

**ITEM #36<sub>(2)</sub>**

**ADDITIONAL MATERIAL  
10:00 REGULAR MEETING  
APRIL 8, 2014**

**SUBMITTED AT THE REQUEST OF  
COMMISSIONER GUNZBURGER**

[sun-sentinel.com/news/opinion/fl-rbcol-oped0307-20140312,0,7533119.story](http://sun-sentinel.com/news/opinion/fl-rbcol-oped0307-20140312,0,7533119.story)

# Sun Sentinel

## Children's Services Council of Broward is doing its job well

By Robin Bartleman

March 12, 2014

Every organization should be able to plan for the future, without the threat of elimination. advertisement

Its customers should expect that needed services and products will continue without interruption.

Its partners should be able to rely on a solid foundation for ongoing cooperative work, without the fear of losing a most critical collaborator.

All of this is especially true when the services are being provided to children and their families, and particularly at-risk children, who are the most vulnerable and the most in need of a dependable services.

In 2000, the voters of Broward County made a commitment to create an agency with a dedicated funding stream focused solely on children. Since then, the Children's Services Council of Broward County has served over 100,000 children through a wide variety of effective programs including: academically-supportive pre-school and out-of-school programs for economically disadvantaged children and those with special physical or developmental challenges, programs for grandparents raising their grandchildren, programs that empower young adults to become leaders and embark on a life of success, and programs that help youth who have committed minor offenses get back onto the right path.

Other programs address maternal and child health, family strengthening, drowning prevention, children aging out of the foster care system and youth employment. All of these programs employ proven practices and are carefully monitored both programmatically and fiscally.

Each contract contains expectations for positive changes to be made in the lives of the children and / or families receiving the services. Agencies are held accountable for meeting those expectations.

CSC Broward is highly accountable to the public. There are 11 council members responsible for all policy-making and financial decisions. Three of those members – a county commissioner, school board member and a judge, are elected officials selected by and accountable to their organizations. Five are appointed by the governor from a list recommended by the county commission.

Finally, three are there by virtue of their positions — the superintendent of schools and the local heads of the state Department of Children & Families and the state Department of Health. The appointees can be removed and replaced at any time. The chief executive officer serves at the will of the council and is publicly reviewed annually. And CSC Broward can be dissolved by a vote of the Florida Legislature, with the approval of the governor.

Transparency has always been a core value of CSC Broward. Compliance with the Florida Sunshine Law is achieved by holding public meetings with time reserved for the public to comment on important issues. Before these meetings, agendas and background materials are posted on line. Financial information, including budgets, monthly performance updates and every proposed expenditure are also readily available on line.

Also posted is CSC Broward's Comprehensive Annual Financial Report which has received an Award for Excellence in Financial Reporting from the Government Finance Officers Association every year since its creation.

The Broward County Property Appraiser's tax notices include notice of CSC Broward's proposed millage rate, along with the dates of the Truth In Millage hearings just like every other government agency. Citizens can speak at the hearings, submit concerns or contact us for more information on our proposed millage rate or any other aspect of CSC Broward.

In 2000, the voters in Broward understood that children's needs do not have an expiration date and therefore neither should the agency created to focus on those needs. A new requirement imposed in 2010 requires all Children's Services Councils across the state to go back out for reauthorization to make sure the citizenry still wants to support those agencies. That statute allows communities to reaffirm that commitment to children unless and until dissolved by law. Periodic reauthorization votes are simply overkill, and distract from our focus. At the Children's Services Council of Broward County, our focus has been and should always be on our children.

*Robin Bartleman chairs the Children's Services Council of Broward and serves on the Broward County School Board.*

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