



Board of Directors Meeting

June 14, 2012

Early Learning Initiatives

- **Low Williams Project Update**
- **Head Start/Early Head Start**
- **Letter of Intent**

Item V.A.

Information Item: Early Learning Initiatives

Strategic Goal: School Readiness

Low Williams:

Beginning in January 2012, a broad coalition of partners began working toward developing a system of high quality early learning opportunities in Pinellas County. The Low Williams Project is inspired by the memory and passion of deceased Pinellas County School Board member Lew Williams. Along with Mr. Williams' widow, Arthurene, Pinellas County Schools, the Juvenile Welfare Board, the Early Learning Coalition of Pinellas, St. Petersburg College, USF-St. Petersburg, Pinellas County Childcare Licensing Board and Pinellas County have been collaborating to begin a program launch during the 12-13 school year.

Jim Madden, Deputy Superintendent of Pinellas County Schools, presented the first steps of the project to the School Board at its workshop on May 15th, and a more in-depth look at the program in a follow-up workshop on May 31st. Though there is no voting or formal approval at School Board workshops, the members of the board universally expressed their excitement about the project and commitment to building a quality early learning partnership with JWB and other community partners.

Mr. Madden presented information about the same five target areas of the county that JWB and Pinellas County Health and Human Services have identified as areas of high need (East Tarpon Springs, North Greenwood in Clearwater, High Point, Lealman, and South St. Petersburg.) Eventually, the Low Williams Project intends to create high quality early learning programs in each of those areas, beginning with South St. Petersburg (PTEC South/Gibbs High School) and North Greenwood (Kings Highway Elementary) in the initial program year of 2012-2013. It is anticipated 250 children 0-4 would be enrolled by late Fall. An additional 150 youth could be served at the King's Highway site if funds are available for further renovation. Pinellas County will consider a recommendation in July to fund the capital outlay for the first phase of the King's Highway Community Development facility.

The Lew Williams Project has adopted the same quality standards for early education that the JWB Board passed in 2011. These high quality standards will be mandated operating procedures for all early learning environments within the Lew Williams Project. (See attachment 1).

As plans evolve and take shape, JWB staff will continue to be engaged with the project, ensuring that the quality standards are met or exceeded in every aspect of the Lew Williams Project.

Head Start/Early Head Start:

The federal Agency for Children and Families' release of the Pinellas Head Start and Early Head Start funding opportunity announcements has allowed the partnership to envision a future for a project that includes county-wide reach, and significant federal funding geared toward the same goal of school readiness for the most at-risk children in our community.

Funding for the quality child care slots involves a partnership between the Pinellas County School system, the Early Learning Coalition, JWB and the state. JWB's Child Care Executive Pool funding would double funding available for this project from \$1.4M to \$2.8M. JWB's investment for child care in FY 12/13 is estimated at approximately \$7M.

Letter of Intent:

In 2011, the Board passed quality standards for early education. Since that time, staff has been working to identify child care environments in Pinellas County that meet the requirements. Unable to do so, several options have been investigated. The most promising is the Lew Williams Project partnership with the Pinellas County Schools and other entities. Unfortunately, there will not be enough spaces in Lew Williams Project sites in 2012-2013 to serve all of the children currently funded by JWB.

In order to provide high quality early learning environments for the remaining children funded by JWB, staff has created a letter of intent to be distributed locally and regionally. The letter requests that entities who are willing to provide quality environments that meet the Board's standards formally declare their interest.

In order to reach as wide an audience as possible, staff have also created a website that highlights the letter of intent and provides detailed information on both the quality standards and the current state of early learning in Pinellas County. The website can be found at www.jwbqualityearlylearning.org.

Interested parties have been given until the middle of July to respond.



Board of Directors Meeting

May 12, 2011

Establish a Market Rate Unit Cost for Child Care

ITEM III. B.

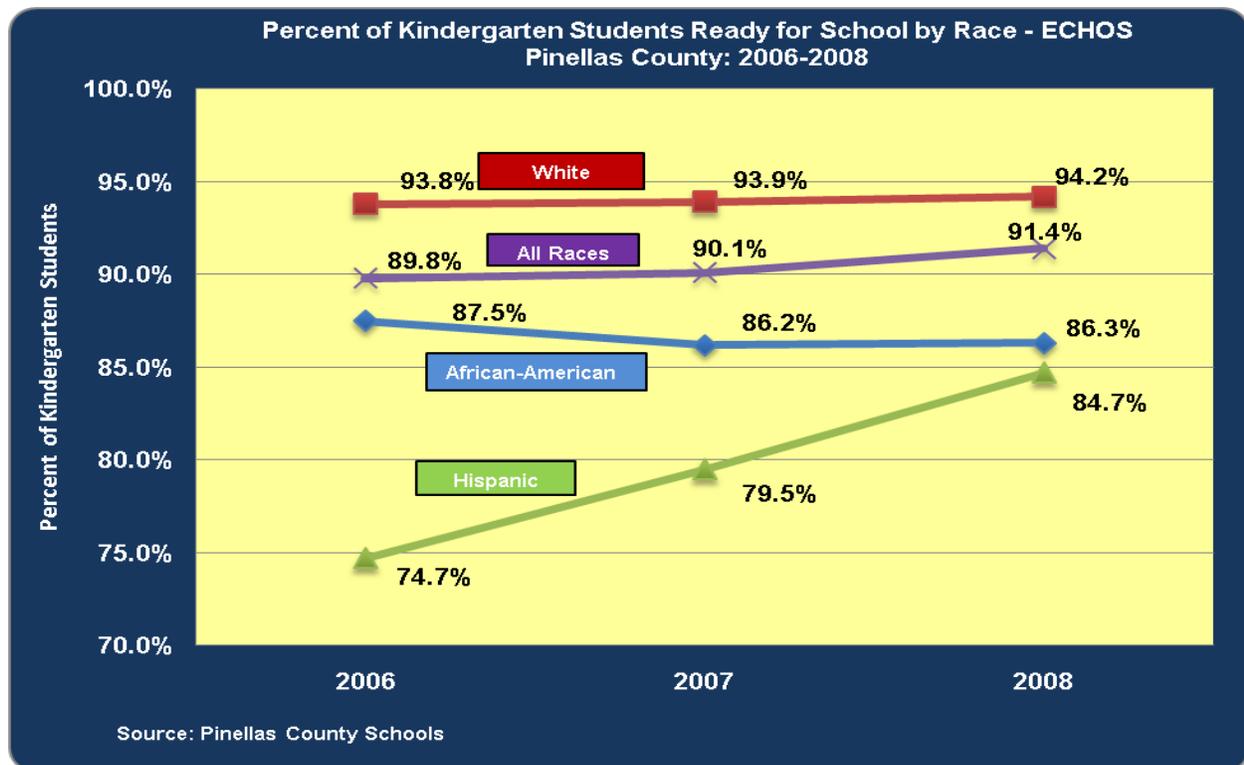
Recommended Action:	Establish a market rate unit cost for child care of \$5,400 per child per year and a unit cost for Out-of-School-Time (OST) of \$4,480 per child per year.
Issue:	Improve the Quality of Child Care
Program:	JWB Subsidized Child Care and OST
Budget Impact:	Less Child Care/OST slots would be available but the quality of care would be substantially higher
Strategic Plan Goal:	School Readiness

Background:

Staff has been working with Coordinated Child Care (CCC) to improve quality child care and after-school services in Pinellas County. A way to improve quality child care is to establish a market rate unit cost for child care to \$5,400 per child per year, a \$1,200 increase. The average cost for OST would rise by \$1K to \$4,480 per child per year.

The guiding principle for this strategy is to provide low-income children with the opportunity to enter school ready to learn and succeed in school. For the duration of the Five-Star Program, very few child care centers and homes received multiple star ratings. (see attached map) The Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS) has not yet been implemented.

There is clear evidence that low-income children are less ready for school than other children. Therefore, paying a competitive rate for their care will allow children to receive services from providers who meet minimum standards which assures high quality care.



In order to make a measurable impact now, staff is proposing in collaboration with CCC and the Early Learning Coalition, to adjust the system for JWB child care/OST purchasing to set mandatory quality standards. All providers must meet the following criteria:

1. Licensed
2. Evidence-based curriculum approved by the JWB Research department
3. Increased Staff Education
4. NAEYC Standards for ratios and group size
5. Offering enrichment opportunities for Out-of-school Time

Additionally, staff is recommending increasing the per slot rate to the 2010 market level. The current level paid by ELC is approximately \$1,000 - \$1,200 below this rate. The increase would provide the revenue necessary to move to Bachelor's level staff. Although approximately 400 fewer children will be served, these children will have a greater potential to be school ready.

Staff is also seeking a mechanism to address the gap in service created by the new ELC eligibility criteria. Five hundred 9-12 year olds will lose care as of August 21, 2011.

Staff has met with the City of St. Petersburg to request additional match dollars for the Child Care Executive Partnership Pool. (CCEPP) It is also recommended that the \$900K JWB investment in CCEPP, which generates \$1.8M, be available for children 0-12.

Child Care Centers with Star Ratings

