

Early Learning Coalition of Broward County, Inc.

PRC Meeting Agenda

January 12, 2024, at 12:00 PM

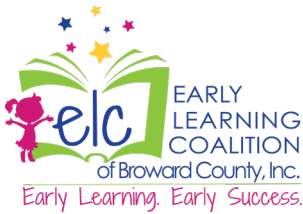
Zoom Meeting

Members are reminded of conflict-of-interest provisions. In declaring a conflict, please refrain from voting or discussing and declare the following information: 1) Your name and position on the Board, 2) The nature of the conflict, and 3) Who will gain or lose as a result of the conflict. Please also fill out form 8B prior to the meeting.

		PAGE
1.	Call to Order	Monica King, PRC Chair
2.	Roll Call	Melody Martinez, Board Liaison
3.	Lunch & Learn – Special Needs	Allison Metsch, Sr. Director of Education & Quality Initiatives
4.	Consent Agenda 1. Approve August 28, 2023, Committee meeting minutes.	2 Monica King, PRC Chair
5.	Regular Business 1. PRC242RB1 - School Readiness Enrollment/Redetermination Update (Goal 1 of Strategic Plan) 2. PRC242RB2 - VPK Enrollment Update (Goal 2 of Strategic Plan) 3. PRC242RB3- Education/Quality (Goals 3 and 4 of Strategic Plan) a. Special Needs Initiatives Update b. ARPA Discretionary Funds Update • Curriculum • Trainings • A Day in K • Mental Health/Special Needs Supports • School Readiness Learning Computer Software 4. PRC242RB4- Advocacy/Communications Update	6 Amy Moore, Sr. Director of Family Services; Howard Bakalar, CPO; Christine Klima, CAO 7 Allison Metsch, Sr. Director of Education & Quality Initiatives; Howard Bakalar, CPO 8 10 12 Ancel Pratt, Sr. Director of Communications & Outreach, Howard Bakalar, CPO,
6.	Unfinished Business New Business Matters from the Chair Matters from the Committee Public Comment	
7.	Next PRC Meeting: <u>TBD</u>	
8.	Adjourn	

Please Note: Agenda is subject to revisions and additions at the discretion of the Chair of the Coalition. Notification will be sent of any such revisions or additions. **Members of the Public:** Please sign up at the entry desk for public comments to be made on any particular agenda items no later than five minutes after the Coalition meeting has been called to order.

“As per [§286.0105, Fla. Stat.](#) Any person who decides to appeal any decision of the Board with respect to any matter considered at this meeting will need a record of the proceedings and for such purpose, may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made which record includes testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based.”



Early Learning Coalition of Broward County, Inc.
Program Review Committee Meeting Minutes
August 28, 2023, at 2:00 PM
[Zoom Meeting](#)

Members in Attendance	Chair, Monica King; Dawn Liberta; Cindy Arenberg-Seltzer; Renee Podolsky; Ellie Schrot; Richard Campillo
Members Absent	Laurie Sallarulo; Melody McDonald
Staff in Attendance	Renee Jaffe, CEO; Judith Merritt, COO; Christine Klima, CAO; Howard Bakalar, CPO; Melody Martinez, Board Liaison; Amy Moore, Sr. Director of Family Services and Provider Relations; Allison Metsch, Sr. Director of Education & Quality; Ancel Pratt, III, Sr. Director of Communications & Outreach; Kasey LaFrance, Contract Administration Manager.
Others in Attendance	Sharonda Bailey; Beverly Batson

Item	Action/Discussion
Welcome & Call to Order	Chair Monica King called the meeting to order at 2:02 PM. The roll was called, and a quorum was established.
Consent Agenda 1. Approve June 02, 2023, Committee meeting minutes.	There was a Motion to move Consent Agenda by Renee Podolsky and Seconded by Dawn Liberta. Unanimously approved. Motion Passes.
Regular Committee 1. PRC241RB1 – School Readiness Enrollment/Redetermination Update (Goal 1 of Strategic Plan) 2. PRC241RB2- VPK Enrollment Update (Goal 2 of Strategic Plan) 3. PRC241RB3- Education/Quality (Goals 3 and 4 of Strategic Plan) a. ARPA Discretionary Funds Update • Increasing/Building Supply of Child Care • Training, Professional Learning Activities,	<p>Amy Moore provided updates on School Readiness enrollment and redetermination. ELC Broward is continuing to enroll families in School Readiness services. Last FY, we enrolled a total of 5,171 children.</p> <p>Because there are still unknowns about the level of and the timing of funding we will receive from DEL for childcare slots for FY 2024. We reviewed the range of options to choose in setting enrollment strategies for FY 2024.</p> <p>Amy Moore provided updates on VPK. Last FY, we ended with 13,959 enrollments, and currently, we have approved 14,202 applications. The reimbursement/finance team has just begun putting enrollments in the system for children; we currently have enrolled a little over 9,464 children.</p> <p>Allison Metsch reported on Education and Quality. DEL released instruction for the Coalitions to apply for their allocations for the \$305million ARPA Discretionary pool that DEL is expected to award in September. Broward received approximately \$19.3 million of these funds.</p> <p>We are currently building another module in the CRM, and Hubert is taking the lead across the state.</p> <p>Currently we are taking a deeper dive into our special needs capacity. Staff will utilize the Florida Special Needs Rate Matrix of Services tool to determine levels of need/intervention/reimbursement for facilities serving these children.</p>

- Workforce Initiatives
- Local Initiatives/Pilot Projects to Improve Kindergarten Readiness
 - Community Outreach and Family Engagement
 - Mental Health/Special Needs Supports
 - Equipment, Supplies, Classroom/Child Care Materials
 - Curriculum
 - School Readiness Learning Computer Software

Approval of Procurement for qualified trainer/trainings

Ellie Schrot would love to volunteer to be in a team to work on this initiative.

Allison Metsch updated on Training and Professional Learning Activities. All classes will resume CLASS, providers saw benefits. In addition, we want to expand what we offer to providers. Stipends will be made available to encourage/reward successful training completion.

A Motion was made by Cindy Arenberg-Seltzer to recommend to the Executive Committee subject to budget authority being recommended by Finance that they provide the budget for the procurement of trainers to conduct professional learning activities related to improving teaching environments and children’s learning experiences, including trainings related to children’s mental health and special needs. Seconded by Renee Podolsky. The Motion was unanimously approved. Motion Passes.

CEO added that this committee reports to executive committee.

Allison Metsch provided an update on Workforce Initiatives, local initiatives/pilot projects to improve kindergarten readiness.

Community Outreach and family engagement:

Staff will continue its Bookworms program, partnering with Scholastic to send free books to Broward families. Baby Bookworms will promote parent bonding/reading to infants.

Museum of Discovery and Science, we want to have a family come and explore the museum for free.

Parent bootcamp, staff are excited to host information and experiential training for new parents. They will focus on child development, parent-child communication, and the common rewards/challenges of first-time parenting.

Mental Health/Special Needs Supports:

Allison shared that ELC plans to partner with United Way of Broward County to co-host this year’s Mental Health Conference in May. United Way has been hosting this very successful conference for eight years.

The statewide Help Me Grow is growing, and more money exists to expand. We are hoping to become an official Help Me Grow partner. We are waiting for more info on this.

Staff will create Behavior Baskets to support teachers and students by providing educational material to each contracted school that helps improve students’ positive classroom behavior, encourage students to self-regulate their emotions, communicate using visuals, and relieve stress and anxiety.

Mental Health Consultants:

ELC plans to contract with up to six Early Childhood Mental Health Consultants (ECMHC). They have specialized training in early childhood development. They will not be providing the clinical work to the child, even though they have the expertise. They work in conjunction with the educator, the program, and the parent; they will

look at the child and what the classroom needs.

Allison shared that providers with a 2024-2025 CLASS score of at least 5.2 or higher and have increased their score by .2 or higher on their previous SR or VPK composite score will receive a one-time dollar incentive. The funds will be used for equipment and/or classroom materials at recognized early childhood material vendors.

ELC will transform its former call center space into a model classroom, which will be used as training for early learning educators and directors. This will allow for a hands-on experience to practice and implement content and for parent engagement opportunities.

DEL and the Florida Legislature have launched a curriculum study through its designated ARPA discretionary categories. Providers will be reimbursed for any State-approved curriculum upon completing an application form that DEL has created and receipts proving the purchase of materials. Then, they will be part of a fidelity study with one of the universities of the State, and they will be surveyed on how using this curriculum is helping them in the classroom. Hubert and his team are working on this.

At the June PRC meeting, committee members approved the concept of ELC staff procuring learning software that could help children achieve proficiency in literacy/math skills, which would help indicate they were kindergarten-ready. We continue to filter our local data and are expecting DEL to allow us to compare it to statewide data soon to try and determine where this software can best be utilized. Currently, we are waiting for DEL to answer some contracting questions, which will determine whether we can utilize the ARPA discretionary funds to enter into multi-year contracts with software vendors, as we do not want to begin a large technology project and have to end it just as providers are achieving proficiency with it.

There was a Motion to approve the Continuation of the Children's Forum's INCENTIVE\$ Wage Supplements, pending the Availability of Funds by Dawn Liberta and Seconded by Cindy Arenberg-Seltzer. Unanimously approved. Motion Passes.

The Age of Learning Program has recently been used in Palm Beach County. For FAST Assessments, VPK students have been able to go from an average of children scoring in the 50th percentile during the first assessment to the upper 70th percentile on the third assessment. The program staff at the ELC of Palm Beach attribute much of this progress to the technological supports being instituted.

Monica King asked if this was a subscription to an online platform. Allison responded that it was and that we would give access to the schools and we would be paying for a subscription.

In procuring technology aids, ELC Broward will advertise a product that:

It is geared to progress at the pace of each individual child; involves childcare educators, involves parents/caregivers, addresses the literacy and math domains that should help children's FAST scores rise; and could potentially raise the CLASS scores of the classrooms using the technology.

This technology procurement will be subject to the availability of stimulus funds.

	There was a Motion to Approve Concept of Procurement of Education Technology Aids by Cindy Arenberg-Seltzer and Seconded by Melody McDonald. Unanimously approved. Motion Passes.
4. PRC241RB4- Advocacy/ Communications/ Outreach Update	<p>Ancel Pratt gave an overview of outreach and advocacy updates. ELC participated in over 12 community events, from resource fairs to back-to-school events. We also actively engaged families who came to our table about the SR, VPK, childcare resources and referrals, and other services we provide.</p> <p>We are currently focusing on promoting VPK enrollment to the community via community events, emails, and online marketing. We ran a targeted campaign to SR families whose children are now eligible for VPK. In just two weeks of running that campaign, we facilitated over 800 VPK page views, which we are confident will translate to higher VPK registrations by the end of the campaign.</p> <p>From July 1 through August 4, our VPK page saw 2,553 unique pageviews, a 30% increase from the previous year (1,963 unique page views).</p> <p>As for Advocacy, we have begun crafting the agenda based on issues identified locally and through the AELC.</p>
Unfinished Business	None
New Business	None
Matters from the Chair	None
Matters from the Committee	None
Public Comments	None
Next Meeting	TBD
Adjourn	The meeting adjourned at 2:59 PM.

These minutes contain the action items of the Board meeting of the Early Learning Coalition of Broward. They do not include all of the Committee's discussions or comments on each matter or issue raised during the meeting. A tape recording of the meeting is held in the Coalition office. Corrections from the Committee will be taken before approval at the next meeting.

ITEM #/MEETING:	PRC242RB1 / Program Review Committee Meeting
MEETING DATE:	1/12/24
SUBJECT:	School Readiness Enrollment/Redetermination Update
FOR ACTION:	No
RECOMMENDED ACTION:	None
FINANCIAL IMPACT:	None
AS RECOMMENDED BY:	N/A
ELC STAFF LEADS	Amy Moore, Howard Bakalar, Christine Klima

Background Information:

Beginning in FY 2019-20, the Division of Early Learning gave ELC Broward additional School Readiness funding to clear its waitlist for childcare for income-eligible families. At the time, there were upwards of 4,000 children waiting for childcare. This trend continued through FY22/23, with DEL encouraging Coalitions to enroll children off the waitlist to meet the needs of each community. In FY21/22, with additional staffing and enrollment process modifications, ELC could enroll 4,255 children from the SR waitlist. In FY22/23, we enrolled an additional 5,171 children, bringing us to a total of 15,500 children served (per month) and allowing us to eliminate our waitlist.

In May of 2023, DEL notified us that our SR base allocation for FY23/24 would not be sufficient to sustain the FY22/23 level of 15,500 enrollments unless we were to receive an additional \$30 million in funding. As a result, on June 5th, 2023, we paused new SR waitlist enrollments to decrease our census of children through natural attrition to remain within the anticipated SR enrollment allocation. Through this effort, approximately 1,800 children left our system, and our waitlist quickly climbed to almost 3,000 children in 90 days.

In September, ELC Broward received an additional \$15M in SR funding, allowing us to resume processing SR waitlist enrollments but at a less aggressive pace than the past two fiscal years.

Current Status:

Since enrollments resumed on October 4, 2023, ELC staff have successfully enrolled 1,134 new children, with the total number of enrollments for FY23/24 being 1,369 children (as some children were in the process of being enrolled before the pause, so their enrollment was not finalized until the new fiscal year).

During the first quarter of the fiscal year 2023-2024, there were 4,973 children due for redetermination, coinciding with a notable spike in our attrition rate. Our attrition rate averaged 28% in this fiscal year, a noticeable increase from the 24% recorded during the same period in FY 22-23 when 3,651 children were due for redetermination. This, coupled with the stability in "side door" enrollments, with no significant enrollment surges in these categories, influenced the decision to initiate the enrollment of additional children in the income-eligible categories.

In the second quarter of FY 2023-2024, the volume of redeterminations persisted, with 5,095 children due for eligibility redetermination. Recognizing the elevated number of redeterminations and the consequent attrition rate observed in the first quarter, we collaborated with our Communications department to formulate a proactive outreach strategy to reduce attrition. This strategy aims to enhance communication methods, fostering increased responsiveness from families concerning their redetermination. As a result, we identified the addition of an extra email reminder, sent from an ELC email address, as a more recognizable approach for families, potentially boosting their responsiveness. Consequently, families now receive an additional reminder urging them to submit the necessary documentation for their impending redetermination promptly. As of the current quarter, our attrition rate stands at approximately 26%, with a continued expectation of stabilization. The improved stability in our attrition rate is anticipated to further support the sustained and consistent pace in enrolling additional children and contributing to the overall number of children in our services.

The ongoing enrollment strategy remains focused on replenishing at least a portion of the number of enrollments lost through attrition to maintain stability in our enrollment figures in line with the budget.

throughout the fiscal year. This approach positions us to navigate changes in the overall system, considering factors such as attrition and budgetary considerations for FY 24.

ITEM #/MEETING:	PRC242RB2 / Program Review Committee Meeting
MEETING DATE:	1/12/2024
SUBJECT:	VPK Enrollment Update
FOR ACTION:	No
RECOMMENDED ACTION:	None
FINANCIAL IMPACT:	None
AS RECOMMENDED BY:	N/A
ELC STAFF LEADS	Amy Moore, Ancel Pratt

Background Information:

Florida’s Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK) Program is free for all 4-year-old children living in the State of Florida. During the school year, 540 instructional hours (usually 3 hours per school day) are allotted for VPK learning. While the vast majority of families who take advantage of VPK do so during the school year, Summer VPK is also available in a much smaller number of preschools and School District sites. During the summer, 300 hours are allotted for learning.

Before the pandemic began, Broward County had 15,022 children enrolled in school year VPK in FY 2018-19 and 15,928 children enrolled in FY 2019-20. During the pandemic (FY 2020-21), these numbers dropped to 11,813 children enrolled in the VPK school year. During the 2021-2022 program year, schools began a new sense of normalcy with 14,018 children enrolled in the VPK school year.

The 2022-2023 VPK school year had a challenging start statewide due to some changes in Statute and Covid-Relief initiative system kinks and confusion. The VPK school year ended with a total of 13,959 children enrolled.

Current Status:

As of January 8, 2024, we have approved 15,014 VPK school-year applications for the 2023-2024 program year, and 13,176 students have completed enrollments. An updated number will be presented at the upcoming PRC meeting. For comparison, by the end of the last program year (2022-2023), we approved 15,866 VPK school year applications, and eventually, 13,959 students completed their enrollment.

On January 1, 2024, the new application for the VPK Program year 2024-2025 became available to parents. As of now, for the program year 2024-2025, we have approved 1,038 applications, which is 11% higher than the same time last year when we had approved 932 VPK applications.

Annually and throughout the year, the Statewide Estimating Conference convenes to forecast the expected percentage and volume of VPK enrollments across Florida, both at the State level and within individual Counties. Preliminary projections are typically released at the beginning of the school year. For the 2023-2024 program year, the Conference projects in Broward County to be 14,211 children. Looking ahead to the 2024-2025 program year, the Conference estimates 13,817 children for Broward County.

While it remains too early to predict the outcomes for the current or subsequent years for VPK, our commitment to providing outreach and information to eligible families for VPK services continues.

ITEM #/MEETING:	PRC242RB3a / Program Review Committee Meeting
MEETING DATE:	1/12/2024
SUBJECT:	Special Needs Update
FOR ACTION:	No
RECOMMENDED ACTION:	N/A
FINANCIAL IMPACT:	None
AS RECOMMENDED BY:	N/A
ELC STAFF LEADS	Allison Metsch, Howard Bakalar

Background Information:

The Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) is the screening instrument used for all children receiving School Readiness services to gauge children’s development (in various areas) and a valuable tool to determine if further developmental evaluations or support are needed. We estimate about 20,000 children per year in Broward County are screened. ELC Inclusion staff are responsible for reviewing ASQ results and working with educators and parents of children who are found to have challenges or areas of concern based on the ASQ results to implement strategies to improve potential learning success. They are also responsible for referring parents to Early Steps (children birth to three) and Child Find (children three to five), the State’s designated referring agencies for formal evaluations of children with identified challenges or suspected special needs. Each month ELC staff track how many children are referred and/or recommended for further evaluation.

Based on need over the past 7 years (when we brought inclusion in-house for the first time), we have continued to increase the number of Inclusion Specialists whenever possible. With the addition of federal COVID relief funding and increased School Readiness funding, we were able to add 2 additional Inclusion Specialists and an Inclusion Coordinator to support the large volume and needs of our community. The Inclusion team now includes 1 Inclusion Manager, 1 Inclusion Coordinator, 9 Inclusion Specialists, and 1 Family Engagement Specialist. While the increase in inclusion staff has helped increase the number of referrals to Early Steps and Child Find year over year, challenges persist due to the high volume of families who need support and the reality that many families do not follow through with the evaluation process for a variety of reasons including the fear of stigma related to a potential “special needs” diagnosis for their child.

Last Spring, to increase our efforts to provide support, we developed an even more hands-on and emotionally supportive approach that included adding a new Peer Support Specialists (PSS) position. The vision was to have staff who are also parents and have been through the evaluation process to be paired with SR/VPK parents with children ELC Inclusion staff have recommended a referral to Early Steps or Child Find. PSS would provide a sympathetic and empathetic perspective of the referral/evaluation process and experience as they have gone through it themselves. Based on their knowledge and experience with the special needs system and process, ELC staff hoped this would lead to an increase in the number of families agreeing to an evaluation referral, completing the process, and accessing the recommended services.

Following the development of the PSS role, ELC staff applied for and were approved for a grant through the A.D Henderson Foundation to fund two Peer Support Specialists (PSS). In July 2023, our new PSS staff began providing services.

With our new structure, Inclusion Specialists can build and maintain a rapport with both the parents and the child’s school to promote strategies that may help the child in the classroom. At the same time, PSS staff can be present, supportive, and resourceful during the time between referral, evaluation, and next steps.

Current Status:

In July 2023, we began utilizing Peer Support Specialists who call and email families to provide support through the referral and evaluation process (for children identified as having challenges or suspected special needs). Their role includes reminding parents of upcoming appointments, being a sympathetic listener, and providing needed resources. They are in constant communication with Early Steps and Child Find regarding the child’s referral and evaluation status to ensure collaboration from all angles.

Since implementing the PSS position, we have received positive feedback from our partners related to the role and our data has proved the addition has already made a great impact on the process and compliance already.

We are excited to share that due to this new position, we are seeing benefits to families attending their initial screening appointments and subsequent full evaluations.

Below is data supporting the impact of our expansion of Inclusion Specialists as well as the new PSS role.

Overall, we have seen an increase in the number of referrals with the increase of number of staff over the years.

# of Total Referrals to Both Early Steps and Child Find	
Fiscal Year 2018 - 2019	127
Fiscal Year 2019 – 2020	164
Fiscal Year 2020 – 2021	326
Fiscal Year 2021 – 2022	751
Fiscal Year 2022 – 2023	705
Fiscal Year 2023 – 2024 (to date)	382

Below are additional data points reported between 7/1/2023 to 12/31/2023:

- Early Steps - 82% of families with children from birth to 35 months who were in contact with a PSS attended their initial (screening) appointment to determine further eligibility.

ELC Strategic Plan 5 Year Goal - 65% of families with children ages 0-2 who have received a referral, will follow through with their referrals to Early Steps. The previous rate was 47%.

- Early Steps - 38% of families with children needing an evaluation based on initial screening results, who were in contact with a PSS, attended a full evaluation. (Some children did not qualify for services or moved, etc) This is a new metric we are looking at since the screening and evaluation are not done in the same day.
- Child Find - 59% of families with children from three years of age to five years of age who were in contact with a PSS attended their screening/evaluation appointment. (Screening and evaluation are done at the same appointment).

ELC Strategic Plan 5-Year Goal - 75% of families with children ages 3-5 who have received a referral will follow through with their referrals to FDLRS. The previous rate was 63%.

Below are some of the results from a survey conducted with the families regarding their experience with PSS staff:

- 75% of families report that having the help of a Peer Support Specialist (PSS) was helpful during the evaluation process.
- 70% of families report it helpful that the PSS completed/assisted with the referral form for their child's evaluation.
- 62% strongly agreed that it was helpful that the PSS reminded them of their upcoming appointment for their child's evaluation.
- 70% strongly agreed that their PSS made them feel comfortable.

ELC staff continue to look for ways to increase compliance throughout the referral and evaluation process and provide educators and families with as many resources as possible to assist. Data being collected and tracked is also being fine-tuned to ensure we understand the impact and success of the department's efforts, including the new PSS role.

ITEM #/MEETING:	PRC242RB3b / Program Review Committee Meeting
MEETING DATE:	1/12/2024
SUBJECT:	Education & Quality Programming Update, ARPA Discretionary Funds
FOR ACTION:	No
RECOMMENDED ACTION:	N/A
FINANCIAL IMPACT:	None
AS RECOMMENDED BY:	N/A
ELC STAFF LEADS	Allison Metsch, Howard Bakalar

Background Information:

At the August 2023 PRC meeting, ELC staff reported that ELC Broward was expected to receive approximately \$19.3 million of the approximately \$350 million the State had remaining for ARPA Discretionary funds. Additionally, ELC staff provided the committee with an overview of the initiatives to be included in the application. Coalitions were required to provide to the Division of Early Learning (DEL) on how the funding would be utilized (based on the criterion provided by DEL). ELC Broward’s plan focused much of the plan on continuing to provide initiatives related to the upskilling and retaining of early childhood educators.

Current Status:

Below is an update on the status of ARPA Discretionary initiatives included in our plan approved by DEL:

1. Curriculum Reimbursement:

The Division of Early Learning set aside funding for School Readiness and VPK providers to receive funds for curriculum and accompanying curriculum supports. ELC Broward will reimburse these providers who have purchased any state-approved curriculum and/or corresponding training. Currently, 100 schools have taken advantage of this funding and will receive reimbursement this month. The last date to apply is January 31, 2024.

2. Training and Professional Learning Activities:

In November 2023, the ELC of Broward issued a Request for Proposals on various topics to improve and enhance instruction in the classroom. At the December 2023 full board meeting, the board approved the recommended 10 training vendors. We are currently finalizing the contracts for these various vendors. We estimate training will begin at the end of January. Training will be provided virtually and in person in multiple languages through June 30, 2024. Stipends will be offered to educators upon training completion.

3. A Day in K:

In partnership with the Museum of Discovery and Science (MODS), we are planning an event called A Day in K, which will take place (tentatively) on June 11th. The event will provide parents and soon-to-be Kindergarten children (in the fall) a glimpse of what an actual day in kindergarten will be like while offering parents guidance on how to prepare their children for day 1. The event will be complete with various info sessions and activities for parents and children. There will be informational booths with resources. And it is Broward, so of course, we will have many community partners attending (and providing resources or services), like the School District, Broward County Library, Memorial Health, etc.

4. Mental Health Kits

In December 2023, an evaluation committee convened to procure Mental Health Kits. Discount School Supply is a developer, manufacturer, distributor, and retailer of education products and was the chosen vendor which was approved at the December full board meeting. Our team is working to finalize the contract and logistics of direct mail delivery of these kits to each preschool in Broward County.

5. Child Care Classroom Management and Learning Technology Services

In November 2023, an evaluation committee convened for procurement for learning technology to enhance VPK children’s learning as measured by the FAST scores. MarcoPolo Learning, Inc was the highest-scoring vendor, and the Board approved the award at the December board meeting.

However, since the award to Marco Polo will not consume the entire approved budget that was allocated for this procurement and the solicitation parameters allow the Coalition to select multiple vendors if desired, staff propose issuing an additional award to the next highest scoring vendor: Age of Learning. Adding a second vendor would provide VPK providers with multiple options to choose from and would supplement the rich content offered by Marco Polo for our children’s learning.

In addition to giving VPK providers another option to use, the second technology choice has a feature that can adapt lessons/learning content based on the child’s progress (and challenges) in real-time. The adaptive technology allows the level of difficulty in each lesson and pace of progress to be specific to each child and challenges them to continue to learn harder concepts.

Both technologies support the ever-changing landscape in early learning and provide interactive and multi-sensory developmentally appropriate support.

6. New Educator Bootcamp

In February we will have our first New Educator Bootcamp. This will be a weeklong training to foster a new generation of early childhood educators who will learn how to provide a nurturing, comprehensive, and inclusive education to every young child. Training topics were chosen to give new educators the foundations for early learning. Each participant and the sponsoring school will receive a stipend for full participation.

ITEM #/MEETING:	PRC242RB4 / Program Review Committee Meeting
MEETING DATE:	01/12/2024
SUBJECT:	Communications, and Advocacy & Outreach Update
FOR ACTION:	No
RECOMMENDED ACTION:	None
FINANCIAL IMPACT:	None
AS RECOMMENDED BY:	N/A
ELC STAFF LEADS	Ancel Pratt III, Howard Bakalar, Renee Jaffe

Background:

In April 2022, ELC Broward launched a transformative overhaul of our communication and outreach strategies. This marked a pivotal year where we concentrated on fortifying our communications, outreach, and advocacy/elected official engagement. Internally, we strategically introduced the role of Senior Director of Communications and Outreach, entrusting this individual with the leadership of a dynamic team, including a Communications Manager and an Outreach Specialist. The comprehensive overhaul involved reorganizing the unit and crafting a strategic plan. Our goal was to increase our community reach and visibility and forge more robust connections with elected officials and community partners.

Current Status:

OUTREACH:

In Q1 & Q2 of FY23/24, ELC Broward participated in 16 community outreach events to promote the ELC program and services, a 45% increase from Q1 & Q2 of 2022. Based on the QR Code scan, Outreach Event Codes have garnered more traffic than other flyer categories.

Item	Jan 24	Dec 23	Nov 23	Oct 23	Sep 23	Aug 23	Jul 23	Jun 23
Community Engagement (4)								
Municipality meetings		1	2	1	8	2	1	
# Outreach/Enrollment events in		4	0	1	2	6	3	
# of meetings 1 on 1		1	1	3	1	1	3	
# of meetings with current legislators		1	2	3	1	1	3	

COMMUNICATIONS:

In Q1 & Q2 of FY23/24, social media impressions skyrocketed by almost 10X, driven by a successful paid ads campaign initiated in late Fall to boost website traffic. However, overall website traffic dipped compared to FY 22/23, primarily due to a pause in enrollment activities. Promotion of School Readiness and Bookworms commenced in October, contributing to the shift in web traffic dynamics.

Item	Jan 24	Dec 23	Nov 23	Oct 23	Sep 23	Aug 23	Jul 23	Jun 23
Communication (17)								
# of Facebook post		37	54	30	45	53	61	
Facebook Audience Reach		236000	139679	26000	108000	227000	18000	
Facebook engagement		6.26%	1.90%	6.40%	2.80%	1.00%	5.29%	
Instagram Audience Reach		37000	104000	14000	9700	12000	10000	
# of Instagram post		26	47	22	32	43	34	
Instagram engagement		3.02%	1.86%	3.51%	3.49%	3.70%	3.16%	
# of tweet		22	48	17	23	25	18	
Twitter engagement		3.41%	4.52%	10.82%	22.00%	46.00%	10.00%	
# Twitter Impressions		732	3400	749	2300	1700	782	
%Provider newsletter email open rate			63.00%			54.00%		
Open rate of Parent Newsletter			59					

Item	Jan 24	Dec 23	Nov 23	Oct 23	Sep 23	Aug 23	Jul 23	Jun 23
Open Rate of legislative Newsletter								
# of website visitors per month		33114	35607	35601	18294	27183	17629	
SR Page Traffic		2744	1229	1299	2562	3440	2505	
VPK Page Traffic		1528	529	609	1258	2735	1987	
Bookworm Page Traffic		2347	6214	3688	5188	496	546	
Amount of Paid Advertising		\$2706.67	\$1525.76	\$221.53	\$845.82	\$1941.06	\$113.12	

ADVOCACY

ELC Broward achieved a remarkable 29% increase in the School Readiness Match grant from municipalities, soaring from \$261K to \$344K, representing one of the largest single-year increases.

ELC Broward is proactively addressing School Readiness funding challenges through advocacy efforts, culminating in the upcoming State of Childcare event on January 17 in Tallahassee, coinciding with Broward Days. The event boasts a distinguished lineup, including Renee Jaffe (ELC Broward), Cari Millier (Chancellor of DEL), Zenani Johnson (Florida Chamber Foundation), Erin Smeltzer (CEO of Children's Forum), Representative Dana Trabulsy, and Representative Marie Woodson.

In preparation for the State of Childcare event, ELC Broward has conducted one-on-one meetings with all Broward Delegation members on the appropriate Pre-K Education committees, including Representatives Daley, Dunkley, Williams, and Senator Osgood. Additionally, a strategic meeting with Delegation Vice Chair Representative Marie Woodson has been secured. Notably, City of Lauderhill Vice Mayor Sarai Martin has pledged support and will present a resolution through the city commission, advocating for a revised SR funding methodology. This resolution will be forwarded to the pertinent state departments, amplifying ELC Broward's call for urgent action.

CEO Renee Jaffe presented at the October 4th Broward Delegation Public Hearing, informing state elected officials about our legislative priorities and seeking their support for advocacy in Tallahassee.

Furthermore, ELC Broward collaborated closely with Representative Bartleman on vital Special Needs legislation. This collaborative effort aimed to increase support for children with special needs by proposing matter-specific training.