



Early Learning Coalition of Escambia County

Executive/Finance Committee Meeting Minutes

July 24, 2025, 9:00 a.m.

Members Present

Shannon Nickinson (Interim Chair) Roger Thompson Mona Jackson
Tammy Hicks

Members Absent

None

Staff

Bruce Watson Melissa Jennings Nina Daniels Dawn Engel

Public

None

I. Welcome and Introductions

Notification of the Executive Finance Committee Meeting scheduled for July 24, 2025, was sent to the Pensacola News Journal, and posted to the Coalition Public Calendar Board on July 1, 2025. The meeting was called to order by Ms. Nickinson.

II. Public Comments

None.

III. Consent Agenda

Upon a motion made by Mr. Thompson and seconded by Ms. Jackson, the Consent Agenda, consisting of the Agenda, Financial Reports for May 2025 and Minutes of June 26, 2025, was approved without objection.

IV. Coalition Status Reports

a. Financial Update

Through June the Coalition spent \$15.3 million of the \$17.9 million SR grant which is 85.7% of the grant. SR Admin was 3.0%, Non-Direct Services was 19.5% and Quality was 10.2%. VPK Services was \$4.8 million of \$5.0 million which is 97.7%. VPK Admin spending was 2.4%.

b. Enrollment/Wait List Status Report

There are 2,510 children enrolled in the School Readiness Program of which 58 are SRMAT and 868 are school-age children. There are 320 children on the Wait List. There are 1,490 children approved for VPK for 2025/26 Program year.

c. Contracting and Fraud Summary Report

There are 80 SR providers and 67 VPK providers.



Early Learning Coalition of Escambia County

V. Committee Recommendations

None.

VI. Old Business

a. SR Fiscal Year 2024-25 EOY Funding and Invoicing

All SR and VPK Advances were expended with the May 2025 Invoice. For VPK this was planned, but for SR and SR Plus this was done a month sooner than usual because the DEL required all SR and SR Plus advances to be returned with the May invoice. To help ensure expenditure reimbursements were more than advances the DEL approved including any non-direct expenses already paid or obligated in June be included in the May 2025 invoice. There will not be a June 2025 or a 13th invoice for 2024-2025 for SR and SR Plus services or expenditures. This was done so that the balance of unexpended but allocated SR and SR Plus funds could be reverted to the Coalition for use in Fiscal Year 2025-2026. Payment for the June Service Period of SR and SR Plus will be made by doing a Prior Year Invoice in 2025-2026. The amounts reverted were \$2,560,523 for SR and \$184,588 for SR Plus. Approximately \$1.4 million of the reverted funds were used to pay for June SR services. June SR Plus services have not been invoiced because the reverted funds have yet to be reallocated and there was no allocation of SR Plus funding in the first NOA for FY 2025-2026.

b. State SR Allocations (First NOA for 2025-2026)

The first edition of the Notice of Award for 2025-2026 has been released and was presented for discussion. The initial SR allocation for the fiscal year was \$16,368,553.

c. Funding Projections for Fiscal Year 2025-2026

The following analysis and funding scenarios for use of the FY 2025-2026 SR funding allocated to date were provided for review and discussion:

1. The FY 2024-2025 year end funding amount of \$18.3 million supports enrollment of about 2,500 children.
2. The initial allocation from the Legislature for ELC Escambia for SR services was \$15.8 million. This amount can only support 2,000 children in care. To meet budgetary restrictions a reduction in enrollment of 500 children would have to be initiated almost immediately.
3. The reverted funding should result in an increase in funding for use in serving children in FY 2025-2026 of just over \$1.5 million. This addition funding could support 2,200 children in care. This would result in a reduction of about 300 children.
4. The AELC has proposed a plan named the Compression Scenario where all the reverted funds are redistributed based on need. This could potentially increase Coalition funding by an additional \$500,000. This could support 2,300 children in care. This would result in a reduction of only about 150-200 children.



Early Learning Coalition of Escambia County

5. The Escambia Children's Trust has made an offer to try and get the Coalition \$1 million to help offset the shortage in funding from FY 2024-2025 to FY 2025-2026.

- d. Audit RFP Status

The Audit RFP process has been completed, and the firm of Carr, Riggs and Ingram LLC was selected. The Coalition's contract and the CRI agreements were not ready to present to the EXCOM but will hopefully be ready to present to the August Board meeting. Once the contract is approved by the Board, a contracting pre-approval request will be sent to the DEL because the amount is over \$25,000. Once the Coalition receives approval from the DEL, both parties will execute the contract to start on September 1, 2025.

- e. VPK Requirements/ECSD/ReadyKids! ReadingPals Program – Update

An issue was found that put the school district VPK program in non-compliance with DEL Guidance regarding what can and cannot be done during VPK Instructional Hours. The school district allows ReadyKids! ReadingPals program volunteers to take children out of class once a week for forty-five minute sessions to help to improve literacy. The volunteers are not qualified VPK teachers or aides, and DEL guidance says only VPK qualified teachers can deliver VPK. With the new understanding of the DEL guidance, ReadingPals will not be allowed during VPK hours.

- f. Governor Board Appointees

The Board Appointment Office has informed the ED that Board applications are only valid for three years. Any positions that have applications pending that were submitted within the last three years will have to resubmit an application.

- g. New Finance Director Search

The Finance Director position has been posted on the ELC website. One firm has offered to do the functions of Finance Director, but as a contractor, and without a full-time day-to-day presence on site. A hiring company was also contacted. They want between \$25,000 - \$30,000 for their efforts.

- h. Staff Availability Updates

There have been two staff out since March. Ms. Rollins is scheduled to return to work on August 4. Mr. Cotton is still out and has not had any communication with the Coalition in over a month. Mr. Cotton has not provided any timeframe for his return. Due to the absence of Mr. Cotton, the Coalition had to find alternatives to get IT work done. The Coalition found a solution to the IT issues which in return will eliminate the position for an on-site IT position.

- i. Change to IT Support Services Contract

The service agreement with Digital Boardwalk was changed from partial IT support to fully managed IT support. The cost increase was about one third of what the Coalition was paying for a full-time on-site position with benefits.



Early Learning Coalition of Escambia County

VII. New Business

a. ELC Organization Change

The in-house IT position is being eliminated, and IT services will be handled by Digital Boardwalk. Due to these changes, the ELC Organizational Chart required updating. The updated ELC Organizational Chart was presented for discussion. Upon a motion made by Mr. Thompson and seconded by Ms. Nickinson, it was approved without objection to take the revised ELC Organizational Chart to the Board.

b. FY 2025-2026 Budget

The FY 2025-2026 Budget was presented for discussion. Upon a motion made by Mr. Thompson and seconded by Ms. Jackson, it was approved without objection to take the FY 2025-2026 Budget to the Board.

c. ED Annual Evaluation

The ED Annual Evaluation was presented for discussion. Upon a motion made by Mr. Thompson and seconded by Ms. Jackson, it was approved without objection to take the ED Annual Performance Evaluation to the Board.

d. EOY Reports

The EOY Reports were presented for discussion. In FY 2024-2025, there were 1,237 Vision Screenings performed, 1,348 hearing screenings performed, 24 outreach events, and 17,886 books were distributed. EOY Reports will be presented to the Board.

e. Kindergarten Readiness Rates

Kindergarten Readiness Rates were presented for discussion. A summary of the Kindergarten Readiness for the 2023-2024 VPK program year was provided for discussion. This summary will be presented to the Board.

VIII. Audits and Reviews - In Progress

- a. DEL Accountability Review.** Waiting for Final Report.
- b. DEL Finance Review.** Waiting for Draft Report.

IX. Executive Director's Resignation

Mr. Watson submitted his resignation letter. He has been the Executive Director for 13 years. His last day will be November 14, 2025, or 90 days after a new Finance Director is hired. He has volunteered to be the move coordinator in the event that the Coalition has to relocate in 2027.

X. Adjourn: The Meeting was adjourned at 10:46 a.m.

Next Meeting: September 25, 2025, at 9:00 a.m. at the Early Learning Coalition Office, 1720 West Fairfield Dr., Suite 100/400, Pensacola, Florida 32501