



MINUTES

Monroe County Advisory Committee Meeting

March 15, 2022; 1pm

Zoom Meeting ID: 985 8956 0530

Passcode: 462762168

Committee Attendees: Sandi Bisceglia; Aleida Jacobo; Gilda Ferradaz; Sue Ellen Bennett; Lisa Taylor; Marla Russell; Gilda Ferradaz

Committee Absentees:

Attendees: Christine Patterson, Fiorella A Christie, Dialina Quintanal, Amy O'Connor, Anabel Espinosa, Sandra Gonzalez, Pamela Hollingsworth, Laurie Dunn, Desiree Aguilera, Laura Toman, Michele Morgan, Michelle Meilan, Wilhelmina Lopez-Martin, E. Torres, Ana Sejeck, Olabisi Baruwa-Castro, Angelo Parrino, Mercy Castiglione, Lucy Schrack, Leidys Maya, Jeff Hurst, Dr. Nolo, Charelis Santana, Dr. Frederick Hicks, Olabisi Castro, J.Walker

I. Welcome & Introductions

Sandi Bisceglia, Chair

- A. S. Bisceglia called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone.
- B. Quorum was established with seven (7) voting members.

II. Approval of Minutes

Sandi Bisceglia, Chair

Approval of January 18, 2022 Meeting Minutes

Approval of minutes for January 18, 2022

- o Motion to approve by G. Ferradaz
- o Motion seconded by L. Taylor
- o Motion unanimously passed

III. Chair Updates

Sandi Bisceglia, Chair

- A. Recognition of Marla Russell S. Bisceglia thanked Marla Russell and her staff for attending the Upper Key Rotary Festival. A photo of the booth and event was shown.
- B. Recognition of Stephanie Scuderi- S. Bisceglia recognized thanked for Stephanie Scuderi for her time serving on the Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade and Monroe Board

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.



of Directors. She will continue to participate in the Monroe Advisory Council. A certificate will be sent to her.

- C. Keys trends and developments- S. Bisceglia discussed 8 specific trends/issues that could affect enrollment and families
- Key West Chambers reported on January 29, 2022 that they have lost 2,000 workers in the last year.
 - Free Press on March 9, 2022- Sherriff reported they force is down from 27 to 16 with 4 vacancies. Out of the 12 Deputies, more than half no longer live in the Keys.
 - Three K-Marts (Key West, Marathon and Key Largo) have been closed for over 2 years now, as well as Sears.
 - February 5, 2022 Key West Citizen reported that many shell companies are buying out mom and pop hotels.
 - Property values have gone up, which may affect many families.
 - Key West High School used to host out of county sports teams in which the teams would stay in hotels. Now the school will build dorms since there are no available/affordable hotels.
 - The school system has raised the paraprofessional but it is still under the affordable salary to live in the Keys.
 - 70% of the homes purchased in the Keys are second and third homes with the minimum price being around \$600,000.

The mentioned above may affect our Strategic Plan.

- D. Early Learning Coalition keys private sector board vacancies- 2 Monroe vacancies along with one other vacancy (could be Miami Dade or Monroe). E. Torres explained the applicant requirements and needs of the Board. If anyone is interested they can reach out the Kristine Gregory or Laurie Dunn.
- E. The value of separating Dade and Monroe statistics and goals in the Strategic Plan- Monroe County data has been separated from Miami Dade Country to get a better picture of Monroe's needs. E. Torres thanked everyone who participated in the Strategic Planning activities. Outcome measures are getting finalized. The Strategic Plan will be discussed at the next Monroe Advisory Committee.
- F. Chamber Updates- S. Bisceglia reported that the April 6, 2022, The Ocean Reef Chamber of Commerce Florida State Senator Ana Maria Rodriguez will give a recap of the Legislative Session. March 23, 2022 the Islamorada Chamber is featuring the Early Learning Coalition of Miami Dade and Monroe as Key Note Speakers. S. Bisceglia will be attending along with L. Taylor, L. Dunn, E. Torres and A. Parrino. A. Parrino reported on the last Chamber he attended. He reported on a dynamic guest speaker and stated that every event he attends, someone approaches him either before or after the meeting to inquire about early learning. Going to listen to a presentation can lead to many connections and the word is spread about what we do. S. Bisceglia will also be speaking at the Monroe County Commission meeting with Mayor Rice. E. Torres and A. Parrino will be attending also.

IV. Partner Updates



- A. District Head Start/Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Update Marla Russell, Early Childhood Supervisor reported that this time last year there were 202 VPK vouchers and this year we are up to 273 VPK Vouchers being used by Monroe County children. This is good news that enrollment is up. Head Start enrollment is down.

V. Monroe County Update

Laurie Dunn and Sandra Gonzalez

- A. L. Dunn and S. Gonzalez reported on outreach activities to increase enrollment - L. Dunn shared a listing of the multiple ways in which the Monroe team has reached out to promote services in the Keys to include flyers, banners, magazine ads, blasts through the Chambers and attendance at Outreach events. L. Dunn will be placing a banner in Marathon this week.
- B. Enrollment data Enrollment Date- S. Gonzalez shared that the SR enrollments have increased to 298 and are holding steady. The Keys experience significant transitions of families leaving the Keys due to the high cost of living and lack of affordable housing. The ELC is stepping up promotional efforts throughout the Keys to ensure maximum exposure of our services. She shared a chart showing the Monroe Monthly School Readiness data broken down by care level. VPK now has 440 children enrolled, a decrease in 9 from last month. A VPK program recently closed and the children stayed on as school readiness. At risk referrals are at 31 and are staying consistent. Referral trainings are offered to our partner agencies as needed and requested.
- C. Monroe Conference: Be the Star of Your own Life! Resilience Monroe Conference: September 24th at Marathon High School. The theme is “Be the Star of Your own Life!” to spotlight self-care and Resilience in early childhood educators. The keynote is TBD.
- D. Internship P. Hollingsworth gave updates on the Internship program in Monroe. Two early learning partners (Inez Martin and St. James) have signed up for the program and are awaiting the placement of an intern.

VI. Monroe Inclusion and Assessment Update

Dr. Anabel Espinosa

Dr. A. Espinosa discussed the Child Assessment Differential for FY 2021-2022. One (1) Monroe provider is participating.

BPIECE Support Services have begun in Monroe county. Three (3) Monroe partners have graduated and two (2) new partners have begun.

Developmental Screenings have transitioned to the Statewide Providers Services Portal. Voluntary Pre-K Specialized Instructional Services (VPK-SIS) is now being offered in Monroe.

We have started Child Assessment Differential for FY 2021-2022 One (1) Monroe provider has met the eligibility criteria, Burton Memorial Child Care.

Best Practices in Inclusive Early Childhood Education (BPIECE)



BPIECE FY 2020-2021, Quarter 3, Graduates

1. St. James Children's Center
2. Kreative Kids Christian Academy
3. Temple Christian Preschool (Submitted Special Needs Rate Application for two (2) children)

FY 2021-2022, Quarter 3, Participants

1. Montessori of Key West
2. Burton Memorial Child Care Center

VPK Specialized Instructional Supports (VPK-SIS) Monroe

Approved Providers:

- Alpha Behavioral Solutions
- Happy Time Behavioral Therapy Services
- Clever Kids Therapy Center
- ABA Star Service

Three (3) Children are currently receiving VPK-SIS services in Monroe

*In the future we will be using Upper, Middle Lower Keys to determine service areas and needs.

VII. Early Steps

Charelis Santana

Early Steps presented on the services they provide.

VIII. Monroe County Community Needs Assessment Update

Dr. H. Nolo Martinez

A. Dr. H. Nolo Martinez provided his report and feedback of his findings. A main point presented was teacher salaries and turnover.

IX. CEO Update

Evelio Torres

A. Legislative Update was presented by E. Torres with the following information:

School Readiness Program:

- Additional \$183M in Child Care Development Fund appropriated for the School Readiness Program
- Total of \$861M allocated to ELCs (789M + 71M Hold Harmless allocations)
- \$30M for SR Match Program
- 72M to Expand SR Services on Per-Child Allocation Basis
- \$40M for QPI payment differentials
- \$5M for Special Needs payment differentials
- \$70M for Gold Seal payment differentials

Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten:



- \$4,042,600 provided for implementation of VPK Program Assessments
- Historic increases to the Base Student Allocation
 - School Year BSA increase from \$2,486 to \$2803 (\$317 increase)
 - Summer BSA Increase from \$2,122 to \$2393 (\$271 increase)
- \$100,000,000 Additional Payment Program to increase the VPK BSA for providers attesting to increase wages to \$15/hr

House Bill 5001, General Appropriations Act, Pages 19-20 (Funding Formula)

- From the funds in Specific Appropriation 79, \$72,000,000 in nonrecurring funds from the Child Care and Development Block Grant Trust Fund is provided to expand school readiness services to families.
 - The Division of Early Learning is directed to develop a methodology to evaluate the relative per-child funding provided to each early learning coalition through the base school readiness allocation. This methodology must use 2021-22 FTE enrollment data available as of August 10, 2022, and must factor in the average reimbursement rates for each care level and the district cost differential established pursuant to s. 1011.62(2), Florida Statutes. Once a weighted per-child allocation is calculated, this funding must be allocated to increase the weighted per-child allocation as much as possible.
- B. American Rescue Plan Act Grants: F. Christie reported that the application processed started March 7, 2022 and application acceptance will close on June 30, 2022. A news alert will be sent out.

X. DCF Updates

- A. Department of Children and Families (DCF) Updates J. Hurst, DCF discussed a new program /special training DCF employees will be taking to promote quality early education system that they will be implementing after the staff is trained.

XI. New Business

Sandi Bisceglia, Chair

S. Bisceglia reiterated there will be more information from Dr. Nolo. E. Torres requested to keep the agenda light next time as we will focus on Strategic Plan and the Needs Assessment. L. Dunn will encourage Monroe partners to attend.

XII. Public Comments

Sandi Bisceglia, Chair

XIII. Adjourn

Sandi Bisceglia, Chair

- Motion to adjourn by L. Taylor
- Motion seconded by M. Russell

Next Meeting Date: May 17, 2022 at 1pm