



# Florida School for the Deaf & the Blind

## Enrollment and Outreach Committee

### MEETING MINUTES

December 12, 2023, 8:30 a.m.

Moore Hall, Room 215

#### **Call to Order**

Dr. Tom Zavelson, Chair, called to order the FSDB Enrollment/Outreach Committee Meeting at 8:30 a.m. in Moore Hall's room 215.

#### **Attendance**

Committee Members Present: Dr. Tom Zavelson, Mrs. Christine Chapman, Mrs. June Ann LeFors, Mr. Matt Kramer. Non-Committee Members Present: None

#### **FSDB Staff Attendance:**

**Administration:** Tracie Snow, President; Shelley Ardis, Administrator of Outreach, Parent and Technology Services; Scott Trejbal, Administrator of Instructional Services; Kim Carr, Director of Blind/VI Early Intervention and Outreach; Jennifer Cato, Director of Deaf/Hard of Hearing Early Intervention and Outreach.

**Staff:** Cindy Brueckner, Recording Secretary.

#### **Approval of Meeting Minutes**

*Mr. Kramer moved to approve the April 14, 2023, Committee Meeting Minutes. The motion was seconded by Mrs. LeFors and was carried unanimously by the Committee.*

#### **Public Comment**

No public comments were made.

#### **Unfinished Business**

No unfinished business.

#### **New Business**

Ms. Ardis introduced Kim Carr and Jennifer Cato to the Committee and allowed them to present to the Committee.

Ms. Cato explained that the Early Intervention programs she and Ms. Carr run are primarily not on the FSDB Campus.

The following are points from the presentation:

- Progression of Services to families with children who are deaf/ hard of hearing, blind/visually impaired, and dual sensory impaired.
- The regional and statewide services provided.
- The State of Florida has a mandated newborn hearing screening. Of those screenings there are approximately 350 identified annually.

- The Joint Committee on Infant Hearing aims to screen every newborn by one month of age, diagnose or “identify” by three months, and enroll in an early intervention program by six months.
- FSDB has a contractual agreement with the Department of Health and the Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Office.
- The program is named the Parent Empowerment Program (PEP).
- FSDB has received through the PEP almost 350 referrals since July 1.
- The referred children are enrolled in the Early Steps Program.
- Early Steps also helps families enroll their child into the school system when they turn three years of age so there are no gaps in services.
- Early Steps helps parents through the process via a single point of entry.
- Currently, we serve 444 families in 57 of the 67 counties statewide.

Ms. Carr explained that there is no newborn screening for Blind/VI babies. If the doctor or the family identifies a visual impairment, the newborn will be screened, but children are often not identified until parents notice a problem.

- American Ophthalmologic Association recommends that babies receive an exam by six months if there are concerns.
- FSDB has established relationships with ophthalmologists, hospitals, and doctors’ offices.
- Children with secondary disabilities are referred to Early Steps. When they do evaluations, babies with visual impairments are referred to FSDB.
- Division of Blind Services provides funding.
- Currently serve 265 families in the Panhandle, Jacksonville, Gainesville, and West Palm areas of Florida.

The following information was shared in detail with the Committee by both Ms. Cato and Ms. Carr.

#### On-Campus Parent/Child Education:

##### Stay and Play -VI and DHH

- 18 months to 3 years old
- DHH and VI- 2-3 days/week
- Hands-on Parent Education
- ASL acquisition, peer interaction, Deaf role models, orientation and mobility, independent functioning, concept development, exploration and cognition, and pragmatic skill development.

##### Baby Bunch - DHH

- Birth to 18 months
- One day/week
- Bonding, language modeling, and sensory exploration
- Hands-on Parent Education

#### Off-Campus Direct Services:

##### Mentors and Paren Network (DHH Specific)

- Mentors-FDOH-EHDI Funds
- Parent Leaders-FDOH-EHDI Funds

Regional Family Events – Funded by:

- FSDB General Revenue
- FDOH- EHDI Parent Empowerment Program
- FDOE- DBS Blind Babies
- FSDB Endowment Funds

Virtual Programming:

Variety of Services:

- Direct Services
- Book Studies and Parent Education
- ASL Literacy and Spoken Language Workshops
- Family Networking Events
- Parent Chats/Parent Panels
- Playgroups

Statewide Informational Outreach

Creating Awareness through:

- Conference Attendance
- Information Fairs
- Offering Profession Trainings
- Participating in Interagency Collaborations/Multi-Agency Meetings
- Memorandums of Agreement and Understanding

Partnerships and Collaborations

Early Intervention Deaf/HH

- Florida Department of Health
- Florida Early Steps State Office
- Broward Center for Hearing and Communication
- Florida Hands & Voices
- Nova Southeastern University- Audiology Dept.
- University of Florida- INSPIRE Project
- The University of Miami Ear Institute and Debbie School
- Clarke Schools for Hearing and Speech
- Joe DiMaggio Hospital- C.I. Team
- Nemours Hospital- Orlando and Jacksonville
- Florida and Virgin Islands Deafblind Collaborative
- Deaf Literacy Center- Tampa
- Family Center on Deafness
- Hillsborough County Public Schools
- Northeast and North Central Early Steps
- Hearing Me Program- Orlando
- Resource Materials and Training Center for the Deaf/Hard of Hearing
- UCF- Technical Assistance and Training System
- Regional Early Acquisition of Language Project- Gallaudet/Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind

Early Intervention Blind/VI

- Division of Blind Services
- Lighthouses for the Blind

- Florida Center for the Blind, Inc.
- Florida Outreach Center for the Blind, Inc.
- Conklin Davis Center for the Visually Impaired, Inc
- Florida State University
- Florida Instructional Material Center
- Florida and Virgin Islands Deafblind Collaborative
- Florida Early Steps State Office
- Northeast and North Central Early Steps
- University of Florida- INSPIRE Project
- University of Central Florida- Technical Assistance and Training System
- Center for Assistive Technology
- Perkins School for the Blind
- Utah State University – INSITE/VIISA
- Positive Eye – UK
- Wolfson Hospital
- Technical Assistance Training System
- ARC of Jacksonville
- Palm Beach Interagency Council for Young Children with Special Needs
- Family Care Council

The Committee asked several questions that Ms. Ardis, Ms. Cato, and Ms. Carr answered.

Enrollment and Withdrawal updates – Ms. Ardis updated the December Enrollment Data. Currently, 520 students are enrolled at FSDB. This number does not include the Early Intervention children.

Dr. Zavelson asked what percentage of children in the Early Intervention Program come to FSDB.

Ms. Cato explained why that is difficult to determine because many parents won't send their small children to a boarding school, and when older children are enrolled at FSDB, the parents don't always report what type of services they received in their child's early years.

Mr. Kramer asked if there is relocation help that FSDB can offer parents who do not want to put their young children in a boarding program.

Ms. Ardis explained that we do not have funding to help them relocate, but we provide support for parents to attend an admissions process.

The next Enrollment Committee meeting will be on April 12, 2024. Dr. Zavelson thanked everyone and adjourned the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 9:31 a.m.