I. Call to Order

Chair Craig Phillips called the meeting to order at 4:22 p.m.

A. Chair Craig Phillips called for the approval of the November 17, 2015 agenda.

A motion was made by Patsy Buker and seconded by Yvonne Malague to:

Approve the November 17, 2015 agenda.

The motion passed unanimously.

B. Chair Craig Phillips called for the approval of the September 17, 2015 minutes.

A motion was made by Patsy Buker and seconded by Yvonne Malague to:

Approve the September 17, 2015 minutes.

The motion passed unanimously.
II. ACTION ITEMS

A. Budget Amendment #1 15.11.01E

Merita Kafexhiu presented the Budget Amendment #1.

The Coalition has received two grants increasing the total budget revenue from $47,275,586 to $47,915,946 with an overall increase of $640,360. $556,210 is for the Early Learning Professional Development Initiative funded by the Florida Legislature. This program provides incentives to child care providers and instructors for improvement in School Readiness Program outcomes and provides data for an independent evaluation. The project’s duration is October 1, 2015 until September 15, 2016. The other $84,150 is the Early Learning Florida Grant from the UF Lastinger Center for Learning. The grant supports a comprehensive professional development system that helps early childhood professional gains the knowledge and skills needed to transform the care and education they provide to young children. The project duration is October 15, 2015 until July 31, 2016.

The Coalition’s Expenditure budget increased the following items: PFP Provider Payments, ELF Provider Payments, and the Personnel Services.

A motion was made by Jim Madden and seconded by Yvonne Malague to:

Approve amendments to the Coalition’s Budget as proposed by the Coalition staff.

The motion passed unanimously.

B. Fraud Plan Amendment 15.11.02E

Lindsay Carson presented the Fraud Plan Amendment.

The criteria for the anti-fraud plans is described in Rule 6M-9.400, FAC. The rule requires Early Learning Coalitions to create procedures for detecting and investigating possible acts of fraud, abuse, or overpayment and procedures to endure due process for recipients. It also requires training on the detection and prevention of fraud, abuse, and overpayment including an annual self-assessment of the ELC’s internal controls, policies and procedures.

A motion was made by Jim Madden and seconded by Yvonne Malague to:

Approve the revised 2015 – 2016 Anti-Fraud Plan and ELCPC-60.1.16 School Readiness Client Compliance Policy.

The motion passed unanimously.

C. Florida First Start Contract 15.11.03E

Lindsay Carson presented the Florida First Start Contract.
The Coalition has a contract with the Pinellas County School Board for the Florida First Start Program. Florida First Start is a home visitation program designed to provide children at risk of school failure the best possible start in life. As well as, support parents in the role as their children’s first teacher. All of these efforts are focused to support the School Readiness Program.

Services include; providing in-home visitations, play groups several times per month, a monthly bilingual newsletter and a parent resource center. These are provided fulltime during the academic year and in the summer weeks as the funding is able to support.

A motion was made by Jim Madden and seconded by Yvonne Malague to:

Approve the contract with PCSB for the Florida First Start program. The contract term is July 1, 2015 – June 30, 2016.

The motion passed unanimously.

III. DISCUSSION

A. School Readiness Provider Enforcement Policy

Lindsay Carson presented the School Readiness Provider Enforcement Policy.

Twelve Providers have lapsed in their insurance coverage, resulting in immediate termination in accordance with the current contract and statutes. The immediate termination is not argued; it is clearly stated and defined in the contracts and statutes. The contracts and statutes state if a provider is terminated for non-compliance they are ineligible for a period of five (5) years. This policy has been discussed throughout the state and legal counsel has been sought. The legal counsel has stated Coalitions have the ability to withhold eligibility for a period of up to five (5) years; despite the fact that the statutes’ writing does not depict flexibility. There is not yet complete consensus as to what is the best way to go.

Yvonne Malague asked if OEL has stated an opinion.

Lindsay Carson replied not yet, but it is understood that they will.

Yvonne Malague asked if the Coalition feels as if they have the right to make that adjustment to the policy.

Lindsay Carson replied asked to defer to legal counsel, Jay Walker.

Jay Walker replied there is discretion available to reduce the amount of time the provider is ineligible. As a policy, the consequence must be consistent. Jay asked the Board to consider an amendment to the policy.

Lindsay Carson added that several other Coalitions are looking at this policy and handling it in similar fashion. Several of the Coalitions are responding exactly as the
contract states. Using the Review Hearing Committees to make any accommodations, or compromise. Ms. Carson advised empowering the CEO, in order to protect the Board from being bombarded with appeals.

Yvonne Malague encouraged Ms. Carson and the Board to keep consistent. That, if an adjustment is to be made it must be an adjustment that can be kept with every appeal.

Patsy Buker seconded Yvonne’s suggestion; and added further that using a range should be discouraged.

Lindsay Carson stated should the state give the Coalitions flexibility to make adjustments to the ineligibility time. Ms. Carson said that it should be made available to everyone within Pinellas County. At this time Ms. Carson is not making a recommendation to action; but, rather hopes for an adjustment from OEL. If the Coalition is able to reduce the severity of the ineligibility, Ms. Carson expects it will also be retroactive; and that adjustments can be made for previous providers as well.

Erik Smith asked if there is a penalty for repeating offenders. And, recommends for the Coalition to consider one.

Lindsay Carson replied, at this time there is not a different penalty, since this went into effect in July 2015.

Patsy Buker said that a grace period, between insurance being due and an extended deadline, is not the answer. The insurance deadline should be held to.

B. Giving Tuesday

Matt Spence presented on Giving Tuesday.

The concept is built on the Black Friday, Small Business Saturday, and Cyber Monday focused sales days. A nation day for Non-Profits to push for donations; this year it is taking place on Tuesday, December 1. Scholastic approached the Coalition with a partnership. They are creating a stand-alone website for the Coalition and highlighted three (3) literacy endeavors: Office Friendly’s Book Club, Adventures in Tote Bags, and Ready to Read. The donor gives on Scholastic’s website to ELC of Pinellas County, and the Coalition is able to purchase books on the Face Program (purchase books at a 60-70% of the shelf cost) through Scholastic. 100% of the donations go to the purchase of books for children. The easiest way to access is through the ELC website. This will go live on December 1st, and will be accessible on the Coalition website year around.

C. Legislative Update

The House Education Committee has drafted a bill to address the Child Care Development Social Services Block Grant Reauthorization Act, in which the state is currently not in compliance; the Coalition does expect to see some amendments happen to the act. The House has made it very clear that only the minimum requirement is expected in order to come into compliance. The early learning bill has not passed in two (2) years and the House is taking a very conservative approach with
the bill this year. Once the Legislation passes this bill the Office of Early Learning will need to send in a new plan to the Feds.

The Coalition is very grateful for supportive local representatives.

D. VPK Readiness Rates

Lindsay Carson presented the VPK Readiness Rates.

VPK Readiness rates were not given to providers last year because the assessments were not given to children that entered Kindergarten. This year, providers will not get rates because assessments were not completed when the children entered Kindergarten. This was stated in the paper.

E. Meeting Times

Craig Phillips presented on the Meeting Times.

The meeting day was adjusted from Thursday to Tuesday to accommodate the JWB representative. The JWB representative is no longer on the Coalition’s Board. Craig asked if the Coalition could consider meeting on Thursday again, the Executive and Finance Committees meeting on the third Thursday of every other month; and the Board of Directors meeting on the fourth Thursday of every other month.

Yvonne Malague replied that Thursdays would be better for her and that this should be taken to the Board.

Yvonne Malague asked if this could begin in January.

A motion was made by Yvonne Malague and seconded by Jim Madden:

To take to the Board of Directors the motion to move the Board of Directors Meetings, Executive Meetings, and Finance Meetings back to Thursdays

The motion passed unanimously.

IV. Public Comment

No public comments were made.

V. Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 4:57 p.m.

Next meeting: Scheduled for To Be Determined at 4:00 p.m. until the conclusion of business. Please see the Coalition’s meeting calendar on the ELC website. Early Learning Coalition Training Room, 5735 Rio Vista Drive, Clearwater FL 33760.