

Early Learning Advisory Council

Early Learning Advisory Council

October 25, 2019

Minutes

Call to Order

Adrian Alfonso, ELAC Chair – Miami-Dade/Monroe

- Meeting called to order, 9:00 a.m.
- Housekeeping.
- Roll Call. **Members representing the following ELCs and appointees participating via conference call:** Brevard, Santa Rosa, Palm Beach, North Florida and Marion.
- Quorum not reached. Unable to vote on and approve agendas or minutes.
- Welcome of New Chairs.
- Review of public comment process.

Office Updates

Legislative Update

Shan Goff, OEL Executive Director

- Guiding Principles
 - Richard Corcoran implementation of “Guiding Principles”
- Strategic Planning
 - Alignment with Department of Education (DOE)
 - Office of Early Learning (OEL) Priorities:
 - Collaboration and Coordination
 - Publications
 - Workgroups and Partnerships
 - Frequent Communication
 - EFS Modernization Stabilization
 - Daily monitoring of attendance/reimbursement data ongoing action plan to address:
 1. System functionality/Development Futures
 2. Data Validation
 3. Overpayments and Collections
 4. Local Consequences
 5. State Consequences
 6. Communication and Training

Discussion

Leigh Guinta (IRMO): I have two questions. I know that there are overpayments and underpayments and right now you asking that each coalition holds on to the funds that they have right now if they are over. Do you have any idea when you will be recalling some of that money back just planning purposes for the upcoming year?

Shan Goff (OEL): I think part of the piece and what we have focused on honestly is closing the books for 18-19. Lisa Zenoz is also on the line along with our new Budget Director, Allyce Heflin. So I'm going to let them tag team in. We are taking a look at being able to categorize the over payments and absolutely have a tracking system so we can put those funds back to the coalition they were assigned to.

Leigh Guinta (IRMO): It does. I just know we're getting ready to go into our audits and I just wanted to know how that will affect us. What are the ramifications going to be? We know that it's a state wide issue but this was something that the coalitions were concerned with at the beginning of the year when the site was down. So what is the liability that we are going to have?

Shan Goff (OEL): And one of the things we can offer to do is follow up most assuredly is send you all additional information in writing specifically, the board chairs. We've had trainings for all of the firms that are actually conducting those annual audits in the 30 coalitions and RCMA. We've had a series of phone calls we are also giving them detailed information about the state wide system and doing basically everything we can to mitigate that risk for you and quote on quote "give you cover". We know that currently when they look at 18-19 there's going to be, not in every single coalition, but there is going to be a series of financial payments that are not substantiated as we speak at this moment by attendance records and we're doing everything we can to help your coalitions rectify that. I'm going to stop for a minute and see if other OEL staff on the call want to add to that.

Laura McKinley (OEL): In addition to the efforts Miss Shan described we're gathering responses back from the CPAs who have met with either governing board or audit or finance committees. We did ask them as they were sharing updates about EFS Mod. In fiscal year 18-19 that any questions that board members or committee members had that they send them to us so from the responses that we have received and we are still tracking others, to get them all in for all entities. We have received about a dozen questions similar to the one that you just asked. I asked for us to review and give answers that we can share with all coalitions and all boards.

Leigh Guinta (IRMO): Great, thank you.

- Kindergarten Readiness
 - We want to make sure parents are making well informed decisions
 - Program Accountability and Improvement
 - Supports and Services to Families
 - Transparency
-
- Legislative Update
 - Early Learning is a priority
 - September and October Committee Meetings Recap
 - Legislative Budget Request
 - School Readiness Funding Model
 - Early Learning Bill Highlights

- Greater Accountability at State Level
 - Establish separate office
 - Provide SBOE with rulemaking authority
- Greater Accountability at the Local Level
 - Authorizes OEL/DOE to remove a coalition from eligibility to administer programs and contracts with a qualified entity and/or reestablish or merge the coalition if the coalition has not substantially implemented the SR plan and does not meet the performance standards and/or outcome measures adopted by OEL/DOE
- VPK Program Enhancements and Accountability
 - Increases required training for instructors and VPK directors
 - Providers on probation must implement both the approved curriculum and a staff development plan
 - Contingent upon appropriations, requires OEL adopt a program assessment

State of ELAC

What is the future of ELAC?

Discussion

Adrian Alfonso (MDM): I'm curious to hear from the members that are on the call, what their thoughts are on ELAC and what we should do. And Shan I don't know if there is anything that you want to add. I know you and I had talked about it, but in conversations with your staff and what thoughts you all have with the overall future of ELAC. I'll open it up, Shan I'll hand it over to you first to see what you have to say. Then I'll open it up to the chairs to see what comments we get and hopefully we can do something.

Shan Goff (OEL): Thank you Mr. Chair. I remember this from my DOE seat way back when and the original creation of ELAC and the purpose at that particular time and I think it has shifted for many years now. What I honestly find now is, having conversations with staff, looking at the difficulty of having quorum. Having ELAC as a statutorily required advisory group, basically handcuffs you in what kind of collaboration and communication you can have with each other. And that was really the entire intent of ELAC so that a chair from a large coalition that might have a question about leadership, management, vision or community issue could easily pick up and talk to another chair in a large coalition. From our position looking at it, not sure its productive anymore to keep this advisory committee group in the Florida Statue, but absolutely not give on the commitment to help facilitating conversations between chairs and even a meeting across the board between chairs if that's what the group would like to continue to do. Absolutely Adrian the conversations you and I have had, I just don't think, what's getting accomplished now is quite different than what the original intent was and its probably been like that for quite some time.

Adrian Alfonso (MDM): Is there currently any talk to make any legislative changes for ELAC from statue because that's the only way to get rid of ELAC, right?

Shan Goff (OEL): Yes, and actually the thought process is that it is in the big early learning bill is that would be the appropriate avenue to basically just repeal that statutory requirement, but as

I mentioned again absolutely not and actually open up and encourage continued collaboration across chairs.

Adrian Alfonso (MDM): and if it is removed from statute. If board chairs want to get together in meetings I'm assuming there's a way to have those meetings funded and reimbursed by the local coalitions?

Shan Goff (OEL): It could also be by us. We absolutely would want to take that role and work with your local coalitions to help facilitate those kinds of conversations and some may find that the coalition board chairs, of similar size coalitions might find that to be an effective way but we absolutely would collaborate with the chairs to make sure that we can financially and otherwise support those kinds of conveniences.

Adrian Alfonso (MDM): Ok, understood. I guess I'll open it up to any other chairs that are on the call who have any questions or feedback regarding this.

Leigh Giunta (IRMO): I know I'm one of the newest board chairs for the early learning coalition and if I could just share a little bit about my experience as a new chair. Its been difficult because the communication is few and far between and I believe its because of the Sunshine Laws that handcuff us, from allowing us to talk to other board chairs about things that are going on in our coalitions. So if we disband ELAC and solely rely on OEL to maybe have whether its quarterly or semi-annual meetings held at facilities that are easy to get to, meaning not Tallahassee. Its difficult, because I mean, that's not a central location if you look at the state of Florida. I think its probably one of the biggest factors, its difficult for people to get to those locations. But by disbanding ELAC will we still have the opportunity for OEL to sponsor whether it's a quarterly or semi-annual meeting so that we can get together, have these discussions, as board chairs without having to worry about Sunshine law?

Shan Goff (OEL): Mr. Chair if I could respond, the answer would be yes. We would probably vote to kind of do semi-annual meetings. It certainly makes sense after the legislative session and there's probably another time during the year. Absolutely to be able to support and facilitate that communication and you said it much more directly and much better than I did. It is because you are in the statute of the Sunshine Law so you really can't talk to each other unless you notice that and that's a huge obstacle of collaboration.

Tara Orlowski (Big Bend): I would agree with what Leigh said. I think there are lots of opportunities that are hindered right now. I would also like to put out there that I think it would be really good for ED's and chairs to come together for these meetings so the fact that the ED's meet and then the chairs meet, I think we miss opportunities for all of us to kind of be there together working through some of these things.

Adrian Alfonso (MDM): And we've talked about having, if ELAC is removed from statute and having the chairs with these semi-annual meetings, maybe do them at the same time the ED's are meeting. There has been some comments from some ED's that they prefer meeting with the ED's without the chairs there. But we can have a separate meeting where we all get together and collaborate. Even the presentation Shan went over, from my understanding she

did the same in their meeting yesterday. The resources and the time, I think we keep duplicating the work and I agree these semi-annual meetings at least one of them should together with the ED meetings. Not that we're going to do everything together as far as meetings but give EDs their time to have their meetings without us there. But we should definitely try to coordinate them. So there is a time of the day where we can all get together and collaborate with them on whatever issues that are going on.

Robert Colen (Marion): Is there any reason why the ELAC meeting couldn't be at the same time as, almost a joint meeting with the ED meeting?

Adrian Alfonso (MDM): Again, I don't know. Is the ED meeting held within Sunshine or? Shan?

Shan Goff (OEL): If I'm not mistaken and I'll ask maybe Amy to chime in, for years they've always been, tried to be scheduled pretty close together. I think because of the rescheduling of this event and not being in Fort Walton Beach, but we did just have the ED meeting yesterday. We do notice it, we advertise it, as a public meeting that anybody is invited to and can attend. I don't think we typically have an audience but because it's a public meeting and we convene it then yes anybody can come.

Robert Colen (Marion): Just talking about efficiency, having a joint meeting with EDs and board chairs of ELAC and that way you're not having to redo this whole presentation two days in a row.

Adrian Alfonso (MDM): It's been discussed for years, but there's always, I don't want to say a push back but I think the EDs prefer, and I don't know if there are any ED's on the call that can clarify this, but I think the EDs prefer to not have their entire meeting with the chairs so they can discuss openly some of the issues. I think we can do it where part of the meeting we're involved and then the other part is just the EDs themselves. If we go to these semi-annual meetings, assuming ELAC is removed from statute which will give us an opportunity for us as chairs to get together while the EDs are meeting and discuss freely without Sunshine law.

Maggi Parker (OEL): A question was asked about the Sunshine Law, and it is correct the ED meeting covered by the sunshine because it is not a body created by statutes. Where as ELAC is.

Adrian Alfonso (MDM): That is one of the issues as to why the meeting haven't been combined as well.

Marcus Rowe (Duval): I know we talked about this in our committee breakout meeting. I want to ask you this. If we can remove it from statute, are we still going to try and request full attendance at each of these meetings because I know that was one of the bigger issues. Is the purpose of these meetings to give updates two times a year or is it also for things like best practices?

Adrian Alfonso (MDM): I guess that's to be determined. We have to see what happens with the bill and if ELAC will be removed, at which point we'll be open to sit down and have discussions on our own as chairs as to what we want the future to be. The reality is we have five or six board chairs on this call and the committees, since our last meeting only one has met. If we

remove it from statute I don't think we can make it so every single coalition is represented in these meetings. I don't know if we have that authority. We would have to form a committee and decide post ELAC as to what we want the future to be.

Tara Orlowski (Big Bend): Just to follow-up on that I think, like Marcus was saying if we could do some more work around best practices, even if we don't require people to be here, if the agenda is enticing enough they will want to be here.

Adrian Alfonso (MDM): I agree. The more we can put out there in all the committees, we hope we'd get more participation. I'm not saying we do away with the committees, but I think it will give us more flexibility to not be under the Sunshine Law. I think the committees are very important.

Leigh Giunta (IRMO): What's the next step? We don't have a quorum and haven't had one for the last three meetings.

Adrian Alfonso (MDM): Yup. It has been about three meetings.

Leigh Giunta (IRMO): So how do we move this forward if we don't have a quorum?

Adrian Alfonso (MDM): Shan is this in the bill already?

Shan Goff (OEL): Currently it is in the outline of the bill. As you and I talked wanted to get the direct feedback from the chairs. As soon as the bill moves its way, there's a lot of steps that folks jump through is absolutely make sure we can share it with the chairs, but also provide you with our commitment to continue with our collaboration and communication of the coalition board chairs.

Adrian Alfonso (MDM): I'm willing to take a vote with the people on the call even though we don't have quorum. Is there anyone that is opposed to adding language to the bill to remove ELAC from statutes?

Leigh Giunta (IRMO): I'm not opposed.

Marcus Rowe (Duval): I'm not opposed either. And just a suggestion I don't know if we all need to be on the conference call to vocally say "yay" or "nay", but if an email would be appropriate.

Maggi Parker (OEL): Without a quorum we really can't vote. Because you're still a statutory body you can't communicate with each other via email without it being noticed in the Sunshine.

Adrian Alfonso (MDM): We can call for a vote even though we don't have quorum, just from a "we support whatever language is going in the bill to remove ELAC." I know it has absolutely no authority but I think it's worth in the minutes if we put that. I think it will be helpful to have that in the minutes.

Maggi Parker (OEL): Each person can state their position, but there is no validity to holding a vote because there is no quorum.

Adrian Alfonso (MDM): First of all is there any other discussion or anyone else have comments about this.

Alan Bergman (Brevard): This is not the solution. I think what we are missing is that we don't have members of our group who want to partake. As exemplified by the fact that there aren't that many people on the call and we haven't had quorum for the last three calls. I think we really have to generate members who want to be involved and I think that's the key. And I have no objection to what you're trying to do with all this. That's fine. Thank you.

Adrian Alfonso (MDM): Thank you. I'm also in support of it.

Marcus Rowe (Duval): Maggie, if OEL sent out the email with a yes or no button, and we respond back and we have the language within the email, I wonder if responding back to OEL directly would constitute as a vote and not communication between individuals.

Maggi Parker (OEL): It would still be a vote. I would suggest having each individual provide their position and we can certainly encourage folks through the minutes here to folks who were not in attendance to provide their positions through the director and those will be shared.

Marcus Rowe (Duval): We're looking at quorum as adding up the number of coalitions total and dividing it by the number of people present. If people aren't present for a certain number of meetings, can we then reduce the denominator and say we won't count them as part of the overall quorum number since they haven't been present.

Adrian Alfonso (MDM): We've have this discussion before and because it's in statue I don't think we can do that. Maggi correct me if I'm wrong.

Maggi Parker (OEL): If you do decide going forward to have a requirement for members to attend, well right now even though you are in statue and there is no requirement. You can't sanction your members for not attending. What we typically do to count quorum, because we have a lot of vacancies, is count the seats that have appointed members in them. We have 26 seats appointed by the governor, we have to get a majority number of those seats to reduce the denominator, if we can to get a quorum.

Marcus Rowe (Duval): Thank you.

Adrian Alfonso (MDM): If there are any other chairs on the call I would love to hear your position. For purposes of the minutes then we can move forward to the next agenda item.

Robert Colen (Marion): I go along with what you're saying Adrian.

Ana Weaver (Santa Rosa): I'm in agreement as well.

Adrian Alfonso (MDM): Any other comments or questions regarding this? Shan I guess whoever is spear heading this, if you could just communicate that all the governor appointed chairs that were on this call are in support of this. There was a comment I heard, that it would be hard to eliminate a board where there is all these governor appointed members on. But I think the reality is, correct me if I'm wrong, I think there is only one governor appoint member directly to ELAC is the board chair and everyone else is the governor appointed ELC members on this committee. So I don't think we would be eliminating a significant amount of governor appointed positions by eliminating ELAC.

Shan Goff (OEL): Correct and we'll be glad to jump through those hoops. There are a house and senate representative but we can absolutely deal with that as well. And we thank you for your support on that particular issue.

Adrian Alfonso (MDM): And I think we will continue to be happy with having a representative from the House and the Senate continue meeting.

Shan Goff, OEL Executive Director

- School Readiness Funding Model
 - Funding Methodology Recommendations: Three funding methodologies were proposed for consideration
 1. 2014 SR Funding Model Work Group
 2. Zone Model
 3. Conceptual Framework for an SR Funding Formula
 - Additional Recommendations
 1. Recalibrate reimbursement rates in 2020-2021 using anticipated additional CCDF funds (approximately \$140 Million).
 2. Consider statutory authority to establish statewide child care reimbursement rates to reduce the variance and resulting inequities across coalitions.
 3. Review impact of SR program improvement initiatives for 2019-2020 and the 2020-2021 including the use of contracted slots, as discussed in Section III.
 4. Determine the impact of the three methodologies, described in Section V., based on SR data and feedback from stake holders.

Cybersecurity Presentation by Fred Hicks

- Cybersecurity Video (we need your support around the state Cybersecurity Governance).

Committee Report Outs

- *Marcus Rowe:* Best Practices and Communication Committee
- *Leigh Giunta:* Policy/Legislation & Finance Committee
 - Request for the budget reports to be sent out to everyone

AELC Update

Lindsay Carson, Chair of the Association of Early Learning Coalitions

- Erin Smeltzer, New Executive Director
- Focus:
 - VPK funding and accountability for Providers and child assessment elements
- What data do we need as a state and community to tell our Story
- Continue to maintain a strong partnership with OEL.

Public Comment

- None.

Wrap up and Adjourn

- Next meeting: January 2020 (TBA)
- Meeting Adjourned 10:27 a.m.

DRAFT