



Early Learning Coalition of Escambia County

A Executive/Finance Committee Meeting Minutes

April 24, 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 April 24, 2025, was sent to the Pensacola News Journal, and posted to the Coalition Public Calendar Board on April 3, 2025. The meeting was called to order by Ms. Nickinson.

II. Public Comments

None.

III. Consent Agenda

An amendment to add the Anti-Fraud Plan to the Consent Agenda was made at the start of the meeting. Upon a motion by Mr. Thompson and seconded by Ms. Jackson, the amended Consent Agenda, consisting of the amended Agenda, Financial Reports for March 2025 and Minutes of March 27, 2025, was approved without objection.

IV. Coalition Status Reports

a. Financial Update

Through March the Coalition spent \$12.2 million of the \$17.9 million SR grant which is 68.6.7% of the grant. SR Admin was 3.0%, Non-Direct Services was 18.7% and Quality was 9.5%. VPK Services was \$3.9 million of \$5.0 million which is 77.8%. VPK Admin spending was 2.2%.

b. Enrollment/Wait List Status Report

There are 2,516 children enrolled in the School Readiness Program of which 58 are SRMAT and 932 are school-age children. There are 140 children on the Wait List. The Wait List has been pulled through mid-April. There are 1,572 children currently enrolled in VPK. There are 996 children approved for VPK for 2025/26 Program year.



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c. Contracting and Fraud Summary Report

There are 79 SR providers and 72 VPK providers.

V. Committee Recommendations

None.

VI. Old Business

a. SR Fiscal Year 2024-25 Funding – Update

On December 5, 2024, the Coalition received \$1,059,443 from the Wait List Reduction allocation. As a result, from October to April 1, 100 children have been pulled from the Wait List, which was all the BG-8 Econ children on the list. The new goal for enrollments is 2,700 children, however, reaching this goal and expending all our SR funding is not realistic in the few months remaining in this Fiscal Year.

The additional funding did not address the Coalition funding shortfall for the QPI and Gold Seal Programs. On February 4, 2025, the DEL advised all Coalitions to take steps necessary to balance their budgets with the funding they currently had, and to not expect or count on funding to cover the QPI and GS shortfalls. The DEL then initiated a round of Reob/Deob so Coalitions could let their shortfalls be known. Through the Reob/Deob Request process the Coalition requested either \$506,605 in overall SR Funding or \$63,840 for Gold Seal and \$442,756 for QPI. On March 7, 2025, the Coalition received an additional \$537,130 in SR funding and \$25,014 in Gold Seal funding, with instructions to use the SR non-direct quality funding to cover any QPI and Gold Seal shortfalls that may occur this year.

The DEL has requested input from Coalitions for another round of Reob/Deob. However, because the state budget is not yet finalized many Coalitions are reluctant to Deob SR funds as this may establish a new reduced end of year funding level which may have an impact on allocations for next year. The DEL understands this and asks for Gold Seal Reob/Deob requests and Deob inputs for Special Needs and VPK. Our Coalition requested \$27,000 additional funds for Gold Seal and offered to Deob all \$94,374 originally allocated for Special Needs, \$50,000 of regular VPK funding and \$5,000 of unused VPK assessment funding.

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

The owner of two facilities, Blessed Our Children and Me and All My Children, was arrested on March 5, 2025, for suspected money laundering. Her home, both childcare facilities and another business were raided, and files and computers were confiscated. The owner was released on bail that same day. The owner decided to surrender her two DCF licenses and self-terminate both of her SR contracts. It is suspected this was done to preclude DCF from suspending her license and the Coalition subsequently terminating her SR contracts and making her ineligible for providing services for five years. The case is still pending.

c. Farewell Presentation to Former Board Chair, Van Mansker



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The farewell presentation for Van Mansker has been rescheduled for May 8, 2025. The presentation will be held at the start of the Board meeting at 10:00 a.m.

VII. New Business

a. DOE Single Sign On Transition

To meet cybersecurity requirements, the DOE has made changes to how all users of DOE electronic systems access their accounts and use the DOE systems. This has required great effort on the part of the DEL and the Coalitions to get everyone, ELC staff, providers and parents, into the new Single Sign On system. There are still very significant errors and problems that are being worked on to make this system work for all users.

b. Legislative Session 2025

The two major topics from the current legislative session are good news and possibly not so good news. The good news is that the criteria to qualify for the School Readiness Program is changing from 150% of FPL to 55% of SMI. This closes the gap in eligibility for single parents with 1-3 children that was created by Florida increasing its' minimum wage. The possibly not so good news is that the legislature is contemplating reducing SR funding this year. The legislature still has not settled on a budget for the coming year, but the current version under consideration does not fund SR at the same levels as last year. More to follow as this issue develops.

c. FY 25-26 Funding Projection

Projections are provided for the SR program Fiscal Year 2025-2025. One projection is the year starts at the same level of funding as currently provided. Then a projection is added for what additional funding would do for enrollments. These projections will have to be revised once the state budget is finalized, and Coalition allocations are published.

d. Brian Wyer Board Member Approval

Upon a motion made by Mr. Thompson and seconded by Ms. Jackson, the motion to recommend to the Board approval of the appointment Bryan Wyer as a Board Director was approved without objection.

e. Warren Everett Resignation Letter

Warren Averett has decided to no longer have the Coalition as a client. They did not elaborate as to why they made this decision, but it is possible it was because of how the Coalition's last three audits have gone and the greater scrutiny the Coalition has placed on their performance.

f. Audit Services RFP - Draft

A draft of the RFP for Audit services to commence with Fiscal Year 2024-2025 has been prepared for review and approval. The Evaluation Committee will consist of three Board members and two staff members. One additional staff member will be the recorder and administer the Evaluation Committee process. The Coalition is requesting three Board members volunteer to be on the Evaluation Committee.



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g. MIP Terminated Contract

The Coalition has decided to terminate the MIP contract. MIP was unable to deliver the services that they claim they could provide.

h. Staff Issues

Two staff have had medical issues that have kept them out of work for over a month now and likely may keep them out until the end of May. Both have applied for benefits of our Short-Term Disability policy

i. Anti-Fraud Plan Approval

The yearly updated Anti-Fraud Plan that includes the new benefit recovery procedure was presented to the EXCOM for discussion. Upon the motion made by Ms. Nickinson and seconded by Mr. Thompson, forwarding the Anti-Fraud Plan, ELCEC 4101.1J and Benefit Recovery Procedure, ELCEC 4102.2B to the Board for approval was approved without objection.

VIII. Audits and Reviews - In Progress

a. 2023-2024 A-133 Audit Complete

The audit was presented to the EXCOM for review. The audit will be presented at the Board meeting in May.

b. DEL Accountability Review

In process. The Exit Conference will be held May 20, 2025.

IX. Adjourn: The Meeting was adjourned at 10:21 a.m.

Next Meeting: June 26, 2025, at 9:00 a.m. at the Early Learning Coalition Office, 1720 West Fairfield Dr., Suite 100/400, Pensacola, Florida 32501