



Florida Autism Center of Excellence, Inc.  
Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting  
December 15, 2015  
5:00 p.m.

**Board Members Present:** Brenda Connolly, Karina Chisholm, Denia Fraser, Ron Sklaver, Travis Siegfried, Judy Romera, Greg Eckley

**Board Members Absent:** Laura Prather

**Faculty and Staff Present:** Annie Russell (Director) and Karen Kelley

**Others Present:** Paul Malberg

**Call to Order:** Meeting was called to order by Brenda Connolly at 5:07 p.m.

**Proof of Public Notice:** Public notification of this meeting was accomplished through posting notices on the office door of FACE, on the bulletin boards in the school conference room and in the hallway of the school.

## **AGENDA ITEMS**

**Due Date Checklist:** Annie stated that we are current on everything being submitted right now. The only thing on there for the month of December is our monthly financials. The Letter of Intent to Renew Contract we do not have to submit because we are not renewing our contract this year. We will be renewing our contract the following school year so we will submit that letter to them next year. Ron asked if the checklist was helpful. Annie stated that it is something the District provides so it is helpful but there are a lot of things that we are required to do that are not on this list so that can be frustrating for some of the principals. Sometimes there is short notice on items due. January will be the opt-in or out for the District reading plan. This year was the first year FACE has ever opted in to that. The monthly and quarterly financials will not be for us. Those are for high performing schools.

**Board Minutes:** Brenda asked if there were any corrections or comments on the October and November Board minutes. No changes were presented. Brenda proceeded with asking if there was a motion to approve the October 15, 2015 and the November 18, 2015 Board meeting minutes.

**MOTION:** Member Ron Slaver moved to approve and Member Travis Siegfried seconded to accept and approve the October 15, 2015 and the November 18, 2015 Board meeting minutes Board Meeting Minutes. The motion carried unanimously.



## **Operations Report:**

**Enrollment** - Annie stated that the first thing on there is the enrollment. Our current enrollment is 92 students. Our October FTE survey, which is survey 2, came in at the 92 students. The enrollment data listed is from November 16<sup>th</sup> through December 2<sup>nd</sup>. During that time we had 14 contacts. Ten of them were for enrollment and 4 of them were for other. Sometimes the other is “do you know of any advocacy services in Tampa? Do you know a lawyer that deals with guardianship? Do you know of a neurologist that you can refer to?” etc. so it is not always enrollment inquiries. Of those 14, how did they hear about FACE? One was a former applicant who had declined at the beginning of the year but is now going to be enrolling in January. One of them heard from a friend and then 10 of them were internet searches. Of those 14 contacts we received 4 IEPs. I think that is something that has been highlighted in past meetings that just because we take the phone call, get an email or a stop in doesn’t necessarily translate to them providing the information and then of those that provide the IEPs how many of them translate to enrollment. We received 4 IEPs and had 4 tours. Of the 14 contacts, 10 of them were eligible and 4 of them were not. The eligible students were placed on a wait list. We are currently contacting parents in the hopes of opening a new unit in January or just increasing enrollment in other classes. Ron stated that we received 4 IEPs but we are convinced that the other 6 that are eligible have active IEPs but we just haven’t actually gotten them. Annie stated yes. Of the 4 who were ineligible, 2 were regular standards 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders which is not something the program offers; 1 did not have Autism on the IEP and 1 had an expired IEP from 2013 and our charter stipulates the rules. That can happen if the child goes to a private school for a couple of years and the private schools won’t update the IEP. In that case, you would enroll in the County, they would fix the IEP and then they can come to us. It is in the Charter that they have to have a current IEP. Brenda commended Annie on the team for the compilation of information. She feels it is very helpful and asked the Board if there was anything else or additional information that would be beneficial as we move forward in terms of trying to identify email potential. Ron asked if she was asking how do we market or how do we manage the cycle. Brenda stated for collecting the data at this point. Ron stated that the stats are here and he assumed that there was some process or tracking spreadsheet somewhere keeping track, this person called, next column did we ask them for the IEP, IEP received, yes they did take a tour. That is the most important thing. If we haven’t touched base in a few weeks, we should call and follow-up. Acting on it is the hardest part. Brenda agreed and stated that she appreciated all the efforts that have been made. Greg stated that it was very insightful and it kind of peels it back a bit. He asked, with the expired IEP and coming from a private school, is there any place that they can go through a third party or an outsource to get an IEP? Annie stated, no. What we would do is these instances and we do, we refer them to the staffing specialist with Hillsborough County. Then once the staffing specialist can meet with them, Annie believes they can update the IEP without the child having to enroll in a county school. It still has to be done through Hillsborough County personnel. Gregg stated that the one that did not have Autism on his IEP, this is the case of my son at one point in time and we went to a third party to get this done and that’s when we came here. Annie stated that sometimes we work with the parents and make recommendations on the process.



Travis asked how they heard about FACE. Is it some kind of survey? Annie stated that when they call, it is part of our question process to ask them.

### **Personnel Update –**

- One teacher assistant (TA) resigned stating reason of pursuing other opportunities. His last day was the 11<sup>th</sup>.
- We did hire a full time float on the 1<sup>st</sup>. We are currently interviewing two full time TA's. One to be a classroom TA and one to be a float. Travis asked if there was a reason why it went from one to two TA's for hire. Annie stated that we have two people going out on maternity leave. One will be going out next Friday and another one in February. One to accommodate being down a person and one to accommodate for an increase in enrollment. It may turn into needed another dependent on enrollment and the classroom that they will go into.
- Review of Chart – Status Toward Satisfying Agreements to Earn – There was a brief discussion of staff progress. Some of the teachers have had difficulty enrolling in the ESOL course due to Hillsborough County requirement for the new hires to take this course. ESOL is not a State requirement it is only a Hillsborough County requirement prior to initial contact with a student. Ron stated, looking at the chart, he is completely comfortable that you have a handle on what each of the teachers have to do. From a Board perspective he is not interested so much in what people have to do but the progress made and the results. Is there some way to tell the Board what was passed or completed? Annie stated that she can add another column but there will not be much progress from month to month. She would have to do one in this format for FTE and one with what the Board is requesting.
- Community Update –
  - Yesterday we had a visit from Santa. He was a sensory friendly Santa. This is his 5<sup>th</sup> year coming to FACE and taking time to volunteer and take photos. All students had the opportunity to do a coloring activity while they wait and have cookies and milk. We also sell pictures with Santa for \$5.00 and the money goes to PTO.
  - Annie spoke at the Tampa Women's Counsel of Realtor Award and Holiday Party. It was a wonderful chance to help share FACE's mission with the community. They will also potentially do fundraising for us next year. Having a contact like this is very unique in that they are able to make first contact with parents sometimes as they move in the area.
  - FACE recently received a \$2,500.00 donation from IBM. Thank you Travis for your effort on this.
  - Recently, the week of the 4<sup>th</sup>, Gary Menke, performed at the Tampa Improv and connected donations for FACE. Gary is a local Florida comedian but he also has ties to Autism, having a child with Autism and he performs a segment of his show called, Ha Ha Autism. He originally contacted me last year and now every time he is in town, he passes out our promo material and accepts donations for FACE.
  - We have made \$5,242.63 to date from the ARAMARK concessions at the Bucc's games. We still have 3 more required events this year. We have 2 more to be paid for as well as the 3 more to work. Ron asked if we had a



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hard time staffing games. Annie stated, not really. Brenda stated that this serves two purposes, raising funds but it also develops relationships with parents. Annie stated that the parents really enjoy it. The parents that come say a) it's wonderful to see how well we work together even outside of the school, going back to be a short order cook, or running a register, and b) they recognize the teamwork and comradery. The parents who are not able to financially contribute to FACE expressed that they are absolutely thrilled that there is something that they can contribute to. They have time that they can donate. I want to put a huge thank you out there to Amy Quesenberry for coordinating this fundraiser. She has absolutely worked every event so far this year and has been very dedicated. It's not necessarily hard finding volunteers to work the games. You have to be trained as a lead to be able to do the inventory or the cash and that happened at the beginning of the school year. We only have three trained leads, myself being one of them, and you need two of them per game. It has been tricky to manage that. That is why she has worked every game. We have already had people identified that want to be trained as leads next year. Because of how well we have done with the Buccs, our stand lead is thrilled with everything that we do, we actually have the fairground and concert area contacting us to run their facility for next year. We don't have all the details.

**MOTION:** Member Ron Slaver motioned that the Board send a formal commendation to Amy for all her efforts that she has put into this and making it successful. Brenda agreed and will send her a personal note and copy everybody so that everyone can chime in on it. She would really appreciate that from everybody.

- Annie stated that Amy does a lot with fundraising. We have a Painting with a Twist event Thursday and Amy set that up as well. She works very hard to help fundraise.
- FACE had our holiday staff party on Friday the 11<sup>th</sup> at Gaspar's. The event was a huge success. Thank you to our PTO and our Board members who donated to help fund that.
- We have our official FACE promo materials today. Thank you Karina for putting these together. They were delivered today. They look so professional and I would be very happy to take these to events and hand them out.
- A big thank you to River Hills Church of God. They provided presents for 10 students as part of their Angel Tree. They adopted the whole family instead of just the students that went to FACE. Paul stated that they appreciate the partnership which goes beyond the lease.
- Operations Report was discussed – Attachment 1
  - Behavior update – In the last three months we have had 21 restraint incidents. Eighteen of them occurred in September and October and were for 3 different students. We established some interventions which seem to be working as there have been a significant decrease in restraints. Ron asked by what percent? Annie stated that if you look at the next point only 3 of them occurred in November and December. Of the 21, the majority of them



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were in October. Ron asked who should get credit for that, it is really good. Annie stated it's a combination of our behavior staff, the classroom teachers, recognizing signs more urgently, don't wait to call for help until the kid is already throwing the chair, they start crying, they start pacing, rocking. If those are precursors, call for assistance then and maybe we can de-escalate before they are in crisis mode. Ron stated that this is a really good indicator management, frankly, this is good.

- ABPathfinder – Currently being used in all the classrooms to track BIPs which is our behavior intervention plan data. Classes are beginning to add teaching plans to the program, which actually started last week. Certain target classes are now using ABPathfinder for their IEP data tracking and we are systematically increasing that with other classrooms. Ron asked, what is the feedback from our users? Annie stated that the feedback from the users is that it is very labor intensive, initially. Even Tawnya did not realize how much was going to go into setting it up. The initial set-up piece was very, very labor intensive, learning etc. Ron stated, the teachers aren't doing that, it is just particular ones using it as a tool. Annie stated, yes there is that piece and then for Tawnya on the back end, her administrative use isn't generally what the teachers see, how to administratively run the reports, determine if things are being collected, etc. For the teachers it is a user interface, how do I input this, how do I switch between students, things like that. Ron asked, are they finding it useful or easy to use. Annie stated that they are. Now that they are using it and getting comfortable with it, we are getting really good feedback. Before, you were taking data on a piece of paper and at the end of the day and entering it into the computer. They will still have their binders but they will not record data on paper. One to two tablets are assigned per classroom and they are responsible for carrying it with them throughout the day in case a data point occurs during transition in the hallway they can log it immediately. It will help ensure fidelity of our data collection as well. Teachers are transitioning around the campus with the tablet so that they can input data as it occurs. Ron asked if they are handing the tablets off amongst themselves. Annie stated, depending on how many students and teachers are in each classrooms, they might have multiple.
- Brenda interjected to escalate items requiring motions while there was a quorum present. Some Board members had previous commitments and need to leave prior to completion of the meeting.
  - Brenda stated that one of the things that Annie came to her with a couple of weeks ago was to revise our evaluation plan. Right now we have a really extensive evaluation plan. I have to fill it out for her. Even when we initially decided to do it, my concern was that it was very complicated. She would like to propose a new evaluation system. Part of this system comes with a software system so that she can do it all online. Right now she has to carry 50 pages to each classroom to do it. I'm never a big one to say let's spend money, she'll tell you how much it is, we have to work smarter and we are putting a lot of pressure on Annie to do a lot and I think we really need to support this. I don't remember what the costs are. Ron asked how many teachers do we have. Annie stated nine. Ron asked if it is \$100 bucks a



head to start it off if we add teachers. Annie stated that if we add teachers it would be a price range and she was not sure what that is. Brenda stated that it is literally a large stack of paperwork and we are required by the District to complete these evaluations so that we are compliant. We are putting a lot of pressure on Annie for marketing and all this that I think we need to support this. Ron asked if it is used only for teachers. Annie stated that the board would use the same system to evaluate her. Ron asked, could it be used to evaluate other staff as a way to track evaluations? Annie stated, not the Observe for Success program because it is based off of this one particular evaluation system. Brenda asked, are we required just to do evaluations for teachers though? Annie stated, teachers and administrative personnel and then if, and when speech and OT becomes our employees and not third party contractors, then we will be required to evaluate them as well. Ron asked Brenda if we can afford it, cash flow wise. Brenda stated that she would not agree with it if we could not afford it. We can definitely afford it. This will allow Annie to spend her time on other things.

**MOTION:** Member Ron Slaver moved to approve going forward with Observe for Success as described in the Operations Report and Member Brenda Connolly seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

- Annie stated that we also need to have a Board motion to change our evaluation system to the model used by FCPCS which is the Florida Consortium of Public Charter Schools.

**MOTION:** Member Ron Slaver moved to change our evaluation model to the one adopted by FCPCS so that we are in greater compliance than we are today. Member Denia Frasier seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

- Continuation of Behavior update – Clinics which are classroom meetings with the behavior unit to review student data began last week. It's a program component that every student have a clinical meeting with the behavior staff once per month. Every single week the teacher has a scheduled time to meet, brings program binders and over the course of the month we will review every student in her class with them. Ron stated, we are tracking it to ensure that we touch each student that way when we get audited we can say we have made contact. Annie stated that they have a spreadsheet to make sure that they are touching each one but now the clinical summaries are done in ABPathfinder. ABPathfinder houses Tawnya's recommendation to change this program, try it this way, etcetera, etcetera. Then we can print that out, provide it to the parent, and then once we are fully comfortable in implementing ABPathfinder 100% across the board, then we can release parent log in's. So instead of us printing and sending home clinical summaries, you as the parent can log in at any time and see how your child is doing. Getting the program after the start of school caused a delay in the implementation. We had hoped that we would be doing clinics by now. We



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started training late but now that staff are trained we are increasing the functions that we are using. Brenda stated that ideally we would want to train the teachers prior to the start of school. Annie stated that ideally we would have Tawnya start loading in July but we purchased it late.

- Audit update – Annie stated that she received notice from Commissioner Stewart that she will be accepting the panel’s recommendation to restore partial funding for FACE for students who we could demonstrate attended during the 2011-2012 school year and were aware of the transportation agreement at that time thereby making them aware of that same agreement for the following year. We have not yet received what that financial impact will be. Ron asked how much they were trying to ding us for. Annie stated, they were trying to ding us for \$36,000. It is going to be partial restoration. Our estimates are roughly half. We did receive notice November 2 of two certification audit findings for the 2013-2014 school year. Once teacher was out of field for art and music due to FACE using the incorrect course code that required the teacher to be art and music certified. It basically, do we code them as regular student taking art and music classes thereby requiring an art and music teacher or do we code them as ESE students in a self-contained teacher directed, art and music not required. The proposed fine is \$566.00. Ron said, their proposal to us? We can’t just say, lesson learned? Annie stated, no, we just accept and agree to that. The other thing that the state is saying that one teacher unapproved, out of field for Autism until December of 2014. This teacher was in FACE’s employment during the 2013-2014 year and had completed the required course work prior to the start of the 2014-2015 school year. We contested this finding. The proposed judgement from DOE is \$31,155.00. Ron asked, on what basis are we contesting, summarize it. Annie stated, she completed her course work December 2013. She her transcripts April 2014, being awarded the Autism endorsement to her certificate. So her certificate was valid during that time of the survey so we are saying that she did not require a Board vote because she had already satisfied the agreement by having done the course work. Ron said so they are saying the Board did not formally say its okay we will take her anyway. Annie stated yes and we are saying we did not have to. She did not have it officially on her certificate but satisfied the coursework. We will contest this one. Travis asked if we have something in place that we have all these course codes correct. Annie stated that we do not have anything great in place yet in looking through the DOE list and what district has in the database. Karen and I are working on it. Ron stated the keep fighting the \$31,000. We will be hosting the State Auditor’s in January for FTE documentation. We are currently working with District to review all files in advance of the Auditor’s arrival. Our DRT has been helping. Accolades to Lori who has done a lot of work on this.
- Our next Board meeting is set for February 11<sup>th</sup>. Our date certain for Survey 3 is February 12<sup>th</sup>. When we go to FTE, we need to have approved out of field letter for parents as well as approved Board meeting minutes where the out of field letter was approved. I am proposing that we have a January Board meeting to approve that letter and then a February meeting prior to the 11<sup>th</sup> to approve the January minutes. Maybe we need to coordinate the dates via email. Brenda asked if it will change any. Annie stated yes. Hopefully Bruce Goff will be changed after taking his test. Denia asked about Berthanie Pierre. Annie stated that she probably won’t change because she will be on maternity leave. Greg said to go ahead and find some dates.



Brenda said to try for around the 14<sup>th</sup>. Annie stated that we don't need to vote on the out of field. We don't have a quorum since Karina left but if we are going to do a January meeting that can wait until then. I know we have kind of talked about do we need to approve it every month. I would, as best practice, have the Board approve that every month considering the issues that we have with certification findings from DOE. I think it is better to approve more than needed. Ron stated that this is fine. Let's do it when you are doing the operations report each month.

- **Cash Flow Statement** –
  - Brenda stated that she nicely underestimated our inflows. We had an extra \$7,000 cash which was due to donations from IBM, the bucs game as well as lunch.
  - Inflows – Brenda stated that she and Annie have had correspondence with the DOE and they have reasonably assured us that our Capital Outlay, and last year that was about \$30,000, was not included in our budget, which we will start receiving a portion of it in December.
  - The other big item underestimated is the \$7,000 equipment bill from Extensys for the switches. Travis said this was a good price. It was originally supposed to be \$20,000 and we got it down to \$7,000. Annie stated that the good thing about it is that know that it is paid for, we can submit for reimbursement through e-rate. We will get that back.
  - Our ending bank balance is approximately \$161,000. We are watching it very closely. Brenda stated that she is hoping that in December we will have a couple of inflows that are not accounted for yet. Annie mentioned that we received a \$4,000 reimbursement for our curriculum and if we get the capital outlay so that will bump up our cash. Also, December wide, we don't have much of an impact to our cash flow is because they are out of school for two weeks. January will be a little stressful. Ron stated, predicated on my direct question, Brenda can we afford it, do we have the cash flow. Come January can we. Brenda stated that she envisions that January will be our worst month and then come February, where the FTE occurs, our revenue will start to bump up. Ron stated, if we can get these new students in. Brenda stated that she was pretty sure we will. Ron asked what we can do to help get them in. Annie stated that there is really not anything they can do accept marketing and getting the word out. Brenda stated that she realized January would be tight and that is about what happened last year. In March, we started doing fundraising. We have been a lot more diligent about fundraising. We included everything and I reconciled the account.
- Survey – Denia stated that we had 13 responses from staff and 14 responses from FACE families. She was hoping for more. Annie stated that she will send an email out again this week. Denia stated that she wanted to give some positive highlights, the other section of the results will happen in January. On the staff questionnaire, 70% of the staff members that responded feel that they have a satisfactory level of communication with the other staff members here at FACE; 45% have a mentor which is a good number; 70% feel comfortable making mistakes, they feel like it is a safe environment to do that; 60% say that they have no difficulty communicating with staff members. For parents, 40-60% of parents believe that communication about their child's progress is excellent. We got a good response from that question; 40%



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of parents stated that childcare is the biggest obstacle at parent teacher meetings. Denia asked if we offer childcare for parent/teacher meetings. Annie stated, if they are scheduled during regular staff hours, yes. That is good feedback that we need to advertise more. Even looking at when we do conference night, if we can swing 3 people overtime and have some TA's to provide childcare because those can go as late as 3:30 p.m. Denia stated that 100% of the parents said that feeling that they belong and their children belong is important. She thinks their responses overall were that they were impressed. She felt comfortable with the results and the sense of community. Brenda stated that this is good and maybe we can establish benchmarks.

### **Adjournment**

**MOTION:** Member Brenda Connolly moved and Member Travis Siegfried seconded to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 6:12 p.m.

The next Board meeting is scheduled for February 11, 2016 at 4:00 pm.

  
Brenda Connolly-Board Chair