

**The Broward Reads Coalition - Campaign for Grade-Level Reading
Meeting Minutes
February 3, 2021**

9:30 a.m.

Meeting conducted via Zoom

I. Welcome and Introductions

The meeting was called to order at 9:32 a.m.

II. Updates

a) Early Learning Coalition (Allison Metsch)

Apologies were tendered for Renee Jaffe, ELC Broward CEO, who would be unavoidably absent. ELC updates were made by Allison Metsch.

Ms. Metsch reported that the ELC has been able to move approximately 400 children off their waitlist every two weeks due to additional funds received from OEL. There are currently 1,900 children on the waitlist.

DOC Preschool: The program was started over the 2020 summer period and provided virtual classrooms for children and their families. DOC will be relaunched with access being given to ELC waitlist families and, outreach is being done to introduce the program to VPK families and families of 4-year-olds who are not attending school. Through the DOC program, families are able to access an array of activities to engage their children. There are also book readings and recommendations.

3 Ts: Tune in. Talk More. Take turns. The ELC is still working on getting the word out about this initiative. Partnerships have been forged with Broward Healthy Start and, information has been shared with WIC in the community. The plan is to partner with Broward Health next. Ms. Metsch shared that the ELC is working with their providers and sharing the information with their families as another available resource. Any agencies interested in partnering on the initiative or learning more, please contact the ELC as there several members of staff trained in it.

Broward Early Childhood Educator Conference: The conference will be held on Saturday, April 10, 2021 and it will be conducted virtually. The team is working on

finalizing the logistics to make the conference a successful one. The last conference had over 900 attendees. The team hopes that the support will be the same, if not greater since it will be virtual.

b) Broward County Public Schools (Lori Canning; Dan Gohl)

Read for the Record Books: Lori Canning reported that the Read for the Record books are being delivered to schools. With the help of HandsOn Broward, a group of ten volunteers was pulled together to pack books at Gulfstream Early Learning Center on January 23rd. Not only were books mailed to all the Charter schools and Broward County Public Schools, but pick-up services are being facilitated for childcare providers throughout the County. The plan is to distribute the books to students on February 12th in preparation for Valentine's Day. There are still books available, and those can be collected at Gulfstream. Any childcare centers who have not as yet received their books can contact Lori Canning, Layne Polakoff, or Allison Metsch to arrange receipt.

Branded Material for Broward Reads:

Bookmarks - The Broward Schools' team, with the help of representatives from the Early Learning Coalition, Broward County Libraries, United Way of Broward, and CSC of Broward County have designed a Broward Reads bookmark. The bookmarks will be issued along with books being distributed and will bear tips for before, during, and after reading the book. The bookmark also has a QR code at the bottom (as suggested by Pablo Calvo of ELC), which, when scanned, will take the user to the Broward County Libraries website. A mockup was shown on screen. Ms. Canning reported that they were able to apply Countdown to Kindergarten activity funds toward the printing costs for 25,000 bookmarks. The prints will be shared with the CSC, ELC, and other groups.

Tablecloths - New tablecloths have also been secured, complete with the Broward Reads logo, clip art of children hugging books, and two QR codes – one to Broward County Library home page and the other, the Broward Reads webpage. Countdown to Kindergarten activity funds were also applied to cover print costs.

Countdown to Kindergarten Campaign: The Parker Playhouse event scheduled for April 17th will be executed virtually because the number of families that would be allowed to participate would have to be limited due to social distancing guidelines. The decision was taken to create a Countdown to Kindergarten

webpage, which will be hosted on the Broward County Public Schools website. The page will be located between the Early Learning page and Elementary Learning and will be called "Transition to Kindergarten" and should go live by the beginning March. The page will provide various resources to include readiness tips, a welcome video from Supt. Runcie and a video of a COVID era kindergarten classroom. A video of a field trip to a kindergarten classroom done by Penny Bernath (PBS) will also be linked to the page. Ms. Canning shared that the team would like to create a new video showing children wearing masks and social distancing. New resources have been developed for families who are interested in learning more about kindergarten and which would allow them to register to share their interest in kindergarten. Those families will receive a welcome package by mail, which will include a kindergarten book favorite – *Miss Bindergarten Gets Ready for Kindergarten*, Be a Broward Reader bookmark, and a Kindergarten Roadmap to Success brochure. The webpage will also help families identify their boundary schools by zip code.

Since the Countdown to Kindergarten event will not be hosted at the Parker Playhouse, some of those funds were reallocated to the purchase of pig puppets for the Healthy Adventures of the Three Pigs. The puppets will be sent to Broward County Public School Head Start and VPK participating classrooms, as well as childcare center participating classrooms.

Lori shared that Kimberly White (Broward County Libraries) aided with creating a list of transition to kindergarten books which is available on the webpage. The books are linked to the Library site and will show users which library branch they are available from. There is also a link to BCL for families to register for library cards. Beanstack will also be promoted on the page. The videos for BCL's Summer program *Tails and Tales* (being prepared by Kim White – BCL and Megan Albright – Nova Southeastern Library) will also be hosted on the page to promote Beanstack.

Sandra Bernard-Bastien (CSC) suggested that Lori's presentation could be made into an information video for parents. SBB will revert to Lori to discuss further.

Lori went further to share the desire to add a "tour of Broward County early childhood places to visit" to the website for example, Museum of Discovery and Science, Flamingo Gardens, libraries etc. Videos would feature a quick introduction from a representative of the featured place to visit sharing what they have to offer and perhaps a link to their website. Penny Bernath committed to providing any assistance she could towards the initiative to include providing Virtual Field Trip videos previously created that could be linked to the site.

Carol Hattan suggested that all county municipalities should include the kindergarten link on their respective sites. She went further to share that she would contact Jared Blaut of DRW Magazine who would likely do a feature article on the initiative. Lori asked that Ms. Hattan share her email (lori.canning@browardschools.com) with Blaut to facilitate a discussion.

Information: New twitter handle is @BrowardKindergarten

National Center for Families Learning: NCFL hosted a conference in Fort Lauderdale a couple years ago which was sponsored by the CSC. The organization is now venturing into the world of virtual reality with family engagement. They reached out to BCPS to partner on the initiative. Four families from the Gulfstream/Hallandale area have been identified for a pilot program for family engagement. Through a partnership with the Broward Education Foundation, those families have been provided with virtual reality headsets/goggles. The projected launch date for the pilot is February 11th. Participants can choose a topic such as healthy living, children's literacy, financial independence, and adult education which a virtual room/space will then be built around to use as an education piece. Ms. Canning shared further that work is being done with NCFL and their partners to possibly plan a virtual reality summit for July 2021 where they will highlight what's been accomplished by the program.

Dan Gohl explained that the goggles can't be used within BCPS sites because of the filtering and security software that is in place. He shared that the instructional technology is working to open those ports.

Lori shared she is trying to identify a place within the Hallandale area to host the first meeting. John Escobar (YV Foundation) committed to assist to try and secure an Xfinity location since they would have the high speed internet to make the effort successful.

The purpose of the program is to help NCFL figure out how to overcome the barriers to rolling out such a program on a larger scale. NCFL is committed to the project because virtual reality is the future of technology and, bearing in mind that physical interactions are also difficult but, family learning interactions can be facilitated through the virtual world.

Other Matters -

Commissioner Furr asked Lori Canning and Dan Gohl if they believed there is a need for students to have an orientation to the public library and how to use the resources. Both agreed and went further to suggest an open house styled meeting could be done via Zoom supported by a video as a reference of "how to" would be useful. Commissioner Furr commented he would work on making it happen.

FSA–Dan Gohl reported that the State is still proceeding as normal and so all students, grades 3 through 8 and then at high school, will need to take the test in person at school. He explained that the Board is advocating that the State decouple the accountability system and requirements (waive the third grade promotion requirement and just apply what's called good cause criteria i.e. our best scores and the portfolio of achievement and the teacher judgment. Those would be the decision points about whether a student should be promoted). Parents can get involved by contacting the Governor's office, their Commissioner's office, and other representatives. The senate bill is 866. Mr. Gohl will share his talking points and supporting background information with the Coalition and, directly with the CSC. Cindy Arenberg Seltzer (CSC) committed to having the CSC's Government Affairs Manager, Megan Turetsky – include the issue on the Florida CSC Statewide Association legislative agenda.

c) Broward County Libraries (Kimberly White)

Summer 2021: Tails and Tales will be run from June 1st through August 14th. Beanstack will be used again this year. All the featured artwork is done by Salina Yoon – one of the featured authors for the 33rd Conference on Children's Literature. Ms. Yoon will be at the libraries in September 2021. The team is now working on building out the programming which will primarily be virtual.

BCPS Collaboration: The Library will have a link on the new BCPS Kindergarten webpage which will let kindergartners know they can register for the BCL Beanstack page and then easily link their accounts when they start kindergarten. Ms. White gave a demo of navigating the Beanstack website (www.browardbeanstack.org).

Ms. White reported that BCL would be printing several thousand gameboards for Countdown to Kindergarten. Lori shared that the gameboards would also be included in the welcome packages.

Kimberly suggested creating a linked page for ELC for 3Ts or the DOC Preschool. She will discuss further with Allison Metsch of ELC.

Other:

Cindy Arenberg Seltzer shared that she participated in the National Summer Learning Loss Webinar where the City of Chicago Library System shared that they were doing was adding a math component to their literacy initiatives and, building reading nooks at laundromats. She asked if these Kim was aware of them and if they could be considered for Broward. Ms. White responded that BCL has previously integrated math into literacy programs and, that some of their partners were already doing things with laundromats in Broward. She mentioned the Bedtime Math app which is a free and easily downloaded, which the library can share as a resource. Ms. Arenberg Seltzer will share the webinar recording with Ms. White.

Ms. Arenberg Seltzer suggested having a discussion with Shevrin Jones of Florida Reading Corps to see if a partnership could be forged with BCL to facilitate tutoring during the summer. Deontré Clayton - Regional Manager at FL. Reading Corps) committed to contacting Kimberly White to discuss further.

Commissioner Furr mentioned a capability with the new circulation system which would allow the library card to be used as a membership card for other organizations which hadn't been full explored. He asked Kimberly to check how we can begin to use that capability and have it as a Broward Reads initiative.

d) Children's Services Council (Sandra Bernard-Bastien)

Partnership with School Board on Truancy: A Future First episode will be filmed to share the message about the importance of school attendance. The episode will be filmed via Zoom over the next few weeks and aired on BECON-TV.

Partner Literacy Efforts: Sandra Bernard-Bastien shared that Broward AWARE has added a literacy component to their campaign this year with books that teach children how to be safe and recognize that strangers are not their friends. She also shared that the City of Tamarac has taken the decision to do a Story walk for Black History month at the Waters Edge Park, which is a direct result of their involvement in Broward Read for the Record.

Lintor Make A Book Donation: Cindy Arenberg Seltzer shared that the Lintor company, which CSC had worked with for years purchasing books for our summer programs, had gone out of business. The couple who owned the

company donated what stock they had remaining to the CSC for a total donation value of \$6,000 (18 boxes total). Liza Khan identified which programs would make the best use of the books, and Lintor drop shipped the books directly to the programs, and the shipping costs were covered by the Florida Grade-Level Reading campaign, coordinated by Jenn Faber.

III. Special Presentations

Lectio Institute Report: The Institute was attended by Allison Metsch (ELC), Kimberly White (BCL), Katie Ospina (HoB) and Layne Polakoff (BCPS). Lectio looks at organizations and their programs to see how they're working for early literacy. The participants shared briefly what the experience was like for them. Layne made a special note that people look to Broward County as an example of what to do right for early literacy and for children. They shared too that Lectio uses rubrics to measure the programs/projects implemented by communities. The consensus of the participants was that the Coalition continue to participate in the institute. Katie Ospina shared the rubric that was provided by Lectio to evaluate programs. The file is included in the appendix.

Education, Innovation and Research Federal Award: Children's Literacy Pre-k Partnership - Joel Zarrow, CEO - Children's Literacy Initiative:

Children's Literacy Initiative has been focused solely on strengthening early childhood education in the United States. They anchor their work and theory of change, which asserts that center directors and teachers need ongoing structured professional development combined with high-quality curriculum supports and assessments for children. Mr. Zarrow shared the program components of Blueprint for Early Learning - a research-based pre-K curriculum, which provides a detailed set of teaching plans and resources for teachers to deliver engaging, intentional, and responsive pre-K instruction.



The program will be rolled out across Broward county, through 30 to 35 schools/centers as part of the treatment group and then another 30 to 35 being used as control schools. There will be four professional learning workshops (2.5 hours each). If the workshops need to be conducted outside of work hours, CLI will provide stipends for teachers. If it's in a situation where there will be a need for substitute teachers, CLI will pay for the associated cost.

Lori Canning shared that the impact of CLI's work has been great both in terms of teacher feedback and student achievement data. Canning went further to explain that the initiative will be a Broward County Early Childhood initiative and not solely for BCPS. Participating classrooms will receive a copy of the curriculum as well as 90 read-aloud books. She explained that we are now looking for VPK classrooms of schools that have multiple VPK classrooms and pre-K ESE specialized classrooms. Once the schools have been identified, the opportunity will be shared with all schools eligible to apply for the opportunity.

Allison Metsch reported that the ELC has found that there are approximately 170 schools that have multiple VPK classrooms. The schools are being sorted by zip code to determine program eligibility. The only issue identified thus far is that when a school has a school readiness contract with OEL through the ELC, the school has to choose a curriculum from OEL but, the team is working behind the scenes to see if the program can still be pushed through. Layne Polakoff interjected to say it is very important the chosen schools have directors and teachers who are willing to go through the intensive training and improvements needed.

Cindy Arenberg Seltzer proposed that positioning the program to directors/teachers as a means of providing additional tools to assist them to better prepare their students for school, the buy-in would be easier. She asked if the program implementation would benefit class assessment in the early childhood space. Allison Metsch responded in the affirmative explaining that having one-on-one support to implement the curriculum in the class would be advantageous to performance. Allison also shared that because there are incentives associated with the program, the appeal will be greater to teachers. Ms. Arenberg Seltzer also suggested that the possibility of higher-class scores (which lead to higher reimbursements rates) be used as another marketing angle.

Ms. Arenberg Seltzer asked Mr. Zarrow to submit a proposal to the Early Learning Coalition for match-funding support to help with satisfying the \$300,000 gap which CLI needs to raise over the next two years.

IV. Partner Update

Florida Grade-Level Reading (Jenn Faber):

- FGLRC February Newsletter: <https://conta.cc/3pvEHXK>
- Upcoming events:
 - o February 16th FGLRC Statewide Meeting: The agency will be announcing 12 new projects which will take place between now and September. Once more information is available, it will be shared with the group.
<https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/45598987490589313>
 - o February 19 FGLRC/Lastinger Reading Series 'Selecting Books to Maximize Students' Reading Practice:
<https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/2398035272437033999>
 - o February 23 FGLRC T/A Webinar 'Seeing Through A Trauma Lens':
<https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/8854130056603005451>
(working with our children who are struggling through COVID and all other social emotional challenges they have to deal with)
- FGLRC will do more of the University of Florida Lastinger Reading Series which have seen between 100 to 250 people on every webinar that has been hosted by Dr. Paige Pullen.
- Jenn reported that FGLRC will be funding enhancements to the Chamber's Gap Map which was launched a few months ago and build that project out

- further. The tool can help users to look at the poverty levels by zip code and then match them to the schools and grade-level reading scores.
- Spanish translation of the Sound Beginnings training will be provided. As of December 2020, there are 26 ambassadors launching the program statewide and so, they'll be able to offer the program in Spanish where needed.
 - Summer Programs:
 - o FGLRC will be incentivizing the Supporting Literacy and School-aged programs 5-hour modules. The first 350 practitioners who take the SLSA course within the designated timeframes will receive a \$50 gift certificate to purchase books for their programs. Over 1,300 persons were trained under this program last year.
 - o HELIOS is allowing the disbursement of Summer Literacy Acceleration mini grants for the first-time ever. These will be for K5 summer programs online or in-person and will be between \$2,000 and \$5,000 each. Any type of summer camp/summer learning program is eligible to apply for the grants as long as it serves Kindergarten to 5th grade.

BCPS: Lori reminded the meeting that February 14th will mark the 3rd anniversary of the MSD tragedy. If persons are interested in participating in service projects or events to commemorate the day, they should visit the Student Support Initiative website through BCPS for more information.

V. Meeting Schedule for FY 20-21:

Meetings will be conducted virtually unless otherwise stated. April 7, June 2, August 4, October 6

VI. Adjourn Meeting

Meeting adjourned at 11:29 a.m.