



**Board of Directors Meeting
December 11, 2020
9:00 AM-12:00 PM**

This meeting was held via teleconference in an abundance of caution due to COVID-19 concerns

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE:

Board Members present: Bob Buesing, Wil Blechman, Allison Davis, Claudia Davant, Ted Granger, Gege Kreischer, Larry Pintacuda

Staff Present: Phyllis Kalifeh, Kerri Cloud, Denise Bishop

Welcome:

Chair Bob Buesing welcomed those in attendance and called the meeting to order at 9:10 am. A quorum was present. Bob started off by sharing that he is incredibly grateful to be the expectant grandfather of twins!

He provided an expression of appreciate for the Children's Forum Board stating that while most executive boards address fiduciary responsibilities, and some also engage in strategic planning, we do both and we do them effectively. In fact, he said that we also follow through with implementation of our strategic plan. He stated that he is very proud of our board.

Approval of Minutes:

The Board approved the minutes from the September 11, 2020 Meeting. (M: L. Pintacuda/ S: G. Kreischer). There was a reference in the minutes to the Forum's HR policies, which are being reviewed and edited. Larry shared that he is about halfway through the review process and will share his recommendations as they are formulated. Wil revisited earlier discussions about submitting Op-Eds and developing advocacy webinars. The board agreed to continue the conversation later in the meeting.

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

Wil said that he recently participated in the First 1000 Days webinars provided through the Children's Movement and shares that he signed in as a Children's Forum Board Member.

Chair's Report: Bob Buesing:

Bob initiated a discussion about launching both a statewide and a regional approach to early care and education (ECE) advocacy and strategic intervention. He shared that he was asked to talk about ECE with the Athena Society, which is a group of female business owners. Bob said he was impressed by another presentation provided by John Pepper who was the CEO of Proctor & Gamble in Cincinnati. Mr. Pepper shared that he realized how important quality ECE was to the economy and society in general but was having trouble getting traction at a state level. He shifted his focus to regional efforts and took a grass roots, bottom up approach to advocating for ECE.

Bob is a strong advocate for a bottom-up approach and feels we should focus on that throughout Florida. He explained that with Local Effort (legislative term) the state will contribute to evidence-based programs that are locally funded. He shared that 21/22 Local Efforts has passed within the K-12 system. Bob suggests we ask any legislative contacts we have to smooth the way for "Local Effort for ECE." While CSCs are an example of this in practice, Bob thinks we need to go beyond the idea of CSCs. He further discussed millage rates and said that in most communities, a referendum can be introduced to increase the millage and perhaps attach that added funding to ECE initiatives as the co-beneficiary. A joint discussion ensued.

Wil said that the work of John Pepper was a good example of the implementation of programs with measurable outcomes. Wil reminded the Board of the Investing in ECE webinar we saw a month or so ago when Pay for Success was successfully implemented jointly with business and local government investments. He also shared how PNC Bank has been doing the same thing throughout Pittsburgh.

Ted asked some clarifying questions about the millage rate asking if it was cumulative or if it applied separately by project/area of focus. Bob responded that it has an overall application and explained that millage is a completely separate tax, which can be increased through referendum. Ted added that he thinks connecting with the Chamber is key suggesting that we need business partners to drive this train. Bob added that Publix, Bank of America, and Florida Blue are all involved in these types of partnerships. He shared that Ms. Arthur Blank who owns Home Depot and the Atlanta Falcons is heavily invested in ECE initiatives. He stressed that Florida needs an identified business leader for Early Childhood Advocacy. Ted said that if we can prove success in one city, it would have a domino effect and transfer to other cities.

Gege initiated a conversation about funding challenges in ECE because of the pandemic. She shared that the overall workforce has been negatively impacted and many programs are closing. She said that unfortunately, some programs are barely staying open are using their personal resources to delay the inevitable closures. She said that many owners do not understand how close they are to total collapse. She is very concerned about a "crisis in quality" for those that remain open. She is a strong advocate for a coordinated regional focus on quality in light of COVID 19 and the ramifications.

Phyllis said there was a significant CCDBG money coming to Florida that is earmarked for local grants with matching required. This may be a model to pursue. Everyone agrees that we need to find a central voice that can serve as a champion for ECE in Florida. Larry said we need to remember all of the children who live in rural communities and to consider the vast childcare deserts that exist in Florida.

Claudia suggested Monesia Brown who currently works as an upper level executive for Walmart, but has been actively involved in early childhood issues for years. Claudia offered to reach out to Monesia and see if she would like to continue a conversation along these lines.

Ted revisited the state-level budgetary issues and stressed that regional approaches may be our best bet for funding support during this session reiterating that we need to reach out to the Chamber.

Wil suggested we should go to businesses to see if they will fund some research and development studies and then go to state universities to gather the human capital to have the work done. Ted added that we could go to Shan Goff (Executive Director of OEL) or Cari Miller (Vice Chancellor of Literacy Achievement at FDOE), both of whom worked with Jeb Bush on his literacy initiatives, to discuss the possibility of some R&D work.

Wil came back to the impact of Covid and shared that he is very concerned about how things will look in the spring and how it will affect the legislative session.

Nominating Committee: Larry Pintacuda said there is nothing new to report this month.

Finance Committee: Kerri Cloud, CFO, Larry Pintacuda, and Chris Card had an opportunity to meet and discuss the financial statements prior to the board meeting.

Financial Statements:

Kerri Cloud shared that the finance committee met yesterday and that the Forum is \$1492 to the positive. She said that things are moving forward as planned through the July 1, 2020-June 30, 2021 fiscal year. The current financials reported (see attached) are for 4 months (July-October, 2020).

The FY19-20 audit report should be released next week and will be presented and approved at the next board meeting in March 2021. Call for a motion to accept the financial statements (M: L. Pintacuda/ S: W. Blechman)

CEO Travel and Expense report

Consistent with NonProfits First, the Children's Forum provides all necessary documentation to accompany the CEO travel and expense report. This report was reviewed and approved (M: L. Stoller/ S: L. Pintacuda)

Special Presentation to the Board by Brian Hickey, Florida Afterschool Network

(For more details, please refer to the PowerPoint presentation included with these minutes)

Following the presentation, Phyllis opened up the floor for questions directed to Brian. She shared that she and Brian were on a call where there was discussion about the impact of investments in ECE, Afterschool, and a combination of both ECE and AS and the data showed there was a greater return on investment (i.e., aggregate impact for third grade reading outcomes) when Quality ECE and AS were delivered together for children.

Since the Children's Forum is the new administrative home for FAN, specific goals and objectives need to be included in the Children's Forum Strategic Plan. This work will be addressed independent of the board meeting.

President's Report: Phyllis Kalifeh

Phyllis shared that the environment surrounding the legislature and session this year is different from past years due to COVID restrictions, visitation protocol, and budget constraints. Representative Grall will reintroduce her Early Learning Bill this Session. We will need to educate the new members on the value and importance of early learning issues. Linda recommended that we focus on local meetings with representatives. Everyone agreed that local connections are critical this year. T.E.A.C.H. is somewhat vulnerable this year, even though the funding is federal, but fortunately, it is included in the Governor's budget at this point.

Children's Services Councils: Leon County and Escambia County have new CSCs. There was discussion about the funding structure for each of the new CSCs.

Minimum wage increase: A graduated minimum wage increase was approved. This will have a direct impact on childcare programs. Gege suggested that a network should be established to coach and mentor people around this issue. The change is going to have a significant impact on the bottom line for program directors.

Computer Reimbursement through T.E.A.C.H.: T.E.A.C.H. is offering financial reimbursement (up to \$500) to scholars taking online classes. This has been a tremendous resource and to date, over 650 reimbursements have been issued. The testimonials from scholars who have taken advantage of this benefit are heartwarming and they are very appreciative of the proactive support during the pandemic.

Children's Week: Phyllis provided an extensive update on Children's week in her written report, which was submitted with the board materials for this meeting. In short, we are planning on a series of virtual events and there will be F2F activities as CDC guidelines permit. Several *Avenues to Advocacy* webinars are scheduled as a precursor to Children's Week events. Ted shared that he is very thankful for the leadership and coordination the Children's Forum is providing for Children's Week. Bob asked if board members should be working on some Op-eds around Children's Week, Legislative priorities etc. He encouraged everyone to create a unifying message that early care and education is essential for the economy to thrive and for families to get back to work. The awareness about how important access to K-12 schools is for families has been highlighted since COVID shut down in person classes for many families. We need to communicate the same message with a Birth-5 collaborative effort.

Wil suggested that we have other organizations sign on to the Op-eds we send for publication and recommended we develop a research-based white paper for the legislature. He said if we write Op-eds, he wants to be sure they include a whole child approach, which would go beyond academic preparation and would focus on prenatal to age three development. Everyone agreed that this is the time to emphasize the role of ECE. Bob asked who should lead the effort (e.g., Children's Movement, Business

Alliance). Phyllis said she would talk to the EL Consortium. Bob and Wil said they wanted to be actively involved in this initiative. It was recommended that we collaborate with the Children's Movement, as this is their forte, and create a loud and unified voice. Ted agreed and said it was time for a social media blitz and that parents and caregivers should be involved in the outreach.

Phyllis said that the amount of funding included in the Federal and State Relief Bill is significant, but she is concerned about whether those resources will get to where they need to be for early learning initiatives. We need to develop a Parent Leadership Model; research other programs that have done this already. Ted said he would reach out to the Chamber, and specifically the Chair of the Business Alliance. Gege suggested that we select five programs and conduct interviews, which can be transferred to a webinar format to communicate the impact of the pandemic on child care. We did something similar to this in our Summer Webinar Series 2020, but it may be time to revisit it. Phyllis said that there was a need for some internal strategizing and that we needed some time to think this through collectively.

Children's Forum Strategic Plan Review

Phyllis said that she would add a goal to the Children's Forum strategic plan related to the Florida Afterschool Network (FAN). There was a call for a motion to add the Goal/Objectives to the strategic plan (M: W. Blechman/ S: G. Kreischer).

Next meeting: March 19, 2021 (Virtual)

Closed Executive Session (N/A)

Please note addendum: Amendment to our 403(b) Plan to add an automatic escalation for contributions to the plan. Board took an electronic vote and unanimously approved the request. The following is the email sent to the board along with several attachments, which will be included with these minutes:

(12/15/20)

We currently already have the automatic enrollment in our plan with a 1% contribution rate on behalf of all new hires. Whatever an employee contributes, we match those contributions up to 5%. What this amendment does is institute an automatic escalation of contributions to the plan on behalf of the employee each year up to 5%. We match the 5% so this is an encouragement for employees to take advantage of the matching funds and save. Of course, the employee can opt out if they do not want to participate.

*This requires an amendment to the plan. Therefore, I am requesting approval for this amendment. There are several attached documents should you wish to read them. If you approve of this amendment, Bob will just need to sign the attached **Board of Directors Resolution** authorizing me to sign for the amendment.*

Respectfully submitted,

Larry Pintacuda
Secretary



Signature of Secretary



Signature of President

Denise Bishop
Recording

<<will be reviewed and approved at March 2021 meeting>>

Minutes Approved (date)

<<will be reviewed and approved at March 2021 meeting>>

Minutes Approved (date)