

# PRESS RELEASE

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### **Amid Community Concerns and Some Public Strife ELC of Hillsborough Transitions Some Services In-House**

**Tampa, FL (May 12, 2016)** – After many months of public meetings and a considerable amount of work put forth by a task force comprised of community stakeholders, on March 7<sup>th</sup>, the Early Learning Coalition of Hillsborough County (ELCHC) elected to transition some of its administrative services from its subcontractor, the School District of Hillsborough County, to its own in-house staff.

On March 8, the Coalition quickly began the steps necessary to begin transitioning what can be categorized as a host of administrative tasks relating directly to services delivered to children, families and early childhood providers. Since the transition began ELCHC staff has had the following successes:

#### **Expansion of Space & Staffing**

The ELCHC has secured approximately 3,400 additional square feet of office space to house the 7 additional staff that have been hired, five of which are from the School District, to implement the transitioning services. ELCHC estimates that an additional 8 staff will be hired by June 30 to implement the remaining components being transitioned.

#### **Launched a Provider Portal**

In early April, the ELCHC launched its new Provider Portal. The Portal is a web-based, secure and streamlined environment for providers to complete contractual agreements and maintain volumes of required documentation previously managed in paper form. To assist providers in learning to use the new Portal, ELCHC has conducted 7 training sessions and trained 168 providers on the Portal. There are currently 660 contracts in the Portal in various states of submission, review and or approval:

- School Readiness - 389
- VPK 2017 - 230
- VPK Summer 2016 - 41



### **VPK Applications and Customer Satisfaction**

In transitioning VPK family services, ELCHC staff's primary focus was on minimizing any negative impacts on families. Staff has processed 3,016 VPK applications between March 8 and May 7, 2016. As a means of monitoring the implementation of a new customer service paradigm, ELCHC implemented a customer service survey at the point of service. Those surveyed indicate an average of 95% satisfaction in all categories. Survey results are being used to refine the ELCHC customer service approach where needed.

"Our Board of Directors and staff are working very closely with administration and front-line personnel from the Hillsborough County Public Schools to ensure the smoothest transition of services," said Coalition Board Chair Aakash Patel. "Our combined efforts are focused on ensuring a change that is seamless to our children and families. Our overall goal is the efficient delivery of quality services with an exceptional emphasis on customer service."

Hillsborough County Superintendent of Schools, Jeff Eakins echoed the sentiments of ELCHC Board Chair Patel when he said, "The needs of our students come first and this partnership between Hillsborough County Public Schools and the Early Learning Coalition will provide the very best service for our students and families. We always strive to set our students up for success and this partnership gives our families the resources they need to help their children get a great start on their path to being successful in school and in the future."

With things moving along as smoothly as they are, the ELCHC anticipates that all of the service components to be transitioned will be successfully in place by June 30, 2016.

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