

**Early Learning Coalition of Escambia County  
Board Meeting Minutes  
April 13, 2023, 10:00 a.m.  
Chair: Van Mansker**

**Members in Attendance**

Van Mansker	Richard Wright	Deborah Tucker
Brian Wyer	Mary Ann Bickerstaff	Shannon Nickinson
Angela Strumeyer	Tammy Greer	Melissa Birdsall
Melissa Sidoti	Melody Meier	Paul Fetsko

**Members Absent**

Marcus McBride	Shanna Robinson	Mona Jackson
Reginald Dogan	Edna Williams	Roger Thompson
Craig Jones	Cindy Kirk	

**Public in Attendance**

None

**Staff in Attendance**

Bruce Watson	Dawn Engel	Melissa Jennings
Darrell Merritt	Nina Daniels	

**I. Welcome and Introduction**

Notification of this meeting of the Board of Directors was posted to the Coalition Public Calendar Board and sent to the Pensacola News Journal for publication on April 3, 2023. The meeting was called to order by Mr. Mansker.

**II. Public Comments**

- a. None.

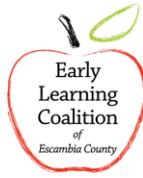
**III. Chair Comments**

- a. **Approval of Consent Agenda: Meeting Agenda, Minutes of the February 9, 2023, Financial Reports for December 2022, January 2023 and February 2023**

Upon a motion made by Ms. Birdsall and seconded by Ms. Nickinson, approval of the Consent Agenda, Meeting Agenda, Minutes of February 9, 2023, Financial Reports for December 2022, January and February 2023 was approved without objection.

**IV. Executive Committee Report:**

- 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 identifying, hiring, and retaining staff to work in their early learning and care facilities. Although much has been done to financially support providers and help them pay incentives for retention and recruitment, the child care industry here locally, like many other services industries, is suffering from a lack of people willing to work. The Coalition is seeking ideas for how to assist providers in finding more staff. Efforts are being made to improve education opportunities and raise the level of professionalism amongst early learning teachers.

**b. Letter to PSC Concerning early Learning Courses**

The letter sent to PSC was attached. No response has been received from PSC regarding the letter. However, the program director for the courses in question has discussed possible changes to when the courses will be taught and how they might be taught, such as virtual options. So hopefully the letter is having the desired effect.

**V. Executive Director's Report**

**a. Financials**

Financial reports were provided in the consent agenda. As of the end of February, the Coalition has spent nearly two thirds of the SR grant, \$10.7million of the \$17.3 million or 62.1%.

**b. Coalition Status Reports: Enrollment/Wait List Status Report, and Contracting Summary Report**

There are 2,725 children enrolled in the School Readiness program of which 79 are SRMT and 1,031 are school-age children. Three weeks of children were pulled from the waitlist last week.

There are 1,623 children enrolled for the 2022/23 VPK School Year Program.

There are 85 SR Providers, and 77 VPK Providers. There are no new fraud cases to report.

**VI. Old Business**

**a. Coalition Financial System - Update**

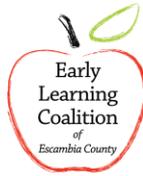
The last corrections are being finalized for the audit later this month. The old accounts, both desktop and QBO, will be kept for recording purposes.

**b. DELCRRSA Workforce Initiative – Update**

The local initiatives are complete. The Coalition is waiting on approval of our request for the DEL to re-obligate approximately \$50,000 to pay for expenses that exceeded our initial CRRSA grant. Approval should be received this week.

**c. ARPA Grant Funding - Update**

All payments for ARPA Round 1 third installments and Round 2 have been completed. The DEL intends to recoup all unexpended direct provider payments and redistribute the funding to



Coalitions in time for ARPA Round 2 Final Payments to be made by June 30, 2023. The Coalition expects to return approximately \$6 million in unexpended funds but receive \$4.25 million for final payments. The Coalition has applied to expend \$658,000 of the \$1,285,652 dedicated to Build A Better Workforce funding for local initiatives. The plan is to spend all \$1.28 million between this year and next. All ARPA funding originally connected with this current fiscal year must be completed by September 30, 2023.

**d. 401K Transition – Update**

The transition to the new 401K program is complete. 401K deductions will resume on April 15, 2023.

**e. ECSD Education Career Academy – Update**

The ECSD Education Career Academy program coordinator, Ms. Adkison, retired in December. The ECSD has hired someone, but the Coalition has not been told who it is, nor has a first meeting or introduction been arranged. This reaffirms the Coalition’s recommendation to no longer support this program; however, a final decision will not be made until after the Coalition meets the new program coordinator.

**VII. New Business**

**a. 2023-2024-Sliding Fee Scale**

The new Sliding Fee Scale for parent copayments for 2023-2024 is provided. A good reference point for discussing program eligibility is a family of four at 150% of FPL to be eligible for SR services is now \$45,000, and the same family will income out at just under \$71,000.

**b. Rotary Transition to Kindergarten Initiative**

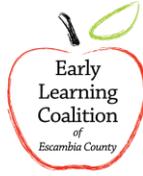
The Coalition has been working with the Pensacola and Five Flags Rotary Clubs to purchase books for every VPK classroom to be used to help prepare children for the transition to kindergarten. Talks are also underway about what can be done to help next year.

**c. News of Interest – Med Techs, Assessments, CCRR**

The Med Techs were given the opportunity to go to a local Community Health Clinic, where they were given helpful information to give to providers to share with parents on how to receive free dental care in our area. The dental clinics in Cantonment are under utilized and have available openings for appointments.

UWF extended an invitation to participate in a Poverty Simulation. Three of the Coalition’s staff are slated to participate.

A big shout out to the Coalition’s SR and VPK Contracts Administrator. Our Coalition was the first in the State to get all CCRR profile updates completed for the year. These updates were not due until the end of May and our Coalition is already 100% complete.



**d. In Studio Video**

The Coalition recently was invited to participate in a TV show called In Studio, that is sponsored by the local PBS station. The focus of the show was early learning. After the meeting was adjourned, the two segments of In Studio in which the Coalition participated were shown.

**VIII. Audits and Reviews in Progress**

**a. DEL Accountability Review 2022-2023 – In Progress, Review January 23-27**

The Accountability Review has been completed and the results will be presented in the first week of May.

**b. DEL Financial Review 2022-2023 – In Progress, On Site February 13-17**

The draft report of the 2022-2023 DEL Financial Review is complete. There were 3 minor findings in the report.

**c. Warren Averett A-133 Audit 2021-2022 – In Progress, On Site April 10**

The Coalition has been working on uploading files to Warren Averett for the 2021-2022 A-133 Audit. The official Audit date has been moved to the last week of April.

**VIV. Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:10 a.m.

**Next Meeting: Thursday, June 8, 2023, at 10:00 a.m. at the Early Learning Coalition offices at 1720 West Fairfield Dr., Suite 100/400, Pensacola, FL 32501**

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**Minutes of the meeting on February 9, 2023, of the Board of Directors of the Early Learning Coalition of Escambia County were approved by the Board on April 13, 2023.**