



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS ANNUAL MEETING APPROVED MINUTES

Monday, October 23, 2023, at 3:00 pm  
6302 E. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., Suite 100  
Tampa, FL 33619

### MEETING ATTENDANCE

**Facilitator:** Chair Aakash Patel

#### Board Members Present:

Dr. Daphne Fudge\*, Dr. Stephie Holmquist, Commissioner Gwen Myers\*, Dr. Shawn Robinson, Amanda Jae, Dr. Jodi Marshall\*, Stacie Ward\*, Dr. Jacquelyn Jenkins\*, Tracye Brown\*  
Dr. Larissa Baia\*, Dr. Lise Fox\*, Adam Giery\*, Gino Casanova\*, Dr. Daira Barakat Avila\*, Rebecca Bacon, Derek Zitko\*, Chantal Porte\*, and Beth Pasek\*

#### Board Members Absent:

Allison Nguyen, Cynthia Chipp and Michelle Zieziula

#### ELCHC Staff:

Dr. Fred Hicks, Nancy Will, Sabrina Ruiz\*, Gary Myers\*, Abigail Perez\*, Alison Fraga, Kelley Minney, and Kiyana Scott

#### Other Attendees:

Frazier Carraway, Tonia Williams\*, Molly Grant\*, Jes Fowler\*, Carol Wick\*, and Dennis Hebert

*\*Indicates attendance via Zoom meeting platform.*

### CALL TO ORDER

#### Quorum Verification

Noting a quorum had been established, Chair Aakash Patel called the meeting to order at 3:01 pm.

### PLEDGE OF ALLIGANCE

Chantal Porte lead the pledge of allegiance.

### PUBLIC COMMENT I

Mary Hancock, owner of Merry Go Round childcare centers. Ms. Hancock asked that the board of directors consider adding another representative to the board of directors for equal representation. She went on to share that there were more for-profit centers than faith-based, and home centers so that everyone has a seat at the table with their unique needs, and perspective it would best to have representatives from all different forms of early childhood education.

### CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

#### A. Mission Moment

Chair Patel opened the floor for Gino Casanova to share with the committee as to why he wanted to serve on the board of directors. Mr. Casanova shared that he is the father of 2 young children and the importance of education, especially early education, is vital to the success not just of his children but that every child deserves a solid start on their education.



**B. Recognition of our newest Board of Director, Rebecca Bacon, Executive Director of The Children’s Board of Hillsborough County**

Chair Patel opened the floor for Mrs. Bacon to introduce herself. Ms. Bacon shared that she has been working in education for over 30 years and has raised 3 children in Hillsborough County that all went through the early learning program. Ms. Bacon shared that she has a passion for quality early learning and stated she was happy to be a member of the Board of Directors for early education.

**C. Committee Appointments**

Chair Patel asked that each of the committee chairs share a description of their committees. The following chairs shared a description of their committee as outline in the bylaws:

Dr. Jacquelyn Jenkins-Provider Review Hearing Committee

Amanda Jae-Service Delivery & Efficiency Committee

Dr. Stephe Holmquist-Governance Committee

Dr. Shawn Robinson-Development Committee

Adam Giery-Legislative Committee

Gary Myer, Chief Financial Officer spoke about the duties of a member of the Finance Committee on behalf of Chair Michelle Zieziula.

Chair Patel asked Rebecca Bacon which committee she would like to serve on, and Mrs. Bacon stated that she would like to hold off on joining one as she would like a little time to get settled into her role on the board before deciding.

Chair Patel asked Chantal Porte which committee she would like to serve on. Ms. Porte stated that she would be interested in serving on the Provider Review Committee.

Chair Patel appointed Stacie Ward to the Finance Committee.

Chair Patel appointed himself to the Legislative Committee.

Chair Patel appointed Amanda Jae to the Legislative Committee.

Chair Patel explained that anyone can attend any meeting as they are available and welcomed participation in all aspects of the board.

Chair Patel asked for a motion to approve Chantal Porte to the Provider Review Committee, Chair Patel to the Legislative Committee, Stacie Ward to the Finance Committee, and Amanda Jae to the Legislative Committee.

*Dr. Shawn Robinson made a motion to approve Chantal Porte to the Provider Review Committee, Chair Patel to the Legislative Committee, Stacie Ward to the Finance Committee and Amanda Jae to the Legislative Committee. Dr. Stephe Holmquist made a second. The motion carried unanimously.*

**D. Recognition of former Board of Director Members-Carl Harness, Lee Bowers, Melissa Raburn, and Kelley Parris**

Chair Patel recognized former Board Member, Carl Harness. Mr. Harness shared that one of the highlights of his time serving on the board was bringing Dr. Hicks onboard to lead the dedicated staff of the Early Learning Coalition of Hillsborough County (ELCHC). Mr. Harness stated it was a privilege to serve and that he really enjoyed his time on board and was just a phone call away should he be needed in the future.

Chair Patel asked if any other former board members were present to recognize them with their certificate of appreciation. Mrs. Bacon stated she would be able to hand Kelley Parris her certificate when she was available to meet in-person. Chair Patel thanked the other former members of the board for their service.

Chantel Porte asked if perhaps with her job duties and title if that might be conflict of interest. Ms. Porte shared her role with Hillsborough County. The Board Council, Frazier Carraway, Esq. recommended that Ms. Porte be moved onto a different committee.

Chair Patel asked for a motion to move Chantal Porte to the Service Delivery & Efficiency Committee from the Provider Review Hearing Committee. Amanda Jae made a motion to move Chantal Porte to the Service Delivery & Efficiency Committee. Dr. Daphne Fudge seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

- E. Meeting Date Change-Board of Directors February 19, 2024, meeting moved to February 26, 2024 & Special meeting of the Board of Directors on December 11, 2023.** Chair Patel announced the date change of the next Board of Directors meeting and shared that there would be a special meeting on December 11, 2023.

Chair Patel gave a brief update on the dates that Dr. Fred Hicks, CEO and members of the Legislative Committee will be in Tallahassee for the upcoming legislative session. Chair Patel shared that any board members interested in traveling to Tallahassee to represent the ELCHC were more than welcomed to join.

## **CONSENT AGENDA**

The following items were included under the Consent Agenda:

- A. June 26, 2023 Board of Directors Annual Meeting Agenda
- B. April 17, 2023 Board of Directors Regular Meeting Minutes

*Dr. Shawn Robinson made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Amanda Jae made a second. The motion carried unanimously.*

## **ACTION ITEMS**

- A. Reappointment of Adam Giery to the Board of Directors**

Chair Patel opened the floor to Dr. Stephanie Holmquist, Chair of the Governance Committee. Dr. Holmquist reported that the Governance Committee could not recommend more highly the reappointment of Adam Giery to the ELCHC Board of Directors.

*Dr. Stephanie Holmquist made the motion to reappoint Adam Giery to the ELCHC Board of Directors. Dr. Shawn Robinson made the second. The motion carried unanimously.*

**B. Approval of allocation of funds to the Children’s Forum for Early Childhood Educator INCENTIVE\$**

There was committee discussion to possibly hold off on vote until the December special meeting of the Board of Directors to have a representative from the Children’s Forum to give a breakdown as to where specifically these dollars would go. It was determined that from past allocations to the Children's Forum for Early Childhood Educator INCENTIVE\$ a motion could be made.

*Dr. Shawn Robinson made a motion of the approval of allocation of funds to the Children’s Forum for Early Childhood Educator INCENTIVE\$. Dr. Stephie Holmquist made a second. Dr. Larissa Baia abstained from the vote. The motion carried.*

**C. Approval to enter into a contract with the Children’s Board of Hillsborough County FY 23-24**

Dr. Hicks shared that this is match money from the Children's Board of Hillsborough County.

*Amanda Jae made a motion to approve to enter into a contract with the Children’s Board of Hillsborough County FY 23-24. Dr. Shawn Robinson made a second. Rebecca Bacon abstained from the vote. The motion carried.*

**D. Approval of the allocation of funds to Sharity Global-Board of Directors Retreat FY 23-24**

Dr. Hicks explained this allocation is for the Board of Directors retreat and this was an RFP that was open for 20-days as laid out in the agenda packet. Ms. Wick from Sharity Global was available for questions and she explained the details of what the allocation would cover and shared that she provided strategic planning for multiple coalitions throughout state.

*Adam Giery made a motion to approve the allocation of funds to Sharity Global-Board of Directors Retreat FY 23-24. Dr. Shawn Robinson made a second. The motion carried unanimously.*

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **A. EXECUTIVE**

Chair Patel reported that the Executive Committee met on October 16, 2023 to review and discuss the following items:

- Approval of the August 14, 2023 Executive Committee meeting minutes
- Approval of the October 23, 2023 Draft Board of Directors Agenda
- Committee Reports
- CEO Report
- Legislative Focus

## **B. Governance**

Dr. Stephie Holmquist Johnson, Committee Chair, stated the Governance Committee met on September 25, 2023, to review and discuss the following items:

- Recommendation of Adam Giery for reappointment to the Board of Directors
- CEO Evaluation results
- Provider Representation on the Board of Directors
- Provider Nominations (Timeline)
- CEO Report
- Next meeting of the Governance Committee will be held on January 29, 2024

## **C. SERVICE DELIVERY & EFFICIENCY**

Amanda Jae, Chair of the Service Delivery & Efficiency Committee, shared they met on September 14, 2023 to review and discuss the following items:

- Day of Play & Upcoming events for providers and/or families
- CEO Report

## **D. DEVELOPMENT**

Dr. Shawn Robinson, Chair of the Development Committee, shared that the Committee met on September 6, 2023 to review and discuss the following items:

- Resource Development Department Updates
- Education of Young Children Summit
- Host Committee Update

## **E. Finance**

Gary Meyer, Chief Financial Officer gave the committee report on behalf of Michelle Zieziula, Chair of the Finance Committee. Mr. Meyer reported the committee met on October 2, 2023 to review and discuss the Fiscal Year 2024 budget presented and also shared that the committee approved the following allocations:

- Approval of allocation of funds to contract with Saxon Gilmore & Carraway, P.A. for governance-related legal services
- Approval of allocation of funds to WebAuthor.com LLC
- Approval of allocation of funds to contract with Sharity Global for Board of Directors retreat and strategic plan formation
- Approval of allocation of funds to Protected Trust, LLC

## **FINANCE REPORT**

Gary Meyer, Chief Financial Officer shared that the ELCHC received an additional \$6.8 million to fund 14,300 children in total for the year, and the team is busy with assisting in the ARPA grant distribution. Mr. Meyer also shared that he has been forwarding RFP opportunities that are also noted on the website and will have many procurements completed in December for approval at the special meeting.

## CEO REPORT

Dr. Fred Hicks, CEO of ELCHC introduced Ms. Molly Grant from Association of Early Learning Coalitions of Florida (AELCFL) to present the Board of Directors with the three legislative items the AELCFL would be taking to the Florida state legislative session in the spring of 2024. Ms. Grant also stated they do not lobby but are subject matter experts. Ms. Grant shared the priorities that were included in the agenda packet for Board members to review so they could also speak to these priorities at the local level.

In the interest of time Dr. Hicks briefly reported on the following items that were outlined in his CEO report in the agenda packet:

- Legislative Coordination
  - Dr. Hicks shared that Ms. Grant hit all the priorities and that he would be traveling to Tallahassee in January and February while legislators were in session with Chair Patel and other members of the Legislative Committee.
- Provider Representative Election Live -Nominations
- \$33 Million Dollar ARPA Update
  - Dr. Hicks called attention to the outline in the agenda packet.
- Homeless Initiative
  - Dr. Hicks shared the ELCHC is coordinating with organizations that are experts in helping with the homeless population to use the \$1 million dollars given for this purpose.
- Improving Services to Children with Special Needs
  - Dr. Hicks emphasized that there were already processes in place in prioritizing children with special needs. For example, moving children up on the list; more classrooms that are ready to meet their needs as well as teacher trainings at all levels including the owners/directors of centers.
- Results of CEO Evaluation (DEL form)
  - Dr. Hicks called attention to the results of the CEO evaluation in the agenda packet.

## ADJOURNMENT

Citing the time, Chair Patel asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

*Amanda Jae made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 4:55 pm. Dr. Stephie Holmquist made a second motion to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously.*

Read and approved by: Stephie Holmquist 3/27/2024  
*Dr. Stephie Holmquist, Secretary* *Date*

**Signature:** *Stephanie Holmquist*

**Email:** stephie@hecedu.com






# October 2023 Board of Directors Meeting Minutes\_approved Draft

Final Audit Report

2024-03-28

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