

Early Learning Coalition of Escambia County
Board Meeting Minutes
February 11, 2021 10:00 a.m.
Chair: Van Mansker

Members in Attendance

Van Mansker	Roger Thompson	Mary Ann Bickerstaff
Craig Jones	Richard Wright	Shanna Robinson
Marcus McBride	Brian Wyer	Angela Strumeyer
Melody Meier	Judy Dickinson	Cindy Kirk
Steven Sanchez		

Members Absent

Beate Bolton	Dr. Laura Edler	Drew Hardgrave
--------------	-----------------	----------------

Public in Attendance

Mona Jackson	Edna Williams	Shannon Nickinson
--------------	---------------	-------------------

(Note: These three Public Attendees were appointed to the Board during this meeting.)

Staff in Attendance

Bruce Watson	Dawn Engel	Paula Rollins
Becki Rutchland		

I. Welcome and Introduction

Notification of this meeting of the Board of Directors was posted to the Coalition Public Calendar Board on February 1, 2021 and sent to the Pensacola News Journal for publication on January 25, 2021. The meeting was called to order by Mr. Mansker.

II. Public Comments

- a. None

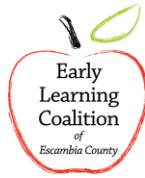
III. Chair Comments

- a. **Approval of Consent Agenda: Meeting Agenda, Minutes of the December 10, 2020 Board Meeting, and Financial Statements for October and November 2020.**

Upon a motion made by Mr. Wyer and seconded by Mr. McBride, approval of the Consent Agenda, consisting of the Meeting Agenda, Minutes of December 10, 2020 meeting, and Financial Statements for October and November 2020 were approved without objection.

IV. Executive Committee Report:

- a. **Board Resignations**



The OEL informed the Coalition that upon review of an update to the Coalition Board membership submitted to the OEL it was noted that two members had been appointed for a third term. By statute appointed members cannot serve more than two consecutive terms. Mr. Watson has mistakenly assumed this only applied to Governor appointees, and not all private sector members. To correct this mistake, the two members in question were asked to resign, and they did so. They are, however, eligible to reapply for appointment in the future.

b. Board Member Term Limits

Statute provides for Board member terms to be for either three or four years. Coalition By-Laws provide for either term length. Current practice is for members to be appointed for three-year terms. The Coalition asks the Board to reaffirm if it wants to continue this practice or go with longer terms. The Board agreed without putting it to a vote to continue with three years terms.

c. New Board Members

Ms. Mona Jackson has applied for an appointment to the Coalition Board of Directors. On a motion from Mr. Thompson and seconded by Ms. Bickerstaff appointment of Ms. Jackson for a three-year term was approved without objection.

Ms. Edna Williams has applied for an appointment to the Coalition Board of Directors. On a motion from Mr. Thompson and seconded by Ms. Strumeyer appointment of Ms. Williams for a three-year term was approved without objection.

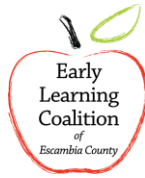
Ms. Shannon Nickinson has applied for an appointment to the Coalition Board of Directors. On a motion from Mr. Jones and seconded by Ms. Bickerstaff appointment of Ms. Nickinson for a three-year term was approved without objection.

V. New Business:

The Board decided to change the order of the agenda and place New Business before the Executive Director's Report to ensure any Board members that might have to leave early were present for the discussion of these two topics.

a. OEL Rate Increases

OEL conducted an analysis of market rates statewide and developed proposed rate increases specific to each Coalition based on their local market rates. This is in effort to implement statewide an increase School Readiness Provider rates using \$50 million earmarked by the legislature for use in this fiscal year. These rates are to be made effective January 1, 2021. The proposed State budget for the coming year includes a \$100 million increase to cover these same increases for an entire year. The current and proposed rates are provided for comparison. The Executive Committee recommended approval of this increase in principal but could not make a motion as the final tables from OEL had not yet been published. On a motion Mr. Jones and seconded by Ms. Kirk the Board unanimously approved adoption of the new rates developed by the Office of Early Learning of Florida.



b. Coalition Operations/Relocation Update

With the post-holiday increase in COVID cases the Coalition decided to reduce on site staff and lock the doors to the public. Providers and parents are still allowed in the office on a case-by-case basis, but the numbers are restricted, and appointments are encouraged. The process to transition selected staff to permanent telework has begun. The Coalition is also in discussion with the landlord to relocate to newly renovated offices in the Plaza Tower at the south end of the Town and Country complex. These offices are more in line with the business needs of the Coalition and would restore most of the square footage lost as a result of the fire in August 2020. Lease terms and renovations are being negotiated.

VI. Executive Director's Report:

a. SR/VPK Program Fiscal Year Benchmark Report, Utilization/Enrollment/Wait List, Status Report, and Contracting Summary State Report

1. Benchmark Report:

Through the end of November, the Coalition was roughly \$300,000 below budget projections. Registration fees for FY 2020-2021 are just beginning to be paid. The Benchmark report included the addition of the CARES GRANT funding for the year. This is additional money from the OEL to cover cost for both the First Responder/Health Care Worker Child Care Program and the four phases of CARES Grants.

2. Enrollment/Wait List Status Report:

There are 3,044 children enrolled in the School Readiness program, of which 1,219 are school-age children. There are 107 children enrolled in the SR Match Program. All the children on the Wait List were pulled last week. VPK enrollments are 1,304, which are about two thirds of the enrollments from last year.

3. Contracting and Fraud Summary Report:

There are 83 SR Providers, and 65 VPK Providers. There were no new fraud cases to report.

b. Mid-Year Operational Reports

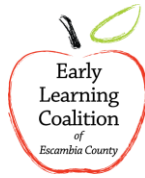
Reports summarizing activity from July to December 2020 were provided. Of note was that the Medical Support staff have resumed, and they are seeing an increase in children's BMI, CCRR calls have increased to pre-pandemic levels, and on-site monitoring visits are being conducted.

VII. Old Business:

a. COVID Impact on Operations

1. Provider Absences and Closure Payments and Parent Fee Waivers

Payments to Providers based on enrollments, vice attendance ended September 30, 2020. The number of allowable absences was decreased by two each month starting with 16 days in



October to usual 10 days in January. Waivers for all Parent Co-Payments (Parent Fees) ended on December 31, 2020.

2. First Responder and Health Care Worker Child Care Program

New enrollments in the First Responder and Health Care Worker Child Care Program ended July 31. However, those already in care could submit new referrals until December 31, 2020. Those referrals are in the process of ending without extension and the whole program will conclude on March 31, 2021.

3. SRPA and Monitoring

SRPA and Monitoring field work and site visits resumed in December. The prevailing COVID conditions are such that the Coalition is now comfortable doing site visits so SRPA observations and monitoring site visits are being conducted. All SRPAs, except for those required for Providers on a QIP, will be done by the end of March. So far the results have been better than expected.

b. OEL CARES Grants Phase IV and First Responder

In December, CARES Phase IV Grants provided a second, but smaller, grant to all our SR and VPK Providers and non-contracted childcare Providers as well. It appears current funding, however, may not be enough to cover all the remaining costs of the First Responder program.

c. Escambia Children's Trust Update

The Trust was approved and now the work begins. The Council had their first meeting two weeks ago. There were many questions and uncertainty regarding the next steps.

VIII. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 11:15 a.m.

Next Meeting: Thursday, April 8, 2021 at 10:00 a.m. at the Early Learning Coalition Office at 3300 N. Pace Boulevard, Suite 210, Pensacola, FL 32505

Minutes approved by:

 Marcus McBride, Board Secretary

 Date