

Early Learning Coalition of Escambia County
Board Meeting Minutes
October 13, 2022, 10:00 a.m.
Chair: Van Mansker

Members in Attendance

Van Mansker	Roger Thompson	Richard Wright
Paul Fetsko	Deborah Tucker	Reginald Dogan
Mona Jackson	Cindy Kirk	Brian Wyer
Shannon Nickinson	Angela Strumeyer	Tammy Greer
Melissa Birdsall	Melissa Sidoti	Craig Jones
Mary Ann Bickerstaff		

Members Absent

Melody Meier	Marcus McBride	Shanna Robinson
Edna Williams		

Public in Attendance

None

Staff in Attendance

Bruce Watson	Dawn Engel	Vicki Pugh
Nina Daniels	Darrell Merritt	Paula Rollins
Stephanie Richardson		

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 October 1, 2022. The meeting was called to order by Mr. Mansker.

II. Public Comments

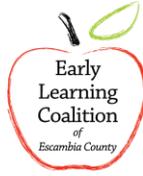
- a. None.

III. Chair Comments

- a. **Approval of Consent Agenda: Meeting Agenda, Minutes of the August 11, 2022, Board Meeting.**

Upon a motion made by Ms. Bickerstaff and seconded by Mr. Wyer, approval of the Consent Agenda, consisting of the Meeting Agenda, and the Minutes of August 11, 2022, was approved without objection.

B Introduction of New Finance Director – Darrell Merritt



Mr. Merritt was introduced to the Board as the Coalition's new Finance Director. Mr. Merritt started the position on October 3, 2022.

IV. Executive Committee Report:

a. Executive Director Annual Evaluation

The Executive Director's annual evaluation was done in the new format required by the DEL and will be submitted to the DEL as required. Upon a motion made by the EXCOM and seconded by Mr. Jones, the Executive Director Annual Evaluation was approved without objection.

V. Executive Director's Report

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

There are 2,678 children enrolled in the School Readiness program of which 87 are SRMT and 1,236 are school-age children. Wait List pulls and new enrollments increased in September. 328 children have been pulled off the Wait List since the last Board meeting. The Coalition is still managing the number of children pending provider placement to less than 30.

There are 1,682 children enrolled for the 2022/23 VPK School Year Program.

There are 84 SR Providers, and 77 VPK Providers. There are no new fraud cases to report.

VI. Old Business

a. End of Year Funding Transition and Financial Position

The end of year invoicing is complete. The 13th invoice was submitted in September. Nearly \$800,000 dollars for SR expenses was received that were not properly invoiced during Fiscal Year 2021-2022. The process to make the necessary corrections in the accounting system is underway. An independent audit firm that audits other Coalitions has been approached to assist in this process.

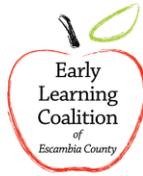
b. DEL 2021-2022 Finance Review - Update

The Finance Review final report was received last week for the DEL. The Coalition had three findings and is awaiting an answer from DEL in response to the Coalition's Proposed Corrective Action Plan (PCAP).

c. Gubernatorial Appointments and Vice Chair Opening

There are currently two Gubernatorial Appointments open. If anyone is interested in one of these positions who has not already applied, please let the Executive Director know and the information on how to apply will be forwarded. The Vice Chair position is still unfilled.

VII. New Business



a. New DEL NOA, CRRSA and ARPA Grant Funding - Update

The DEL issued a new NOA at the end of September, mostly to award remaining CRRSA and ARPA funding by the September 30 deadline. The Coalition received \$8.7M in ARPA funding, of which nearly \$1.3M is earmarked for Workforce initiatives. There was also additional funding provided for Gold Seal, Special Needs and CRRSA.

The Coalition’s request to dedicate \$720,000 of this year’s CRRSA grant funding to local retention and recruitment initiatives was approved.

The first round of ARPA Grants for direct payments to Providers is nearly complete. The last of three installments will be concluded in December. The second round of ARPA Grant applications is about to start. In addition to Provider payments, a portion of the funding will be used for more retention and training initiatives. All funds must be dispersed by June 30, 2023.

b. Escambia Children’s Trust Agreement

The Escambia Children’s Trust (ECT) approved funding the Coalition for the School Readiness Match Program commencing October 1, 2022. The ECT agreement is provided.

c. ESCD Career Academy Change

Due to changes in how the Escambia County School District (ECSD) has chosen to conduct the Education Career Academy, the Coalition has decided to withdraw support for this program. Students are no longer gaining experience in early learning at childcare provider sites. Experience is only being gained by supplementing teaching staff in VPK and Kindergarten and First grade classrooms. The ECSD persists in using these experiences to qualify for a Child Development Associate (CDA) certification. The national CDA Council which awards these certifications does not consider these experiences appropriate to qualify for a CDA. Endorsing this practice places the qualifications of the local CDA observer at risk of losing their qualifications.

d. Code of Ethics

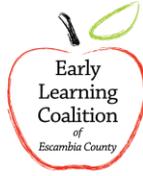
The annual review and training of the Code of Ethics was conducted. Board members were asked to complete the acknowledgement form.

e. Christmas Meeting

The question was raised about what, if anything, beyond the usual agenda was desired by the Board at the December meeting. The was topic was discussed, but no decision was reached regarding any specific activities.

VIII. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 11:47 a.m.



Next Meeting: Thursday, December 8, 2022, at 10:00 a.m. at the Early Learning Coalition offices at 1720 West Fairfield Dr., Suite 100/400, Pensacola, FL 32501

Minutes of the meeting on October 13, 2022, of the Board of Directors of the Early Learning Coalition of Escambia County were approved by the Board on December 8, 2022.