

Early Learning Coalition of Escambia County
Board Meeting Minutes
May 14, 2026, 10:00 a.m.
Interim Chair: Tammy Hicks

Members in Attendance

Tammy Hicks	Shacondra Primm	Deborah Tucker
Tarae Donaldson	Lindsey Cannon	Doug Brown
Melissa Sidoti	Craig Jones	Reginald Dogan
Cindy Kirk	Deirdre Patton	Paul Fetsko
Ruthie Noel	Ashley Colon	Bambi Sealy
Mona Jackson		

Members Absent

Edna Williams	Deanna Oleske	Brian Wyer
Mary Ann Bickerstaff		

Public in Attendance

Adam Nelson (Carr, Riggs & Ingram)

Staff in Attendance

Al Henderson	Dawn Engel	Tom Porter
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 April 28, 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

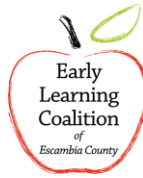
a. Approval of Consent Agenda: Meeting Agenda, Minutes of February 18, 2026, and Financial Reports for January and February 2026.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Fetsko and seconded by Mr. Brown the Meeting Agenda, Minutes of February 18, 2026 and Financials for January and February 2026, were approved without objections.

IV. Carr, Riggs & Ingram Single Audit Report

a. Presentation of FY 2024-2025- Single Audit Report

Mr. Adam Nelson from Carr, Riggs & Ingram was onsite to present the FY 2024-2025 Single Audit. Mr. Nelson stated that it was a clean audit with no findings. The audit showed high



program efficiency, strong compliance and a stable financial position. Upon a motion made by Mr. Brown and seconded by Mr. Fetsko, the audit was approved as it was presented.

V. Executive Committee Report

a. New Board Members – Ruthie Noel, Ashley Colon & Deirdre Patton

Ms. Ruthie Noel from Habitat for Humanity has submitted her application to be a member of the Early Learning Coalition Board of Directors. Upon a motion made by EXCOM and seconded by Ms. Kirk, it was approved without objection to appoint Ms. Noel to the Board.

b. Private Provider Representative – Ashley Colon

Providers were asked for nominations for Provider Representatives to serve on the Board. Only one nomination was submitted for Private Provider Representative. Ms. Colon will serve as the mandatory position of Private Provider Representative.

Upon the motion made by EXCOM and seconded by Mr. Fetsko, the recommendation of Ms. Colon serving as the Private Provider Representative, was approved without objection.

c. Faith Based Provider Representative – Deirdre Patton

Providers were asked for nominations for Faith-Based Provider Representatives to serve on the Board. Only two nominations were submitted for Faith-Based Provider Representative. A poll was sent to Providers to vote for the nominee that they wanted to be the representative. Ms. Deirdre Patton won the vote and will be the mandatory Faith-Based Provider Representative. Upon the motion made by EXCOM and seconded by Mr. Fetsko, the recommendation of Ms. Patton serving as the Faith-Based Provider Representative, was approved without objection.

d. ELCEC Use of Restricted Funds Policy & Procedures

This policy and procedures are to establish clear governance guidance for the appropriate, responsible, and strategic use of unrestricted funds.

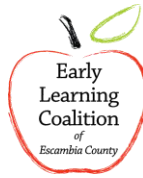
Upon a motion made by EXCOM and seconded by Mr. Jones, the ELCEC Use of Restricted Funds Policy & Procedures was approved without objection.

e. Revised Developmental Screening Policy

Language updates had to be made to change Inclusion Specialists to Early Intervention Specialists. A new policy was implemented by DEL to give parents 20 days to complete the developmental screenings. If parents fail to complete the developmental screenings within the 20-day time frame, the Provider will have 45 days to complete the screening from the end date of the 20 days given to the parents.

Upon a motion made by EXCOM and seconded by Ms. Cannon, the revised Developmental Screening Policy was approved without objection.

f. Revised SR Program Assessment Policy



In 2023, the SR Program Assessment Policy was changed to add the VPK program. DEL has now decided that VPK cannot be a part of the SR Program Assessment Policy. The policy was revised to remove all language and rules pertaining to VPK.

Upon a motion made by EXCOM and seconded by Mr. Fetsko, the revised SR Program Assessment Policy was approved without objection.

g. Revised Eligibility Manual

DEL requires some language updates in the manual. DEL also updated income guidelines from using FPL to now using State Medium Income.

Upon a motion made by EXCOM and seconded by Mr. Fetsko, the revised Eligibility Manual was approved without objections.

h. Revised Eligibility Priority Template

Revisions to the priority template had to be made. An assessment will need to be done before the template can be approved by DEL.

Upon a motion made by EXCOM and seconded by Mr. Fetsko, the Revised Eligibility Priority Template was approved without objections.

i. Revised Fee Waiver Policy

DEL requires an update to the Fee Waiver Policy for Co-Pays for Protective Services families. DEL has 3 Co-Pay options to choose from.

1. Implement the highest parent fee of 85%. Once documentation has been provided, adjust the parent fee accordingly.
2. Set a Common Co-Payment amount.
3. Set the Co-Payment to zero due to no documentation being provided.

The Coalition chose to implement the first option. The revision was made to the Fee Waiver Policy reflecting the Co-Payment change.

Upon a motion made by EXCOM and seconded by Mr. Fetsko, the updated Fee Waiver Policy was approved without objections.

j. Revised Anti-Fraud Plan

Language changes had to be made in the Plan. Over payment process due to fraud cases had to be added to the Anti-Fraud Plan.

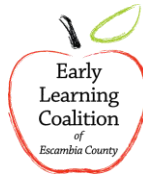
Upon a motion made by EXCOM and seconded by Ms. Cannon, the Revised Anti-Fraud Plan was approved without objection.

VI. Executive Director's Report

a. Coalition Status Reports:

1. Financial Update

Through April the Coalition spent \$14.95 million of the \$19.4 million SR grant which is 77% of the grant. SR Admin was 1.829%, Non-Direct Services was 82.9% and Quality was 9.6%. VPK Services was \$4.1 million of \$4.8 million which is 85%. VPK Admin spending was 2.285%.



2. SR/VPK Enrollment/Wait List Status Report

There are 2,476 children enrolled in the School Readiness program of which 74 are SRMAT and 95 are school-age children. The BG8 ECON Pri 6 Wait List has 44 children, BG8 ECON Pri 7 Wait List has 4 Children and the SRMAT Wait List has 4 children for a total of 55 children.

3. Contracting Summary Report

There are 86 SR Providers, and 66 VPK Providers under contract.

VII. Old Business

a. Impact 100 Grant – Update

The van has been purchased, and it is now at Fleetco for internal modifications. After modifications are completed, the van to be sent to Gator Grafix to be wrapped. The goal is to expend funds by June so the Coalition can apply for another grant this year.

VIII. New Business

a. Employment Law Retainer - Update

The Coalition entered a Law Retainer with The Krizner Group. This action requires Board approval. Upon a motion made by Mr. Brown and seconded by Mr. Fetsko, the retainer of The Krizner Group was approved without objections.

b. Retention of Legal Counsel

The Coalition had retained TG Law PLLC for legal Counsel. This action requires Board approval. Upon a motion made by Mr. Brown and seconded by Mr. Fetsko the retention of TG Law PLLC was approved without objections.

c. Provider Termination – My Little Blessings

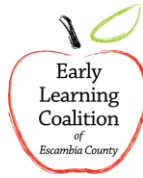
My Little Blessings is being terminated for fraud. The Provider has requested a Review Hearing and was given three dates and times to choose from. The Review Hearing will be held on May 26, 2026

d. Provider Termination – Little Hands and Feet

Little Hands and Feet was terminated due to noncompliance for developmental screenings. This is an issue that has been ongoing for the past five years. Little Hand and Feet has been on probation twice in the past 12 months. The Provider requested a reviewing hearing that was held on May 6, 2026. The Review Hearing Committee reversed the Coalition's decision to terminate Little Hands and Feet Child Care Development Center's contract. The Committee agreed to a Corrective Action Plan.

e. Nonparticipating Board Members

The Board currently has two members who are not participating. Private Sector member Edna Williams has not attended a meeting in over a year and a half. County Commissioner



Representative, Deanna Oleske has not attended a meeting since she was appointed on 8/14/2025. Mr. Henderson is going to reach out to Wes Moreno regarding the County Commissioner Representative and to Edna Williams.

f. TORSH Single Source Procurement

TORSCH is a coaching platform that will allow ELC's coaching staff to be able to reach more early learning educators. A request to purchase this platform was submitted to DEL and approval has been granted. The approval document was posted on ELC's website where it will remain for 15 days. Once the 15 days have passed, the purchase agreement will be signed.

g. Tandem Staffing Services

The Coalition has signed a contract with Tandem Staffing Services. Tandem Staffing Services is a service that offers a pool of qualified substitute teachers that the Coalition's Providers can use for staffing issues. Tandem will vet all teachers and take care of background screenings and verify that the teachers have their required 40 hours.

h. Community Outreach Vehicle Insurance

Insurance for the van has been purchased. The policy is now in effect. The premium for the policy was paid for out of the Impact 100 Grant.

i. Property and General Liability Insurance

Quotes for Property and General Liability Insurance have been received and will be reviewed before a recommendation is presented to the Board.

IX. Audits and Reviews in Progress

a. 2024-2025 Financial Fiscal Monitoring Review – Report

Financial Review is in process.

X. Adjourn: 11:45 am

Next Meeting: Thursday, August 13, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. at the Early Learning Coalition offices at 1720 West Fairfield Dr., Suite 100/400, Pensacola, FL 32501