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PERFORMANCE REVIEW OF THE EARLY LEARNING COALITION OF POLK REPORT 07-08

Results in Brief

In accordance with Florida law, the Agency for Workforce Innovation's Office of Early Learning conducted a performance review of the Early Learning Coalition of Polk County (the coalition or the Polk coalition). The on-site review took place the week of May 7-11, 2007. The review examined the period of coalition operations from July 2005 through April 2007. This coalition is the 5th to be reviewed under this coalition performance review process. A review of eligibility determination for early learning programs in Polk County is contained in a separate report, dated April 24, 2007.

The Polk coalition's overall implementation of early learning programs is commendable in meeting most service delivery and operational requirements. The review found that the coalition is continually improving the educational services delivered by child care service providers, and that the coalition's processes for curriculum selection and approval are clear and well-defined. Additionally, the coalition continues to operate its programs in a manner that builds strong community relationships. Some notable accomplishments include:

- Key community representation on the board.
- Appropriate mixture of board members on committees and workgroups.
- Effective recruitment strategies.

Notwithstanding the above accomplishments, the coalition's performance shows some inconsistencies, specifically in the areas of written policy, practices, procedures, and administration of contracted services. Some of the issues include

- Missing written policy and procedures.
- Improper voting procedures.
- Missing scope of responsibilities for staff.
- Inadequate enforcement of curriculum requirement.

Scope and Methodology

Florida law requires the Agency for Workforce Innovation (the agency) to monitor and evaluate the performance of each early learning coalition’s administration of the School Readiness and Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) education programs [s. 411.01 (4)(l), F.S., s. 1002.75(1), F.S., and 45 CFR 98.11(b)(6)]. Additionally, Florida Statutes Chapter 411.01(3)(m) gives the agency authority to identify best practices for early learning coalitions, improving the outcomes of school readiness programs by providing coalitions with quality indicators for sound business practices.

For this purpose, the Office of Early Learning developed performance expectations or criteria to provide a framework for measuring a coalition’s effectiveness in implementing early learning programs (See *Appendix A—Indicators/Expectations/Standard Levels of Service*). These performance expectations include a combination of indicators relating to compliance with state and federal laws and regulations, as well as indicators for additional activities that could assist early learning coalitions in maintaining high quality programs and operations. Specific areas of program implementation covered by the expectations include: governance and operational processes; grant award and contract management; program access and availability; and educational service delivery (s. 411.01(4)(1), F.S.).

In addition, the Office of Early Learning developed a series of indicators and standards known as the *Child Care Resource & Referral Network CCR&R Standard Levels of Service* (Standard Levels of Service), which local coalitions should meet in delivering child care resource and referral services to families. These standards address issues such as customer service expectations, staff training and certification, consumer services and information, and database maintenance. See *Appendix A—Indicators/Expectations/Standard Levels of Service* for a more detailed description of the Standard Levels of Service.

To measure the extent to which the Polk coalition is meeting the performance expectations and the Standard Levels of Service, the OEL review team interviewed the coalition executive director, coalition staff, board members, parents, providers, and personnel from the coalition’s contracted service provider. The team examined various documents such as the coalition’s contracts, board meeting minutes, mini-grant program guidelines, provider agreements, and coalition reports. The team also conducted focus groups for both the School Readiness and VPK programs, and analyzed various data contained in the Enhanced Field System (EFS).

Background

History of Operations. The Early Learning Coalition of Polk County, Inc. began operations in January 2000 in response to the passage of Chapter 411, F.S. by the Florida legislature. Polk is the fourth largest county in Florida, and the eighth most populous, with approximately 13.2 percent of its population living below the poverty level. The coalition’s expenditures for the School Readiness and VPK early learning program for fiscal year 2005–2006 totaled \$25,531,565, with a total of \$28,939,809 in expenditures for fiscal year 2006–2007. Details of key budget areas and reported expenditures appear in the tables below. It should be noted that the Polk Coalition began performing VPK child eligibility determination services in-house in December 2005 and hired additional staff, which increased administration expenditures for FY2006–2007.

Early Learning Coalition of Polk Reported School Readiness (SR) Expenditures		
Area	2005–2006	2006–2007
Administration	\$245,490	\$635,521
Resource & Referral	\$119,703	\$106,019
Eligibility Determination	\$993,590	\$900,488
Monitoring (w/ other non-direct OCAs)	\$1,192,202	\$805,979
Quality Initiatives	\$1,804,139	\$1,510,341
Program Services	\$16,504,061	\$18,866,521
Total Expenditures	\$20,859,185	\$22,824,869

Source: AWI Grant Management FLAIR Expenditures, OCA Reconciliation as of 6/30/07

Early Learning Coalition of Polk Reported VPK Expenditures		
Area	2005–2006	2006–2007
Administration	\$144,020	\$70,772
Enrollments	\$61,644	\$176,560
Monitoring	\$8,538	\$2,179
Quality for VPK	\$9,994	\$0
Program Services	\$4,448,184	\$5,919,429
Total Expenditures	\$4,672,380	\$6,168,940

Source: AWI Grant Management FLAIR Expenditures, OCA Reconciliation as of 6/30/07

During the 2005–2006 and 2006–2007 review periods, the Polk coalition had two principal contractors, Youth and Family Alternatives (YFA) and the Polk County School Board (PCSB or school board). The YFA contract includes school readiness eligibility determination; Child Care Resource and Referral Services (CCR&R), health and developmental screening; provider reimbursement, recruitment and training; family support; and Project Safety Net, which provides transportation to and from the child care provider for at-risk children. YFA contracted services for VPK includes EFS management for providers and children and provider payments. However, the coalition provides services in-house for child enrollment and child care provider contracts and eligibility for the VPK program.

The contract with the PCSB provides services for school readiness children three and four years of age who meet eligibility requirements, and home-based services for infants and toddlers. The PCSB delivers school readiness services in the form of family support, developmental and health screening, curriculum support, and Florida First Start, as well as collaborating with organizations and programs serving families and children such as Head Start, Even Start, Youth and Family Alternatives, Inc., Teenage Parent Program, and Workforce Development—Welfare Transition. PCSB contracted services for VPK include a provider agreement to deliver the VPK program as a provider. Other VPK services, such as provider eligibility, VPK training, and provider monitoring, are contracted separately with the Polk County Community College. *Appendix E—Polk Coalition Contracts for 2006–07* lists these contracts by contractor, services provided, contract period, and amount.

Governance. The coalition’s board of directors serves as the policy-making entity for the coalition, delegating authority to the coalition’s executive director. At the time of the review,

the 21-member board consisted of 6 non-voting and 15 voting members representing Polk County. Membership composition includes representatives from both the private and public sectors. *Appendix B—Early Learning Coalition of Polk Board Membership* depicts board membership as submitted with the coalition’s plan amendment approved on March 12, 2007.

The board is supported by four standing committees, made up of both voting and non-voting board members. Three of these committees provide executive, fiscal, and programmatic guidance for the board’s activities. A fourth committee provides assistance to the board in recruiting and screening prospective members.

- **The Executive Committee** reviews strategies and operations of the coalition, making decisions on behalf of the coalition in between coalition meetings and acting as the overall leadership for the coalition.
- **The Finance Committee** is responsible for the overall management of cash flow regarding coalition funds, including the development and review of fiscal procedures, annual budget review with staff and other board members and oversight of other fiscally related issues/opportunities as identified.
- **The Enhancement Committee** is charged with the selection and approval of curricula used by child care providers within Polk County. It also ensures all required elements in early learning programs and services that directly impact the ability of children to become school-ready are met.
- **The Nominating Committee** is responsible for screening and recommending prospective private sector representatives for board membership. These private sector representatives are referred to the coalition by the local economic development boards.

Children Served. For fiscal year 2005–06, the Polk coalition served a total of 2,236 children in VPK and 9,965 children in the School Readiness program, with 755 children receiving services from both programs. For fiscal year 2006–07, the Polk coalition served a total of 2,834 children in VPK and 9,782 children in the School Readiness program, with 959 children receiving services from both programs.

Organization and staffing. The coalition has an administrative staff of five employees who implement the programmatic aspects of the coalition’s mission. These include the executive director, operations manager, the program quality manager, fiscal administrator, and the administrative assistant. After the coalition assumed direct control of VPK child eligibility determination in December 2005, three additional staff were hired which include the VPK Manager and two VPK specialists. See *Appendix C—Coalition*

Organizational Structure for a diagram of the coalition’s organization.

Findings

The OEL analysts observed coalition accomplishments, compliance issues, and business practices during the site review. Recommendations regarding business practices (best practice issues) appear separately in the *Management Assistance Addendum to Report 07–08 Performance Review of the Early Learning Coalition of Polk County*. The following report of findings summarizes coalition accomplishments and compliance issues observed by the review analysts. All compliance issues require a corrective action plan to be submitted by the coalition within 30 days of the report’s publication, and a subsequent six month follow-up status report.

Governance and Operations

To ensure the success of the School Readiness, Voluntary Prekindergarten, and Child Care Resource and Referral programs, coalitions must have an effective executive leadership structure. Specifically, coalitions must have a constructive and trusting relationship between their boards, committee members, executive director, and coalition employees. This relationship is in jeopardy when the parties do not understand, or fail to adhere to, their distinct roles in the governance process.

A coalition may use both formal and informal mechanisms to ensure each entity adheres to its proper roles and responsibilities. The board should be the policymaking entity for the coalition, and the executive director should have the primary responsibility for implementing and managing these policies. All major policies should be implemented with the board’s approval. At a minimum, the coalition should establish clearly written bylaws and governance policies that comply with state and federal statutes regarding these roles and responsibilities.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Board membership reflects a strong commitment and representation by community stakeholders

The coalition’s strategy to recruit new board members has proven effective as demonstrated by an average board membership of 21 for the past two fiscal years. For much of its history the board has recruited key economic stakeholders in Polk County, including the phosphate industry and Publix, Inc. Additionally, the board utilizes meeting space from the Phosphate Research Institute in Bartow.

Some of the core members of the board also served on the Success By 6 Community Board and held leadership positions

within this organization providing early education and child care services in the county. Having key community leaders serving as members of the coalition board, providing expertise and community resources, ensures a solid foundation for board governance and establishes a broad range of members from across the community that can provide local input to board decisions.

COMPLIANCE ISSUES

Some coalition governance practices may reduce board effectiveness and efficiency

Each coalition establishes its own bylaws, including the selection of parliamentary procedures to provide structure and organization for board business and operations. These procedures must establish, among other requirements, how the board constitutes a quorum and how motions are presented to the board for decision.

The Polk coalition’s bylaws set Robert’s Rules of Order as a standard for parliamentary procedure for voting members; however key processes are neglected in actual practice. Specifically, the integrity of the board’s decision-making process is jeopardized by the coalition’s failure to prevent unauthorized voting. Furthermore, with regard to Florida’s Government-in-the-Sunshine Law, some coalition board actions have deviated from the current legal position held by OEL and Florida’s Attorney General.

- **Improper actions by non-voting and non-board members.** Non-voting and non-board members have made and seconded motions in committees. As an example, during the Enhancement Committee meeting on March 6, 2007, one non-voting board member and a service contractor staff person (non-board member) made and seconded motions to approve committee meeting minutes. Allowing non-voting and non-board members to vote on decisions of the board potentially invalidates the decisions of the body as a whole.

Non-voting and non-board members should not be allowed to make or second motions that will result in official actions being taken by a committee. Actions taken by a committee that lead to full board action should comply with parliamentary procedures and accepted legal guidance. AWI’s General Counsel states that “a non-voting member of an Early Learning Coalition may not vote on board business, whether in the full board meeting or in committee. However, a non-voting member may provide input and information to the committee and participate in discussion for matters that will go to the board for consideration. The same response applies to non-board members participating in a committee.”

- **Board and/or committee meeting times are perceived as being inconvenient to the public.** Coalition board meetings take place at the Florida Institute of Phosphate Research on Main Street in Bartow, a central portion of Polk County. Committee meetings are held on a main street in Lakeland. When interviewed by OEL staff, board members indicated that board and committee meeting times were convenient for them and complimented their respective work schedules. However, during a provider focus group, several child care providers stated that they were unable to attend coalition board meetings scheduled during normal business hours because they are unable to leave their child care centers.

Personnel processes raise concerns for effective management

It is important for coalitions to structure the roles and responsibilities of each organizational unit in order to effectively operate and manage the coalition and personnel. To meet this performance expectation each coalition board should have mechanisms to ensure that the administrative and daily operational functions of the coalition are effective and efficient.

The Early Learning Coalition of Polk County has not fully established policies and procedures to effectively manage coalition personnel. The following are specific areas for improvement:

- **Incomplete position descriptions for key staff.** While the coalition has established its organizational chart, the coalition’s personnel policies and procedures do not consistently describe the qualifications and responsibilities for coalition employees. Position descriptions for the executive director and the financial administrator/manager contain minimum qualifications but the position descriptions for the operations manager, program quality manager, VPK eligibility and enrollment manager, VPK and provider specialists do not. This increases the coalition’s vulnerability to employee challenges regarding personnel decisions and actions, such as poor performance review. Additionally, having minimum requirements increases the likelihood that staff will have the necessary skills and abilities.
- **Missing human resource policies.** The coalition’s human resource policies omit the process for employee evaluations and lacks policies regarding drug use. The coalition makes itself vulnerable to potential challenges made by employees related to adverse employment decisions related to drug use and employee performance in absence of such policies. At the time of the review there were no written human resource policies with respect to discriminatory hiring practices. However, as of

June 2007 the coalition had amended its bylaws and plan to include equal employment opportunity policies.

Also, the coalition’s *Policies and Procedures Manual* and the *Personnel Policies and Procedures* do not include a procedure for maintaining personnel files or processing public records requests. Having policies and procedures that document the coalition’s position or process for current and future staff provides written guidance in the absence of verbal instruction. In absence of information management policies, the coalition makes itself vulnerable to mishandling of public records requests, including the violation of confidentiality statutes or the untimely release of records.

Grant Awards and Contract Management

The Early Learning Coalition of Polk County has an efficient and effective method for meeting most requirements for procuring goods and services, specifically by performing adequate contract file maintenance and developing an adequate contract monitoring tool.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The coalition maintained continuity in its services and demonstrates continuous improvement

The coalition maintained services to children and parents during problematic contractor relations. With a few minor exceptions, the coalition’s major contracts with its service providers included all elements required by federal and state law. With regard to its contract with YFA, the coalition successfully maintained services to children and parents despite YFA providing notice (April 2, 2007) that it would discontinue services at the end of the fiscal year.

The OEL review found the incumbent operational manager (and acting contract manager) to be very experienced and particularly knowledgeable about procurement and the contract management process. However, through self evaluation, the coalition has identified areas for improvement in its financial management structure and they are currently developing a reorganization plan which will include a dedicated contract manager position.

COMPLIANCE ISSUES

Key elements of the procurement process do not comply with statute or rule

Effective and efficient contracting is crucial to successful coalition operation. To ensure the effective and efficient procurement processes, early learning coalitions must have in place policies and procedures to ensure compliance with state and federal laws and regulations, and specifically with s.

287.057, F.S. To ensure compliance with Florida Statutes, early learning coalitions must maintain all documentation relating to the contract and/or grant award selection process including the method of selection used. Without the proper documentation, there will be insufficient evidence that the proper procedures were followed according to chapter 287, F.S., and AWI/OEL polices. Failure to adhere to the requirements could result in conflicts of interest, bid protests, and poor quality work performed by the service provider.

Although the coalition generally complies with federal and state laws, regulations and policies regarding procurement and contracting, the following are specific deficiencies in the coalition’s contractual processes:

- Missing written contract management procedures.** Written procedures are critical to ensuring that all steps in the contracting process are followed explicitly, but the coalition’s policies and procedures do not describe, in detail, operating procedures for contract management. The OEL review team found policies developed by the coalition on procurement are not detailed and do not provide the steps in the contracting process that need to be followed explicitly. Specifically, the coalition does not have a reference or guide for the bid process, including a Request for Proposal (RFP), Invitation to Bid (IIB), or directions for performing the evaluation and selection process. Failure to follow proper procurement procedures could result in costly bid protests or result in poor procurement selections.
- No provision for conflict of interest.** The coalition’s contracts contained most of the required information in accordance with state statutes and federal regulations. However, the contracts between YFA and the PCSB did not contain standard conflict-of-interest clauses. The YFA’s failure to include a signed conflict-of-interest clause in the contract could potentially cause a person involved in the contracting process to unwittingly have a conflict of interest.

Child Care Resource & Referral —————

Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) should serve as the “front door” to all services offered through the early learning coalitions and their contracted service provider. All parents, regardless of socio-economic status, seeking or needing financial assistance with child care should receive complete CCR&R services. All parents should be offered the option of receiving assistance with finding child care and information that will help them make an informed decision, as well as additional information and community resources as appropriate.

The Polk coalition contracts with Youth and Family Alternatives, Inc. (YFA), for CCR&R services. The contract

totals \$107,170, and the terms of agreement include: providing child care consumer information, establishing a toll-free telephone system, maintaining and managing a comprehensive database of all early child care and education caregivers and community resources in Polk County, among other aspects of the CCR&R program. Notably, YFA also makes available their quarterly publication, *Team Talk*, a newsletter which is mailed to all child care providers in the database to serve as a helpful, well-developed information resource for the care and education of children residing in the Polk community.

The number of completed referrals generated by the coalition’s child care resource and referral services approximate the expected volume, based on the size of the population. For example, the referrals for the 2006 calendar year numbered 4,211 for a birth-to-five year population of 94,122 (4.5%). In comparison, the Brevard coalition generated 4,820 referrals for a birth-to-five year population of 74,976 (6.4%).

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Resource & Referral services in Polk County effectively serve the coalition’s customers

The child care resource and referral services provided by the coalition are in compliance with most of the Standard Levels of Service. Services are accessible to parents and providers within the Polk County service area and all staff members have attended necessary trainings, including the *VOICES* training provided by the CCR&R Network. Additionally, OEL found the following notable resource and referral accomplishments:

- Thorough listings.** Resource and referral had a thorough listing of services available in the Polk community. In addition to the 211 directory, the coalition provides additional information on resources available within Polk County, including parenting resources and inclusion services.
- Well trained and fully staffed.** Each child care resource and referral site within Polk County is completely staffed with trained personnel. There were no vacancies or unsupported hours of operation at the time of the review.
- Accurate EFS Entry.** All standard codes are current and entered into EFS correctly. All updates were approved by CCR&R.
- Provider Information up-to-date.** The coalition’s attention to database upkeep is commendable. At the time of the review, all active child care providers (100%) were listed in the database.

- **Thorough provider packets.** The coalition provides thorough and comprehensive information packets to providers. These packets include resource information and budgeting guidelines for child care service providers, as well as information concerning basic business management, marketing, and training opportunities.
- **Knowledgeable staff.** OEL analysts observed a resource and referral specialist during a parent interview and found the specialist knowledgeable and thorough, an indicator of sound staff customer service training.
- **Good Continuity of Operations Plan.** The Polk County Resource and Referral Services Contingency Plan contain innovative provisions and ensure the availability of parent packets during natural disasters. Specifically, 50 parent packets are reserved in case of emergency, thereby allowing continuation of services.

COMPLIANCE ISSUES

While the overall quality of the program is high, the Polk coalition is not sufficiently addressing some of the required standards. These deficiencies could reduce the overall effectiveness of the coalition’s resource and referral program if not addressed in a timely manner.

The coalition should address posted service center hours and waiting room cleanliness

Parents wishing to enroll their children in early learning and Voluntary Pre-kindergarten programs need to know when to visit the resource and referral offices for information. While the Polk offices in Winter Haven and Lakeland comply with OEL requirements for hours of operation, the public display of hours is inaccurate. Additionally, OEL standards state that waiting room/reception areas should be family friendly, with an activity area for children that has safe, clean, and age-appropriate materials:

- **Incorrect and missing business hours on websites and in service centers.** Through secret shopper calls and staff interviews, OEL determined that the resource and referral office hours were in compliance with the Standard Levels of Service, which are that the office must be open late one day per week and open early one day per week. However, the hours are posted incorrectly on the coalition and service center web site. Additionally, in the Winter Haven office, business hours are displayed incorrectly, while hours are not displayed at all in the Lakeland office.
- **Dirty toys in waiting room.** OEL staff found that toys in the Lakeland Service Center were not sanitized. This undermines the center’s efforts to provide a family-friendly environment and may cause health concerns for the children that visit the office.

Printed and online information about state-mandated training, educational exemptions, and staff training requirements for child care providers is missing

Providers with questions about state-mandated training, educational exemptions and staff training requirements (CDA, CDAE, Director’s Credentials, and VPK) must be referred to the DCF Child Care Training Information Center (CCTIC). A team of CCTIC Specialists is available Monday–Friday, 8:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m., to answer questions concerning CDA, CDAE, Director’s Credentials, VPK and other training concerns. This information must be posted on local Coalition/R&R websites and included in provider packets.

- **Missing required fax number.** During the review of the coalition the OEL analyst found that while information about the Department of Children and Families (DCF) Child Care Training Information Center (CCTIC) was included in the provider packet, the required fax number was missing.
- **Missing website link.** The coalition and service contractor web sites do not have a link to the DCF CCTIC web site that is also required under the Standard Levels of Service.

Educational Service Delivery

Chapter 411.01, Florida Statutes, provides an outline of components for each coalition’s school readiness programs, including the use of developmentally appropriate curricula by providers, and the implementation of health and developmental screenings and assessments for children participating in the program. Coalitions must address these elements as part of their coalition plans, and the plans must be approved by the Agency for Workforce Innovation.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The coalition has been successful in forming positive partnerships with various community organizations.

- **Health partnerships.** The coalition partners with the United Way’s Success by 6 programs to host events such as a Back to School Bash and provide lending libraries. They have also partnered with the Polk County Health Department for ‘Round Ups’ that included physicals and immunizations for children ages three through five.
- **Literacy partnerships.** The coalition also works with Even Start’s Family Literacy Program, which enables parents and children to participate in literature-based activities using *Dominie Home Connection Kits*. The kits provide interactive activities that improve literacy for

families. The kits include English/Spanish guides for bilingual and non-English-speaking families.

- **Provider education partnerships.** The coalition partners with the Polk Community College for training and continuing education for providers, including one or two quality child care conferences each year.
- **Curriculum selection and approval.** Polk has a clear and comprehensive method for determining if a curriculum not already on its approved list for school readiness can be used by a provider. The coalition also clearly outlines what is expected in order for a curriculum to meet the requirements for placement on the approved curriculum list.
- **Quality improvements.** The coalition distributes mini grants in the form of educational packages to assist providers with improving their classroom resources. These packets include literacy, math, and science curriculum supplements for infant/toddler and pre-school children.

COMPLIANCE ISSUES

While Polk’s educational service delivery contains many positives, the OEL review identified areas that require improvement. Many of these deficiencies have been influenced by the coalition’s adverse relationship with its service provider, YFA.

During the period of the review, the Polk Coalition had contracted its school readiness and a portion of VPK program services to YFA. However, despite having a year left on its contract with the coalition, YFA chose to no longer provide services at the end of FY 06-07. The coalition entered into an emergency procurement contract for one year with Arbor Education and Training, beginning July 1, 2007, and brought some services in-house (such as tracking assessment results, inclusion training, and monitoring curriculum) that were once contracted out to YFA.

Required tests are not clearly stated as service contract deliverables

Section 411.01(5)(c) 2. d., F.S., requires early learning programs to administer a pre-test to children when they enter the program and a post-test when they leave. Each coalition must demonstrate how it implements a pre- and post-test instrument for a statistically significant sample of children receiving school readiness services. OEL coalition plan guidance states that the coalition must describe how it will ensure that children in school readiness programs are administered a pre- and post-test while in the program.

The contracts between the coalition and its service providers do not adequately delineate requirements for delivery of pre-

and post-tests that include: a design providing data to inform classroom practices and curriculum; a method for selecting a statistically significant sample of children in each age group; a measurable and correlated objective for the tests, including current situation, activities; and an outcome that assesses whether the objective was achieved. The absence of a clear statement of work for this element of services delivery impairs the coalition’s implementation of this program requirement.

Monitoring of the service provider by the coalition is ineffective

A significant portion of early learning services were outsourced to YFA during the review period. During that time, the Early Learning Coalition of Polk County relied on monitoring reports from YFA to determine whether services were being delivered satisfactorily. Lax monitoring by the coalition led to the following problems in the area of educational service delivery.

- **Lack of enforcement for curriculum mandate.** The coalition mandated in its OEL-approved plan that all early learning providers would have and use an approved curriculum by July 1, 2005. There was no enforcement of this mandate for two years. A YFA monitoring report from May 2006 showed 10 out of 17 providers monitored did not have an approved curriculum. In November 2006, the Enhancements Committee discussed the need to enforce the mandate, and a subsequent survey showed that 41 out of 430 providers did not have an approved curriculum on file. Notwithstanding these findings, board meeting minutes dated January 17, 2007 and interviews with child care providers indicate that the coalition did not initiate corrective actions to support the July 2005 mandate until January 2007.
- **Users of unapproved curricula reported as compliant.** At the request of the coalition, YFA prepared a report dated April 19, 2007 to track which providers were using an approved curriculum. The OEL analysts interviewed some of the providers listed in the report as using an approved curriculum and found that some were not in compliance even though YFA had reported they were. During a provider interview conducted on May 9, 2007, the provider stated she was supposed to have received the curriculum from YFA, but as of the date of the report she had not yet received it, and was not using the curriculum listed.

Further interviews with coalition staff revealed that when providers attended curriculum training, they were listed on the spreadsheet as using that specific curriculum. YFA did not verify that the providers actually used the curricula for which they were trained. This calls into question how many providers did not have or were not

using the approved curriculum listed on the spreadsheet. It should be noted that an OEL analyst placed seven calls to additional child care providers to confirm that they were using the curriculum stated on the spread sheet. Although it was not a representative sample, all providers contacted stated they were in compliance.

For Action

The Polk coalition is operating its programs in a manner that complies with state and federal rules and regulations for most aspects of program implementation. However, some issues remain in each of the areas reviewed. To correct these weaknesses, the coalition will submit a detailed corrective action plan to OEL within 30 calendar days from the receipt of this report demonstrating the steps it will take to correct the deficiencies listed below, and a subsequent six month follow-up status report.

Coalition Required Actions

- Adhere to proper parliamentary procedures for voting members.
 - Provide procedures for participation in board operations by non-voting and non-board members.
 - Consider alternative board meeting times (at least semi-annually) to accommodate greater provider and public participation.
 - Clearly define in the bylaws the powers and duties of the executive director in relation to the board.
 - Include minimum qualifications and responsibilities in all job descriptions for staff.
 - Clearly state personnel policies, to include required human resource elements.
- Develop written policies/procedures that accurately describe the steps to be followed in the contract and procurement process and ensure all required language is included in contracts.
 - Establish clear roles and responsibilities for contract management and assign the contract management duties to an employee(s) that will not be placed in a position leading to conflicts of interest or the appearance of impropriety
 - Improve Child Care Resource and Referral operations to include the following standards:
 - Ensure waiting room toys are clean
 - Post correct hours of operation at R&R service centers and on the coalition and contractor websites
 - Add CCTIC/DCF Link to coalition and contractor website
 - Update CCTIC/DCF fax number in the provider information packets
 - Develop an effective tracking process to ensure child care providers are using an approved curriculum, as required by the coalition
 - Ensure current and future contracts contain clear requirements for all mandated testing, including the following requirements for pre- and post-tests:
 - a design providing data to inform classroom practices and curriculum
 - a method for selecting a statistically significant sample of children in each age group
 - a measurable and correlated objective for the tests, including current situation, activities, and an outcome that assesses whether the objective was achieved.

Appendix A—Indicators/Expectations/Standard Levels of Service

Performance Expectations for Governance and Operations

- 1 The coalition clearly delineates the roles and responsibilities of the board and the executive director in order to promote effective working relationships.
- 2 The coalition organizes efficient board meetings that are accessible to the public.
- 3 The coalition clearly defines its organizational structure, including procedures to effectively manage coalition personnel.
- 4 The coalition's process for managing information supports daily operations.
- 5 The executive director and coalition board exercise effective oversight of the coalition's financial operations.
- 6 The executive director and coalition board exercise effective oversight of the coalition's programmatic allocations and development.

Performance Expectations for Grants and Contract Management

- 1 The coalition has policies and procedures to ensure effective and efficient procurement of commodities and services.
- 2 The coalition has policies and procedures to ensure the awarding of a contract is fair, equitable and cost-effective.
- 3 An individual(s) is (are) assigned responsibility for managing coalition contracts.
- 4 The coalition has policies and procedures in place to monitor both administrative and programmatic aspects of all contracts.

Excerpts from the Standard Levels of Service for Child Care Resource & Referral

- 1 Each ELC is responsible for the coordination and/or provision of CCR&R services in their service area. Each ELC must ensure all CCR&R services are provided, including but not limited to the following responsibilities:
 - Designating/training/supervising CCR&R Staff
 - CCR&R services for all families and providers
 - Resources for families and providers (including but not limited to information on resources, VPK, financial assistance, School Readiness, Florida Kid Care Insurance, CCEP, employer initiatives)
 - Designating/training/supervising inclusion services/Warm Line staff
 - Provider outreach and recruitment
 - Community outreach and collaboration
 - Reports (Monthly, Quarterly, ad hoc) and community awareness plans
 - DCF Reports and Information
 - Data collection/updates (for providers/families)
 - Coalition Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP)

Excerpts from the Standard Levels of Service for Child Care Resource & Referral (cont.)

- 2 CCR&R Coordinator/designated trainer must use the Quality Assessment form to observe each CCR&R specialist, (including but not limited to School Readiness staff/ELC staff) conducting a complete family interview and generating referrals at least twice a year.
 - The Quality Assessment Roll-up Report must be sent to the CCR&R Network Office during the second and fourth fiscal quarters detailing the staff name, date of assessment, and result (Excellent, satisfactory, poor).
 - The Quality Assessment form must be kept on file at the ELC/R&R office for review by Network staff during assessment visits and/or onsite training/TA visits.
- 3 Each ELC must complete an internal CCR&R Programmatic Assessment. Assistance is available from coalition analysts and CCR&R Network staff.
- 4 ELC and CCR&R Staff must respond in a timely manner to the AWI-OEL monitoring staff's request for a scheduled monitoring date, be available for interviews, and provide all necessary documents as requested during the monitoring session.
- 5 Work to promote awareness of the Child Care Executive Partnership and other employer initiatives. Training and TA is available upon request. Possible activities may include but are not limited to:
 - Speaking at employer benefit events
 - Speaking at local Chamber of Commerce meetings
 - Speaking at Kiwanis, Rotary, or other service club meetings

Performance Expectations for Educational Service Delivery

- 1 The coalition has a comprehensive plan for improving the educational services of early childhood providers in its service area.
- 2 The coalition supports providers in using curricula that are effective and developmentally appropriate.
- 3 The coalition ensures that providers use pre and post assessment data to make sound decisions about teaching and learning.
- 4 The coalition has identified a process to demonstrate that its board has discussed, chosen, and approved the assessment instrument and implementation process.
- 5 The coalition/service provider has an effective and comprehensive health and developmental screening program that is relevant, utilizes available resources, and facilitates parental participation.
- 6 The coalition has a system in place to offer and track training to all providers for professional development and on the health and developmental screening process.

Appendix B—Board Membership

Name	Contact Information	Designation	Mandatory/ Voting	Affiliation	Term/Ends
Armstrong, Bessie	450 West Main Street Bartow, FL 33830 P: (863) 533-0015 Ext. 123 F: (863) 534-8756 Barmstrong@polkopp.org	Head Start director	Yes/No	Polk County Opportunity Council Head Start	(mandated)
Bacon, Lisa	501 E. Carter Rd. Lakeland, FL 33813 P: (863) 647-9845 lbacon@sjncc.org	Faith-based provider representative	Yes/No	St. John Newman	3yrs/01/17/2010 (first term ends)
Berryman, M. Hunt	3328 Bridgefield Drive Lakeland, FL 33803 P: (863) 644-1460 Cell: 660-6114 huntberryman@aol.com	Private Sector, Gubernatorial Appt.	Yes/Yes	Retired	04/30/2007 (first term ends)
Bryant, Tracy	100 Lem Barnes Road Davenport, FL 33837 P: (863) 557-0699 F: (863) 422-8610 tbryant@rinker.com	Private Sector, Gubernatorial Appt.	Yes/Yes	Rinker Materials	3yrs/09/20/2009 (first term ends)
Bucher, Bill	4720 Old Highway 37 Lakeland, FL 33813-2030 P: (863) 619-4215 F: (863) 648-3336	DCF District Administrator designee	Yes/Yes	Department of Children & Families designee	(mandated)
Campbell-Domineck, Stacy	500 East Lake Howard Dr. Suite 400 Winter Haven, FL 33881 P: (863) 508-1600 Ext. 400 F: (863) 508-1601 stacy-cambelldomineck@polkworks.org	Regional workforce development board chair/director	Yes/Yes	Polk Works	(mandated)
DeSena, Diane	3119 Bellflower Way Lakeland, FL 33811 P: (863) 370-4768 F: (863) 688-5122 ddesena@tampabay.rr.com	Private provider representative	Yes/No	Smart Start Enterprises, Inc.	4yrs/01/17/2011 (first term ends)
Friedt, Matti	Post Office Box 391 Bartow, FL 33830 P: (863) 534-0578 F: (863) 534-0210 matti.friedt@polk.fl.net	District Superintendent of schools or designee	Yes/No	Polk County School Board	(mandated)
Graber, Ray	1004 US Hwy 92 West Auburndale, FL 33823 P: (863) 965-7733 Ext. 82230 F: (863) 288-2229 ray.graber@mybrighthouse.com	Private Sector Business	Yes/Yes	Bright House Networks	4yrs/12/31/ 2007 (second term ends)
Hallock, Dave	1355 South Orange Ave. Bartow, FL 33830 P: (863) 519-0723 F: (863) 519-4544 polkfamilies@aol.com	Private Sector	Yes/Yes	Retired	4yrs/12/31/2008 (second term ends)

Name	Contact Information	Designation	Mandatory/ Voting	Affiliation	Term/Ends
Haas, Mary	1290 Golfview Ave. 4th Floor Bartow, FL 33830 P: (863) 519-7900 Ext. 1031 F: (863) 534-7046 Mary_haas@doh.state.fl.us	County Health Dept. director or designee	Yes/Yes	Polk County Health Department designee	(mandated)
Hightower, Sandy	6780 Lake Clark Drive Lakeland, FL 33813 P: (863) 297-1010 Ext. 6250 P: (863) 297-1024 F: (863) 297-1034 shightower@polk.edu	President of a community college, or designee	Yes/Yes	Community College designee	(mandated)
Holmes, Artemas	2330 Jonila Ave. Lakeland, FL 33803 P: (863) 682-0491 C: (863) 738-2093 aljudgeholmes@aol.com	Board Chair, gubernatorial Appt. Private Sector	Yes/Yes	Retired	04/30/2009
Holmes, Sherwin	P.O. Box 391 Bartow, FL 33830 P: (863) 534-0931 F: (863) 534-0031 Sherwin.holmes@polk-fl.net	Disabilities Education Act, program representative	Yes/No	Children with Disabilities	4yrs/05/28/2009 (first term ends)
Kay, Howard	815 SR 60 East Lake Wales, FL 33853 P: (863) 676-1991 F: (863) 676-3873 HKay@LOBLawyers.com	Private Sector	Yes/Yes	Lilly, O'Toole and Brown Attorney at Law	4yrs/09/20/2010 (first term ends)
Lazarre, Maggie	1507 Lakeland Hills Blvd. Suite 105 Lakeland, FL 33805 P: (863) 603-9777 F: (863) 603-9779 mlazarre@advantagehomecare.com	Private Sector	Yes/Yes	Advantage Home Health	4yrs/09/20/2010 (first term ends)
Lovelace, Joyce	151 First Street, S. Ste. B Winter Haven, FL 33880 P: (863) 299-0002 F: (863) 299-0185 C: (863) 221-4354 jlovelace@oldcypressbank.com	Private Sector	Yes/Yes	Olde Cypress Community Bank	3yrs/08/16/2010 (first term ends)
Magrill, George	7524 Plathe Road New Port Richey, FL 34653 P: (727) 835-4184 F: (727) 835-4196 geoyfa@aol	Central child care agency representative	Yes/No	Youth & Family Alternatives, Inc.	(mandated)
McPherson, Charles	210 South Florida Avenue Lakeland, FL 33801-4622 P: (863) 284-4836 F: (863) 284-4835 Charles.mcpherson@suntrust.com	Private Sector, gubernatorial Appt.	Yes/Yes	SunTrust Bank Mid-Florida	04/30/2008

Name	Contact Information	Designation	Mandatory/ Voting	Affiliation	Term/Ends
Plews, Mary Jo	301 3rd Street, NW Suite 200 Winter Haven, FL 33881 P: (863) 297-3043 Ext. 2# F: (863) 297-3045 mplews@tampabay.rr.com	Board of county commissioners appointee	Yes/Yes	Board of county commissioners	4yrs/08/10/2009 (first term ends)
Swartzwelder, Lana	7 La Terraza Lakeland, FL 33813 P: (863) 712-8628 F: (863) 648-5427 lana.swartzwelder@verizon.net	Private Sector	Yes/Yes	Sylvan Learning Center	3yrs/09/20/2009 (first term ends)

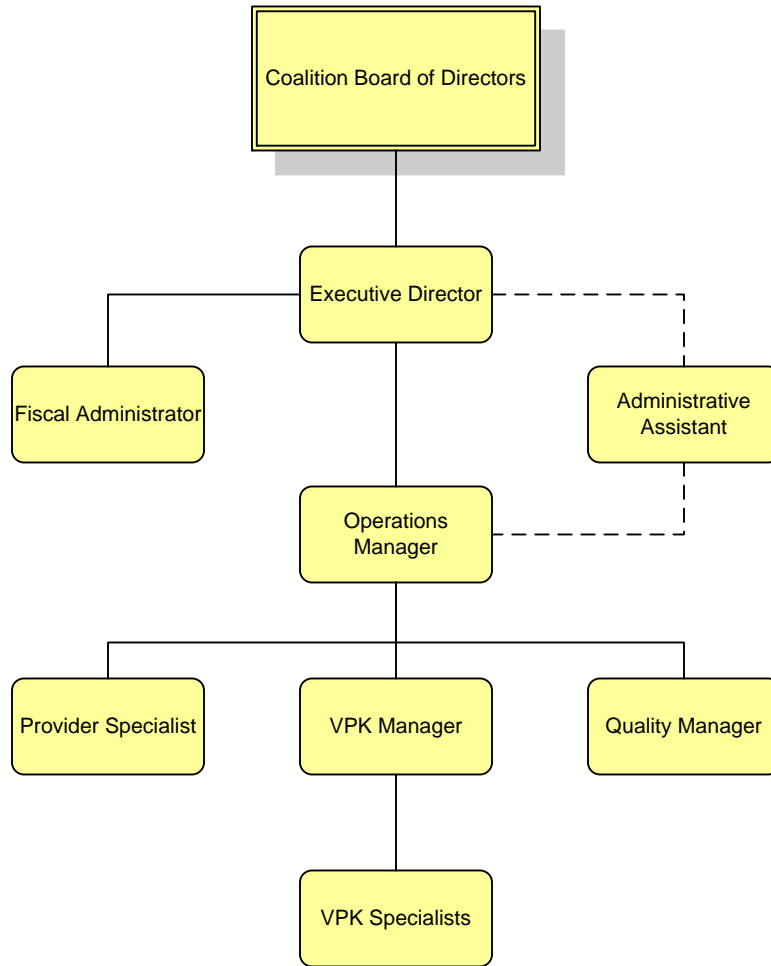
Appendix C—Committee Membership

Executive Committee				
Name	Office	Mandatory/ Voting	Affiliation	Term/Ends
Graber, Ray	Private Sector	Yes/Yes	Bright House Networks	4yrs/12/31/ 2007 (second term ends)
Hallock, Dave	Private Sector	Yes/Yes	Retired	4yrs/12/31/2008 (second term ends)
Hightower, Sandy	Secretary	Yes/Yes	Community College designee	(mandated)
Holmes, Artemas	Board Chair/Private Sector	Yes/Yes	Retired	04/30/2009
McPherson, Charles	Vice-Chair	Yes/Yes	SunTrust Bank Mid- Florida	04/30/2008
Finance Committee				
Name	Office	Mandatory/ Voting	Affiliation	Term/Ends
Berryman, M. Hunt	Private Sector,	Yes/Yes	Retired	04/30/2007 (first term ends)
Bucher, Bill	Public Sector	Yes/Yes	Department of Children & Families designee	(mandated)
McPherson, Charles	Committee Chair	Yes/Yes	SunTrust Bank Mid- Florida	04/30/2008
Plews, Mary Jo	Public Sector	Yes/Yes	Board of county commissioners	4yrs/08/10/2009 (first term ends)
Enhancements Committee				
Name	Office	Mandatory/ Voting	Affiliation	Term/Ends
Bacon, Lisa	Faith-based provider representative	Yes/No	St. John Newman	3yrs/01/17/2010 (first term ends)
DeSena, Diane	Private provider representative	Yes/No	Smart Start Enterprises, Inc.	4yrs/01/17/2011 (first term ends)
Friedt, Matti	District Superintendent of schools or designee	Yes/No	Polk County School Board	(mandated)
Hallock, Dave	Committee Chair	Yes/Yes	Retired	4yrs/12/31/2008 (second term ends)
Hightower, Sandy	President of a community college, or designee	Yes/Yes	Community College designee	(mandated)

Nominating Committee

Name	Office	Mandatory/ Voting	Affiliation	Term/Ends
Berryman, M. Hunt	Committee Chair	Yes/Yes	Retired	04/30/2007 (first term ends)
Plews, Mary Jo	Board of county commissioners appointee	Yes/Yes	Board of county commissioners	4yrs/08/10/2009 (first term ends)

Appendix D—Coalition Organizational Structure



Appendix E—Coalition Principal Contracts for 2006–07

Contractor	Services Provided	Contract Period	Contract Amount
Youth and Family Alternatives, Inc. 115 S. Missouri Avenue, 2 nd Floor Lakeland, Florida 33815 (863) 577-2450 Fax (863) 577-2451	Eligibility Determination/ Re-certification Provider Payments Child care Resource and Referral Family Support Services Child Assessment Services, Including Health Services Provider Services Data Entry (EFS) for Providers Provider Payments	June 30, 2006 thru July 1, 2007	\$25,888,055
Polk County School Board PO Box 391 Bartow, Florida 33831	Resource Teachers Family Support Services Child Assessment Services Comprehensive Health, Including Clinical Services Family Literacy, Including Take Home Library Florida First Start Program	June 30, 2006 July 1, 2007	\$1,137,200
Polk Community College 999 Avenue H N.E. Winter Haven, Florida 33881 (863) 297-1010	VPK provider eligibility determination and monitoring	June 30, 2006 thru July 1, 2007 (VPK services taken in house 10/1/06)	\$55,921