

Early Learning Coalition of Escambia County
Board Meeting Minutes
April 9, 2020 10:00 a.m.
Chair: Van Mansker

Members In Attendance (Note)

Van Mansker	Angela Strumeyer	Bryan Wyer
Cindy Kirk	Craig Jones	Drew Hardgrave
Judy Dickinson	Mary Ann Bickerstaff	Mona Jackson
Richard Wright	Sheryl Rehberg	

Note: Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic all members in attendance did so by either by use of either teleconference line or Zoom program. All members could communicate, participate in all discussions, and each one cast their vote verbally as required.

Members Absent

Peggy Steward	Dr. Laura Edler	Beate Bolton
Wendi Ochs	Edna Williams	Melody Meier

Staff

Bruce Watson	Becki Rutchland	Jamie Phelps
Paula Rollins	Vicki Pugh (call-in)	Dawn Engel (call-in)

Welcome and Introductions:

The Board meeting was called to order by Mr. Mansker. Note was made that notification of this meeting of the Board of Directors was posted to the Coalition Public Calendar Board and website and sent to the Pensacola News Journal for publication on March 24, 2020.

I. Public Comments:

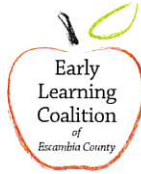
There were no public comments.

II. Chair Comments:

- a. **Approval of Consent Agenda: Meeting Agenda, and Minutes of December 12, 2019, Meeting Notes of February 13, 2020, and Financial Statements for October, November, and December 2019 and January 2020.**

Upon a motion made by Mr. Jones, with a second by Ms. Kirk, the Consent Agenda, consisting of the Agenda, amended to include the 2018/2019 A-133 Warren Averett Audit Summary, the Minutes of December 12, 2019, Meeting Notes of February 13, 2020, and Financial Statements for October, November, and December 2019 and January 2020, was approved without objection.

III. Executive Committee Report:



a. Annual A-133 Audit for 2018/2019 Presentation

Warren Averett representative, Ms. Tara Godbey, presented the A-133 Audit for Fiscal Year 2018/2019. No material weaknesses, no deficiencies, and no compliance issues were detected with the Financial Statement hence, there were no findings to report. Ms. Godbey noted that the Coalition books are extremely clean and that the audit report met the submission deadline.

Mr. Watson noted that the Coalition is the only Coalition in the state that is without a finding on their audit this year related to use of EFS MOD. Mr. Watson stated that in order to more accurately reflect the Coalition's invoicing and reimbursement processes, in particular the Coalition's reliance on EFS Legacy vice EFS MOD, the Coalition chose not to use the wording on this subject suggested by OEL but instead, in conjunction with Warren Averett, developed its own wording for inclusion in the audit report. Mr. Watson added that, to the best of his knowledge, every Coalition in the state edited the OEL wording to reflect their own situation.

Upon a motion made by Ms. Rehberg and seconded by Mr. Wright the 2018/2019 A-133 Audit as presented by Warren Averett was accepted without objection.

b. Annual Sliding Fee Scale, with Parent Fees

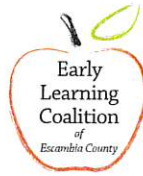
To meet the OEL deadline and upon recommendation from the Executive Finance Committee, the Sliding Fee Scale for FY2020-2021 was submitted to the OEL prior to this Board meeting. As a result of this deadline and the Board not having met quorum in February, the Board did not have the opportunity to approve the Fee Scale before it was submitted. The Coalition proposed decreasing parent fees slightly across the board. Analysis indicated there would be no impact on the number of children to be served.

c. Provider Rate Increase

The Coalition is proposing increasing Provider rates starting July 1, 2020. One reason is there is a serious lack of capacity to serve infants and toddlers, and it is hoped that a significant increase in the rates for these two care levels might increase capacity. Overall, rates also need to increase due to inflation and cost of providing care, and to allow Providers to be able to pay their staff better wages. The Resource Development Committee recommended, and the Executive Committee agreed, the full-time infant rate would increase from \$26.51 to \$35.00 a day and the full-time toddler rate would increase from \$24.42 to \$32.00 a day. Other rates would also increase, for instance the full-time school age rate would increase from \$17.55 to \$20.00 a day. Upon a motion made by the Executive Committee and seconded by Mr. Jones, the proposed Provider Rate Increase was approved without objection. Mr. Watson noted that the proposed rate changes will be presented to the Office of Early Learning before the end of April and that proposed implementation of the new rates is July 1, 2020.

d. Coalition Reorganization

To prepare for the future needs of the Coalition and to bring the Coalition into closer alignment with other Coalitions, a new organizational structure was implemented effective March 1, 2020. The most significant changes were that the Program Improvement Department and Program



Integrity Unit were merged to create a new Operations Department, and Ms. Engel was appointed as the new Operations Director. In addition, a new Community Impact Department has been created and will be piloted over the next year or two. The Community Impact Department will consist of a Community Impact Director and two CCRR staff who will assist with community outreach efforts in addition their CCRR duties. Ms. Pugh was appointed as the new Community Impact Director. The Coalition Reorganization comes to the Board upon recommendation from the Resource Development Committee and upon a motion to approve from the Executive Finance Committee. Upon a motion made by the Executive Committee and seconded by Mr. Wright the Coalition Reorganization was approved without objection.

e. Escambia Children’s Trust Endorsement

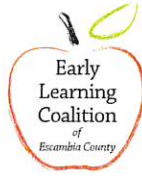
Pending approval in the upcoming November elections, a Children’s Services Council (CSC) would be created and operate under the name of the Escambia Children’s Trust. The Coalition seeks Board approval for two items related to the CSC campaign. First, the Coalition seeks Board approval to officially endorse the campaign. Upon a motion made by Mr. Jones and seconded by Ms. Rehberg, Coalition endorsement of the CSC campaign was approved without objection. Second, the Coalition seeks Board approval to donate \$1,000.00 from unrestricted funds to the Escambia Children’s Trust Political Action Committee for the campaign. Upon a motion made by Mr. Wright and seconded by Ms. Bickerstaff, a donation to the Escambia Children’s Trust campaign in the amount of \$1,000.00 from unrestricted funds was approved without objection. Due to the current COVID-19 crisis, the earliest date that may be possible to bring the Escambia Children’s Trust proposal before the County Commissioners may be May 17, 2020 which should allow sufficient time to for the referendum to be placed on the November ballot.

f. Match Funding Requests for 2020

Because the Coalition continues to under execute the annual budget by roughly a million dollars, the decision was made not to apply for United Way of West Florida (UWWF) funding this year. Although this item was listed for Board review on the agenda for the February meeting, quorum was not met so the item was carried forward to the April Board agenda. However, the deadline for submitting the application for funding to the UWWF was at the end of February so the although the discussed the matter Board it did not have the opportunity to formally approve this decision. Several Board members commended Mr. Watson for his decision to not apply for funding indicating that it was the right decision to make, and no objections were noted.

g. Board Provider Representative Position

Currently, one of the two statutorily required Provider Representative positions on the Board remain unfilled. Several candidates have been identified to might be willing to serve on the Board. The normal three year terms of the two positions are scheduled to end on June 30, 2020. The process has already been started to have two new candidates nominated and by their peers and approved by the Board in time for their terms to start on July 1, 2020. A motion to not fill the vacant Provider Representative position prior to the new fiscal year was made by Mr. Jones and seconded by Mr. Wyer and approved without objection.



h. Board Member Actions

DCF has designated Ms. Angela Strumeyer to be their representative to the Board. Mr. Watson introduced her to the Board. Upon a motion made by Mr. Hardgrave and seconded by Ms. Kirk, Ms. Strumeyer's appointment to the Board was approved without objection. Mr. Watson welcomed Ms. Strumeyer to the Board and indicated that she may now vote on Board actions.

Ms. Edna Williams' second term on the Board expired on February 12, 2020, however, because there was no quorum at the February Board meeting the proposal to approve Ms. Williams for a third term could not be acted upon. Ms. Williams has expressed interest in serving a third term which the By-laws permit because there is no limit to the number of terms a member can serve. Upon a motion made by Mr. Wyer and seconded by Ms. Strumeyer, a third term as a member of the board for Ms. Williams was approved without objection. Mr. Watson indicated that he would inform Ms. Williams.

i. Board Vice Chair and RDC Chair

The Board Vice Chair and the RDC Chair positions remain open. The topic was opened for discussion but no one in attendance was prepared to make a commitment at this time. Mr. Watson pointed out that the DCF Representative has filled at times served as Vice Chair and the RDC Chair, and sometimes as both. He invited Ms. Strumeyer to consider assuming either or both roles. He further noted that assuming these roles involves committing to two meetings per month, vice one meeting every other month as just a Board member. Ms. Strumeyer indicated that she would take the matter into consideration. Mr. Watson reported that Gulf Power is preparing a nomination package. For many years Gulf Power has had someone on the Board, but it has been about a year since the most recent member resigned. Once Gulf Power submits the package, Mr. Mansker and Mr. Watson will arrange to meet with the nominee.

IV. Executive Director's Report:

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

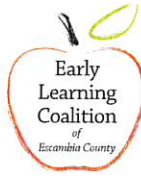
1. Benchmark Report:

The Coalition continues to under execute by just under a million dollars. However, due to the COVID-19 Crisis, during the last quarter of the fiscal year a large portion of the differential is expected to be spent because Providers will be paid for 100% of enrollments and the Coalition is paying all parent fees during the COVID-19 Crisis.

2. Enrollment/Wait List Status Report:

The Coalition continues to hold steady at just under 3,300 children enrolled in the School Readiness program. With the exception Healthcare Workers and First Responders, new enrollments have been frozen during the COVID-19 crisis due to voluntary closures and a lack of capacity to serve additional children.

3. Contracting and Fraud Summary Report:



45 out of 85 School Readiness Providers remain open currently. There were no new cases of fraud to report.

b. COVID-19 Response

Per the Governor's Executive Order on March 17, 2020, the State has determined that childcare is considered an essential function. Additionally, DOE has decided that in order to ensure that child care as an industry survives closures and other economic issues, that Providers will be paid at 100% whether they remain open or closed during the COVID-19 Crisis. The goal of the funding is to maintain industry continuity and to encourage Providers to reopen for business after the crisis is resolved. As of today, 45 out of 85 School Readiness Providers are open. Families whose eligibility is up for redetermination between March 16, 2020 and May 15, 2020 will automatically be extended sixty days. In addition, parent fees have been waived and the Coalition is picking up that expense. Because the Coalition is underspent, Escambia County is better poised to absorb the extra costs incurred during the COVID-19 Crisis. The Coalition will also absorb the full cost of care for first responders and health care workers. First responders are entitled to services regardless of income and will only need to submit an application that verifies their eligibility based on type of employment to be approved.

Of the 45 Providers who are open, many are not operating at maximum capacity largely because that parents who are not working are keeping their children home. The Coalition encourages parents who are not working to keep their children at home to mitigate virus transmission. Mr. Watson and Ms. Strumeyer are holding discussions regarding the potential need for 24-hour care. Bedding requirements are a major consideration for Providers who may wish to offer overnight care. Currently, the Coalition is attempting to quantify the level of demand for 24-hour care and has been waiting on numbers from several different agencies over the last two weeks.

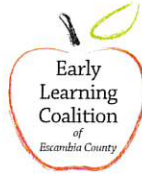
c. 2020 Legislative Actions

House Bill 1013 did not pass into legislation so none of the proposed actions will go into effect this year. There is a chance that proposals from this year will be repackaged into smaller items so that there is a better chance of the bills passing next year. Because HB1013 did not pass, the Coalition will not need to hire additional staff or acquire additional office space. Mr. Watson noted that during the COVID-19 response, it has been determined that several Coalition positions lend themselves well to telework and that some of the positions may remain in a telework status after the crisis resolves.

d. Census Report

The Coalition has volunteered to be a 2020 Census Champion. Workstations will be available to the public and support will be available. Coalition staff have been informed that the Census is offering part time positions paying \$20.00 an hour. In the past, Florida has underreported numbers especially with respect to children which results in a reduction of funding to care for children in the State, so it is critical for accurate numbers to be reported.

V. Old Business:



a. 8th Annual Early Learning Summit – Postponed from May 26, 2020 TBD

The 8th Annual Early Learning Summit has been canceled for the date of May 26, 2020. Mr. Watson and Ms. Pugh have informed the guest speaker that an alternate date in late July or early August may be a possibility. WSRE is still on board to support the Summit and more information will follow as it becomes available.

Mr. Mansker complimented Mr. Watson and the entire Coalition staff for their tireless efforts in keeping business flowing during the COVID-19 crisis. Mr. Watson and Mr. Mansker both thanked those Board members who called in to join the meeting today.

VI. Adjourn

The Board meeting adjourned at 11:03 a.m.

Next Meeting: June 11, 2020 10:00 a.m. at the Early Learning Coalition Office, 3300 North Pace Boulevard, Suite 210, Pensacola, FL 32505

Minutes approved by:

Sheryl Rehberg, Board Secretary

Date