



PRESIDENT'S SUMMARY

April 1, 2022

Legislative Session – We maintained our \$10M for T.E.A.C.H. in the budget and \$1.8 million for Help Me Grow. We have been trying to increase the appropriation for Help Me Grow with little success. There were other wins for early learning which we're pleased to see. Addressing the low wages and compensation issues should be ameliorated somewhat through the increase in the reimbursements for school readiness and the language in VPK with the increase in the base student allocation. However, there are some concerns regarding the sources of those funds for increases that will have to be addressed.

Bainum Family Foundation – As I shared earlier, we will receive \$160,000 for our advocacy work. We were one of eight organizations in Florida (those that comprised the Early Learning Consortium) who were the benefactors of the Foundation's generosity. They're based in Bethesda, MD and selected Florida as a state to focus their efforts. We have proposed to establish an *Early Childhood Policy WORKS Advocacy Institute* with the funding.

The funds will allow the Forum to recruit, train, support, mentor, and develop a professional learning community with 20 early childhood advocates throughout the state. The goal is to educate, empower, and equip early childhood advocates to be a voice in local, state, and national policy conversations. The funding will help to remove barriers to participation and pay for travel and related costs. They will meet four times in person (July, October, January, and April) and monthly for Zoom meetings in alternate months. We are excited about the potential this provides the field to strengthen our advocacy voice and participate more broadly in policy conversations affecting young children and families as well as the early childhood field.

Help Me Grow Statewide Director Position – Our Director, Alex Goldberg, accepted a position at the Florida Healthy Start Coalitions. Therefore, we have advertised and have been interviewing for her replacement. While we have not been able to expand the program with state funding, we did pick up another affiliate with local CSC money in Alachua County. There has also been interest from other counties. In such cases, we support them as an affiliate and charge a small fee for accessing the STAR database so that we can collect those data and support statewide efforts.

CEO Recruitment – We have advertised widely for my position (throughout the state and nationally). A plan has been developed and a committee appointed to lead those efforts. We are on track and will begin reviewing resumes and making selections for interviews. Our goal is to have my replacement set to begin in July 2022. The plan is to allow time for the full board an opportunity to meet and approve the final candidate.