

**Early Learning Coalition of Escambia County
Board Meeting Minutes**

**(Note: These are meeting notes, vice minutes, as the meeting did not meet quorum.)
June 11, 2020 10:00 a.m.**

Chair: Van Mansker

Members in Attendance

Van Mansker Sheryl Rehberg

Members in Virtual Attendance

Cindy Kirk Craig Jones Brian Wyer
Drew Hardgrave Judy Dickinson

Members Absent

Peggy Steward Dr. Laura Edler Wendi Ochs
Beate Bolton Mary Ann Winstead Mona Jackson
Mary Ann Bickerstaff Melody Meier Edna Williams
Richard Wright

Staff in Attendance

Bruce Watson Vicki Pugh Jamie Phelps

Staff in Virtual Attendance

Dawn Engel Becki Rutchland Paula Rollins

Public in Attendance

Marcus McBride

Public in Virtual Attendance

Debbie Tucker Shanna Robinson

I. Welcome and Introduction

Notification of this meeting of the Board of Directors was posted to the Coalition Public Calendar Board and website on May 26, 2020 and sent to the Pensacola News Journal for publication on May 26, 2020.

II. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

III. Chair Comments

a. Failure to Make Quorum

Mr. Mansker announced that there were not enough Board members in attendance to meet quorum, therefore the meeting could not be called to order.



b. Approval of Consent Agenda: Meeting Agenda, Minutes of April 9, 2020 and Financial Statements for February and March 2020

No discussion as quorum was not met.

IV. Executive Committee Report:

a. Provider Rate Changes

The Coalition has submitted a Provider Rate Change proposal to OEL however, due to the pandemic crisis, approval is not likely to occur prior to the requested July 1, 2020 start date for the rate change. In addition, prior to implementing any approved rate changes, the Coalition will review and assess budgetary impact from extra costs incurred due to the pandemic crisis.

b. Legislative Actions

None of the pending legislative action impacting early learning were acted upon as most legislation was tabled due to the pandemic crisis. It is anticipated that proposed bills may resurface next year and that it may be broken into smaller parts to increase the chances of parts of the most interest being passed. It is likely that the proposed changes to VPK may be submitted separately from any organizational changes to OEL.

c. Department of Health Medical Support Services Contract

No discussion as quorum was not met.

d. Annual Anti-Fraud Plan Review and Approval

No discussion as quorum was not met.

e. Board Provider Representative Appointments

No discussion as quorum was not met.

f. New Board Member: Workforce Board Rep (ESCAROSA)

No discussion as quorum was not met.

g. Board Vice Chair, Secretary, and RDC Chair

No discussion as quorum was not met.

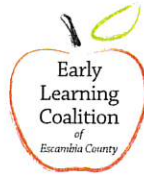
V. Executive Director's Report:

a. SR/VPK Fiscal Year Benchmark, Utilization/Enrollment/Wait List Status and Contracting Summary Status Reports

1. Benchmark Report:

The Coalition is underspent by roughly \$1,000,000.00 at this time. However, the spending gap will likely decrease due to pandemic costs such as First Responder bonuses, infrastructure and health and safety mini grants, and paying for all enrollments and parent fees. In addition, VPK Providers have been paid for full attendance even though historically, VPK attendance typically drops at the end of the school year. The VPK payments are likely to result in overspending the budget by roughly \$100,000.00 dollars. The Coalition anticipates breaking even on the SR side.

CRH



Percentages of spending remained relatively unchanged with 82% going to slots and well under 5% going to administrative costs. Quality is looking good at about 7% which is the target.

2. Enrollment/Wait List Status Report:

There are currently 157 children on the Wait List however, in March the Coalition suspended pulling from the Wait List due to the pandemic crisis. Initially, applications for service decreased due to the pandemic but recently applications have begun to increase as parents return to work. Coalitions have been authorized to offer care to parents working less than 20 hours per week and to parents who are in job search mode. However, at this time there is limited space available and note was made that the new category of applicants would not be bumped to the front of the line for service.

3. Contracting and Fraud Summary Report:

There are 79 School Readiness Providers. The Coalition has lost only one Provider due to the pandemic. The Provider was heavily invested in private pay and was not able to remain financially solvent during the crisis. Another Provider chose to close in April but had already planned to retire at the end of the fiscal year. Providers have reported that not all staff have returned to work which impacts how many children they can serve. There are approximately 400 children in the First Responder/Health Care Worker Child Care Program. However, roughly 200 of the First Responder children were already enrolled in SR services so those children do not represent an increase in total enrollments. A quarter of the First Responder children were already enrolled with Providers as private pay clients and now the Coalition is covering their child care costs under this program. There are 3,500 children enrolled in services however, due to limited space available, the Coalition is struggling to place all of the children. Ms. Rehberg noted that CareerSource is promoting basic childcare certification training as well as childcare job awareness. Mr. Watson noted that the Coalition has resumed hosting DCF testing on a limited basis. To increase Provider staffing consideration is being given to offering sign-on bonuses and test completion bonuses to incentivize job candidates to join the childcare field. Although childcare workers may take up to twelve months to complete the required DCF course, the bonuses would encourage and reward successful completion within 90 days. There were no new cases of fraud to report.

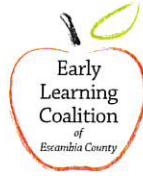
b. COVID Impact on Provider Payments

1. State Waivers.

The OEL has sent requests for waivers for a variety of requirements to the State for approval. One such waiver allows Coalitions to pay Providers for 100% of enrollments during the pandemic. Wave two modified application requirements and included extending care to parents working less than twenty hours a week or who are in job search mode. Redeterminations have been suspended and the second round of 60-day extensions has been approved.

2. Parent Fee Waivers

Currently, the waiver of the SR parent copayments is scheduled to end June 30th. However, Coalitions have been led to expect that another waiver will be granted to extend beyond the end



of June, possibly into July or August. The Coalition will provide updates as OEL provides written guidance.

3. First Responder and Health Care Worker Child Care Program

Currently, 43 out of 77 Providers are participating in the First Responder Program which puts the Coalition about mid-range statewide. At this time, 372 children have enrolled for care under the First Responder Program, many of whom may remain SR clients when the Program ends. Providers are being a \$500 per child per month bonus for serving these children. The first round of 90-day referrals is set to expire soon and families in this category are welcome to apply for a second 90-day referral. Eligibility to enter the First Responder Program is currently scheduled to end on September 30, 2020 but care will continue after that date due to the 90-day referral extensions. Families who are under 85% SMI will have 90 days to establish purpose of care. Families who are over 85% SMI will not be eligible to have 90 days to establish purpose of care. Mr. Watson noted that among other actions, wave three waivers would formally afford families in the First Responder category top priority in placement.

4. SRPA, Monitoring, ASQ, TSG Waivers

Requirements to conduct assessments of all types and contract monitoring are waived until further notice. The combination of safety concerns in conducting site visits, and for lack of attendance of children to be assessed necessitates waving these requirements.

5. SR Contract Extensions, VPK Contracts

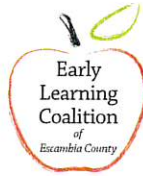
SR contracts are currently set to expire on June 30, 2020. However, OEL is considering extending the current contracts up to 90 days. Further guidance from OEL will be forthcoming on potential SR contract extensions. VPK contracts are currently being processed via EFS MOD and the Coalition expects the new contracts will be signed between now and when the upcoming school year starts in August. Mr. Watson noted that at this time, EFS MOD has not yet been modified in order to process SR contracts. QIP extensions are tied to the contract renewals so the Coalition is awaiting further guidance from OEL on the matter. Wave three waivers will extend the CCRR deadline for the Provider Profiles. However, in May the Coalition was the first in the State to complete all Provider Profiles. The VPK readiness rates that were announced in January will be enforced in the upcoming fiscal year. Mr. Watson noted that 77 out of 79 SR Providers are open at this time and that one of the closed Providers always closes over the summer months.

6. 2020-2021 Curriculum Requirements and Scholarships

The OEL extended the deadline for all SR Providers to use a curriculum for early learning from the State approved list to September 30, 2020. The Coalition is still offering to scholarship half the cost of the curriculum.

c. OEL COVID19 Mini Grants and Learning Stipends

The OEL has three mini-grants programs. One is for helping with the cost of Infrastructure and another is Health and Safety. These are \$1000.00 each. The Coalition is paying childcare



practitioners stipends of \$75.00 each, up to a total of \$750.00 for completion of courses from and OEL approved list. Mr. Watson noted that the Mini Grants and the Learning Stipends will be paid in lieu of the \$500.00 dollar payment to Providers and childcare workers that was previously approved by the Board.

VI. Old Business:

a. 8th Annual Early Learning Summit – ~~May 26, 2020~~ August 25, 2020

The 8th Annual Early Learning Summit has been rescheduled to August 25, 2020 and, in all likelihood, will be held via virtual means due to the pandemic. The Summit is intended to be a kickoff event for the campaign to approve a Children’s Services Council and is intended to raise public awareness and support as voting on the initiative draws near.

b. Escambia Children’s Trust Endorsement

The Escambia Children’s Trust proposal will go before the Board of County Commissioners between 9:00 a.m. to noon on Tuesday, June 16th. The Coalition highly encourages individuals and businesses to submit letters of support for the Children’s Trust initiative. The Coalition is hopeful that there will be at least three votes in favor of the ballot measure. This meeting will be the first of three meetings required in order for the measure to be placed on the ballot. Mr. Watson noted that the Coalition will publish the dates of those meetings so that interested parties may attend.

VII. New Business:

a. OEL Grant Agreement (NOA) Increase

No discussion as quorum was not met Mr. Watson noted that he will sign the Agreement in order to keep funds flowing.

b. OEL 2019-2020 Grant Agreement Addendums

No discussion as quorum was not met. Mr. Watson noted that the Coalition’s Grant Agreement Addendums include language to the effect that ELCEC is not required to submit further reconciliation documentation for the 2018-2019 fiscal year. In addition, the addendums acknowledge that the Legacy System records for 2018-2019 are acceptable and that the Coalition is not required to modify EFS MOD for the 2018-2019 reconciliation period. Mr. Watson noted that he will sign the 2019-2020 Grant Agreement Addendums and that the Board can formally vote on the matter after he signs.

c. 2019-2020 Grant Agreement Extension for 2020-2021

No discussion as quorum was not met. Lacking quorum for a vote on the OEL Grant Agreement, Mr. Watson noted that he will sign the 2019-2020 Agreement Extension for 2020-2021 and that the Board can formally vote on the matter after he signs.

VII. Adjourn

Lacking quorum, the meeting was not called to order therefore the meeting was not adjourned.

