. Riestra-Quintero serves as the chairperson of the Florida Head Association. On behalf of the Nominating Committee I would like to make a motion to appoint Dr. Riestra-Quintero as the Head Start/Early Head Start representative to the board effective immediately.

In an effort to ensure that our board is representative of the community we serve, Evelio Torres reviewed the Miami Dade Beacon Council Statistics as compared to the ELC board composition and we are pleased that our board very closely mirrors the makeup of our community.

In terms of the membership target, there are 27 positions on our board, with a maximum of 22 from Miami-Dade and minimum of 5 from Monroe.

- Miami-Dade 19 filled + 1 vacant = 20
- Monroe 2 filled + 3 vacant = 5 (one vacancy filled today, leaving two vacancies pending appointment)
- Miami-Dade or Monroe Gubernatorial Appointment = 1
- Miami-Dade or Monroe Head Start/Early Head Start = (filled today)

S. Bisceglia asked for a motion to approve the new Board Members.

- o Motion to approve by L. Chant
- o Motion seconded by Dr. Armstrong
- o Motion passed unanimously.



B. Monroe Advisory Committee Report 3/14/2023

**Sandi Bisceglia**

Sandi Bisceglia announced that current legislative platform updates have been shared with the local chambers and we are seeking their support. She reminded everyone they can go online to watch any legislative session live.

The Futures Project (Children's Movement) is building a coalition grounded in the voices of parents and educators and is creating an action road map to distribute. Currently they are conducting a tour across the states to gather input and incite from parents', educators, directors and early childhood advocates.

She also shared a recap on the Future's Project Summit in Orlando spearheaded by the Children's Movement. It was well attended by participants from all over the state of Florida including P. Hollingsworth from the Early Learning Coalition. Participants had their resumes posted on the walls in order to get to know each other. They were then divided into 5 sub committees to work for the next year to year and a half to establish a framework to advocate care for our earliest learners and create a 5-year strategic plan.

On December 2 several members of the Board of Directors and ELC staff visited Dolphin Montessori North in Key Largo. They met with the Director and got to see the teachers and children in action.

On January 20<sup>th</sup>, there is a visit planned at the University of Miami Linda Ray Intervention Center to learn more about the services they offer.

On May 17 at noon there will be a website live forum to discuss all the work done on behalf of the Early Learning Coalitions. It will be hosted by Madeline Thakur President & CEO of the Children's Movement.

S. Bisceglia also thanked the Early Learning Coalition for all their work to create a resolution that was presented to the Monroe County Board of County Commissioners requesting their support to raise the State Median Income (SMI) to allow more families to qualify for services.

Lastly, she added that some staff members of Senator Marco Rubio will be at the Murray Nelson center in Key Largo on March 15 from 11- 2 pm, if anyone would like to attend and ask questions or share concerns.

On April 5 Board members will be visiting the Aguamarina pre- school in Miami at 10:30 am.

**Legislative Priorities**

V. Caballero reported that currently we are in week 2 of the legislative session. Key committees are tracking and monitoring 26 bills with the priority being 8 bills that focus on children ages birth to five. He shared a copy of the resolution with the Monroe Board of County Commissioners. Copies have been shared with all parties listed within the proposal. He thanked Mayor David Rice



and Sandi Bisceglia for their help in getting this resolution unanimously passed and to raise awareness of the high cost of child care.

#### Partner Updates

District Head Start/Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Update M. Russell, Early Childhood Supervisor reported that the numbers for MCSD are still pretty much the same as they were at the last meeting. April 1 is open enrollment although they do accept enrollments all year.

Summer VPK will be held at Gerald Adams Elementary School.

The Head Start program just went through a federal review and had a clean report with no deficiencies.

The Kindergarten Boost program may be available for Summer. The details are currently being discussed and worked out.

S. Bennett (Provider Rep) shared that many schools are still having a hard time recruiting and retaining teachers and that no one is applying.

She stated that providers are thrilled with all the grants and appreciate them all but are having a hard time applying because it is confusing. Plus, she said teachers and Directors are stretched very thin and pulled in many directions and are finding it difficult to find the time to work on the grants. She is always encouraging other providers to apply and is grateful that there may be some in person training on grants coming up soon.

Teachers are appreciative of all the offerings by the Professional Development Department and they take full advantage of opportunities as they are able to.

There was an in-person Directors meeting (the first one since the pandemic) on Feb 11 at Kreative Kids. She thanked Maria Vaillant for hosting the get together.

Seven people attended because it is hard to get together on a Saturday but they got to talk about grants, staff, trainings, contracts etc. The next one will be at St. James on May 6 and after that they would like to have one in Key West. S. Bennett said she hopes more people can attend because it is important to network and spend time with each other. J. Hurst was invited to attend the May 6 meeting if he would like to.

The school sent their hands up to Tallahassee for Children's Week to be hung in the rotunda. E. Torres stated that some ELC staff will be up there and he will ask them to take pictures to share with everyone.

S. Bennett shared that she is working with J. Hurst and L. Dunn to schedule some in person or zoom DCF trainings for staff in the Keys.

J. Hurst (DCF) mentioned that DCF is working together with the ELC for the families and children in the Keys. He recognizes that there is a big issue with getting and retaining staff even though some places are paying \$30 an hour. He stated that this is a very challenging time and everyone needs to stay in communication with each other.

He stated that we were invited by E. Torres and A. Parrino to show other ELC's how to do a change in ownership.



Last month the Office of Licensing held its first in person provider meeting and he is hoping to do another one in Monroe next month. He is currently looking for creative ways to hold meetings and trainings in Monroe.

The DCF website has changed and is not easy to navigate. People are encouraged to reach out to him if they need guidance.

Monroe County Updates were shared at the meeting by Laurie Dunn

Enrollment data --S. Gonzalez showed enrollment data for Monroe County in February.

SR—278 children (this time last year was 298)

VPK--- 463 children (this time last year it was 440)

At Risk Referrals -46 children (increased from 31 last year)

Needs Assessment Action Plan/Next Steps -- L. Dunn discussed how one of the findings of the community needs assessment that impacted employment and retention of teachers, was the availability of child care training and professional development.

In response to that our Professional Development department has increased their training opportunities. There are now Training offered online at various hours (day, evening and weekend) in English and in Spanish).

The next competency exam will be on March 25 and is already full. There will be another one on April 22 and the capacity has gone from 20 to 25. Registration will be open for an hour and a half just for Monroe staff (sometime in early April). The test site is at Marathon Lutheran school. S. Bisceglia stated that the College of the Florida Keys is open to hold the exams. L. Dunn will reach out to see who she can talk to and see how this can work.

The teacher ad helped recruit teachers at 3 sites. It will be updated and run again as soon as possible.

Outreach Activities- L. Dunn stated that ELC staff will participate in the Community Resources Day on March 15<sup>th</sup> at the Key Largo library. They will be taking informational flyers to distribute. Promotional efforts take place continuously throughout the year. The bus shelter ads will run for another 8 weeks throughout the Keys.

American Rescue Plan Act were provided by Paloma Lopez-Barcena

Round 1 and Round 2 Grants.

P. Lopez-Barcena said that Round 1 and Round 2 have closed and they are now reviewing and processing the additional grants. So far they have approved 36 of the 45 applications from Monroe County. They are hoping more applications come through from Monroe once they are able to hold the in-person training sessions.

ARPA-Build a World Class Workforce information was provided by Victor Caballero.





V. Caballero stated there are 580 applicants so far with 13 of those being from Monroe. Providers are not realizing that these grants are separate from Round 1 and Round 2. He is working with L. Dunn on a schedule to provide the in-person sessions in the Keys during the last week of March

Professional development Institute Update was provided by Ana Sejeck .

Super CLASS® Saturday is on the road (in person) April 29 from 8:30-12:30 at Miami Edison High School. There will be panel speakers, presenters', vendors and music.

Monroe Inclusion and Assessment Updates were provided by Dr. Anabel Espinosa  
Developmental Screenings --A. Espinosa stated in February there were 11 ASQ's completed and 8 social & emotional (SE) ASQ's completed. Year to date the total are 189 ASQ's and 79 SE. Of those children there were 13 identified as needing some extra help. She believes that more specialized care is beneficial and she is pleased with the support offered in Monroe. VPK SIS -Currently there are 4 children taking advantage of the services in Monroe.

Sandi Bisceglia reported that the Next Monroe Advisory Committee Meeting is May 24<sup>th</sup> at 1 pm.

C. Program Committee Report 3/27/2023

**Chereen Coile**

Chereen Coile reported that Monday, March 27, 2023 the Program, Policy, and Strategy Committee had a meeting and two (2) resolutions were presented. The first Resolutions 040232023-06 is to authorize the President and CEO to submit the Early Head Start non-competing continuation grant application and all of its supporting documents for the 2023-2024 program year. Belkis Torres provided an overview of the resolution.

- **Grant Reapplication 04032023-06**

Authorize the President and CEO to submit the Early Head Start non-competing continuation grant application and all of its supporting documents for the 2023-2024 program year. Approval for this resolution confirms Board's involvement in the development of the grant application. Ms. Torres provided examples of Board's involvement, such as participating in the self-assessment, developing the program goals, developing the school readiness goals or participating in the recruitment and selection plan meeting. This resolution includes all parts approved in other resolutions, such as the budget, training and technical assistance plan, self-assessment plan and improvement plan, and recruitment and selection plan. Ms. Torres reviewed all of the changes to the grant application narrative making special emphasis on how the program intends to use the Cost of Living Adjustment, the Quality Improvement funds, and the request for a non-federal share waiver.



Belkis Torres reported that Every year the Early Head Start program must submit an application and various documents to receive the funds for the following year. The Office of Head Start requires the approval and involvement of the Board and Policy Council in the development of the grant application. Some examples of involvement include Board members participating in the self-assessment, in developing the 5-year program goals and school readiness goals, and the discussions and recommendations made during committee and Board meetings. This resolution is a continuation application which means the program is required to provide any changes on the prior applications sent for this 5- year project. While the background provides all of the changes being submitted, there are three (3) important items in the application that I would like to call your attention to.

1. The program will be receiving 5.6% Cost of Living Adjustment. A little over ½ of the cost of living adjustment is being used to increase the childcare partners' daily child rate by 5.6% on the federal funds. The partners are required to use the funds to increase staff salaries and any remaining funds would be used to cover any operation cost increases.
2. The program will be receiving Quality Improvement funds. One allowable use of the funds that reflects the Office of Head Start priority is to increase staff compensation. The ELC will use these funds to increase staff salary for staff retention and provide competitive wages to attract qualified applicants for positions that are currently vacant.
3. Early Head Start programs are given the option by the Office of Head Start to submit a non-federal share waiver in advance with their application. By including the request as part of the application, the program will be assured advance approval should we not attain the required nonfederal share. The program is requesting a waiver for \$2,000,000 of the required 3,000,847. The program continues to maximize the nonfederal share as much as possible.

Chereen Coile asked for a motion to approve the resolution.

- o Motion to approve by L. Chant
- o Motion seconded by M. Bruno
- o Motion passed unanimously

- **EHS Training and Technical Assistance Plan 04032023-07**

Authorize the President and CEO to submit the Early Head Start Training and Technical Assistance Plan with the Early Head non-competitive, continuation grant application, and implement the plan for the 2023-2024 program year.

The second resolution 0403202-07 is to Authorize the President and CEO to submit the Early Head Start Training and Technical Assistance Plan with the Early Head non-competitive, continuation grant application, and implement the plan for the 2023-2024 program year. Ms. Torres explained the plan includes seven (7) goals targeted to



parent education and staff professional development. The background of the resolution provides a chart with the training topics or technical assistance activities associated with each goal. The trainings are grouped by a common focus. Goals one (1) through five (5) focus on parents and staff gaining a better understanding of a child's development and expanding their knowledge of the available community resources. Goals six (6) and seven (7) focus on eating well and promoting a healthy lifestyle.

Belkis Torres provided an overview of this resolution. The plan includes 7 goals targeted to parent education and staff professional development. The background of the resolution provides a chart with the training topics or technical assistance activities associated with each goal. The trainings are grouped by a common focus. Goals 1 through 5 focus on parents and staff gaining a better understanding of a child's development and expanding their knowledge of available community resources. Goals 6 and 7 focus on eating well and promoting a healthy lifestyle.

Chereen Coile asked for a motion to approve the resolution.

- o Motion to approve by I. Strachan
- o Motion seconded by Dr. Armstrong
- o Motion passed unanimously.

**D. Provider Services Committee Report 3/30/2023**

**Dr. Fluney**

Dr. Fluney reported that the Provider Services Committee Meeting was held Thursday, March 31, 2023. We have conducted two Provider Services meetings since the last board meeting. (February 16, and March 31)

CLASS Assessment Updates were provided to the committee. American Rescue Plan Act ARPA updates were also provided.

We had round table discussions as with every meeting.

The committee held Provider Hearings at both meetings. Bob de la Fuente provided detailed information on the hearings.

**IX. Community Report**

**Evelio Torres**

Evelio Torres provided information in reference to the Legislative Updates. Mr. Torres introduced Fiorella A. Christie who updated the board on CLASS® Assessments. Victor Caballero provided the board with American Rescue Plan Act updates.

**X. Public Comments**

**Matthew Bruno**



No Public Comments

**Adjourn**

**Matthew Bruno**

**Meeting Dates:**

**ELC Board of Directors Meeting: June 5 2023; 9 A.M. ELC Headquarters and via Zoom**