



Early Learning Coalition of the Nature Coast

Serving Citrus-Dixie-Gilchrist-Levy-Sumter Counties

Provider Alert #2 August 13, 2007

As stated in the August 2, 2007 Provider Alert the Nature Coast Board directed staff to present a draft budget, reduced by 1%, to the Executive Committee and the Administrative Committee directed staff to present a draft budget, reduced by 4% (\$339,529), at the next Administrative Committee meeting.

Recognizing that any delay in a budget reduction reduces the Coalition's flexibility in reducing non-direct services as opposed to direct services Coalition staff recommended a 4% budget reduction to the Executive Committee on August 10, 2007. The following describes the action taken by the Executive Committee.

Coalition staff worked with Childhood Development Services to identify services and costs that could be reduced or transferred from Childhood Development Services to the Coalition. The following was identified and recommended to the Executive Committee.

1. Currently, Childhood Development Services provides **training** to early learning providers in accordance with the requirements listed in the Early Learning Program Operating Procedure. A summary of the requirements follow:
 - A. The service provider will provide a minimum of one hundred and fifty (150) hours of training and workshops (50 hours in Citrus, 50 hours in Sumter, and 50 combined hours in Dixie, Gilchrist and Levy Counties) that promote the enhancement of quality in the school readiness setting and promote effective teaching strategies. Topics must include, but are not limited to, the following areas:
 - a. Curriculum Development: The service provider will develop and implement training workshops to assist teachers in planning age-appropriate, developmentally appropriate, research-based programs for young children.
 - b. Parent involvement and education programs: The service provider will develop and implement training workshops designed to promote parent involvement in the education of children.
 - c. Healthy and safe environments: The service provider will develop and implement training workshops that assist teachers in maintaining healthy and safe environments for young children.
 - d. Early Literacy: The service provider will develop and implement training workshops that assist teachers in planning appropriate early literacy activities.
 - B. The service provider shall develop and implement a pre-and-post test for each training workshop. The purpose of the pre-and-post test is to evaluate the participants gain in knowledge in the subject area as a result of the training workshop.

2. Currently, Childhood Development Services conducts **Provider Observations** in accordance with the requirements listed in the Early Learning Program Operating Procedure. A summary of the requirements follow:
 - A. The service provider must conduct observations of school readiness providers throughout the year, utilizing the Coalition's approved ELCNC-38: School Readiness Program- Program Observation Tools. Each classroom must be observed a minimum of six (6) times per year.
 - B. During the third or fourth quarter of the year, a summary report will be written by the observer, for each school readiness provider, based on the observations throughout the year. The summary will address all of the quality/mandated areas present in the Observation Instruments. The narrative will describe the strengths of each program, as well as the areas for development. The report will be based on the overall strengths of the program, not based on a single, snapshot view of only a few days. The summary report will demonstrate if the school readiness provider is continuing to offer quality/mandated services that are up to the state, federal and Coalition requirements. All summaries must be submitted to the Coalition by July 15 of the new fiscal year.

3. Currently Childhood Development Services conducts **Health and Safety Assessments** on all school readiness providers in accordance with the Early Learning Program Operating Procedures. A summary of the requirements follow:
 - A. The service provider must conduct unannounced on-going health and safety assessments on all school readiness providers at a minimum of every six months or as often as deemed necessary by the service provider. Inspections conducted by the local licensing authority within the last 6 months may be utilized as an assessment to meet this requirement.
 - B. If a provider fails to meet any indicator during on-going health and safety assessments (or licensing inspection) the provider must be placed on a corrective action plan.
 - C. The service provider will conduct health and safety pre- assessments of potential school readiness providers, utilizing the appropriate ELCNC-34: Health and Safety Pre-Assessment/Assessment Tools.

4. Currently, Childhood Development Services offers **Technical Assistance** to providers in accordance with the Early Learning Program Operating Procedure. A summary of the requirements follow:
 - A. The service provider will provide technical assistance which improves health and safety practices, relates to the program observation results, and assists school readiness providers in offering high quality services as requested. The service provider shall report the technical assistance offered on the Quarterly Management Report.
 - B. The service provider will research and collect early education and care training information provided by staff development programs in the community, such as the school system, and distribute the information to school readiness programs throughout the county. Documentation of training information shared will be maintained by the service provider.

The Executive Committee voted unanimously to transfer the above services from Childhood Development Services to the Coalition effective September 1, 2007. As a result the Coalition will reduce CDS' budget by \$150,285.

The Executive Committee also approved the following provisions:

1. The training hour requirement for Coalition staff would be reduced to 40 hours in each region for a total of 120 hours.
2. The due date for provider observation annual narrative reports will be extended to August 31.
3. The Coalition's technical assistance program would focus on areas of development identified during program observations and health and safety assessments. All other technical assistance requests would be offered as possible.

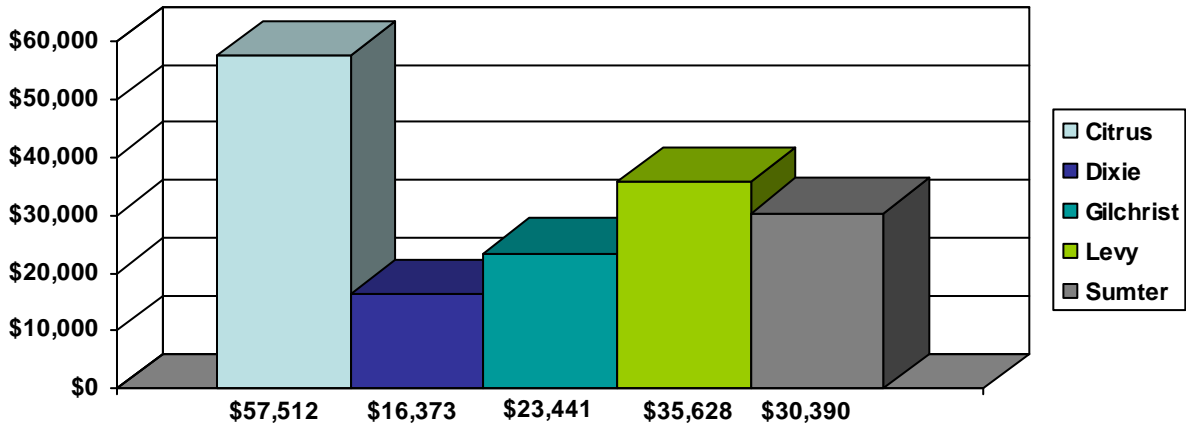
Coalition staff reviewed the quality initiative allocations in each County and recommended the following to the Executive Committee:

1. Eliminating all remaining budget amounts in the Literacy line item would result in an \$11,065 reduction. It is important to note that although the activities under this line item are important, the results of the activities are impossible to track and are not tied to the children served in the school readiness program.
2. Eliminating the Mini Grant line items would result in a \$35,000 reduction. (The August 2, 2007 Provider Alert stated the recommendation would be to reduce the line item by 10%; however, the recommendation was revised by the Executive Committee in an effort to preserve enrollment).
3. Eliminating non-committed funds in the Professional Development Line Item would result in a \$23,114 reduction. (The August 2, 2007 Provider Alert stated the recommendation would be to reduce the line item by 10%; however, the recommendation was revised by the Executive Committee in an effort to preserve enrollment).
4. Eliminating all remaining budget amounts in the quality resources line item would result in a \$17,892 reduction. It is important to note that the quality resources allocations do not specifically benefit any one provider, or program; therefore, it appears this reduction will have no direct impact on providers or children.
5. Eliminating all provider recruitment/expansion program allocations would result in a \$16,500 reduction. It is important to note that as a result of the budget reduction and consequently the freeze in enrollment it would not appear appropriate to recruit additional early learning providers.
6. Reducing the training and conference line items by \$1,000 would result in a \$5,000 reduction. It is important to note that the reduction would still allow a \$5,000 allocation for the Infant and Toddler Conference and all other training sponsored by the Coalition.
7. Eliminating all allocations in the unallocated line items would result in a \$21,800 reduction. It is important to note that the unallocated budgets are not specifically allocated to benefit any provider or program; therefore it appears this reduction will have no direct impact on providers.
8. Eliminating all amounts in the Resource Room would result in a \$1,900 reduction. It is important to note that the allocations to the Resource Room are utilized to replenish or replace used and worn items.
9. Reducing the Teacher Incentive Payment Program line items by 20.5% would result in a \$31,073 reduction. (The August 2, 2007 Provider Alert did not include a recommendation

to reduce the Teacher Incentive Payment Program line item; however, this was created by the Executive Committee in an effort to preserve enrollment)

The Executive Committee voted unanimously to reduce the quality initiative budgets by \$163,344 as stated above.

The following chart breaks the quality initiative reduction out by County:



Finally, Coalition staff reviewed the Coalition's operational budget and recommended a reduction of \$25,900 as follows:

1. Conference Fees \$1,000
2. Subscriptions and resource manuals \$2,400
3. Equipment and Property \$6,000
4. Legal Services \$2,000
5. Office Supplies \$10,000
6. Postage \$500
7. Employee Training and Certifications \$ 4,000

The Executive Committee voted unanimously to reduce the Coalition's operational budget by \$25,900

As a result of the Executive Committee action the following quality initiatives designed to specifically assist **providers and teachers** are inactive:

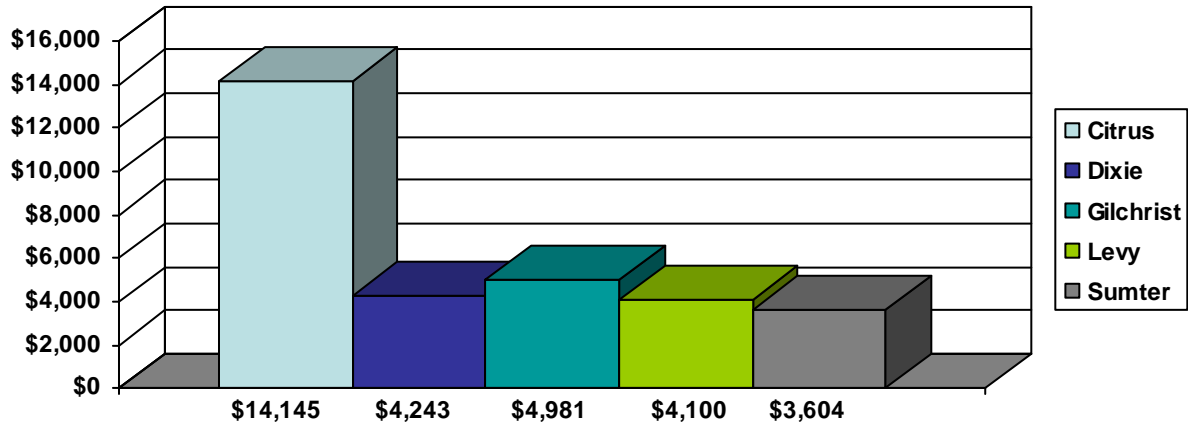
Mini Grant Accreditation Program

Professional Development and Certification Program

Provider Recruitment/Expansion Program

IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE Coalition staff will continue to accept applications for all of the programs listed above. In the event the Coalition does not suffer a 4% budget reduction the programs MAY become active. If the programs become active providers and teachers who have submitted applications in accordance with each programs policy and procedure will receive priority consideration for funding.

In addition, the results of the Executive Committee action resulted in a financial impact to the Teacher Incentive Payment Program. Each County has suffered a 20.5% reduction in this line item. The chart below details the budget reduction by County:



Realizing that the budget reduction in the Teacher Incentive Payment Program could cause a decrease in the number of teachers the Coalition could serve the Executive Committee instructed staff to identify alternatives to decreasing the number of participants.

In an effort to complete this task staff utilized last fiscal year data. The following was noted:

1. The original allocations in the TIPS line item were higher this fiscal year compared to last fiscal year's allocations. The higher allocations were recommended for the purpose of serving more teachers and in preparation for teachers increasing their stipend level.
2. Considering last fiscal year allocations the actual budget reduction for this fiscal year are as follows:
 - Citrus County – reduced by 19%
 - Dixie County – increased by 2%
 - Gilchrist County – reduced by 11%
 - Levy County – increased by 1%
 - Sumter County – reduced by 11%
3. In June 2007, a total of 165 teachers participated in the TIPS program.
4. Based on the revised FY2007-2008 budget allocations all teachers served last year in Dixie, Gilchrist, Levy, and Sumter Counties could be served this year at the same stipend level.
5. Based on the revised FY2007-2008 budget allocations all teachers served in Citrus County last year could NOT be served this year at the same stipend level. The number of teachers that would not be approved to participate in the program (placed on a waiting list) would be 1 to 17.
6. If the Coalition reduced the stipend award in each level by 5% the following would occur:
 - a. All Counties could serve all FY2006-2007 participants.
 - b. All Counties would have some flexibility in increasing the participant's levels.

- c. All Counties would have some flexibility to increase the number of participants. The flexibility ranges by County from 1-24 new participants depending on the participants educational level.
- d. A 5% reduction in the stipend levels are as follows:

Level	Current Total Annual Amount (full-time)	Revised (-5%) Total Annual Amount (full-time)
8	\$3,000.00	\$2,850.00
7	\$2,250.00	\$2,137.50
6	\$1,500.00	\$1,425.00
5	\$1,125.00	\$1,068.75
4	\$750.00	\$ 712.50
3	\$600.00	\$ 570.00
2	\$450.00	\$ 427.50
1	\$200.00	\$ 190.00

Considering the above information, specifically the following:

- Maintaining the current stipend levels potentially benefits 90% of the current participants
- Reducing the current stipend levels potentially benefits a maximum of 10% of the current participants and an unknown number of new participants.

Coalition staff will recommend maintaining the current stipend levels.