

Early Learning Coalition of Florida's Heartland, Inc.

www.elcfh.org

ELCFH Finance Committee Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, November 24, 2009 – 9:00 a.m.
ELCFH Charlotte Office

Members Present: Alan Grimes, Ed Osborne, Kathleen Roehm (via conference call); Dr. Mary Harder (via conference call)
Members Absent: Dr. Sharon Goodman
Staff: Anne Bouhebent, Helena Sloan, Pam Greve, Olga Olvera, Arvilla Brito

I. Introductions (Alan Grimes)

Meeting brought to order at 9:05 a.m.
Introductions were made.

II. Overview of Current Financials/Utilization/Trends (Anne Bouhebent)

Anne gave an overview of the Utilization and Expenditure Summary (pages 1-5):

School Readiness is overspent by approximately 1.9%. Anne noted that this does not include unallocated funds. The ELCFH will do a budget alignment mid-year to review underspent line items in order to pull funds into overspent line items which are slots.

VPK is slightly underspent by .4% with room for some enrollment. Anne noted one trend the ELCFH is monitoring very closely is the expenditures of ARRA dollars which is underspent. If the ELCFH has not spent 50% of these funds by end of this fiscal year whatever has not been spent is reverted back to the state. Anne stated the current trend with ARRA applicants is awaiting unemployment benefits, therefore, the eligibility of funding cannot pertain to them. ELCFH puts these applications on hold. The ELCFH is actively marketing in the community by sending the ARRA flyer to community partners, providers, Client Communicator (a newsletter to parents) as well as press releases. Anne stated the ELCFH will continue to cycle through venues to promote the ARRA dollars so parents are aware of the services. Anne stated the ELCFH is also reviewing other eligibility criteria and connecting with other coalitions to learn about strategies being implemented.

Match Reports

Anne referred to page 11 and noted two new funding partners:

Walmart, Avon Park - award of \$1,000

United Way of Sarasota County-DeSoto County Chapter – award of \$500

Anne noted both awards will be used for slots.

On page 15, Anne noted total secured match needed was \$264,320 and to date the ELCFH has received \$241,834. A large portion of this is due to OEL approved in-kind donations from TechSoup.org. Anne stated the ELCFH purchased software and paid a discounted cost from TechSoup with a savings of up to



♥ **Charlotte Office**
3028 Caring Way, Suite 4
Port Charlotte, FL 33952
Phone: (941) 255-1650
Fax: (941) 255-5856

♥ **DeSoto Office**
4 West Oak Street, Suite H
Arcadia, FL 34266
Phone: (863) 494-5233
Fax: (863) 494-5291

♥ **Hardee Office**
324 N. 6th Avenue
Wauchula, FL 33873
Phone: (863) 767-1002
Fax: (863) 767-1007

♥ **Highlands Office**
209 N. Ridgewood Drive
Sebring, FL 33870
Phone: (863) 314-9213
Fax: (863) 314-4480



"INVESTING IN CHILDREN – INVESTING IN OUR FUTURE"



\$37,000. OEL has approved this amount as in-kind which the ELCFH was able to apply towards the 6% match requirement. Alan Grimes commended ELCFH staff for being innovative in putting together TechSoup.org seeking and obtaining the approval towards the 6% match. Anne noted during the month of December the ELCFH will need to apply for a match waiver for DeSoto County. This is the first time the ELCFH has had to request a waiver for only one county. DeSoto, Hardee and Highlands all qualify for match waivers because they are either rural or contiguous rural. Charlotte does not qualify because it is not considered a rural county. Anne stated the ELCFH is very excited about how much funds were secured to date considering the economic climate.

Kathleen Roehm commented on the impact of Walmart's Distribution Center in DeSoto County and that there is definitely an impact on its employees for the ELCFH's services. Kathleen will obtain a contact person at Walmart for the ELCFH to call in order to pursue some additional match dollars in DeSoto County.

III. New Business (Alan Grimes)

- **Expenditures over \$5,000**

Alan stated there were no expenditures over \$5,000.

- **Quarterly Credit Card Review**

Alan stated he reviewed and approved the quarterly credit card expenditures.

- **Provider Reimbursement Rate Survey Results**

Anne stated at the request of the Committee at the last meeting, the ELCFH sent out a survey to all providers requesting input on the proposed School Readiness Reimbursement Rate Increase. The ELCFH compiled results of this survey which are included in the packet along with letters from providers on pages 35 through 36. Anne stated there was a 50% return rate. On page 31 is projected costs of the Proposed Rate Increase based on a 2%, 4% or 10% increase. Anne stated this is based on the assumption that all providers will request the increase, however, historically this has not happened. Anne further stated this impacts private pay families because whatever the providers charge the ELCFH they must also charge the private pay families. The providers risk losing some families from this group. Olga Olvera stated when the ELCFH had an increase two years ago, approximately 60-75% of the providers raised the rates over a period of time. Anne stated Alan Grimes prepared a visual aid to help better see the results of the survey which Anne emailed to the Committee members prior to the meeting.

The ELCFH is requesting the Committee review the results of the survey and provide recommendation to the Board for the December 2nd meeting.

Kathleen Roehm stated the providers the coalition serves are hit the hardest by the change in the economy and what can the ELCFH do other than increase the rate. She stated this is the only option as far as helping the providers, however, it also means less children will be served. If the increase is 2% it would be considered a cost of living increase since it has been two years since the last rate increase. Anne stated if the 2% increase is proposed it would cost \$70,000 over the year. Alan commented on the letters received from providers specifying quality and if the \$70,000 could be used toward more quality programs instead. Alan stated the coalition's purpose is quality education for children and providing slots, however, the emphasis really is on quality education. If the rate is increased to 2% (\$70,000) what other avenue could the ELCFH use for quality?

Anne referred to the provider letter on page 36 and stated the ELCFH Board is very actively supporting quality measures. The ELCFH has been much more diligent and proactive in sending letters regarding health and safety issues that impact children. The quality program is very strong in providing on site technical assistance and group trainings. The program continues to find venues such

as director forums to bring providers together to network toward quality practices. Anne stated at the annual meeting last year, the Board heard from a provider that had strong feelings about being on the same provider list as those that were low quality. There are providers that need to be stepped up and they are being monitored by quality. Anne stated the letter shows more of same sentiment – let's keep raising the bar. The provider knows that quality is right for kids and the ELCFH Board has a vested interest in that.

A discussion ensued on the Infant/Toddler group and increasing only that group. Anne stated it would cost more for the provider and for private pay families. The survey supports that 60% of providers prefer an increase across all age groups. Pam Greve stated the different rates across the age groups was discussed at the last meeting because of the increase in the market rates. The infant toddler increased significantly compared to the other age groups impacting the private paid families. Olga stated there are providers who do not have infant/toddler programs so they would not benefit from the increase.

Kathleen asked if the ELCFH is on the lower end of rates in the state and asked if there are coalitions that have lower rates than us? Anne stated the ELCFH will research with other coalitions to determine where the ELCFH ranks with the rates and would provide this information to the Board.

Alan Grimes stated 75% of the providers surveyed want the increase to be less than 4%. Kathleen Roehm recommends going with the majority and making a small increase across the board. Ed Osborne and Dr. Mary Harder agreed.

The Committee recommends a 2% increase in School Readiness reimbursement rates for Board approval at the December 2, 2009 meeting. The ELCFH will present results of research with other coalitions.

- **VPK Budget Realignment Proposal**

Anne referred to pages 37 and 38 and noted the proposed VPK budget which aligns with the current notice of award. The ELCFH is requesting Committee review proposal and provide recommendation for approval at the December 2, 2009 Board meeting.

The Committee approved the VPK Budget Realignment as submitted.

- **Annual Audit Draft Review**

Alan stated he reviewed the Annual Audit which produced no findings. Anne stated the auditor will be present at the next Board meeting to present the audit to the Board.

IV. **Open Forum (Alan Grimes)**

Ed Osborne requested an update on the DeSoto Office expansion. Helena Sloan stated the lease has been signed and will be effective 1/1/10. The landlord will be doing construction work on the walls at his expense.

V. **Adjournment (Alan Grimes)**

Meeting was adjourned at 9:50 a.m.

REMINDER:

**Next ELCFH Finance Committee Meeting Date:
Tuesday, January 26, 2010 @ 9:00 a.m.**