



**Board of Directors Meeting  
December 6, 2019  
9:00 AM-1:00 PM**

**MINUTES**

**ATTENDANCE:**

**Board Members present:** Bob Buesing, Wil Blechman, Gege Kreisler, Larry Pintacuda

**Board Members present via conference call:** Claudia Davant,

**Staff Present:** Phyllis Kalifeh, Kerri Cloud, Denise Bishop, Jinan As-Siddiq

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**Welcome:**

Chair Bob Buesing welcomed those in attendance and called the meeting to order at 9:15 AM. A quorum was present.

**Reading and Approval of Minutes:**

The meeting minutes from September 13, 2019 were approved. (M: Pintacuda/S: Blechman)

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

Wil shared with the Board that the viewing of *No Small Matter* held in Tallahassee on December 5, 2019, co-sponsored by the Florida Kiwanis and the Children's Forum, was very successful and he praised the Forum staff for their coordination and execution of the event. Wil recognized that the majority of the audience was comprised of professionals involved within the ECE field and said that it will be important to broaden the reach and increase the exposure for those outside of the professional field such as parents, grandparents, and business associates. Bob spoke from the business perspective and it was well-received from the audience. Wil was impressed with the commentary that followed the film and shared that it was emotional and compelling. There was interest from many to keep the positive momentum going and to do some planning around showing *No Small Matter* to a broader audience and then linking it to future community and statewide action. Contact cards were collected from participants.

There was discussion about the roles that the Florida Kiwanis and the Children's Forum should have in the planning process. Wil said he would connect Phyllis directly with the Kiwanis and Gege said that FLAEYC would continue to be actively engaged as well. Phyllis suggested that the early learning coalitions, Florida Kiwanis, FLAEYC, and other ECE stakeholders should collaborate and partner together as this initiative moves forward. Phyllis asked if the Kiwanis had the rights to the film after December 2019. Wil said he would follow up to see what, if any, limitations there were. Wil also suggested that we all brain-storm ways to get more media

attention and used the Rob Reiner video on parent education as an example. According to Wil, it received a great deal of media attention. There was local media attention prior to the viewing in Tallahassee; Tom Flanagan from the local public radio station interviewed Wil and it played on WFSU just prior to this board meeting!

Gege shared some information about the Power to the Profession (P2P) initiative within NAEYC. She said that 15 agencies at P2P are talking about requiring degreed staff as lead teachers. She said the thinking is that we need to have staff that understand the value of what they do with children in (and outside) the classroom. There is an active push for NAEYC to engage with T.E.A.C.H. and Gege said that Sue Russell (T.E.A.C.H. National) has been involved in the discussions.

Gege also talked about the Council for Accreditation with NAEYC. She said that she is contacted frequently asking if she can assist applicants with their self-studies. Gege shared that doing so defeats the purpose of the self-study and would be a conflict of interest for her, but that mentoring programs as they go through the accreditation process is definitely a need. She said there is a national pilot that is exploring training a cadre of professionals within NAEYC that would be prepared to support programs as they work through the process. They are currently looking for a state to implement the pilot and Gege encouraged them to contact the Children's Forum. She said that there are definitely AEYCs that could take this on.

### **Chair's Report: Bob Buesing**

Bob shared that he and Wil recently attended a Policy Network Meeting and that Phyllis was also there in a leadership role. He said he found it quite interesting. He said he had also attended the Chamber of Commerce Business Alliance meeting and continues to see significant support from the Chamber for early learning. He said that Tony Carvahal, ED for the Business Alliance, would like to see 100% of children kindergarten ready by 2030. Bob also shared that Ready Nation was looking for a media spokesperson for Florida, and they selected him to serve in that role.

Bob also discussed the Talk, Read, Sing initiative and shared that Hillsborough County is the 26<sup>th</sup> national site. He said that he is beginning to see reading centers pop up in laundromats in Hillsborough as well (i.e., Town and Country) and he knows that the Kiwanis are helping with that. He also shared that the superintendent for the Hillsborough School District is resigning. Bob is disappointed with the news because the superintendent was an advocate for early learning.

Bob talked about a research and implementation study that is being conducted in Hillsborough, specifically Town and Country, that is connecting preschools to kindergarten placement and evaluating the impact of the transitions on outcomes for children and their families. Initial data show that there is a 19% increase in K readiness when communication is initiated between the child care centers and the kindergartens to which they are transitioning. Wil said that he had been aware of a similar approach to proactive communication around such transitions in Oklahoma. Phyllis raised the question of establishing a policy-driver through legislation as well as a local strategy to implement it. Bob said that Sheffield Crowder, ED for the Florida Philanthropic Network, is in charge of the data for this project and Bob will share any information he gets with the board. Bob said there is discussion about facilitating a transition fair to support the engagement of the families. He will keep the board posted. Larry added that there is a similar

project, on a smaller scale, being implemented on the Southside of Tallahassee in Leon County. Gege said she could see this also being implemented in Pasco County.

**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 shared that we are four months into the 2019-20 fiscal year and there is an audit underway for the 2018-19 fiscal year. We are on track to spend all of the allocated funds this year and there is no balance to carry forward on the increased Line of Credit that was established. From a budget perspective, Kerry said that T.E.A.C.H. is the largest contract and that we always spend down those funds. The financial statements were approved. (M: Pintacuda/S: Blechman)

- **CEO Travel and Expense report**

The CEO travel and expense report was reviewed and approved (M: Pintacuda/ S: Blechman)

**President's Report: Phyllis Kalifeh**

Phyllis introduced a special guest, Jinan As-Siddiq who serves as the Outreach Coordinator for the Forum. Phyllis learned recently that Jinan actually attended one of the Early Head Start programs as a toddler that Phyllis directed. Phyllis was moved by the full circle implications of Jinan's story and asked that she share it with the Board. Jinan shared her story and it provided inspiration for each member of the board to continue to promote the mission of the Children's Forum. Wil added that we need to make sure that with all of our messaging, we include Early Head Start and the Military. Phyllis and Wil exchanged stories about the development of the military child care system and how they can serve as a model for system change in both the public and the private sector. Bob reminded the board of the statistic shared in *No Small Matter* that stated 71% of graduating high school students are not ready/eligible to join the US military. Larry suggested that we create a page that has interesting factoids like that statistic because it grabs the attention of the reader, makes the current situation very real, and can become a driver for change.

Gege suggested that if we tighten up the criteria for Gold Seal accreditation, we could make an impact on quality in early learning programs. Phyllis added that Representative Grall's bill, which is working its way through the legislative process, suggests moving Gold Seal under the administrative authority of FDOE rather than DCF.

Phyllis then shifted to discuss some of the EL Consortium priorities for 2020:

- \$4.5M for HMG expansion
- \$10M for T.E.A.C.H
- Substantive language included for INCENTIVES

Phyllis said she would send out the EL Consortium document with descriptions and details of the priorities and would attach Representative Grall's bill as well.

Bob stated that Shan Goff, ED of the Office of Early Learning made it clear when she spoke to the Business Alliance that she feels birth to 3 initiatives should fall under the Florida Department of Health and not under the Florida Department of Education.

Phyllis suggested that we keep the pressure on the legislature in terms of education and advocacy. She shared that full-day VPK is being piloted in Title I schools in Leon County and she is interested in seeing the outcome data that follows this intervention.

Phyllis shared a bit more about the Policy Network Meeting since she was actively involved in coordinating it. It was designed to follow-up to the Pritzker Grant Planning Team work. Since the strategic plan was already developed, it was used as a foundation for further discussion about implementation. Phyllis is hopeful this will get some traction and a second Policy Network Meeting will be scheduled for spring 2020. Bob said he will continue to participate moving forward and asked if there would be another opportunity to apply for a Pritzker grant. Phyllis said yes, but we would need the Governor's endorsement to be competitive.

Bob said that the Conn Foundation has a subgroup called the Education Affinity Group and that they have included early learning as one of their targets. He said they will fund projects that are unique and interesting and suggested that we come up with an innovative idea. Bob said their next meeting is in February 2020 in Orlando.

Phyllis shared two other events that she participated in recently. The first was the Alliance for Early Success. She invited Representative Vance Aloupis, Shan Goff, and Madeleine Thakur to attend; however, Shan was not available. Madeleine, Vance and Phyllis did attend. The second event was with the National Women's Law Center. Phyllis was asked to speak to the audience about compensation issues in early education systems. She shared the impact that having no state income tax (Florida) has on generating funding streams for early learning. Wil added that we need to start thinking about babies as human capital and designing our state infrastructure around that idea. He feels like it might shift the thinking.

Phyllis finished her report by discussing the Child Assessment project the Forum is completing and the ECE Professional Development Task Force work that focused on updating educator competencies and drafting a clear career pathway. OEL is scheduling rule promulgation workshops for both deliverables.

She then shifted to discuss the status of the new office building. Phyllis is very frustrated with the slow progress of the renovation. It appears that January will be the earliest possible move in date. Bob offered to get involved if necessary.

**Next meeting:** Friday March 13, 2020 from 9:00 am-1:00 pm. in Tampa, FL

**Closed Executive Session (N/A)**

Respectfully submitted,

Larry Pintacuda

Secretary



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Signature of Secretary

Denise Bishop

Recording

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

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Minutes Approved (date)



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Signature of President

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

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Minutes Approved (date)