

**Early Learning Coalition of Escambia County
Board Meeting Minutes
December 13, 2018 - 10:00 AM
Chair: Van Mansker**

Members in Attendance

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| Van Mansker | Mona Jackson | Craig Jones |
| Edna Williams | Cindy Kirk | Sheryl Rehberg |
| Brenda Hardy | | |

Members Called In

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| Mary Ann Winstead | Peggy Steward | Judy Dickinson |
| Melody Meier | | |

Members Absent

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| Shawn Jennings | Christina Doss | Marty Tutchtone |
| Roger Thompson | Drew Hardgrave | Mary Ann Bickerstaff |
| Wendi Ochs | | |

Staff

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| Bruce Watson | Becki Rutchland | Paula Rollins |
| Anne Cynkar | Vicki Pugh | Dawn Engel |

Public

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| Kermit "Skip" Housh | Wee Kare Carolers |
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I. Welcome and Introductions:

The Board meeting was called to order by Mr. Mansker. A special welcome was extended to guests the Wee Kare Carolers and former Coalition Chair Mr. Kermit "Skip" Housh.

II. Public Comments:

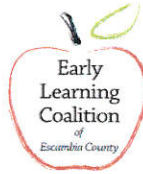
There were no public comments, however, the Wee Kare Carolers opened the meeting by performing a variety of Christmas carols.

III. Chair Comments:

A. Approval of Consent Agenda: Meeting Agenda, Minutes of October 9, 2018.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Jones and seconded by Ms. Hardy the Consent Agenda consisting of the Agenda and the Minutes of October 9, 2018 were approved and accepted without objection. Note: Due to issues with EFS MOD, financials were not available. The Coalition will not have financials for July to November until the February meeting.

The Board Chair announced there will be a presentation and a reception following the meeting in honor of Early Learning Coalition of Escambia County's former Chair, Mr. Kermit "Skip"



Housh. All Board members were invited to stay for the reception and to participate as judges in the staff door decorating contest.

IV. Executive Committee Report:

A. Protective Services Provider Expansion

A copy of DCF Rule 65C-13.030, Standards for Licensed Out-of-Home Caregivers was provided for discussion. Included in this Rule are the selection requirements for child care for children in licensed out-of-home care. Per Rule, child care providers shall be selected in the following order:

1. Gold Seal accredited providers.
2. Licensed child care providers.
3. Public school providers.
4. License exempt child care providers, including religious exempt, registered, and non-public schools.

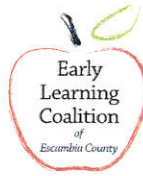
All providers must have a SR contract.

In the past, by local agreement between DCF and the Coalition, only Gold Seal and Licensed providers were used to provide child care for “protective services” children. This was because for many years there were no inspections and minimal oversight of public school and licensed exempt child care Providers.

Since the Coalition and local DCF agencies did not regularly visit or inspect the religious exempt or registered homes on a regular basis the Coalition and DCF agreed not to send Protective Service children to these facilities. However, with new requirements for periodic monitoring and Health and Safety inspections, these facilities are now visited at least three to four times a year. In the Northwest region the other three Coalitions do not limit where Protective Services children can be enrolled. Additionally, there is a shortage of infant and toddler capacity that has been impacting placing Protective Service infants and toddlers. Expanding the number of facilities to choose from might make it easier to place these children.

The Coalition still has to document how a facility is chosen and ensure they are chosen as required by Rule. Presently, choice number 3, public schools, is not an option because the public schools no longer contract with the Coalition. They opted out of the program last year when the State rules changed regarding Health and Safety inspections and background screenings.

Therefore, for all the above reasons the Coalition and DCF now support dropping the restrictions on which SR Providers can serve Protective Services children. All Providers not currently serving PS children will be offered the prerequisite training in January 2019. The Executive Committee brought the motion to drop the local restrictions and expand the list of Protective Service Providers. Mr. Jones seconded the motion and it was accepted and approved without objection.



Mr. Jones inquired how many children would not be served by using the required step by step selection procedures for placing children. Mr. Watson explained that all children would be served, but occasionally some children have to wait for a slot to become available. However, with this increase in the number of facilities that can serve Protective Service children there should be fewer delays in placing children into care.

B. Change in Eligibility Priorities (Ref: CAPC Community Needs Assessment)

In the 2018 session, the State Legislature changed F.S. 1002.87(1)(c) to allow Coalitions to establish their own Priorities 3 through 9 based on their local needs assessment. Eligibility priorities were discussed at the September Resource Development Committee (RDC) meeting and a ranking survey was provided to the members in attendance. The proposed list of Eligibility Priorities was presented at the November RDC meeting, at which public comment was solicited. The RDC recommended approval to the EXCOM. Likewise, the EXCOM makes a motion for approval by the Board of the proposed ELC Escambia Eligibility Priorities. Note this list will be included in the Coalition Plan Amendment required to be submitted for OEL approval by December 31, 2018.

The overall rationale for the new priorities was as follows.

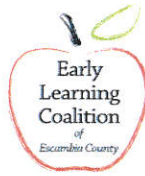
1. Serve whole families and not force break between various age groups. New Priorities 2 and 3 keeps PS families whole. Likewise, new Priorities 4 and 5 keep TCC families whole, and new Priorities 6 and 7 keep Working Poor/BG8 families whole.
2. Maintain continuity of care. Placing TCC right after PS acknowledges our informal practice that we have never forced TCC clients out of care to get in line behind our Wait List.
3. Early learning (birth to 5) is still our priority, but in execution Priority 1 clients always transitioned to old Priority 4 and 7 status even with a Priority 3 Wait List because of continuity of care. Also, the TANF program success stories, those that went from Priority 1 to the old Priority 4 or 7 (based on child's age), and eventually to Priority 3 or 6 respectively as they completed TCC were able to do so because we kept them in care through out these transitions. This new list order makes the TANF to TCC to Working Poor progression clearer.

The specific Eligibility Priorities List changes were:

Priorities 1 and 2, TANF and PS under 9 respectively, by statute cannot be changed.

New **Priority 3**, former Priority 5, PS children 9-12. Rationale: It is Coalition policy to serve the whole family whenever possible. Current priorities require that PS 9-12 not be served if there is a wait list for current Priority 3.

Priority 4 no change. TCC children under age 9. Rationale: These are former PRI1 TANF, their parents need assurance care will continue so they can maintain the new employment they were trained for. For this reason, these children remain in care even though currently assigned a priority lower than current Pri3 where the wait list begins.



New **Priority 5**, former Priority 7, TCC children age 9-12. Rationale: It is Coalition policy to serve the whole family whenever possible. Current priorities require that TCC 9-12 not be served if there is a wait list for current Priorities 3 and 6.

New **Priority 6**, former Priority 3, Working Poor birth to five. Rationale: See comments above regarding continuity of care, maintaining employment and whole family approach. Priorities 4 and 5 are already in care, only transitioning priority classification, and the impact in terms of total children for new Priority 3 is minimal. This will still be where the Wait List begins.

New **Priority 7**, former Priority 6. Working Poor Age 5-12. Rationale: No effective change, only now school age care immediately follows birth to five.

Priority 8 no change. Special needs children.

Priority 9 no change. Children concurrently enrolled in Headstart and VPK.

C. Board Secretary Nominee

When Mr. Rowell retired the Board Secretary position became vacant. Mr. Watson discussed the roles and responsibilities of the Board Secretary's position. Because no one immediately volunteered to be the Secretary, he suggested that the Executive Committee address this at their next meeting and bring a recommendation to the Board in February. It was unanimous that further discussion be held at the Board meeting in February. It was also discussed that the Vice-Chair and Secretary positions be combined, but Mr. Watson offered that doing so would reduce membership on the Executive Committee to a point that it would be hard to reliably make quorum each month.

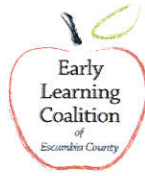
Board Treasurer, Ms. Jackson questioned the need to have 16 meetings annually and the possibility of having less meetings and less often. Mr. Watson explained that it is necessary for the Executive Committee to meet prior to the Board meetings to prepare any action items, and to do fraud related appeals. Mr. Mansker added that when the agenda does not require critical action items to be discussed or voted on immediately the Executive Committee meeting will be rescheduled or cancelled. For overall planning and scheduling purposes the Coalition finds it more practical to have the meetings remain as scheduled.

D. Adopting ELC Northwest Families for the Holiday

Mr. Watson presented an idea to AELC to adopt Coalition families who suffered losses from Hurricane Michael. AELC took the lead on his idea to coordinate an effort to support the ELC Northwest families. Mr. Watson encouraged Board members and ELC staff to participate in The Season of Giving Holiday Fund Drive. Everyone agreed to adopt two families. The staff and Board members donated gifts cards, presents and cash to help these families during the holiday season. To ensure the gifts were received before Christmas Mr. Watson volunteered to deliver the donated items to the ELC Northwest office in Chipley himself.

V. Executive Director's Report:

A. SR/VPK Fiscal Year Benchmark, Utilization/Enrollment/Wait List Status and Contracting Summary Status Reports



1. Benchmark Report:

The Coalition continues to face challenges with the new EFS MOD system. The Coalition continued to be unable to provide budget projections. The financials for July through November should be presented to the Executive Committee for approval at the January meeting.

The Coalition finished processing payments in EFS Legacy in October. Once everything was reconciled the estimated payments from July to October had over paid the Providers collectively about \$500,000. All adjustments were applied to the November reimbursements. Throughout the entire process of implementing EFS MOD the Providers were kept informed through letters, emails and phone calls regarding the Coalition's process and how payments would be made. With the re-introduction of EFS Legacy the Coalition advised Providers if they were under paid or over paid and if they were over paid what their repayment options were. Some Providers decided to pay back their overpayments in one lump sum, while others opted for a repayment plan of two or three months. Those who did not respond and owed the Coalition money had the entire amount taken out of their payment the following month. The 16 Providers underpaid received a check immediately.

The Coalition will be back on track and all accounts reconciled after the final adjustments are made in January 2019. The Coalition will continue using the EFS Legacy system exclusively to calculate Provider reimbursement for both SR and VPK until such time as EFS MOD becomes useable and reliable. In December VPK attendance went live for our Providers but the Coalition did not ask the Providers to use this system.

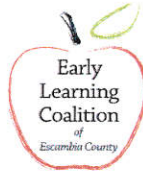
2. Utilization/Enrollment/Wait List Status and Contracting and Summary Status Reports:

As of December 10, 2018, the Coalition had 3,315 children enrolled of which 1,300 were school age children in the SR Program. This ratio has decreased and presently we have more birth to five children proportionately than a year ago.

The Coalition's new goal is to increase enrollments to 3,600 children in an effort to spend the additional \$874,000 granted by the state in October to our Coalition. In December the Coalition cleared the Wait List, however, only 37% of the families notified are responding to their invitations. Even with parents being notified within a week of submitting their application they continue to not respond. This low acceptance rate continues to baffle the Coalition.

DCF has been very concerned that there is insufficient availability of infant and toddler care in Northwest Florida. There has also been an unusual increase in infants and toddlers in Protective Services. DCF intends to reach out to the community for assistance in increasing infant and toddler care. Mr. Watson stated that in the future there may be an even greater shortage because as program assessments enforce quality standards the number of Providers may decrease. This will be a huge challenge, but we should not sacrifice quantity over quality.

There are 1,954 children enrolled in the 2018/2019 VPK Program.



3. Contracting and Fraud Summary Report:

There has been no fraud cases initiated this year, but there are some previously submitted that are still under-investigation.

Currently, there are 88 SR Providers and 77 VPK Providers. The Coalition has terminated seven contracts this year. Since the last meeting, two contracts were terminated by the Providers choice and one contract was terminated because of non-compliance with a total of 29 Class 2 and 3 violations. Board members asked why Providers were receiving so many DCF violations. Mr. Watson explained that the reasons were varied, but included Providers not focusing on maintenance of their facilities, not demanding more their staff do their required training, not maintaining ratio, and a lack of attention to the details of running a business. All these reasons led to more Class violations and contracts not in compliance with State and Coalition requirements.

VI. Old Business:

A. EFS Modernization Transition Update/Letter to Providers

EFS MOD continues to have issues with the undeveloped and improperly developed program functions since the original release in July 2018. During the last week of December OEL was still conducting required testing. OEL insisted that by January 1, 2019 all developmental functions would be operable and available to the Coalitions for processing reimbursements. This does not appear to be a realistic goal. To ensure the Coalition's process was in place and operable, the former EFS Legacy system is being used to accurately calculate the Provider's payments.

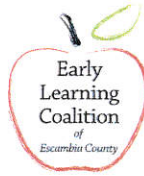
B. Financial Review on site visit October 22 - 26, 2018 - Recap

The Financial Audit Review was conducted in October 2018 resulting in minimal findings. One of the findings was that the Coalition had stale checks with a cumulative value of \$238.00.

VII. New Business:

A. Gulf Power Foundation Grant Update

During the summer, the Gulf Power Foundation approached the Coalition to put together a regional proposal to the Foundation to improve the quality of early learning in the four Northwest Florida Coalitions. The grant was for \$300,000 over a five-year period, with \$60,000 granted per year to be divided among the four Coalitions in Northwest Florida. The Coalition worked with the ELCs of Santa Rosa, Emerald Coast, and Northwest to develop a regional proposal for the Foundation to consider. The proposal was accepted, and the plan is to use the money in the first two years to assist Providers in making preparations for Program Assessments using the CLASS tool. ELC Escambia agreed to be the Executive Agency for the Gulf Power Foundation. Gulf Power Foundation and the regional Coalitions met in Chipley, Florida for a formal presentation of this grant. ELCEC will receive \$16,000, plus an additional \$3,000 to be the program administrator, each year. \$16,000 was also granted to Emerald Coast and



Northwest and \$8,000 to Santa Rosa. The money should be made available by the first of the year so that classes can begin. Mr. Watson intends to publicize this event in the Pensacola News Journal.

B. SR Capacity and Space Availability Reporting

The Coalition recently implemented an SR Capacity and Space Availability list which will aid parents in finding available space and services for their children. Likewise, this list serves to help Providers to fill their vacancies. However, responses to our requests to get the data for this list has been poor, which defeats the goal of having a quick reference list to help parents find a place to enroll their children.

Placing this SR Capacity and Space Availability list on the ELCEC website was met with negative feedback because it has the potential to display preferences for specific Providers.

VIII. Upcoming Audits and Reviews

- A. A-133 Audit, January 8-10, 2019
- B. Accountability Review on site visit, January 22-24, 2019

IX. ED/Chair Travel

- A. ED: AELC Meeting, January 18, 2019, St. Petersburg
- B. ED: PTO to Vietnam , January 21-February 5, 2019
- C. ED: OEL ED/ELAC/AELC, February 25-27, 2019
- D. Chair: ELAC Meeting, February 26, Gainesville
- E. ED: AELC Training Camp, February 27-March 1, 2019 Gainesville

X. Adjourn

Meeting was adjourned at 11:10 p.m.

XI. Next Meeting: February 14, 2019 10:00 a.m., at the Early Learning Coalition Office, 3300 North Pace Boulevard, Suite 210, Pensacola, FL 32505

Minutes approved by:

Roger Thompson, Vice Chair

Date