



Early Learning Coalition of Escambia County

**RDC Committee Meeting Minutes**

July 19, 2022 10:00 a.m.

**Committee Members in Attendance**

Roger Thompson	Cindy Kirk	Paul Fetsko
Melissa Birdsall	Tammy Greer	

**Staff in Attendance**

Bruce Watson	Dawn Engel	Nina Daniels
Vicki Pugh	Melissa Jennings	Christy Zukowski
Ella Brown	Stephanie Richardson	

**Providers and Partners in Attendance**

Andrea Luecht	Shannon Nickinson	Alison Hand
Angela Strumeyer	Brenda Hardy	Hitomi Wright
Paige Morton	Stephanie Lynch	

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

Notification of this meeting was posted to the Coalition Public Calendar Board on July 1, 2022 and sent to the Pensacola New Journal on July 5, 2022. The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by Mr. Roger Thompson, Committee Chair.

**II. Public Comments**

There were no public comments.

**III. Approval of Agenda and Minutes for March 15, 2022**

Upon a motion made by Ms. Kirk and seconded by Mr. Fetsko, the Agenda and the Minutes of the May 17, 2022, meeting were approved without objection.

**IV. Program Reports**

a. Medical Support Services Report

Ms. Ella Brown reviewed the Medical Support Services report. She reported that there were 1763 screenings done for the year. 99 vision and 97 hearing referrals were made. It was noted that there was a greater number of children who are overweight. Working on ways to get the children more active to hopefully help with getting them to a healthy weight.

b. CCR&R Update

Ms. Jennings reviewed the Year End CCR&R report. There is still a little trouble finding openings due to the providers staffing shortages. There was a total of 705 calls for listings for the year. We ended the 2021-2022 year with a total of 16 outreach events for the year and 16,600 books were distributed.



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### c. Program Support Summary

Ms. Engel stated that there were over 1,000 participants in different types of training throughout the 2021-2022 year. Developmental Screenings were performed on about 2,000 children. Gearing up for the new year with all the new changes.

### d. SR/VPK Status Report and Contract Activity Summary

School Readiness enrollment is holding steady around 2,708 children. There is enough funding to have around 3,000 children but there are not enough providers and staff to place that many children at this time. The Coalition is still limiting the number of children pulled from the waitlist to ensure the parents of no more than 30 children are searching for a child care provider. Lack of availability due to provider staff shortages persists. There are around 500 children on the waitlist. To date, there are 1,500 children approved for VPK. This number is expected to increase closer to the start of the new school year. 61 children have been fully enrolled in VPK as of July 10, 2022.

There are now 85 School Readiness providers and 69 VPK providers.

## V. Old Business

### a. Update on 2022 Legislative Actions – VPK Funding, VPK Assessments, Coalition Funding Allocation, SR Provider Rates.

1. VPK Funding – The State is still working on the mechanisms for funding levels that will be paid to VPK providers that agree to pay their teachers \$15 an hour. Funding did go up from \$2,400 per year to \$2,800 per year plus an extra \$500 per child for those who agree to pay their teachers more.
2. VPK Assessment – Once a year VPK teacher assessment will begin this year. The assessment is for the lead teacher only.
3. Coalition Funding Allocation – All the allocations have been distributed. All monies that were unspent from the ARPA and CRRSA initiatives were returned by the Coalition and the funds have been deposited back into the Coalition's account to be used this new fiscal year.
4. SR Provider Rates – By the end of Fiscal Year 2022-2023, the State is going to start setting state-wide rates for the SR Program. This is one factor that was taken into consideration in the decision for the Coalition to increase SR rates in June.

### b. DEL CRSSA Workforce Initiative

There was a good initial return on the Workforce Initiative investment which paid \$1,000 sign-on bonuses to recruit new staff for the SR/VPK providers. The Coalition may have to ask DEL to reallocate some of the new funds to the Workforce Initiative for the new fiscal year.

### c. ARPA Grants



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Initial applications for Round 1 of ARPA had to be submitted by the end of June. Most of the payments for the first of three installments have been made. Round 2 of the ARPA Grant will come with more strings attached. One of the stipulations of Round 1 is that 25 percent of the money must be used for pay benefits. A few providers who submitted their applications early have already received their second installment. By the time all rounds of the payments are made, collectively between 6 to 7 million dollars will have been given to Providers in Escambia.

### d. Coalition Rate Increase Update

The new rate increase went into effect June 1, 2022. Without having much of an increase of new children in care, the Coalition paid out approximately \$200,000 - \$250,000 dollars more in June as a result of this rate increase.

## **VI. New Business**

### a. Program Assessment Scheduling for the New Year

Starting this year all VPK classes will receive a program assessment. The assessments will be done using the same assessment tool as the SR program. As much as possible, the Coalition will combine assessments for Providers who have both VPK and SR classrooms. Currently there are 180 VPK classrooms that have to have an assessment. There is no change in SR Providers who have 2 or more classrooms for a care level (age group) that only half the classrooms will require an assessment. The VPK assessments will begin in September and will be completed by the end of March or first of April. This will give time for second assessments if they are needed. The Operations staff is developing an assessment schedule for the year.

### b. SR and VPK Contracts for 2022-2023 Status.

All SR Contracts were completed by July 1, 2022. Because classes have not begun, only half of the VPK contracts are complete.

## **VII. Community Partner Updates**

### a. Achieve Escambia

No representative was available to report.

### b. ARC Gateway

No representative was available to report.

### c. CareerSource ESCAROSA

No representative was available to report.

### d. DCF Regulation



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Ms. Strumeyer stated that there is nothing new to update on. They are still assisting providers with new CPR and First Aid requirements. They have a couple of trainers who can do the training virtually.

e. Department of Health 5-2-1-0  
No representative was available to report.

f. Early Steps  
Ms. Alison Hand let everyone know that their website is updated with contacts and their numbers. Referrals can now be made through the website.

g. Escambia Children's Trust  
Ms. Greer stated that they have their staff positions. They are working on getting a needs assessment together. They want to have their 1<sup>st</sup> draft ready for their Board in August. They are holding Grant Workshops for their Board.

h. Florida Association for Infant Mental Health (FAIMH)  
No representative was available to report.

i. Gulf Coast Kids House  
No representative was available to report.

j. Head Start  
Ms. Birdsall stated that they are preparing for the new school year which starts August 15, 2022. They are still enrolling at this time. Pre-Service is happening the first three days of August. Community partners are coming in to help with training.

k. Pensacola State College  
Ms. Kirk announced that they have a new department head that started July 5, 2022. They also sent out a Flyer for a new Directors Credential Class that starts on August 15, 2022. Classes go from 11:00 am – 1:40 pm.

l. Ready Kids  
No representative was available to report.

m. School District Education Career Academy  
No representative was available to report.

n. School District VPK  
No representative was available to report.

o. Studer Community Institute



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No representative was available to report.

### **VIII. Adjourn: Meeting was adjourned at 10:52 a.m.**

Next Meeting: September 20, 2022, at 10:00 a.m. at the Early Learning Coalition Office, 1720 West Fairfield Dr. Suite 100/400, Pensacola, Florida 32501