

**Early Learning Coalition of Escambia County
Board Meeting Minutes
June 13, 2024, 10:00 a.m.
Chair: Van Mansker**

Members in Attendance

Van Mansker	Brian Wyer	Tarae Donaldson
Shacondra Primm	Cindy Kirk	Richard Wright
Mary Ann Bickerstaff	Craig Jones	Tammy Hicks
Lindsey Cannon		

Members Absent

Edna Williams	Bambi Sealy	Melody Meier
Roger Thompson	Melissa Sidoti	Mona Jackson
Shannon Nickinson	Paul Fetsko	Deborah Tucker
Reginald Dogan		

Public in Attendance

None

Staff in Attendance

Bruce Watson	Dawn Engel	Melissa Jennings
Nina Daniels	Bess Abernathy	

I. Welcome and Introduction

Notification of this meeting of the Board of Directors was posted to the Coalition Public Calendar Board and sent to the Pensacola News Journal for publication on May 31, 2024. The meeting was called to order by Mr. Mansker.

II. Public Comments

- a. None.

III. Chair Opening Comments

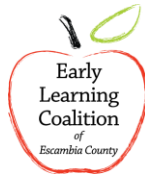
a. Approval of Consent Agenda: Meeting Agenda, Minutes of February 8, 2024

Upon a motion made by Mr. Jones and seconded by Mr. Wyer, approval of the Consent Agenda, Meeting Agenda and Minutes of February 8, 2024, was approved without objection.

b. The April 11, 2024, Board Meeting was cancelled.

c. Adding Anti-Fraud Plan to the Agenda

Approving the Anti-Fraud Plan was left off the agenda. Upon a motion made by Ms. Kirk and seconded by Mr. Wright, it was approved without objection to add approving the Anti-Fraud Plan to the Agenda in New Business.



IV. Executive Committee Report:

a. Mid-Year Reports

The Mid-Year Reports for July through December 2023 were presented to the EXCOM and brought to the Board for discussion.

b. Introduction of New Finance Director

The Coalition's new Finance Director, Ms. Elizabeth "Bess" Denny-Abernathy, who assumed the position in May 2024, was introduced to the Board.

c. New Board Member Lindsey Cannon

Ms. Cannon is the Executive Director of the Escambia Children's Trust. She has been appointed by her Board to fill the statutory Children Services Council director position. Upon a motion made by the EXCOM, and seconded by Ms. Kirk, the appointment of Ms. Cannon to the Board was approved without objection.

d. New Board Member Doug Brown

Mr. Brown has been appointed by his Board as the Director of HeadStart and designated to fill the statutory HeadStart director position. Upon a motion made by the EXCOM and seconded by Ms. Kirk, the appointment of Mr. Brown to the Board was approved without objection.

e. Board Member Misi Birdsall Resignation

Ms. Birdsall has resigned from the Board of Directors. Her new job makes it hard for her to fulfill her obligations to the Board. Ms. Birdsall thanks the Coalition for the opportunity to make an impact on our community.

f. Nomination of Shannon Nickinson for Vice-Chair

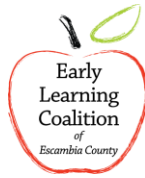
Ms. Nickinson has graciously volunteered to become the Vice-Chair. This will leave the position of Secretary vacant. Upon a motion made by the EXCOM, and seconded by Ms. Kirk, it was approved without objection to appoint Ms. Nickinson Vice-Chair of the Board.

g. Secretary Opening

With Ms. Nickinson becoming the Vice-Chair, the position of Secretary is now vacant. If anyone would like to fill that position, please notify Mr. Watson.

h. Provider Review Hearing May 7, 2024

At the request of Kiddie Academy, a Review Hearing Committee was convened on May 7, 2024. Near the end of the hearing, new information was received that changed the Committee's decision. It was confirmed that one of the Kiddie Academy's two Class 1 violations was downgraded by DCF to a Class 2 violation. This change was considered by the Committee, and it was decided that instead of terminating their VPK contract as previously decided by the Coalition, Kiddie Academy would be allowed to contract with the Coalition for the 2024-2025 VPK school year if they agreed to the Committee's terms and requirements. Both Coalition and



DCF administered training courses were identified that the Kiddie Academy owners and teachers were required to complete before they could enter a new contract with the Coalition. However, Kiddie Academy later decided that completing the courses was too much to ask their staff to do and instead elected to take the 5-year revocation of eligibility to deliver VPK services.

i. Proposed change to Board and Committees Meeting Intervals

The EXCOM makes a motion to change the frequency of the Board and the RDC meetings to quarterly instead of bi-monthly, and the EXCOM to eight meetings a year instead of monthly starting July 1, 2024. Upon the motion made by EXCOM and seconded by Mr. Wyer, it was approved without objection to change the meeting frequency starting July 1, 2024.

V. Executive Director's Report

a. Financial Update – December 2023 Invoice Dashboard

Through April the Coalition has spent \$12.9 million of the \$17.3 million SR grant which is 74.5%. SR Admin was 2.4%, Non-Direct 17.7% and Quality 8.9%. VPK Admin was 3.1%.

b. Coalition Status Reports: Enrollment/Wait List Status Report, and Contracting Summary Report

There are 2,585 children enrolled in the School Readiness program of which 71 are SRMT and 932 are school-age children. There are 533 children on the waitlist. The Wait List has been pulled through mid-January.

There are 10 children enrolled in the Summer VPK Program. There are 1,470 children approved for VPK for the 2024-2025 school year.

There are 84 SR Providers, and 71 VPK Providers.

VI. Old Business

a. ARPA Grant Funding - Update

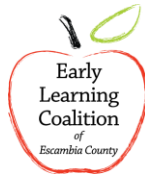
The Coalition spent all but \$907 of the \$404,688 ARPA Discretionary Curriculum Grant. To date, the Coalition has spent over \$4.7 million of the \$4.99 million ARPA Discretionary Early Learning Grant.

b. MIP Implementation

Most of the inputs to set up the program have been submitted and training is well under way. MIP should be going live on July 1.

VII. New Business

a. Legislative Session Results Preview



The highlights from 2024 Legislative Session associated early learning programs were presented and discussed. \$1.7 billion was appropriated for early learning programs. The Legislation including SR and VPK funding was signed by Governor DeSantis on June 12, 2024.

b. New SR Provider Rates for Fiscal Year 2024-2025

A comparative summary of the new SR provider rates was provided for discussion. This is the highest single increase in rates in the Coalition's history

c. Coalition Funding/Budget for FY 2024-2025 – SR Funding Shortfall

Due to the rate increases, the Coalition is expected to have between a \$2 to \$3 million shortfall in SR funding for Fiscal Year (FY) 2024-2025. There is an additional \$800,000 that could be granted from \$20M earmarked for Wait List reduction, but exactly how much each Coalition will receive has yet to be approved. Due to having not yet received from the DEL the Notice Of Award (NOA) for FY 2024-2025, the Coalition has not completed the official budget proposal for the upcoming year. In the interim, the Coalition has requested approval of spending authority not exceed the amount of last fiscal year's award levels. Upon a motion made by Mr. Wright and seconded by Mr. Wyer, it was approved without objection to grant the Coalition authority to begin expending funds in FY 2024-2025 provided spending does not exceed funding levels for FY 2023-2024, and a budget is prepared for Board approval.

d. SR Plus Program in Fiscal Year 2024-2025

The State is implementing a new program to allow parents who are already in the SR program to continue receiving subsidized services although their income exceeds 85% State Median Income (SMI). Parents who qualify can continue receiving services up to 100% SMI. Although their parent fees will be appreciably higher, the assistance provided will help ease the transition as their incomes increase.

e. Kindergarten Readiness Rates

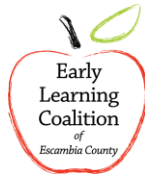
The DEL has published the Kindergarten Readiness (KR) rates for the State by County and by School for 2023. The KR rate for Florida was 51%, and Escambia was 50%. The KR rate for VPK completers for Florida was 64%, and Escambia was 64%. The KR rate for nonparticipants in VPK for Florida was 36%, Escambia was 38%.

f. 2023-2024 Financial Review Final Monitoring Report

The final report has been received. The Coalition received three findings. The Coalition is now working on the Corrective Action Plan for the three findings.

g. IACET Plaque

The Coalition has gained certification as an IACET approved agency. This allows the Coalition to deliver courses that earn CEU credits. The Operations Department staff put in a great deal of work to get approved for this certification. The Coalition can now offer CEU's for courses developed or sponsored by the Coalition. Although there is still work involved to get



h. Anti-Fraud Plan

Once a year the Anti-Fraud Plan has to be reviewed. There are no changes this year. The only action required was to add the review date of June 13, 2024, to the last page. Upon a motion made by Mr. Jones and seconded by Ms. Donaldson, the Anti-Fraud Plan review was approved without objection.

VIII. Audits and Reviews in Progress

a. A-133 Audit for 2022-2023 – In process, Onsite June 24-28, 2024

The Onsite has been rescheduled for July.

IX. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 11:49 a.m.

The Board Meeting was followed immediately by a new Board member Orientation.

X. Board Orientation

Members in Attendance

Tarae Donaldson
Lindsey Cannon

Shacondra Primm

Brian Wyer

Staff

Bruce Watson
Brooke Watkins
Terry Thibodeau
Bess Denny-Abernathy

Skyey Lindsey
Stephanie Richardson
Melanie Tarver
Renee Maxwell

Nathalie Morris
Jase Palmer
Linda Sewell-Otto

The Coalition held a Board Member Orientation on June 13, 2024, at 12:00 pm. Mr. Watson gave the presentation to 3 new Board members, 1 current Board member and 9 new Coalition staff members.

XI. Second Adjourn

The Board Orientation adjourned at 1:42 pm.

Next Meeting: Thursday, August 8, 2024, at 10:00 a.m. at the Early Learning Coalition offices at 1720 West Fairfield Dr., Suite 100/400, Pensacola, FL 32501