



MINUTES

Monroe County Advisory Committee Meeting

August 15, 2023

Meeting ID: 837 6967 9276

Passcode: 663554

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

Board Attendees: Holly Raschein,

Staff Attendees: Evelio Torres, Angelo Parrino, Anabel Espinosa, Laurie Dunn, Jeff Hurst, Laurie Joasil, Josh Rodriguez, Mercy Castiglione, Victor Caballero, Michele Morgan, Ahmed Mitwalli, Fiorella Altare Christie, Chuck Mohr, Christine Patterson, Brandi Jordan, Judy Leggett, Jennifer Walker, Riestra, Miguel Alfonso, Yadira Aguilar, Lisa Blair, Leah Stockton, Leiana Palma, Carmen Medrano, Alix Harper, Cindy Cabrera, Lisney Badillo, Kimberly Sanders.

I. Welcome & Introductions

Sandi Bisceglia, Chair

- A. S. Bisceglia called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone especially special guest Commissioner Holly Raschein and guest speakers Lisa Blair and Leah Stockton.
- B. Quorum was established with six committee members.

II. Approval of Minutes

Sandi Bisceglia, Chair

Approval of May 24 Meeting Minutes

- Motion to approve by M. Russell
- Motion seconded by S. Bennett
- Motion unanimously passed

III. Chair Updates

Sandi Bisceglia, Chair

S. Bisceglia shared photos of the most recent Monroe County School Board. She thanked L. Taylor for presenting her with the GEMS award for her volunteer work with the Boost program.

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.



S. Bisceglia recognized and thanked S. Bennett for all she has done and congratulated her on her retirement.

L. Taylor talked about the Boost program that helps prepare 4-year-old children for kindergarten. Children experience “a day in the life of a kindergartener. It has been highly successful and well received.

S. Bisceglia gave an update The Futures Project. There is a zoom meeting August 18, 2023, where a summary of the activities of the past year will be provided along with discussion of the statewide strategic plan.

S. Bisceglia reported that the ELC annual meeting will be on October 2 from 10-12 at the Mosquito Control Building in Marathon.

IV. Partner Updates

- A. District Head Start/Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Update M. Russell, Early Childhood Supervisor reported that the MCSD just resumed classes on Thursday and is going well so far. She provided numbers for Head Start, VPK, Head Start. There are currently 246 children with a VPK vouchers in the school district this year. She stated the Head Start monitoring went very well with no findings. She thanked L. Dunn and A. Jacobo for their participation as community representatives. M. Russell then shared photos of family nights and all the activities provided.
- B. S. Bennett (Provider Rep) shared that many schools are still struggling with recruiting and retaining teachers. Many of the children at Sunbeam were able to be relocated to other child care sites in the area and most of the teachers found other jobs. She stated that she used some of her grant money to purchase new materials and she has many older items to give away if anyone would like to stop by and pick them up. She thanked the school district for the Boost program for providing such a great opportunity for the children before they started school. She also thanked J. Hurst for offering to do the Abuse and Neglect training and for providing updates at the recent Director’s meeting.
- C. J. Hurst (DCF) introduced L. Joasil who has taken the place of Suzette Frazier as the Licensing Regional Manager for the Florida Department of Children and Families Sothern Region. He reported that the Mandated Reporter training can be completed via zoom or in person. This training can be used towards the 10 hours of service training required each year. He shared a flyer with all the information about the Florida Abuse hotline and reminded everyone that now is the time to distribute the flyers about the distracted adult and the flu (April and September). It is important to have parents sign for both of these informational flyers. Both flyers are available in English and Spanish.



V. Monroe County Updates

Laurie Dunn

- A. Enrollment data –L. Dunn showed enrollment data for Monroe County in July.
- SR—263 children
 - VPK--- 5 children. This is low because the school year VPK has ended and by August 4 the number was 447. On August 12 of 2022 the number was 464. She said they are still receiving VPK applications and expect to surpass last years numbers soon.
 - At Risk Referrals -42 children
- B. Needs Assessment Action Plan/Next Steps -- L. Dunn talked explained the last section of the Needs Assessment to discuss is on Community Resources and Surveys. She went over the results of the surveys sent out as well as the return rate. The results received from teachers and families were very similar to each other and basically summarized the top concern was how to raise wages to improve recruitment and retention. #2 was educating the public on the importance of early childhood professional and #3 was the high cost of housing and how it affects families.
- C. Outreach Activities- L Dunn shared a list of Outreach activities throughout the Keys that Monroe staff will attend between now and February 2024. L. Dunn said she is continually checking with Chambers for any new events. She will obtain information about National Night Out to add to the list.

VI. Professional development Institute Update

Carmen Medrano

- A. Super Literacy Saturday is on Saturday August 26th from 8:30-1:00 via zoom. You can register through the PDI website. There will be vendors, music and materials.
- B. CDA registration starts the first week in September. There are classes in Pre-K and Infant Toddler in English and Spanish. There were several participants from Monroe in the previous session and they are hoping to have some this year as well.

VII. Monroe Inclusion and Assessment Updates

Dr. Anabel Espinosa

- A. Developmental Screenings --A. Espinosa shared a chart of the amount of ASQ 3 and ASQ SE (Social emotional) completed this past quarter in Monroe. The decrease in the numbers follows the trend and occurs when the school year ends and enrollment drops off in the Summer. In 22-23 there were 268 children screened with the ASQ-3 and the ASQ-Social Emotional. 89 children fell in the concern/monitoring area and 16 were referred for additional evaluation.
- B. BPIECE is recruiting partners for the program. Monroe staff will be active in meeting with Directors.



VIII. Guest Speaker/Reach Out and Read Florida

Lisa Blair, M.Ed

L. Blair, M.Ed., President Miami-Dade Family Learning Partnership, Inc. gave some background information on the program and the Miami-Dade partnership with the ELC. Reach Out and Read has a public health framework. They partner with a national network of clinicians to help integrate reading into pediatric practices. This partnership was established in 2002.

She explained that 91% of children under the age of 1 see a doctor at least once a year. They use this opportunity to promote literacy. They serve 4.2 million each year and give out 6.6 million new books annually to over 33,000 medical providers. They currently serve 7 sites in Monroe County where routine health checkups are offered from infancy to 5 years of age.

L. Blair showed a listing of the sites in Monroe but a few people did not recognize the names as given by the organization. S. Bisceglia would like to use the local name on the listing so people can easily identify the locations. L Blair said she would work L. Taylor to get this updated. They are also looking into other locations In the Keys to integrate this program.

IX. Guest Speaker/Monroe ALICE Report

Leah Stockton, Florida

L. Stockton Florida Keys Area President, United Way of Collier and the Keys, explained that the ALICE (Asset Limited Income Constrained Employed) report is a national report that includes data on household budgets, demographics, employment, housing and other critical economic factors. It takes about 2 years to pull together.

L. Stockton shared data specific to Monroe showing the household survival budget in 2021 and how it has gotten worse since that time. A family of 4 needs to make \$83, 520 to survive here. A single adult needs to make \$19.37 an hour just to get by. 43% of Monroe households are ALICE and do not earn enough to afford life's necessities. 47% of seniors live pay check to pay check. The Federal Poverty Guidelines are for all the states, so comparing Florida to a place like Kentucky is not equitable. In the Florida Keys housing affordability has reached crisis level. L. Stockton shared the Success by Six grant that United Way has partnered with the ELC on in order to provide subsidized childcare for 5 families that are over the income criteria.

X. New Business

Sandi Bisceglia, Chair

S. Bisceglia encouraged anyone wanting to add any new business to an agenda to contact K. Gregory prior to the next meeting.



XI. Public Comments

Sandi Bisceglia, Chair

L. Dunn thanked S. Bennett for all her years of working with the children and families of Monroe County. Everyone joined in applause and acknowledged their appreciation for all she has done for the community.

XII. Adjourn

Sandi Bisceglia, Chair

Meeting adjourned by S. Bisceglia.

Next Meeting Date: August 15, 2023 at 1 pm.