



Early Learning Coalition of Escambia County

RDC Committee Meeting Minutes

September 17, 2019 10:00 a.m.

Members in Attendance

Mary Ann Winstead (Co-Chair)
Mary Ann Bickerstaff
Brenda Hardy

Roger Thompson (Co-Chair)
Hitomi Wright

Cindy Kirk
Sharmaine Lillestan

Members Called In

None

Staff

Bruce Watson
Christy Zukowski

Vicki Pugh
Melissa Stankard

Jamie Phelps
Ana Anderson

I. Welcome, Call to Order, and Approval of Agenda

Notification of this meeting was posted to the Coalition Public Calendar Board and posted to the Coalition web site on August 12, 2019 and sent to the Pensacola New Journal on August 27, 2019. The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by Ms. Winstead. Upon a motion made by Ms. Hardy and seconded by Ms. Kirk, the Agenda was accepted and approved without objection.

II. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

III. Approval of Minutes for July 16, 2019

Upon a motion made by Ms. Hardy and seconded by Mr. Thompson, the Minutes of the July 16, 2019 meeting was accepted and approved without objection.

IV. Program Reports

a. Nursing Services Report

The FL DOH representative was not in attendance, so Mr. Watson delivered the report. Coalition Medical Support team conducted 64 screenings and made 8 vision referrals and 10 hearing referrals in July. In August the team conducted 196 screenings with 3 vision referrals and 1 hearing referral bringing the year-to-date totals to 320 children served, 243 vision screenings with 11 referrals, and 236 hearing screenings with 11 referrals. In July and in August there were 8 site visits conducted bringing total site visits to 16 year-to-date. One CPR and First Aid class was conducted in both July and August. Two Client Satisfaction Surveys were received in the July/August period, both with positive comments.

b. CCR&R Update

Ms. Stankard reported that in the month of July there were 73 CCR&R interviews conducted with 61 new interviews and 12 repeat interviews. In August there were 67 CCR&R interviews conducted with 58 new interview and 9 repeat interviews bringing total interviews year-to-date to 140. Transportation and location remain the number one and two issues for persons seeking childcare. The number one reason for seeking care is employment and most of the care sought is for infants.



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The CCR&R lobby was set for a back to school theme with reminders to parents regarding school physicals and immunization records. The Coalition is striving to make the lobby more interactive and have adopted an “I AM” theme to empower children to learn and be confident in themselves in addition to stressing the importance of teamwork both at home and at school. Window 1 was set as a dramatic play area offering 5-2-1-0 information and information on healthy eating. Plastic food items and food boxes were on display and information provided on WIC and SNAP. Window 2, the Weekly Focus Board, posted letter, number, shape, color, and sight words. FOCUS information was also available for parents to take home and use when working with their children. Step Up for Students information was also provided. Window 3 contained Community information regarding community events and holiday giveaways, etc. Window 4 was the Teacher/Parent board and the topic was How To information for creating calm areas for children, and how to get a child’s attention without raising your voice. It was also noted that more information, books, and resources in Spanish have been made available in the lobby, in addition to the materials in Spanish that have always been available in the CCRR office.

c. Program Summary Report

Ms. Zukowski reported that she is working on a draft of the outreach communication posted on the Coalition’s Facebook page and that the draft will be shared with Mr. Watson for his review and approval. The first observations for child assessments have begun. Six out of seven of the Providers that are participating in TS Gold have chosen to make this as part of their SR contract this year. This requires that 75% of their staff are reliable and their SRPA score must be 3.0 or higher to be eligible for the rate incentive. MMCI classes are being conducted. VPK Ready to Read Screeners are being conducted on three and four-year-old children. The Ready to Read Screener is tied to the Bright Stars Toolkits and that the classrooms that really got into using the Toolkits saw scores improve from 36% on the pre-screening to 86% on the post-screening; which is a huge achievement. Mr. Watson requested Ms. Zukowski to generate a list of SR and VPK Providers who are using the Toolkit. Ms. Winstead indicated that the Creative Curriculum units for the three and four-year-old’s do not go into literacy and letter recognition sufficiently and that her teachers pull that information from the Toolkit. There was one outreach event in July and there will be three events in August. 1,300 books were distributed in July and 1,700 books were distributed in August; bringing the year-to-date total to 3,000. The Coalition had two Media Units in the month of July and none in August. Facebook likes increased from 1,026 in July to 1,031 in August.

V. Old Business

a. Wait List and Contract Summary

SRMT (School Readiness Match) is a new category of care that has been added as a result of Legislative changes in 2019 to match funding requirements. The changes allow Coalitions to use local funding combined with OEL match funds to serve families who are initially above 150% Federal Poverty Level (FPL) but below 85% State Median Income (SMI). The Coalition initiated these services in August and enrolled 20 children the first month. In total this funding will allow the Coalition to provide services for a year to about 120 to 150 children. VPK enrollments are 1,935 children. SR enrollments have increased and are currently at 3,342. The parents 44 children who have yet to be placed. It can sometimes take parents several days or weeks to find a facility as Providers are currently unable to operate at full capacity due to staff shortages. In addition, parents with several children to enroll may have difficulty finding a Provider who has space for all the children. There will be some relief with this issue as the Coalition recently signed contracts with three new Providers. There are 83 SR Providers and 77 VPK Providers. There were no new cases of Fraud to report.



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b. Grow With Me/LENA Update

The Coalition has a cohort of Grow With Me Preschool going on right now with curriculum, class, and standards combined. The Coalition will have another cohort of infants, toddlers, and PreK after the holidays.

c. SR Program Assessments

SR Program Assessments for the 2019/2020 contract year will start this month.

d. EFS Modernization Transition Update

The Coalition is still transitioning from Legacy to the new EFS Mod system. The differences (errors) between MOD and Legacy are diminishing. This year VPK is paid entirely from EFS MOD. It is estimated that some Coalitions may need up to two years to reconcile the two systems. Coalition staff continue to work on reconciling SR and VPK for 2018/2019, but it is a work in progress.

VI. New Business

a. Match Funder Sliding Fee Scale

A copy of the Match Funder Sliding Fee Scale chart was included in the meeting materials. Due to Legislative changes to the Match Funding requirements, Coalitions may now use local funding to provide SR services to families who fall in the 150% FPL to 85% SMI range. The white portion of the chart shows the traditional SR program qualification range. The green portion of the chart shows income the incomes for applicants that may be served with the new funding authorization. The red portion of the chart indicates incomes that exceed limitations and are ineligible for any SR services. When families submit their initial application online, the system provides a notice that applicants may be eligible for local funding if they are ineligible for the traditional SR program. The notice directs applicants to contact their local Coalition to enquire about eligibility for local funding. The Coalition was allocated \$168,934 in State Match Funding. Therefore, the first \$168,934 of local donations expended will be matched. The County grant alone exceeds this amount. The combination of State match, County grant and United Way grant exceeds \$477,000. This is the amount that will be dedicated to serve children whose parents are deemed eligible to receive services using SR Match funding. In total this funding will allow the Coalition to provide services for a year to about 120 to 150 children. Additional children may be served by reclassifying and rotating families in and out of the program. Mr. Watson announced that he will go before the County Commission on Monday for the second round of budget discussions. Publicizing the sliding scale funding will move forward after official approval of the County budget and associated grant to the Coalition.

b. Stars Over Escambia Quality Development Incentive Program

The Coalition offered Providers a quality incentive program for 2019-2020, but surprisingly few Providers applied for the incentives. Areas of improvement that are eligible for the incentive include: Program Personnel/MMCI; Program Assessment/SRPA Score; and Program Support/TSG Assessment. The incentive rates are 1%, up to 2%, and 2% respectively, for up to 5% in total. The original application deadline has passed, but an extension has been offered and Providers may still apply for the incentives. Payouts will be made retroactive for those Providers who sign up under the extended deadline. Additional agenda items for the next RDC meeting will include rate changes and updated OEL curriculum requirements. In order to encourage Providers to purchase high-quality curriculum, the Coalition plans to bring forth a proposal to provide matching funds toward the purchase of new curricula. Updated curriculum may cost as much as \$5,000 dollars and the funds provided by the Coalition would be based upon a percentage of the purchase price.



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VII. **Community Partner Updates**

a. Achieve Escambia

No representative was available to report.

b. ARC Gateway

Ms. Bickerstaff reported that there are no specific updates to report. ARC Gateway is collaborating with Achieve Escambia on the work group for Early Learning Matters. Four events are planned throughout the year and elementary schools and churches will partner in the events which will include on-site screenings. ARC Gateway is also assisting 2-1-1 with their data system. Mock call-ins to have been conducted to identify areas for improvement to the 2-1-1 data base.

c. DCF Outreach

No representative was available to report.

d. DCF Regulation

Mr. Thompson reported that there is a big push with Trauma Informed Care and that a presentation was recently given to local agencies. Informational materials have been sent to Providers and will also be presented to the Coalition Board and Committees. Mr. Thompson noted that careful consideration should be given to the goals of this effort as well as to the bigger picture involved. At this time, it appears that the focus is identifying issues in advance as opposed to identifying issues after the fact.

e. Department of Health 5-2-1-0

No representative was available to report.

f. Florida Association for Infant Mental Health (FAIMH)

No representative was available to report.

g. Gulf Coast Kids House

No representative was available to report.

h. Pensacola State College

Ms. Kirk announced that the Florida College Education Network will be visiting the campus of Pensacola State College next week. The group will convene on Tuesday and tour the campus on Wednesday. On Wednesday, WSRE will conduct a "Be My Neighbor" presentation and the group will tour the WSRE Imagination Station and the Blue Wahoos Baseball Stadium. Thursday activities will focus on highlighting educational efforts in Pensacola.

i. School District Education Career Academy

No representative was available to report.

j. School District VPK

No representative was available to report.

k. Western Panhandle Early Steps

No representative was available to report.



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VIII. Adjourn: Meeting was adjourned at 11:00 a.m.

Next Meeting: November 19, 2019 at 10:00 a.m. at the Early Learning Coalition Office, 3300 North Pace Boulevard, Suite 210, Pensacola, Florida 32505