

# Early Learning Coalition of Florida's Heartland, Inc.

ELCFH Executive Committee Meeting  
Thursday, February 11, 2010 @ 9:00 a.m.

**Members Present:** Ed Osborne, Alan Grimes (Conference Call), Sheila Nobles (Conference Call), Deb DeKeulenaere  
**Staff:** Anne Bouhebent, Anna Brookbank, Helena Sloan, Marjie Bateman, Arvilla Brito, Paula Mason, Katie Graddy  
**Guests:** Ron Buschbom (Attorney for Grace Community School), Reverend Ellsworth McIntyre (Corporate Agent for Grace Community School), Rachel Adams (Grace Community School), Franciani Oliviera (Grace Community School)

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1. **Call to Order (Ed Osborne)**

Ed Osborne called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m.

• **FY 09-10 ELCFH School Readiness Provider Contract: Executive Director Recommendation for Provider Contract Termination (Anne Bouhebent)**

Anne stated the focus of the meeting today is for the Committee to review and make a final determination regarding the ELCFH recommendation for FY 09-10 School Readiness Provider Contract termination with Grace Community School in Port Charlotte.

Anne stated ELCFH staff is discouraged that the School Readiness Contract with Grace Community School has had to be recommended for termination. ELCFH was attempting to work with site through a "staffing" which involved mentoring and discussions regarding needed correction to compliance issues. These compliance issues consisted of three counts of insufficient ratios and a decrease in the ERS score. More recently, the site demonstrated further non-compliance by not allowing ELCFH staff on-site unless video-taping was permitted. As a result of the site's non-compliance, 30 children from 21 families being served through School Readiness stand to have their child care disrupted.

Anne referred to the meeting packet which includes observations written by ELCFH Quality staff as well as the Executive Director's letter to the site. The observations demonstrate why the site was issued formal notices of non-compliance which resulted in the site being staffed and mentored by the ELCFH. Grace Community School faxed a document consisting of a letter from the director, teacher statements and a copy/ partial copy of ELCFH generated letters. Anne further stated the fax, in its entirety, was sent to the Executive Committee on Monday, February 8, 2010.

Anne noted that Grace Community School has signed an agreement with the ELCFH that states they will allow onsite visits of ELCFH staff. The ELCFH has never agreed to allow taping of any kind. Anne further stated an internal memo was recently issued to ELCFH staff stating they are not to permit taping. The only exception to that is any meeting held in public forum.

Ron Buschbom, Attorney for Grace Community School stated the site has a good relationship with the ELCFH. However, as a result of violations that were cited at the facility based in Lee County a policy was put in place at both facilities to video tape. One of the reasons for this is that everyone has an interpretation or a different recollection of what happened and sometimes it is not correct. Ron stated he respectfully disagrees with ELCFH that staff was denied access to the site. He stated ELCFH staff were free to come into the site and that they would be video taped. He further stated ELCFH

staff was not told they could not come in unless they agreed to be video taped. Ron also informed the Committee that Grace Community School has decided to cease video taping.

Rachel Adams of Grace Community School stated ELCFH staff was video taped during the mentoring process and when ELCFH staff came back on January 24<sup>th</sup> they informed Grace Community School that they could not be video taped. Rachel stated she thought this was meant only for the mentoring process. She further stated when ELCFH staff arrived on February 1<sup>st</sup> for an inspection that Grace Community staff wanted a clear understanding of what ELCFH staff was saying and wanted to make sure that everything would be corrected that was cited. Rachel stated access was not denied to ELCFH staff and was simply awaiting permission from her boss to let them in without video taping. She stated a letter was faxed to her from the ELCFH in the afternoon informing them of the recommended contract termination. Rachel stated they did not have a chance to correct this situation.

Rachel stated that Grace Community School is trying to comply and is currently addressing all issues and wants to be in full compliance. Ed Osborne wanted clarification from Grace Community School that the video taping was in fact something that was recently implemented. Rachel confirmed that it was.

Ed asked ELCFH staff if there is any provision or stipulation in the ELCFH School Readiness Provider Contract that video taping is not permissible. Anne Bouhebert stated it is not stipulated in the contract, however, the law does not permit anyone to be taped without consent. ELCFH has an internal policy that staff is not to be video or audio taped with the exception of public forum.

Ron Buschbom requested Fran Oliviera make a statement with reference to the ELCFH staff's on site visit on February 1<sup>st</sup>. Fran stated ELCFH staff arrived in the morning to do an on-site inspection. She informed them they would be allowed to enter the site but would be video taped. ELCFH staff stated they could not be video taped. Fran placed a call to her supervisor, Rachel who spoke directly with ELCFH staff.

Deb DeKeulenaere inquired as to why the Supervisor or Director of Grace Community School did not contact ELCFH after receiving the letter the afternoon of February 1<sup>st</sup>. Ron replied that the letter instructed them to submit documentation by February 5<sup>th</sup> for the Executive Committee review and Grace Community School did not think there was any other recourse but to follow the instructions in the letter.

A discussion ensued about the numerous notices of non-compliance standards/items issued to Grace Community School, Port Charlotte relating to insufficient ratio issues and a decrease in the Environmental Rating Scale score.

Ed Osborne stated that Rachel did acknowledge that there are issues with the site. He asked her if Grace Community School would like to continue the contract with the ELCFH and are they interested in meeting the requirements of the contract. Rachel stated that Grace Community School of Port Charlotte is interested in working with the ELCFH to work toward compliance.

Alan Grimes asked if there is any way to do a reassessment or reevaluation inspection. Anne stated that ELCFH felt there was potential with the facility, however, the non-compliance issues are serious and need to be addressed. Alan stated since the video taping has been resolved and will not be done, he suggested a couple of on site inspections be done on the site.

Ed stated the ELCFH's job is to make sure the site provides quality care to children and meets the

health and safety standards. He further stated that is the State's requirement of the ELCFH to make sure the money is spent properly and that the children have proper care and safety.

A discussion ensued and it was agreed to delay the termination of the contract for one month. The ELCFH will conduct on site inspections and will update the ELCFH Board on the status of compliance at the March 24, 2010 meeting.

**Deb DeKeulenaere made a motion to delay a decision on the recommendation to terminate the School Readiness Contract with Grace Community School of Port Charlotte for a time period of no less than 30 days in order to allow the facility to demonstrate the ability to ensure ongoing compliance with the contract. ELCFH staff will visit the site to perform a re-check of ERS as well as conduct at least two inspections. An update regarding the site's progress will be presented at the next ELCFH Board Meeting on March 24, 2010. Alan Grimes seconded. The motion carried.**

3. **Update regarding School Readiness Providers with contractual compliance issues** (*A. Bouheben, M. Bateman*)  
Anne asked the Committee if they would like Information Item #3 with reference to an update on School Readiness Providers with contractual issues be presented at the next ELCFH Board meeting on March 24, 2010. This is due to the unexpected length of today's meeting. The Committee agreed to do so.
4. **Open Forum**  
There was no open forum.
5. **Adjournment**  
Ed Osborne adjourned the meeting at 10:18 a.m.