



Early Learning Coalition of Escambia County

Resource Development Committee (RDC) Meeting Minutes April 22, 2025, 10:00 a.m.

RDC Members in Attendance

Roger Thompson (Chair/Board)	Cindy Kirk (Board/PSC)
Melissa Sidoti (Board/DCF)	Tarae Donaldson (Board/ESCAROSA)
Paul Fetsko (Board/ECSD Board)	Jessica Czuprynski (Partner Member/ECSD)
MaryAnn Bickerstaff (Board/ARC)	Melinda Maiterth (Partner Member/ESCAROSA)
Bambi Sealy (Board/DCF)	Lindsey Cannon (Board/ECT)
Brian Wyer (Board/Gulf Coast Minority Chamber of Commerce)	

Coalition Staff in Attendance

Bruce Watson	Dawn Engel	Nina Daniels
Melissa Jennings	Ella Brown	Bess Abernathy
Renee Maxwell		

Providers and Non-RDC Member Partners in Attendance

Roselyn (Provider)	Paige (Provider)	M. Hunt (Provider)
Phil Bailey Provider)	Angel Casillas (Partner/ARC)	
Stephanie Kruger (Partner/Help Me Grow)		

Public in Attendance

None.

I. Welcome, and Call to Order

Notification of the Resource Development Committee meeting for April 22, 2025, was sent to the Pensacola News Journal for publication and posted to the Coalition's Public Calendar Board on April 3, 2025. The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by Mr. Thompson.

II. Public Comments

None.

III. Approval of Agenda and Minutes for October 15, 2024

Upon a motion made by Ms. Bickerstaff and seconded by Mr. Fetsko, the Agenda and the Minutes of January 21, 2025, were approved without objection.

IV. Community Partner Updates

- a. ARC/Help Me Grow
 - Ms. Bickerstaff introduced Mr. Angel Casillas, Help Me Grow's new Family & Community Outreach Specialist.
 - Help Me Grow is getting ready to be a part of this year's Sneaker Ball.



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- b. CareerSource ESCAROSA
 - Ms. Maiterth reported that the Summer Youth Program is going on.
 - There are no job fairs currently taking place.
 - Career Source ESCAROSA is still busy serving veterans.
- c. DCF – Regulation
 - Ms. Sealy stated that she had nothing new to report.
- d. DCF - Community Development
 - Ms. Sidoti stated that May is Water Safety Month.
 - Ms. Sidoti stated that DCF has a limited number of books available to be given out.
 - These books include Josh the Otter, Stewey the Duck and Swim Safer Little Seals.
 - Granny Get Down for Seniors will be held on May 3.
- e. Escambia Children’s Trust
 - Ms. Cannon stated that the ECT is in the process of issuing 14 new contracts.
 - ECT has over \$600,000 going out in services.
- f. Head Start
 - No representative was available to report.
- g. Pensacola State College
 - Ms. Kirk stated that finals start on May 5 and Graduation is on May 9.
 - Ms. Kirk also stated that she had 160 plus students this semester.
 - There will be two sessions held during the summer.
 - Students will be participating in Be My Neighbor Day.
- h. Ready Kids!
 - No representative was available to report.
- i. School District VPK
 - Ms. Czuprynski reported that the school district is finishing up their PM-3’s and wrapping up the school year.
 - The school district is busy enrolling for VPK next year.

V. **Program Reports**

- a. Medical Support Services Report
 - Ms. Jennings reported that from January through March 2025 that:
 - o 287 vision screenings were done, and 21 referrals were made.
 - o 349 hearing screenings were done, and 40 referrals were made.



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b. CCR&R Update

- Mr. Jennings reported that from January through March 2025:
 - o 158 new interviews were conducted.
 - o The Coalition participated in 8 outreach events.
 - o A total of 12,186 books have been distributed to date this fiscal year.
 - o Lobby Events are now posted on the ELC website.
 - o ELC is hosting the first Sneaker Ball on June 7.

c. Program Support Summary

- Ms. Engel provided the following:
 - o There are only ten classrooms left for SR assessments and one childcare facility requesting a second assessment.
 - o All school year VPK observations are completed. There will be four summer classrooms to observe.
 - o February's Super Saturday was a success.
 - o ELC will be partnering with UWF and planning to hold a Fall Conference.

d. SR/VPK Status Report and Contract Activity Summary

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 the middle of April. There are 1,572 children currently enrolled in VPK. There are 996 children approved for VPK for 2025/26 Program year.

There are 79 SR providers and 72 VPK providers.

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. Through the Reob/Deob process the Coalition requested either \$506,605 in overall SR Funding or \$63,840 for Gold Seal and \$442,756 for QPI. The Coalition received \$537,130 in overall SR funding and \$25,014 in dedicated Gold Seal funding, with instructions to use the funding to cover the QPI and Gold Seal shortfalls. The DEL has



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

b. Proposed Legislation for 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. Farewell Presentaion for Former Board Chair, Van Mansker

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

None.

Adjourn: Meeting was adjourned at 10:44 a.m.

Next Meeting: July 15, 2025, at 10:00 a.m. in the Joyce Griffin Room for Professional Development and Testing at the Early Learning Coalition Office, 1720 West Fairfield Dr. Suite 100/400, Pensacola, Florida 32501