



MINUTES
Board of Directors Meeting
Monday, March 27, 2017
9:00 AM – 1:00 PM

Children's Forum Offices

Board Members Present: Modesto Abety, Wil Blechman, Bob Buesing, Larry Pintacuda

Board Members Present by Phone: Allison Davis, Linda Stoller

Board Members Absent: Chris Card, Claudia Davant, Chuck Hood [medical excusal]

Guests Present: Brian Manuel, Audit Manager, Carr Riggs & Ingram, LLC
Rodney McKinnon, Director, Office of Early Learning
Erin Smeltzer, Director of the School Readiness Program, Office of Early Learning

Staff Present: Phyllis Kalifeh, Kerri Cloud, Beverly Esposito
Emerging Leaders Administrative Team and Participants: Jinan As-Siddiq, Denise Bishop, Felicia Bonner, Qiana Carter, Melissa Clements, Saralyn Grass, Jenna Jacobsen-Brown, Denise Leckey, Erika Pope, Lisa Roberts, Kati Settle, Laura Simonds

Call to Order: Chair Bob Buesing called the meeting to order at 9:15 a.m. A quorum was present.

Reading and Approval of Minutes: Bob asked for additions or corrections to the minutes of the December 16, 2016 meeting. Hearing no changes, Bob called for a motion to approve the minutes as written. The minutes were approved (M/S; Pintacuda/Blechman); motion carried.

Mission Minute (*Opportunities for Board members to be emissaries of the Forum's mission*):

- Wil reported that, since our last meeting, he met with Rep. Gayle Harrell and found her to be very supportive of the T.E.A.C.H. program. When Wil has encounters such as this one, he always identifies himself as a Forum Board member.

- Bob reported that he was glad to have his new Forum business card listing all of our programs and services with him upon arriving in Tallahassee yesterday. When checking into his hotel, the front desk clerk asked “What is the Forum?” and Bob was able to produce his card to help in explaining our mission. He recommends that all Board members be issued business cards.
- Bob asked Mo Abety, as a new member of the Board, to introduce himself to the group. Mo reported that he served as the director of the Miami-Dade County Children’s Services Council for 12 years before moving to The Children’s Trust in Miami in 2002, where he served as President and CEO until his retirement in 2013. In 2016, he ran for a seat on the Miami-Dade County School Board. In addition, Mo was the recipient of the 2016 Chiles Advocacy Award at this time last year as presented at the Children’s Week Advocacy Dinner.
- Bob also acknowledged the presence of the Forum’s first class of Emerging Leaders, consisting of 10 staff members who are completing this leadership development program and who will give presentations on their group Impact Projects during the meeting today.

Chair’s Report: Bob Buesing

- By-Laws Review: Bob referred to the current By-Laws behind Tab 2 in the meeting packet. As a best practice, Forum staff review the By-Laws each year and bring any needed changes to the attention of the Board. Phyllis recently reviewed this document and found no need for any substantive changes in the current version previously amended on March 15, 2013, but did find three instances of “clean-up changes” needed:
 - Vision: The existing vision statement was replaced with the new statement adopted by the Board on September 23, 2016. (Article II, p. 1)
 - Mission Statement: The existing mission statement was replaced with the new statement adopted by the Board on September 23, 2016. (Article II, p. 1)
 - The existing names of our membership levels were replaced with the revised names of our current levels as developed by the staff Membership Committee in 2016. (Article III[B][1], p. 2)

In the process of conducting this review, Phyllis realized she did not give the Board the full 30 days (Article IX, p. 4) to review the By-laws for today’s discussion (although the members did receive the “clean-up language” prior to the meeting). Consequently, she requested that the 30-day rule be waived for this discussion as stipulated in the Amendments subsection (Article IX, p. 4) requiring the approval of the Chair and a 2/3 majority vote of the Board members to effect the waiver. Bob called for a motion to waive the 30-day notice for this meeting only to allow the By-Laws to stand as reviewed effective as of today’s date. The waiver was approved (M/S; Pintacuda/Blechman); motion carried. We will continue to review the By-Laws on an annual basis.

- Strategic Plan Review/Update: Bob referred to the 2016-2018 Strategic Plan behind Tab 2. He explained that, in the past, our annual or biannual Strategic Plan and our Strategic Plan Updates were both contained in the same document. In order to add more substance to our Plan, Phyllis has separated the two pieces into (1) the Strategic Plan itself (now

containing more detail (i.e., additional columns for Date to Accomplish, Resources Needed, Responsibility, and Evaluation and Measurement) and (2) the President's Report: Activities and Progress on the Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan document is included in Tab 2 while the Progress document is included in Tab 4 and shows progress toward our Plan Goals for the 3rd Quarter of FY 2016-2017.

Phyllis added that the only change to the content of the existing 2016-2018 Strategic Plan is the inclusion of a new objective under Goal 5 (p. 7), which reads "The Forum will take a leadership role in convening a Compensation Workgroup to engage leaders on issues of salaries and wages of ECE practitioners." She briefly explained our involvement in this project as part of a larger initiative led by the T.E.A.C.H. national office in North Carolina.

Regarding the new Strategic Plan format, Larry asked if there is any potential for surprise as we look at the "Resources Needed" for each of the goals and objectives; in other words, do we have the resources needed to accomplish everything in the plan? Phyllis indicated that we do. Wil then asked about the notation in Objective 5 under Goal 6, p. 8, which states "Seeking outside funding" in the "Resources Needed" column for the development of a statewide leadership program. Phyllis agreed that this item is in need of additional funding resources, which we are currently pursuing (and good-naturedly noted that Wil was able to find the only objective in the document that fit this description).

Wil commended Phyllis and the staff for the ability to accomplish a large volume of work with a modest amount of resources, by "doing a lot with a little."

There being no further discussion, Bob called for a motion to approve the new Strategic Plan format. The format was approved (M/S; Blechman/Abety); motion carried.

- Chair's Update: Bob wants the Board to be aware that he is attempting to create a model for the state for Early Childhood Education (ECE) work that can be accomplished at the local level. He noted that the programs and funding coming out of the legislature are inadequate for the work that needs to be done in local communities. He has recently joined the Board of a small foundation – the Conn Memorial Foundation in Hillsborough County – as the ECE expert and sees that they are just beginning to realize that ECE is the foundation of the future success of children. Yet, current data indicate that only 53% of children are ready for kindergarten when they arrive, and this figure has been declining over the years. Bob is encouraging the Conn Foundation Board to pay more attention to ECE and how local funds can be used to supplement state and federal funding to enhance outcomes for children. This work is just beginning for Bob, and he will keep us informed as it develops.

Discussion ensued about the low percentage rates of child readiness for school throughout the state and the need for public education on the importance of the early years.

Finance Report: Allison Davis, Treasurer; Kerri Cloud, CFO

Audit Report: Kerri introduced Brian Manuel, Audit Manager at Carr Riggs & Ingram, LLC, (CRI) who led the team for our annual audit for the year ending June 30, 2016, and referred members to the Audit Report behind Tab 3.

Brian gave a summary presentation of the report, noting that the first page of the report relates to the program-specific review of our accounting records with regard to our contract with The Children’s Trust and does not represent an audit of those records.

The actual audit of our financial records begins on the next page, and Brian indicated he would read a few highlights from the report, offer explanations, and answer questions as needed.

He reported that the Forum received a clean opinion, which is the highest level of assurance that the financial records audited accurately represent the financial position of the Forum as of June 30, 2016 (pp. 1-2).

Balance Sheet – p. 3: Accounts Receivable increased during the year, while Accounts Payable showed a comparable increase, reflecting the increase in overall funding largely due to an increased T.E.A.C.H. appropriation effective July 1, 2016.

Statements of Activity – p. 4: Figures indicate that the Forum operates heavily on the program side, using only 2.9% of revenues for administration. Net assets at the end of the year were \$2.6M.

[CFO Note: The 2.9% administrative rate as indicated by Carr Riggs & Ingram is misleading. Their calculation does not include the indirect administrative costs that are charged and reported as part of each program. Accordingly, our actual overall administrative rate is higher than 2.9%.]

Brian then reviewed the Notes Disclosures (pp. 6-9), noting no substantial changes from the prior year.

On p. 8, the guests in attendance from the Office of Early Learning noted the need to change the outdated terminology “Agency for Workforce Innovation” to the “Office of Early Learning.” Brian acknowledged the error and noted that, with their permission, the correction would be made in next year’s report.

Report on Internal Controls – p. 17: No deficiencies and no issues of noncompliance were found.

Report on Compliance – pp. 19-20: The Forum complied in all material respects with the compliance requirements applied, and no management letter was issued.

Required Communications – pp. 23-27: No significant difficulties were encountered in working with the management of the Forum, and CRI is unaware of any fraud or illegal acts with regard to the financial statements reviewed.

Comments on Quality – p. 28: CRI applied two critical policies to our financial procedures in the areas of Expenses and Capital Assets, and the Forum was found to operate in accordance with the principles in both areas.

Management Letter – pp. 30-34: No material weaknesses were found.

Internal Control Findings – p.35-36: No deficiencies were found.

After concluding his report, Brian asked for questions from the Board. Larry commended the performance and consistency over time of the top members of management, especially Phyllis and Kerri, who are responsible for the sound financial management of the agency.

Bob summarized the “big picture” of the Forum for the benefit of new member Mo Abety and the Emerging Leaders by referring to the Grant Revenue list on p. 2 of the July 1 through February 28, 2017 financial statements also found behind Tab 3. This is essentially a complete list of our current funders.

Wil asked Phyllis if we look for opportunities in surrounding states. Phyllis noted that we are open to work in other states and sometimes partner and/or consult with groups outside Florida, but understandably, money often has to be spent within the state that authorizes it.

Mo asked if we reinvest our fund balance to realize any earnings. Phyllis indicated that, since most of our contracts are written on a cost-reimbursement basis, we need to keep our cash fluid. In addition, we have chosen not to take advances on our contracts because of the many stipulations/red tape associated with advances, especially when interest rates are as low as they are now.

There being no other questions, Bob called for a motion to accept the audit report. The report was accepted (M/S; Blechman/Abety); motion carried. Brian left the meeting.

Financial Statements. (Tab 3, following the audit report) Kerri briefly reviewed the financials as follows:

- Balance Sheet: There is \$672,000 cash on hand and \$2.4M in AR.
- Revenue & Expenses: The Year-to-Date figures are shown in Column 1 of the statement, showing where we presently stand.

Kerri summarized the statements as “business as usual.”

She noted that we expect to spend \$7.5 M of our \$10M T.E.A.C.H. allocation this year, but added that now that we have a large number of scholarship recipients on an educational trajectory, we can project what it will take to keep them moving through their credential and degree programs to completion.

Regarding the Financial Ratios, Kerri directed the members to ignore the 2nd entry of “Current Ratio” because the figure entered is incorrect.

There being no questions, Bob called for a motion to accept the financial report. The report was accepted (M/S; Blechman/Pintacuda); motion carried.

CEO Travel Expense Report. The current CEO Travel Expense Report, previously approved at the March 24, 2017 meeting of the Finance & Audit Committee, was approved by the members (M/S; Pintacuda/Blechman) and signed by the Chair.

Finance and Audit Committee Meeting. The minutes of the March 24, 2017 meeting are incorporated as an addendum to the minutes. [See Minutes on p. 11]

At this time, Phyllis presented an award to Bob, recognizing his dedication to the field of early childhood education as demonstrated by his run for a state Senate seat in 2016. Although not successful in his bid, Bob showed a deep commitment to the issues impacting young children in the state of Florida. Phyllis also acknowledged Mo’s run for the Miami-Dade County School Board seat in 2016 and commended both members for their courage and for “walking the talk” on behalf of young children.

Special Presentation: Office of Early Learning

Phyllis introduced our guests from the Office of Early Learning – Rodney McKinnon and Erin Smeltzer – who were in attendance to share the current activities of their office. Rodney serves as the Director of the Office of Early Learning and Erin as the Director of the School Readiness Program.

Erin shared a PowerPoint presentation with the members in which she reviewed their current School Readiness program activities. She began with a graphic illustration of the Florida Early Care and Education System, which represents OEL’s vision for the overall system and shows where the School Readiness program fits into the system.

Erin then gave an overview of the major components of the system:

- Early Learning Performance Funding Project (Pay for Performance)
 - Purpose, Tiers in the model, Results, and Next Steps
 - Larry asked if they have any indications on funding levels for the coming year. Rodney said they are feeling confident at this point that they have the support to continue the project.
 - Wil asked if the Forum Board members can assist in any way, and Larry asked if we can get a one-page brief on the significant points of the project so we can include it in our talks with legislators. Rodney indicated he would get the brief to us.

- Professional Development
 - Registry under development
 - New Career Pathway adopted
 - Advanced Credential Development (in partnership with Early Learning Florida at UF)
- Birth-5 Standards are under revision at this time
- Data Systems – the Enhanced Field System (EFS) is undergoing modernization
- Cultural Responsiveness – a Task Force has been created to address issues of philosophy, core competencies, and a needs assessment
- Health and Safety Regulations
 - Changes in response to 2014 CCDF Reauthorization requirements at the federal level are underway, especially with regard to
 - Pre-service training, and
 - Group size & credential requirements
- Inclusion
 - Screening
 - Developmental Screening
 - Autism Screening
 - Maternal Depression Screening
 - Child Trauma Screening
 - Help Me Grow Partnership
 - Expulsion and Suspension Prevention
 - Infant Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation
 - Professional Development
- Family Engagement – use of the VROOM program, an app for parents providing free, daily tips to enhance interactions with their children
- Subsystems of the Florida Early Care and Education System model
 - Preschool Subsystem
 - Teacher Circles (i.e., communities of practice)
 - Transition to Kindergarten Initiative
 - Infant and Toddler Subsystem
 - Steering Committee, Gap analysis, Next steps

Upon conclusion, Erin shared her contact information and asked for questions:

Erin Smeltzer, Director
 School Readiness Program
 Office of Early Learning
Erin.Smeltzer@OEL.MyFlorida.com
 850-717-8602
www.FloridaEarlyLearning.com

Wil asked if he could receive a copy of the PowerPoint. Erin agreed, and Phyllis will distribute it to the members. Erin and Rodney left the meeting.

Emerging Leaders Presentations: Melissa Clements, Ph.D., VP/Chief Research Officer

Melissa briefly described the Forum's Emerging Leaders program as a leadership development project in its inaugural year. Ten applicants to the program were accepted to participate in a 12-month curriculum designed to enhance the personal and professional development of the participants focused on the growth of leadership skills, knowledge and capacity.

Components of the curriculum included face-to-face group sessions, webinars, commercial training sessions, reading assignments, self-assessment activities, visits to the field (meetings, conferences, Florida legislature) and group impact projects.

In the Impact Projects, two groups of five Emerging Leaders developed these projects and presented them to the Board today:

- *GIVE (Get Involved/Volunteer Everyone!)* – Jinan As-Siddiq, Denise Leckey, Erika Pope, Lisa Roberts, and Laura Simonds
 - The group presentation explained the program, described the planning of the program, shared details of their first event, and reviewed their future plans.
- *Forum Talks Podcasts* – Felicia Bonner, Jill Calhoun, Jenna Jacobsen-Brown, Kiki Peters, and Kati Settle
 - The group presentation explained the project, described some of the challenges they faced in the planning process, played a small segment of their first podcast featuring Phyllis' description of the history of the Forum in a Q&A format, and discussed their plans for future podcasts and the sustainability of the project.

President's Report: Phyllis Kalifeh, President/CEO

State Legislative Update. Phyllis shared that there are a large number of new, first-time members of the legislature this year and that ongoing education on our issues will be needed to help them fully understand the importance of early learning issues.

The first drafts of the House and Senate budgets will be coming out this week, and our hope is that they will mirror the recommendations in the Governor's budget, which calls for \$10M for T.E.A.C.H. (\$3M recurring; \$7M nonrecurring) and \$2.45M for Help Me Grow (HMG) Florida (\$1.88M recurring; \$650K nonrecurring). We know, however, that the House and Senate are likely to have differing opinions on funding for these programs.

1. Help Me Grow Florida – We have experienced some frustration in our attempts to support this program downtown; for example, we were expected to attend a House PreK-12 Appropriations Subcommittee meeting (Chair Manny Diaz) a few weeks ago but did not receive notification of the meeting, as was

the case for many other agency programs that were being reviewed that day. Subsequently, the Committee announced that any agencies not attending the meeting would not be considered for funding. Fortunately, we were able to get someone downtown before the meeting ended and were marked as present, although we did not get to make a presentation. We will continue to advocate for at least the level of recurring funds received last year at \$1.8M. We do know that Senator Anitere Flores has expressed support for HMG.

2. T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood[®] Program – The Office of Early Learning included the full \$10M request for T.E.A.C.H. in their Legislative Budget Request (LBR) earlier in the year, and we are hopeful that funding is maintained at that level so we can continue with the work begun this year.

With regard to both programs, we're not sure where we stand at this moment. We know that the Senate is more supportive of our issues than the House. Bob asked if Phyllis needs anything from the Board, with Phyllis saying not at this time, but she will let members know when they are needed. Larry said that they feel comfortable in advocating for T.E.A.C.H. but may need information in the form of a one-page brief on HMG. Phyllis referred the members to Tab 5, where fact sheets for both T.E.A.C.H. and HMG can be found.

Mo asked if we have a legislative agenda. Phyllis indicated that we do not have a specific Forum agenda because we have adopted the agenda and priorities of the Early Care and Education (ECE) Consortium, a group of six Florida organizations created to develop a unified policy agenda for the early learning sector: Association of Early Learning Coalitions (AELC), Children's Forum, Florida Association for Child Care Management (FACCM), Florida Association for the Education of Young Children (FLAEYC), Florida Children's Council, and United Way of Florida.

Federal Legislative Update. Phyllis reported that we don't yet know what will happen with the Block Grant money (CCDBG) to the states. Although the current administration has said that early learning is a high priority for them, we don't really know what that means at this time. They have talked about tax credits for families and tax incentives for programs, but nothing definitive has been put forward. At the least, we don't want the feds to replace anything already gained, but of course we would not be opposed to additional funding and enhancements.

At this time, it looks like the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program is in trouble, thereby putting afterschool programs for lower-income students in jeopardy. Larry is very active on this issue.

Strategic Plan Progress. Phyllis referred members to the strategic plan update behind Tab 4 in the meeting packet which has been updated to reflect activities accomplished through the 3rd Q of FY 16-17. In the interest of time, she declined to review the full document and instead mentioned a few significant highlights. Phyllis asked for questions; there being none, she invited the members to review the updates at their convenience.

New Business.

Change of September Meeting Date. Phyllis asked the members if they would be able to attend the 1st Quarter meeting on September 15 in lieu of September 22. Most members were either in agreement or needed to check their calendars. Phyllis will send out an Outlook invitation for the 22nd to see if all members will be able to attend.

There being no other comments for the good of the order, the regular portion of the meeting was adjourned at 12:35 p.m. At that time, Bob asked the members to stay for the Closed Session of the Executive Committee, and Forum staff members were excused from the meeting.

The Closed Session ended at 12:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Larry Pintacuda
Secretary

Beverly Esposito
Recording

Signature of Secretary: _____ [date]

Minutes Approved on: _____
[date]

Signature of Chair: _____ [date]



MINUTES

Finance & Audit Committee

Friday, March 24, 2017

10:30 am

Phone Conference

Board Members Present by Phone: Chris Card, Allison Davis, Larry Pintacuda

Staff Present: Phyllis Kalifeh, Kerri Cloud

The finance/audit committee began a discussion of the following:

- **February 2017 Financial Statements** – A discussion ensued regarding the February financial statements which had been emailed to the board earlier. Larry opened the discussion with a question regarding whether the TEACH dollars could all be spent this year. Phyllis and Kerri indicated that our target would be to spend \$7.5M this year. We have had discussions with OEL and they are aware that we will most likely not be able to spend the entire \$10M. Larry & Chris also asked about the Help Me Grow (HMG) contract and if all of those monies will be spent. Kerri explained that most of those contract dollars are pass through to our 9 affiliates and that we are anticipating all of the HMG monies being spent by the end of the year. No other questions were raised regarding the February financials.
- **Travel Expense Report** –Phyllis presented her travel summary for the quarter to the committee for review and approval. The Finance Committee approved the travel summary during the conference call. The summary will be sent to the entire board for final approval at the next meeting on Monday, March 27, 2017.

No further discussion.

Meeting adjourned at 10:48 a.m.