

Early Learning Coalition of Escambia County
Executive Finance Committee Meeting Minutes
November 29, 2018 – 8:30 AM

Members in Attendance

Van Mansker Roger Thompson Mary Ann Winstead

Staff

Bruce Watson Dawn Engel Paula Rollins Anne Cynkar

Members Absent

Mona Jackson

I. Welcome and Introductions

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Mansker.

II. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

III. Consent Agenda:

a. Consent Agenda Approval:

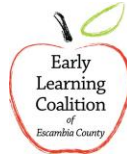
Upon a motion made by Ms. Winstead and seconded by Mr. Thompson the Consent Agenda consisting of the Agenda, and Minutes of September 20, 2018 were accepted and approved without objection. There are no minutes for October 2019 as the meeting was cancelled. (Note: Due to issues with EFS MOD, Financials were still not available. Financials for July through November should be available for the January meeting.)

IV. Status Reports

a. SR/VPK Fiscal Year Benchmarks, Enrollment /Wait List Status Report, and Contracting Summary Report:

1. Benchmark Report:

Mr. Watson opened the meeting with an explanation on the benchmark reports included in the Executive Committee package. The first benchmark report is what was paid to Providers using the estimated slots process that was used for July to October. Based on the estimated payment process the Coalition spent approximately 33% of the OEL grant. The second benchmark report is the amounts that the Providers actually earned from July to October using EFS Legacy to determine reimbursements for all Providers in both SR and VPK Programs. The net result of using the estimated payment process was that the Providers collectively were overpaid by approximately \$500,000. This means the Coalition only spent 29.6%, instead of 33% which is where the Coalition should be four months into the year. A third benchmark, a copy of the report for October 2017, was provided for comparison. Mr. Watson explained to the Committee that the with increase in the Grant Award this year the Coalition should be spending more money at this point in the year. Compared to 2017 total expenditures are comparable. In gross terms the



Coalition has given more money to Providers and served more children. Mr. Watson stated that during September and October the Coalition reactivated EFS Legacy and worked hard to reconcile the Provider accounts since OEL has failed to get EFS MOD to work properly. During the last four months, the Coalition has repeatedly sent notices to the Providers to explain the payment process. Now that all Provider accounts have been brought up to date, all Providers were contacted regarding what actions they must take to reconcile with the Coalition. The majority of Providers who were over paid contacted the Coalition and elected to use the three-month repayment plan that the Coalition offered. For those that were under paid, checks were cut, and Providers were paid on Attendance Day in November. There was one Provider who did not contact the Coalition, but instead took their complaint directly to OEL regarding how long they had to repay the Coalition. OEL notified the Coalition and the Executive Director contacted Provider and worked out a repayment plan.

2. Enrollment/Wait List Status

Currently there are 3,364 children enrolled in the School Readiness program. However, the Coalition goal is 3,450. The longer the Coalition goes without reaching the goal the higher the goal needs to be to spend the entire Grant Award by the end of the year. As of November 24, the Wait List was cleared. In mid-November the Coalition pulled 169 children off the wait list, but only 13 parents submitted new applications.

The Coalition is concerned with the sustained low enrollment rate for new applications. Approximately 50% of parents don't answer their mail, and many parents who initially respond don't finish the eligibility determination process. To increase responses, additional notifications are being sent out at the 15-day mark by phone calls, mail and email. These are reminders that the Eligibility Department is available to assist with the applications process. Ms. Winstead recommended texting parents. Her response time from parents and application completions improved significantly. The Coalition agreed that using texting as an alternative means of notification at the 15-day mark may be worth addressing with the Eligibility Director and staff.

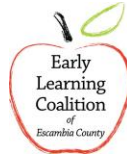
This year, the Coalition has seen a drop in VPK enrollments below 2,000 children. Why this is happening is unknown, and this is a big concern to the Coalition. Whether this is only a local issue, or a statewide trend is unknown. Mr. Watson intends to ask the School District in August how many children enrolled in Kindergarten. The answer may explain why this years' VPK enrollments were lower than expected.

3. Contracting and Fraud Summary Report:

Currently there are 88 SR Providers and 78 VPK Providers. There is no fraud to report and no Providers have been terminated. However, there are two cases because of Providers receiving too many Class 2's and 3's Violations. A Review Hearing is scheduled for one of the Providers on November 29, 2018. There are four SR contract terminations because Providers decided to no longer contract with the Coalition the remainder of this year.

V. Committee Recommendations

- a. Protective Services Provider Expansion



On November 2, 2018 Ms. Gonzalez hosted a meeting with representatives from the four Northwest Florida counties in Region 1 to discuss the urgent need for infant and toddler slots throughout the region. This persistent shortage impacts protective service placements. Several agencies in the area by necessity have relaxed their restrictions on who can serve Protective Service children. In the past these restrictions have been an agency to agency operating practice which was never formalized in writing. One change would be to allow all SR Providers, and not just licensed, to serve Protective Service children. This Coalition was one that did not allow license exempt Providers from serving Protective Service children. However, that decision made prior to the new Health and Safety inspections and other oversight requirements, such as contract monitoring, were in place. Because of the Coalition and DCF's involvement in these facilities at least three to four times a year some of the hesitation to allow registered homes and other licensed exempt categories to serve Protective Service children has gone away. Mr. Watson proposed to the Resource Development Committee (RDC) that this restriction be removed, and that all contract Providers who want to be allowed to serve Protective Services children. The RDC concurred and forwards the recommendation to the Executive Committee and the Board to approve dropping the restrictions on SR Providers so that all contract Providers are eligible to do Protective Services. Mr. Watson stated that there would also be special training for all Providers not currently providing services to Protective Services children in January 2019. A motion was made by Mr. Thompson and seconded by Ms. Winstead to recommend to the Board to approve that all Providers permitted to take in Protective Service Children. The motion was accepted and approved without objection.

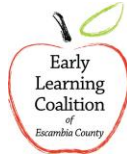
b. **Change to Eligibility Priorities**

Changes to Eligibility Priorities were mandated in 2013 by the state. In 2018 the state opened the opportunity for the Coalition to rearrange priorities three through nine to meet local needs. By statute if the Coalition wanted or needed to change the eligibility priorities list a needs assessment had to be completed first. Recently, CAPC/Headstart completed a needs assessment for the local community and the Coalition received approval from OEL to use this assessment to meet the OEL requirement. Over the course of two meetings the RDC developed and approved the proposed Eligibility Priorities List. Mr. Watson discussed the changes and the impact they would have on the SR program. The RDC brings forward the motion to the Committee to recommend the Board approval of the new Eligibility Priorities List. The motion was seconded by Ms. Winstead and accepted and approved without objection.

VI. Old Business

a. **EFS Modernization Letter to Providers**

During Attendance Days in November the Providers received notification regarding the Coalition's recalculation of the reimbursement requests for the period July through September 2018 using EFS Legacy system. The Coalition is now confident that all Providers have had their reimbursements requests reconciled and brought up to date. The Coalition will continue using EFS Legacy until the performance of EFS MOD is such that it can be relied upon for making payments.



In the next two to three months OEL expects to be able to process VPK and SR attendance and reimbursements. Mr. Watson stated that he lacks confidence that the EFS MOD system will produce accurate data and reliable for full use this fiscal year.

The Coalition was notified that the Department of Health and Human Services was visiting OEL soon. Mr. Watson volunteered through AELC to go to Tallahassee to meet with HHS specifically to address the issues regarding the EFS MOD system and the impact deployment of this system has had on Coalitions and Providers the past five months.

VII. New Business

a. Board Secretary Nominee

Mr. Rowell retired from the Board in October and as a result the Board Secretary position is vacant. Mr. Watson has been seeking out volunteers to fill this position but presently, however, for personal and professional reasons no one is willing to commit to this position. The Board Chair requested to postpone soliciting for a prospective Board Secretary until after the next meeting in January to further discuss the needs of the Coalition with the Executive Director.

The School Board informed the Coalition that Mr. Boone's position as the School Board designee to the Board should be filled in January, and the person named should be available to attend the Board meeting in February.

b. 2018 Community Needs Assessment Escambia County

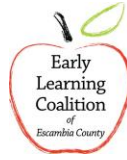
Mr. Watson and Board Chair agreed that it is not necessary to further discuss this topic as it was addressed as part of the discussion on the Eligibility Priorities List, but they encouraged the Committee members to read and review the information. This document provided for interesting reading related to county and community events, statistics and good to know information.

c. Gulf Power Foundation Grant Update

In November, Mr. Watson met in Chipley, FL with the other three Coalitions, Santa Rosa, Emerald Coast and Northwest, to receive a presentation check from the Gulf Power Foundation for the \$300,000 grant they have awarded the Coalition in the Northwest Florida Region. This year the grant money will be used for staff training and Provider preparations for conducting and the Program Assessment CLASS observations. Pictures were taken, and they will be submitted to the Pensacola News Journal.

d. Board Chair Farewell

Mr. Watson suggested that a farewell in honor of the former ELC Board Chair, Mr. Kermit Skip Housh be held after the Board meeting on December 13, 2018. To help celebrate Mr. Housh's farewell and the holiday season there will be carolers from Ms. Hardy's Wee Kare Center to entertain the Board, an award presentation will be made in honor of Mr. Housh's 12 years of service to the Coalition, and a door decorating contest for to be judged by the Board Members. Refreshments will also be served.



The Committee discussed the proposal to establish an endowment in the name of Mr. Skip Housh. Mr. Watson explained that we cannot use Coalition funds to support an endowment. An alternative is to provide recognition to Mr. Housh by combining under one name a group of quality initiatives the Coalition is already funding. A motion was made by Mr. Thompson and seconded by Ms. Winstead to amend the previous proposal to the Executive Committee regarding the endowment in the name of Mr. Housh and approve instead that a quality initiative promoting professional development for child care practitioners be created in his name. The motion was accepted and approved without objection.

e. **SR Capacity and Space Availability Reporting**

The new SR Capacity and Space Availability Report has had limited support from Providers. The purpose of this report is to let parents and Providers know what centers have spaces available by age group. It could potentially be a great tool to assist parents and Coalition staff in placing children, as well as an indirect advertising tool for Providers. Providers are obviously not interested in taking advantage of this tool. The Coalition hopes the Providers will begin to use this report in the New Year.

f. **December 2018 and January 2019 meetings**

Mr. Watson suggested to the Committee to cancel the December 27, 2018 meeting because of the holidays and lack of agenda items, and to reschedule the January meeting from January 24 to January 17, 2019 because of ED PTO plans.

g. **Adopting ELC Northwest Families for the Holidays**

With the devastation of Hurricane Michael, the Coalition offered to support ELC Northwest by adopting two families, who were severely impacted by the storm. Coalition staff and Board members were asked to donate. Mr. Watson volunteered to personally deliver everything donated to the ELC Northwest office in Chipley.

VIII. Upcoming Audits and Reviews

a. **Financial Review Update (On site visit, October 22-26, 2018)**

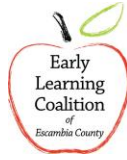
Overall, the Financial Review went well with only two findings. The first finding was there were six stale checks which totaled \$238.00, and the second finding disagreed with the coding for reimbursing staff for professional development. The second finding is under dispute by the Coalition and is under reconsideration by OEL.

b. **A-133 Audit, January 8-11, 2019**

The on site portion of the A-133 Audit will be January 8-11, 2019.

IX. ED/Chair Travel

- a. ED: AELC Meeting, January 18, 2019 - St. Petersburg
- b. ED: PTO to Vietnam, January 21 - February 5, 2019
- c. ED: OEL ED/ELAC/AELC, February 25 - 27, 2019 Gainesville
- d. Chair: ELAC, February 26, 2019 Gainesville



e. ED: AELC Training Camp, February 27 - March 1, 2019 Gainesville

X. Adjourn: Meeting was adjourned at 10:00 a.m.

Next Meeting: January 17, 2019 - 8:30 a.m., at the Early Learning Coalition Office, 3300 North Pace Boulevard, Suite 210, Pensacola, FL 32505

(Note: Date change. Meeting originally scheduled for January 24, 2019.)