



Monroe Advisory Committee
Meeting
August 10, 2021, 1:00 p.m. Zoom
Meeting ID: 983 2643 9037
Passcode: 518951

Committee Attendees: Heather Carruthers, Stephanie Scuderi, Aleida Jacobo, Gilda Ferradaz, Sue Ellen Bennett, Sandi Bisceglia, Lisa Taylor

Committee Absentees: Bob Edie, Marla Russell

Staff Attendees: Evelio Torres, Angelo Parrino, Jackye Russell, Sandra P. Gonzalez, Aileen Suazo, Ana Sejeck, Fiorella Altare, Michele Morgan, Dialina Quintanal, Wilhelmina Martin, Paloma Lopez-Barcena, Laurie Dunn, Adelina Gross

Other Board Members in Attendance: Dr. David Armstrong

General Attendees: Jeffrey Hurst, Christine Patterson, Laura Toman, Carlos Salazar, Amanda Pinkley

I. Welcome and Introductions Heather Carruthers

- a. H. Carruthers called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone.
- b. Quorum was established with seven (7) voting members.

II. Approval of Minutes Heather Carruthers

- Motion to approve minutes by S. Bisceglia
- Motion seconded by S. Bennett
- Motion unanimously passed.

III. CEO Update

- E. Torres gave the following updates:
 - Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations (CRRSAA) Grants
 - Grant payments were provided to qualified instructors in recognition of their continuing service and dedication to Florida's children and families.
 - Photos of teachers receiving the checks at Burton Memorial Child Development Center were shared.

Disaster Relief Payments

- The deadline to apply for Disaster Relief Funding has been extended to August 13.
- Division of Early Learning (DEL) continues to troubleshoot issues with the online application.
- Committee members and staff are urged to encourage partners to apply as application numbers are low.
- Advance Child Tax Credit for 2021 is available for eligible families, beginning July 15 through December 15. Families are informed at every opportunity to file their tax return or register using the IRS Non-filer Sign-up Tool to receive payment.
- Almost \$37 million in partner bonuses has been released by the ELC, and an additional \$11 million in School Readiness local quality bonuses were approved for release in August.

IV. Florida Keys Chamber and other Updates

- S. Bisceglia gave the following updates:
 - The work continues to utilize maps created by the ELC staff to engage the Monroe County Chambers of Commerce.
 - It was shared that a recent report shows 14.6% of renters in the Keys are behind on rent due to COVID or other. Families are urged to apply for rental assistance.
 - Home prices in the County have risen to an average of \$845,000.
 - Current discussions are focused on employers providing a living wage.
 - Ms. Bisceglia was acknowledged by Mr. Torres for her work with the Chamber.

V. Program Updates

- L. Dunn gave the following updates:
 - 296 children receiving School Readiness funding
 - 441 children with a VPK voucher enrolled
 - 28 children with an at-risk referral enrolled
 - A refresher training will be provided to address decline in at-risk referrals
- Professional/Workforce Development
 - Work continues on the Apprenticeship and Internship Programs:
 - Apprenticeship Program will be a 12-month placement with a mentor teacher, while earning a National CDA (Child Development Associate)
 - Internship Program will be a (4) month classroom placement, with a mentor teacher and completion on the Department of Children and Families' 45-hour training requirement.
 - 25 apprenticeships available year 1.
 - Free program orientation took place in July online.
 - Proposed salary under consideration

- Communications
 - 21 ELC email blasts sent out to Monroe
 - June monthly email open rate percentage reported at 24.7%.

VI. Partner Updates

- S. Ellen Bennett gave an update on providers in Monroe County. She stated providers continue to struggle with teacher retention; salary, lack of flexibility and sickness an issue.
- J. Hurst gave the following updates:
 - Providers continue to face challenges with teacher retention to ensure children safety and mandated ratio. Ideas have been discussed among providers such as job sharing, rotating shifts and alternating hours.
 - Miami Children’s Initiative has partnered with Miami-Dade College to offer stackable classes to allow early childhood professionals to earn an AA or Bachelor’s at a reduced rate.
 - Change of ownership of child care centers has been occurring frequently.
 - Applicants for new Department of Children and Families (DCF) license must now apply online.
 - The Care System used to approve renewals and inspections has been updated to 2.0.
 - Latest mandated training released and available for certificate.

VII. Children’s Movement of Florida

- Carlos Salazar, head of Business Engagement shared the following:
 - The Children’s Movement of Florida is working to advocate for high quality early learning opportunities, access to children’s health care, and parent support programs in Florida.
 - A goal is to engage the business community through programs such as Bosses for Babies, an initiative that brings together business champions for early childhood.
 - The organization is partnering with local chambers and other organizations to invest in young children and families and the opportunity to partner is extended to every county in Florida.

VIII. Monroe County Needs Assessment

- A. Parrino stated that NOLO is in the process of collecting primary and secondary data.
 - Provider survey released to 285 partners and 15 responses received.
 - Parent survey released to 694 parents and 9 responses received.
 - NOLO needs a 60% return.

IX. Public Comments

Heather Carruthers

X. Adjourn

Heather Carruthers