Early Learning Coalition of Escambia County

Early Learning Coalition of Escambia County
Board Meeting Minutes
February 18, 2026, 10:00 a.m.
Interim Chair: Tammy Hicks

Members in Attendance

Tammy Hicks	Shacondra Primm	Deborah Tucker
Brian Wyer	Tarae Donaldson	Mary Ann Bickerstaff
Lindsey Cannon	Doug Brown	Melissa Sidoti
Craig Jones	Reginald Dogan	

Members Absent

Edna Williams	Deanna Oleske	Cindy Kirk
Bambi Sealy	Mona Jackson	Paul Fetsko

Public in Attendance

None

Staff in Attendance

Al Henderson	Dawn Engel	Tom Porter
Melissa Jennings	Nina Daniels	Renee Maxwell

I. Welcome and Introduction

Notification of this meeting of the Board of Directors was sent to the Pensacola News Journal for publication on February 3, 2026, and posted to the Coalition Public Calendar Board. The meeting was called to order by the Interim Chair, Ms. Hicks.

II. Public Comments

None

III. Chair Opening Comments

a. Approval of Consent Agenda: Meeting Agenda, Minutes of January 6, 2026, and Financial Reports for October through December 2025.

Discussions were had pertaining to amending the minutes to clarify a statement made by Ms. Maxwell.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Brown and seconded by Ms. Bickerstaff, the Meeting Agenda, and Financials for October through December 2025, were approved without objections.

Once the changes have been made to January 6th minutes, Board Secretary, Mr. Jones, will sign them and the minutes will be posted on the ELC website.

b. Board Handbook/Training

Early Learning Coalition of Escambia County

Ms. Hicks stated that after all the issues that occurred during the hiring process of the new Executive Director, there needs to be a refresher course on Sunshine Laws and duties of each of the Board members' positions.
Ms. Engel and Mr. Jones are currently working on a handbook for the Board members.
Mr. Brown suggested that there be annual Board member training.

IV. Executive Committee Report

a. Introduction of New Executive Director

The new Executive Director, Mr. Henderson, was introduced to the Board. Mr. Henderson presented a counteroffer with a salary range of $120,000 to $125,000 to EXCOM's original offer of $90,000. EXCOM provided Mr. Henderson with their max and final offer of $95,000, which he accepted. The $95,000 counteroffer was approved by EXCOM. Mr. Henderson's first day was February 2, 2026.

b. Coalition's By-Laws Revision

Ms. Engel is working on revising the Coalition's By-Laws. Ms. Engel reached out to other coalitions for examples of their By-Laws. Our Coalition's By-Laws lacked in-depth details of what is expected from the Board. Ms. Engel shared a copy of the revision to the EXCOM to get the process of getting the revised By-Laws approved.
Mr. Brown suggested that the revised By-Laws be presented at two Board meetings, so all members have an opportunity to review them.

c. Gubernatorial Board Appointments and Total Board Membership

Ms. Hicks stated that there needs to be a search for a new permanent Board Chair. The Board currently has two Governor Appointment Private Sector positions still vacant.
The Board discussed having a Facebook Post to recruit candidates to fill the open positions on the Board.

V. Executive Director's Report

a. Coalition Status Reports:

1. Financial Update

Through December the Coalition spent $9.4 million of the $19.4 million SR grant which is 48.6% of the grant. SR Admin was 1.6%, Non-Direct Services was 14.8% and Quality was 8.5%. VPK Services was $2.1 million of $4.8 million which is 43.8%. VPK Admin spending was 2.2%. Note that the Invoice Dashboard still includes the $1.4 million submitted as a Prior Year Invoice for SR services for June 2025. The DEL still has not adjusted the current year balances to account for this amount, and therefore utilization figures, and associated targets and restrictions, are skewed accordingly.

2. SR/VPK Enrollment/Wait List Status Report

There are 2,328 children enrolled in the School Readiness program of which 74 are SRMAT and 956 are school-age children. The BG8 ECOM Pri 6 Wait List has 64 children, BG8 ECON Pri 7 Wait List has 4 Children and the SRMAT Wait List has 30 children for a total of 98 children.

3. Contracting Summary Report

There are 87 SR Providers, and 67 VPK Providers under contract.

VI. Old Business

a. Fiscal Year 25-26 SR Funding Projections – Update

Mr. Porter spoke about the need to get the current enrollment numbers up. The Coalition currently has the funding, but the issue lies in getting parents to enroll their children in the SR/VPK programs.

b. Impact 100 Grant – Update

Ms. Jennings gave an update on the Van. The graphics have been approved so the Coalition can move forward with the purchase of the Van. Next, the van will be sent out to be outfitted and wrapped.

The name for the van has been revealed: The Inspiration Station "Where Families and Learning Meet."

VII. New Business

a. Mr. Thompson's Board Resignation

Mr. Thompson submitted his Board resignation. Mr. Thompson's resignation was effective January 31, 2026. Mr. Thompson has served on the Board since 2002. Ms. Maxwell asked the Board if the Board would like to have an appreciation award made for Mr. Thompson.

Upon a motion made by Ms. Donaldson and seconded by Mr. Jones, it was approved without objection to have an award made to present to Mr. Thompson.

b. RDC Chair Vacancy

Mr. Thompson served as the RDC Chair. With Mr. Thompson resigning, the RDC Chair is Vacant. Ms. Hicks asked the Board if there would be anyone who would be interested in the position. No one offered to volunteer for the opening.

c. Approval of New ED's Credit Card

The Coalition has three credit card holders, Mr. Watson with a $25,000 limit, Ms. Engel with a $5,000 limit and Ms. Maxwell with a $5,000 limit.

Mr. Watson's card cannot be deactivated at this time due to outstanding charges that have to be paid.

Approval from the Board is required to add Mr. Henderson to the account.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Brown and seconded by Mr. Craig, it was approved without objection to add Mr. Henderson to the credit card account.

d. Approval of adding Mr. Henderson to the Checking Account

A discussion was held regarding adding Mr. Henderson to the checking account. Upon a motion made by Ms. Bickerstaff and seconded by Mr. Brown, it was approved without objection to add Mr. Henderson to the checking account.

e. Delegation Letter for the ED

The delegation letter that will allow Mr. Henderson to sign contracts and documents necessary to conduct Coalition business was presented to the Board for approval. Upon a motion made by Mr. Jones and seconded by Mr. Brown, the Delegation Letter was approved without objection.

f. Employee Handbook Revision

A revision was made to the Employee Handbook regarding the Coalition's College course reimbursement policy. During the discussion, Mr. Brown suggested that the handbook be reviewed by legal counsel.
Ms. Sidoti made a motion to have all documents legally reviewed as necessary. Mr. Brown Seconded the motion.
Discussion was had to find legal counsel for the Coalition.
The motion to have all documents legally reviewed as necessary was approved without objection.

Approval of the Employee Handbook was tabled until a later date.

g. MOU ELC and CAPC

Community Action Program Committee (CAPC) provided a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the Board to review and approve. Upon a motion made by Mr. Jones and seconded by Ms. Donaldson, the Memorandum of Understanding between CAPC and the Coalition was approved without objection.

h. HR Services

The Coalition is still in search of company to handle the HR services.

i. Bruce Waston's Retirement Celebration Ideas

The Board has decided to plan a retirement ceremony for Mr. Watson. The ceremony will be held at the next Board meeting on May 14,2026.

VIII. Audits and Reviews in Progress

a. 2024-2025 Financial Review – Report

Financial Review has been submitted and waiting for approval.

b. 2024-2025 Accountability Review – Final Report and CAP

DEL confirms the successful final acceptance of all necessary corrective actions.

c. FY 2024-2025 A-133 Audit

Early Learning Coalition of Escambia County

The audit is ongoing

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d. Second Desk Review

The second Desk Review is scheduled for March 15, 2026.

IX. Adjourn: 11:28 am

Next Meeting: Thursday, May 14, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. at the Early Learning Coalition offices at 1720 West Fairfield Dr., Suite 100/400, Pensacola, FL 32501

Board Secretary Signature: Craig Jones

Date: 6/5/2026