



Early Learning Coalition of Escambia County

**Executive/Finance Committee Meeting Minutes**

May 25, 2023, 8:30 a.m.

**Members Present**

Van Mansker

Roger Thompson

Mona Jackson

Melissa Birdsall

**Members Absent**

None

**Staff**

Bruce Watson

Dawn Engel

Melissa Jennings

Darrell Merritt

Nina Daniels

**Public**

None

**I. Welcome and Introductions**

Notification of the Executive Finance Committee Meeting scheduled for May 25, 2023, was sent to the Pensacola News Journal, and posted to the Coalition Public Calendar Board on May 8, 2023. The meeting was called to order by Mr. Mansker.

**II. Public Comments**

None.

**III. Consent Agenda**

Upon a motion by Ms. Jackson and seconded by Mr. Thompson, the Consent Agenda, consisting of the Agenda, Minutes of March 23, 2023, and Financials for March 2023, was approved without objection. (The April 27, 2023 meeting was cancelled.)

**IV. Coalition Status Reports**

a. Financials

The Coalition is still working on a new version of the Benchmark report. As of the end of March \$13.4 million of the \$17.3 million of the SR grant has been spent. Currently over 84% has been spent on services and SR Admin is at an all-time low of 2.7%. However, the Admin percentage will increase this month due to having to pay the annual premium for liability, D&O and property insurance. Mr. Mansker stated that he would like to spend some of the unused Admin on the staff. Less than 16% has been spent on non-direct service spending. VPK Admin is currently at 3.3%.

b. Enrollment/Wait List Status Report:



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There are 2,711 children enrolled in the School Readiness Program. There are 702 children on the Wait List. There are 343 children enrolled in VPK. The VPK numbers have dropped due to most VPK programs having ended for this school year. There are 24 children approved for the VPK Summer Program. There are 1338 approved for VPK for the 2023-2024 school year. No children have been pulled from the Wait List since April 18, 2023, due to the number of children pending a provider is over 30.

c. **Contracting and Fraud Summary Report:**

There are 86 SR providers and 76 VPK providers. There is one fraud case pending. A Review Hearing for this case will take place after this meeting adjourns.

### **V. Committee Recommendations**

a. Ideas to Improve Child Care Employment Levels

The Resource Development Committee and the Executive Committee discussed what can be done to assist providers in hiring and retaining staff to work in their early learning and care facilities. There has been financial support for providers to help them pay incentives for retention and recruitment of staff, but like in many other service industries, there is a lack of people willing to work. The Coalition is looking for ideas for how to assist providers in finding more staff. Currently there are efforts being made to improve education opportunities and raise the level of professionalism amongst early learning teachers.

### **VI. Old Business**

a. DEL CRRSA Workforce Initiative

The local CRRSA workforce recruitment and retention initiatives are complete. The last part of CRRSA was the Coalition was mandated to pay VPK providers from two years ago, who were closed for COVID for more than five days, for the additional days that they were closed. DEL did the calculations, and the Coalition validated the data. These payments will be made in the next week.

b. ARPA Grant Funding – Update

Around \$1 million will roll over to next year, of which most is a continuation of workforce initiatives. There is under \$200,000 in ARPA Discretionary that is to be used on curriculum incentives and an additional \$9,000 to use for double coding assessments.

c. VPK Program Assessments and Progress Monitoring

VPK program assessments are finished. Currently there are eight children pending completion of their progress monitoring.

d. Change in 401K Providers

The transition from Slavic 401K to ADP 401K has been completed. The loan payments will resume on May 31, 2023.



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### e. Escambia Children's Trust Help Me Grow ITB

The Coalition has elected not to put in a bid to take on this program. The Coalition will be willing to work with whichever company ends up taking this program on.

## **VII. New Business**

### a. New Board Member

Career Source ESCAROSA has decided to change their designee to the Coalition Board. Mr. Marcus McBride has designated Ms. Tarae Donaldson. Upon a motion made by Mr. Thompson and seconded by Ms. Jackson, it was approved without objection to take the new appointment to the Board for approval.

### b. Provider Representative Vote Results

Every three years the Coalition solicits a change in the two statutorily required Provider Representatives to the Coalition Board. The Providers make nominations and in turn vote for who they want to represent them. The Executive Committee agrees with the nominees chosen by the Providers and makes a motion the Ms. Shacondra Primm be appointed as the Private Sector Provider Representative and Ms. Tammy Hicks be appointed as the Faith-Based Provider Representative. Upon a motion made by Mr. Thompson and seconded by Ms. Jackson it was approved without objection to take the new appointed Provider Representatives to the Board for approval.

### c. Legislative Recap

Legislative Session Recap is out and the first item on the list is very positive for SR. There will be a \$100 million increase to SR recurring base funding, for a total of \$889 million. \$77 million was allocated to DEL to be dispersed to the Coalitions. A \$2.6 million increase was added to Help Me Grow statewide. There is a \$20 million increase to VPK funding, which equals to \$148 increase to VPK BSA. \$750,000 has been set aside for a cost of care study. There is \$315 million in ARPA discretionary funding for coalitions/providers to address local initiatives to meet unique community needs.

### d. 2023-2024 Coalition Budget

The Coalition budget for Fiscal Year 2023-2024 was not ready for review and approval by the Executive Committee. The budget is a draft based on level funding from the prior year for SR and VPK, and an estimate for any other funding, because the Coalition had yet to receive the first NOA from the DEL from which to apply actual funding amounts. Upon a motion made by Mr. Thompson and seconded by Ms. Jackson, it was approved without objection to bring the first draft of the budget to the Board for approval so the Coalition will be authorized to commence spending for the new year on July 1, 2023.

### e. Anti-Fraud Plan FY 2023-2024

All Coalitions are required to review their Anti-Fraud Plan annually. The plan has been reviewed and there were no changes made this year. Upon a motion made by Mr. Thompson and



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seconded by Ms. Jackson, it was approved to take the Anti-Fraud Plan FY 2023-2024 to the Board without objection.

### f. Review Hearing Committee Meeting May 25, 2023

A Review Hearing Committee meeting is scheduled for May 25, 2023, at 10:00 a.m. at the request of a Provider who has had their SR and VPK contracts terminated for suspected fraud. This Provider persists in having little to no accountability for who is attending their program on a day-to-day basis. This Provider has claimed, and has been paid for, children who no longer attend their program. They need to be held accountable and a fraud referral will be made. The Provider's contracts are scheduled to be terminated on June 10, 2023.

## **VIII. Audits and Reviews - In Progress**

### a. Accountability Review – Data Gathering Complete, Waiting Draft Report

The Accountability Review is complete. The out brief was done the first week of May. The final report is still pending.

### b. Finance Review – On Site complete, Waiting Draft Report

The Finance Review final report has been issued. There were 3 findings in the report.

### c. A-133 Audit – In Process, On Site Late March

The Audit for Fiscal Year 2021-2022 is still in process. The auditor asked if their bookkeeping office could have a look at the books first and to offer advice and help with the changes they feel are necessary and beneficial. The Coalition is now at the end of that process and hopefully will get the report in the next few days. Once this process is completed the auditors will be able to begin the audit.

## **IX. Adjourn: Meeting was adjourned at 9:40 a.m.**

**Next Meeting: June 22, 2023, at 8:30 a.m. at the Early Learning Coalition Office, 1720 West Fairfield Dr., Suite 100/400, Pensacola, Florida 32501**