



Early Learning Coalition of Escambia County

Executive/Finance Committee Meeting Minutes

March 27, 2025, 8:30 a.m.

Members Present

Shannon Nickinson (Interim Chair) Roger Thompson

Mona Jackson

Members Absent

None

Staff

Bruce Watson

Melissa Jennings

Nina Daniels

Bess Abernathy

Dawn Engel

Public

None

I. Welcome and Introductions

Notification of the Executive Finance Committee Meeting scheduled for March 27, 2025, was sent to the Pensacola News Journal, and posted to the Coalition Public Calendar Board on March 6, 2025. The meeting was called to order by Ms. Nickinson.

II. Public Comments

None.

III. Consent Agenda

Upon a motion by Mr. Thompson and seconded by Ms. Jackson, the Consent Agenda, consisting of the Agenda, Financial Reports for January and February 2025 and Minutes of January 30, 2025, was approved without objection.

IV. Coalition Status Reports

a. Financial Update

Through February the Coalition has spent \$10.8 million of the \$17.9 million SR grant which is 60.7% of the grant. SR Admin was 3.07%, Non-Direct Services was 18.9% and Quality was 9.6%. VPK Services was \$3.4 million of \$5.0 which is 68.5%. VPK Admin spending was 2.2%.

b. Enrollment/Wait List Status Report

There are 2,520 children enrolled in the School Readiness Program of which 53 are SRMAT and 980 are school-age children. There are 271 children on the Wait List. The Wait List has been pulled through the first week of March. There are 2,113 children approved for VPK, and 1,596 children are currently enrolled.

c. Contracting and Fraud Summary Report



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There are 81 SR providers and 71 VPK providers.

V. Committee Recommendations

None

VI. Old Business

a. New DEL NOA March 10, 2025

The new NOA was released on March 10, 2025. An additional \$537,130 was awarded for basic SR. This was given with the intentions to pay for QPI. An additional \$25,000 was granted for Gold Seal.

b. SR Fiscal Year 2024-25 Funding – Update

The Coalition currently has 2,520 children enrolled, and with the March 10, 2025, NOA, this leaves the Coalition a surplus of \$937,710. To use up all the funding, the Coalition would need to have 2,892 children in care. Even if all the children were pulled from the wait list, the Coalition would not reach the number of children to use up all of the funding. If the Coalition could manage to have an enrollment of 2,892 children, it is not guaranteed that the Coalition would receive enough funding at the beginning of FY 25-26 to accommodate that many children.

VII. New Business

a. Provider Arrest, SR Contract Termination and Impact on Families

An Owner of two facilities, Blessed Our Children and Me and All My Children, has been arrested for money laundering. Law Enforcement confiscated all computers and paper records from both facilities. All bank accounts associated with the facilities have been frozen. Due to the timing and nature of the arrest, February reimbursements have been rejected. Ms. Hill will have to resubmit at such time the Coalition gets approval from the DEL to pay this provider. The provider self-suspended her DCF licenses and terminated her SR contracts for both facilities. This sudden action left many parents looking for a new childcare facility for their children.

b. By-Laws and Board Member Attendance

The DEL has brought to the Coalition's attention that there are several Board members who are in violation of the Coalition's By-Laws by not meeting requirements for Board meeting attendance. The DEL had a list of four members, two of which were at the February Board meeting, which made their attendance acceptable. One member is a Statutory member, and the other is a Private Sector member. There is nothing in the By-Laws that differentiate between private sector and statutory member attendance. The ED is going to contact the Statutory member to see if they want to remain a member of the board, if not, the ED will contact the Organization to have them appoint a new designee.

c. Edna Williams Board Member Status



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Ms. Williams is the private sector member in question. She has not been to any of the board meetings in over a year. It was discussed to have her removed from the Board.

d. Richard Wright Rolled off the Board

Mr. Wright has rolled off the Board. Mr. Wright decided not to be reappointed for a new term.

e. Tammy Hicks Nomination for Vice Chair and Faith-based Rep Status

Ms. Hicks is resigning as the Director of her facility but still has a year left as the Faith Based Provider Representative. The ED has suggested asking the Faith Based Providers if they have any issues with Ms. Hicks remaining as their representative. There is nothing in rule or guidance stating that Ms. Hicks cannot remain as the representative.

Ms. Hicks has also volunteered to be the Board Vice-Chair. Upon a motion made by Mr. Thompson and seconded by Ms. Nickinson, it was approved to take the nomination of Ms. Hicks as Vice-Chair to the Board for final approval in May.

f. Legislative Session 2025

Legislative Session is currently underway. There is a chance that there will be a change in SR eligibility for the SR Program. It has been said that eligibility will go from 150% FPL to 65% SMI. This will be beneficial for parents who are now making \$15 per hour that became ineligible due to the pay increase putting them over 150% FPL.

g. ED Travel 14-17 April (AELC/DEL ED) and 20-23 May (AELC Annual Mtg)

The ED will be traveling from April 14-17 for the AELC/DEL-ED meetings and again May 20-23 for the AELC Annual Meeting.

h. Bank Account – Update

In order to have Ms. Nickinson added to the bank account, the motion must be brought to the Board for approval.

VIII. Audits and Reviews - In Progress

a. 2023-2024 A-133 Audit Complete

Presentation for EXCOM will be in April, and Board in May.

b. DEL Accountability Review

Still in process.

c. DEL Desk Review

Completed, waiting review.

IX. Additional Discussions



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a. Building Lease – Update

The Landlord has turned discussions over to his attorney. The Landlord's attorney is now in talks with the Coalition's workers compensation company, Amtrust. The Landlord's attorney has proposed a 60/40 split. The ED has recommended to Amtrust that the owner pays 100%. As of today, the owner stands firm that Coalition's lease will not be renewed when it ends in 2026. If this decision does not change, actions will be taken to find a new location to move to. The fact that the Landlord apparently does not have liability insurance coverage on the building, it might not be in the best interest of the Coalition to remain at this location.

b. Audit RFP – Update

An RFP for new Audit services is being drafted.

X. Adjourn: The Meeting was adjourned at 10:26 a.m.

Next Meeting: April 24, 2025, at 9:00 a.m. at the Early Learning Coalition Office, 1720 West Fairfield Dr., Suite 100/400, Pensacola, Florida 32501