

Question Time

On August 23, 2024, a letter (see appendix) was emailed to some (although not all) PFW employees whose children attend the daycare center supported by the university, [The Learning Community](#) (hereafter, TLC). In this message, the VCFAA, Glen Nakata, announced that PFW would cease its support for TLC once the 2024-25 academic year had concluded and evict TLC from a PFW Foundation-owned building. While there will be time to interrogate the wisdom of this decision and its broader consequences, the letter itself raises several pressing questions that require immediate attention.

1] Were the individuals who made this decision aware that:

- a) IPFW and TLC initially entered their arrangement in order to replace child-care services that were once provided in an on-campus facility?
- b) these child-care services were intended to support (D)PFW students, faculty and staff rather than act as a "revenue generator" for the university?
- c) TLC's administration is aware of the unique scheduling challenges faced by academic workers and students and therefore provides scheduling flexibility and benefits to them that would likely not be available in other child-care facilities?
- d) as part of its relationship with PFW, its students, faculty and staff are eligible for discounts on care that would not be available at other area facilities?
- e) child-care places are at a premium in the Fort Wayne area (for instance, the current wait list at TLC is more than seventy families long)?
- f) TLC spent thousands of dollars in the past year renovating their spaces dedicated to infant care, thereby expanding the number of infant-care places that are currently in the shortest supply regionally?
- g) TLC has been a Paths of Quality Level 4-rated child-care facility for at least the past five years, the highest ranking available in the state of Indiana?
- h) TLC prides itself on being an educational institution and is thus accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children ([NAEYC](#))?
- i) many (D)PFW students in the Early Childhood Education program have utilized TLC as the site for their practicum studies?
- j) despite the support provided by PFW, TLC has had to raise its tuition rates significantly in the last year due to the disappearance of COVID pandemic-related federal child-care subsidies?

2] How does the decision to end PFW's relationship with TLC and thus make it even more difficult for PFW employees and students to find affordable child-care options square with the Purdue system's attempts to ease the financial burden of child-care as evidenced by the [Purdue Child Care Tuition Assistance Program](#)?

3] How does PFW's decision to end its support for employee child-care benefits dovetail with the university's attempts to "Enhance Quality of Place" as an employer, an important goal of PFW's 2020-2025 strategic plan?

4] How could a building that is apparently too expensive to maintain and renovate with its current day-care facility in place be financially viable as a site for a new day-care provider?

C. Ortsey

S. LaVere

From: Glen Nakata <gnakata@pfw.edu>
Sent: Friday, August 23, 2024 11:49
To: Glen Nakata <gnakata@pfw.edu>
Subject: The Learning Community

Dear PFW Parents,

We have some important information to share with you regarding The Learning Community. The building and property where TLC is located is owned by the Purdue Fort Wayne Foundation and operated by the university. It is provided to TLC, along with several key services such as full facility maintenance, at no charge to TLC. We are pleased to have been able to offer this substantial benefit to TLC and its clients for well over a decade.

Unfortunately, the building, which opened in 1989, is in need of frequent repairs annually to meet code requirements and major renovations to ensure its long-term viability. With no revenue generated from that location, these necessary expenses have become cost-prohibitive and the PFW Foundation is exploring options for the property. The current agreement with TLC ends in December, but we will be extending that arrangement through the end of the current 2024-25 academic year in May.

The spring date was chosen in order to provide time for the foundation to find an acceptable option for the site, which ideally would include a child care provider. It also provides TLC a five-month extension to its current service agreement, which was set to expire Dec. 31. This information was communicated to TLC today.

We can assure you members of university and foundation leadership are working diligently to find viable options for the site.

We understand that any change of this nature, regardless of the advance notice provided, can present significant stress for you and your family. We will provide updates as they become available and, in the weeks ahead, will provide resources and support accordingly.

Glen Nakata

Vice Chancellor for Financial and Administrative Affairs
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