

**Early Learning Coalition of Escambia County**  
**Board Meeting Minutes**  
**April 13, 2017 - 10:00 AM**  
**Chair: Kermit Housh**

**Members in Attendance**

Kim Carmody (Acting Chair)	Roger Thompson	Craig Jones
Van Mansker	Edna Williams	Pam Hagan
Tammy Hicks	Melody Meier	Christina Doss
Drew Hardgrave	Gerald Boone	Jeanne Martin

**Members Absent**

Kermit Housh	Brett Rowell	Marty Tutchtone
Brittany Curtis	Judy Dickinson	Mary Ann Bickerstaff
Cindy Kirk	Susan Nelms	Wendi Ochs

**Members Called In**

Mona Jackson

**Members of the Public**

Brenda Hardy	Dr. Sherry White	Kathleen Baldwin
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**Staff**

Bruce Watson	Becki Rutchland	Dawn Engel
Vicki Pugh	Paula Rollins	Holly Stratton

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**I. Welcome and Introductions:**

Mr. Watson welcomed and introduced Dr. Sherry White with the Capstone Academy and Ms. Brenda Hardy with Wee Kare Academy.

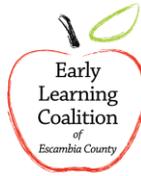
**II. Public Comments:**

There no public comments submitted prior to the meeting. Ms. Hardy requested to make a public comment during the discussion of provider rate changes. These comments are incorporated in the appropriate section of the minutes.

**III. Chair Comments:**

**A. Approval of Consent Agenda, Minutes of February 2017, January and February 2017 Financial Statements.**

The Consent Agenda was approved on motion made by Mr. Thompson and seconded by Mr. Mansker.



#### **IV. Executive Committee Report**

##### **A. A-133 Audit – Final Report**

Ms. Kathleen Baldwin with Warren Averett reviewed the Coalition's A-133 Audit Final Report. There were no incidents, no findings, and it was a clean audit. Upon a motion made by the Executive Committee and seconded by Mr. Jones, the Board accepted the A-133 Audit Final Report.

##### **B. 2015-2016 Form 990**

Ms. Kathleen Baldwin with Warren Averett reviewed the Coalition's 2015-2016 Form 990. The Form 990 was completed and filed this year one month earlier than last year. Although a filing extension was applied for, but it was not needed. Upon a motion made by the Executive Committee and seconded by Mr. Thompson, the Board accepted the 2015-2016 Form 990.

##### **C. Provider Contracting Eligibility Policy, ELCEC 32.01.1B, and Procedure, ELCEC 3201.2B**

Mr. Watson reviewed the changes in the revised policy. The changes were made to bring the policy in compliance with recent changes in the rules governing contracting for both the SR, Rule 6M-4.610, and VPK, 6M-8.301, programs. Mr. Jones questioned the wording in paragraph 4.8, and Mr. Watson suggested replacing the paragraph with the exact wording from Rule 6M-4.610, and renumbering the paragraphs accordingly.

Upon a motion from Mr. Mansker and seconded by Ms. Carmody, the Board approved the Provider Contracting Eligibility Policy, ELCEC 3201.1B as amended with the proposed wording from Rule 6M-4.610, and the Provider Contracting Eligibility Procedure, ELCEC 3201.2B.

#### **V. Executive Director's Report**

##### **A. SR/VPK Utilization/Projections, Enrollment/Wait List Status and Contracting Summary Reports**

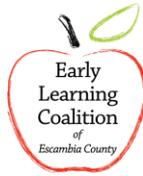
Two thirds of the way through the Fiscal Year, the Coalition has spent 66% of its School Readiness grant award. Over 6% of expenditures have been on Quality. This includes Infant/Toddler Gold Seal.

As of April 9, the Coalition has 3,017 children enrolled in the SR Program. There are 1,039 children on the Wait List, of which 693 are Birth to School Entry.

There are currently 2,067 children enrolled in VPK for the 2016/2017 school year.

There are no significant changes in the Provider Contract Activity Report.

#### **VI. Old Business**



**A. Accountability Review – January 23-25, 2017: OEL Report Pending**

The OEL Accountability Review audit went very well. Mr. Watson gave kudos to the staff. The draft report from OEL is still pending.

**VII. New Business**

**A. Financial Review – Onsite March 20-24, 2017**

The OEL Financial Review took place onsite March 20-24, 2017. The Coalition is awaiting the full report from OEL.

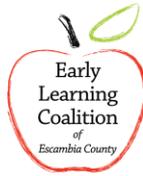
**B. QRIS Revision**

The Coalition has created a new QRIS system that goes from a four STAR to a five STAR system. Mr. Watson explained to the Board how the QRIS system works. The new system is based on a 50-point scale, is more objective and more performance based than the last system. It also requires more staff time as the staff will need to go onsite to perform the rating validations. The new QRIS can be reviewed periodically and modified every three to five years to include TSG outcomes, or new requirements. Mr. Watson would like the Board members to review the new system over the next couple of months. He will present it again to the Board in June for approval.

**C. Discussion of SR Provider Rates, Parent Fees and School Age Enrollments**

Mr. Watson shared with the Board that the Coalition is paying providers more than most other Coalitions pay their providers. OEL has asked why this Coalition has some of the highest rates in the State, and specifically higher than average market rate percentiles. To put the Coalition in line with all the other Coalitions in the State, Mr. Watson recommends that the the Coalition cut all providers rates 10% except for after school care, which will be cut 20%, and reduce Gold Seal payments to at least 10%, 5% or eliminated all together in the coming year. Additionally, the Coalition proposes paying up to 20% higher rates for participants in the proposed new Quality Rating Improvement System. The provider payment cuts will help the Coalition to pay for the QRIS. These changes will also enable the Coalition to enroll more children birth to five, and improve the quality of care. Ms. Williams thinks it is a good idea because at the end of the day the Coalition will be serving more younger children. Mr. Watson suggests that the Board think about this for a couple of months and then bring it to the table for discussion and consideration for approval at the June Board meeting.

Mr. Watson brought the subject of parent fees and school age care to the Board for discussion. It was discussed that the Coalition does not have in place a definitive program to ensure that all parents do not pay more than 10% of their gross income for child care. Mr. Watson was pleased to say that OEL accepted the Coalition's proposal to incorporate into EFS modernization the capability to calculate parent fees based on



income to keep parent payments to less than 10% on income. This new functionality will be a better alternative to the current practice of using sibling discounts to limit parent payments. OEL has assured that this change will be in next upgrade to the EFS system to be released on July 1, 2017.

Ms. Brenda Hardy requested to make a public comment regarding the provider rates change proposal. She stated that she spoke for the community of providers by voicing these concerns: 1) the new QRIS system will hurt several providers because the providers will not be able to afford to pay their staff more money, 2) it will add to the teachers' work load taking their time away from teaching the children, and 3) cutting after school child care for school age children will affect negatively some of the parents. Ms. Hardy strongly urged the Coalition to consider how the disenrollments will affect the children and also the age group of children they consider to disenroll. Ms. Hardy was also concerned that the new QRIS would require providers to begin doing child assessments using TSG. Mr. Watson commented that currently the State legislature is contemplating driving into legislation that school readiness programs are required to use assessments as a measurement tool to track early education outcomes.

Mr. Watson asked the Board to begin consideration of changes to Coalition policy regarding the ages of children the Coalition serves and exercising the statutory option of including older siblings in the Priority 3 category. He requested that consideration be made first to classify all BG8 school age, with or without siblings, as Priority 6. This option is afforded by the statutes and is the policy of some of the Coalitions. Second, consider within Priority 6 only serving children up to a certain age, such as age 8, 9 or 10. This would allow the Coalition to focus more resources on serving children birth to five, which is in line with our mission of providing Early Learning. The Coalition currently has between 600-800 children birth to five on the wait list. Mr. Watson suggests that the Board think about this for a couple of months and then bring it to the table for discussion and consideration for approval at the June Board meeting.

#### **D. Community Thrives**

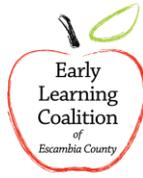
Community Thrives is a program sponsored by the USA Today Network. They are offering \$100,000 grants to community projects. Recipients will be decided based which agencies get the most votes through an online voting process. The Coalition submitted a video requesting support for our LENA Grow With Me project. Mr. Watson encouraged the Board to vote every day between April 12 and May 12.

**VIII. Adjourn: Meeting adjourned at 12:14 p.m.**

#### **Next Regularly Scheduled Meeting**

10:00 a.m. – Thursday June 8, 2017

3300 North Pace Blvd, Suite 210, Pensacola, FL 32505



**Minutes approved by:**

\_\_\_\_\_ Brett Rowell, Board Secretary

\_\_\_\_\_ Date