



Early Learning Coalition of Escambia County

Executive/Finance Committee Meeting Minutes

March 24, 2022 8:30 a.m.

Members Present

Van Mansker

Roger Thompson

Mona Jackson

Members Absent

Marcus McBride

Staff

Bruce Watson

Vicki Pugh

Paula Rollins

Nina Daniels

Fred Perkins

Dawn Engel

Public

None

I. Welcome and Introductions

Notification of the Executive Finance Committee Meeting scheduled for March 24, 2022, was sent to the Pensacola News Journal on March 3, 2022, and posted to the Coalition Public Calendar Board on March 1, 2022. The meeting was called to order by Mr. Mansker.

II. Public Comments

None.

III. Consent Agenda

Upon a motion by Mr. Thompson and seconded by Ms. Jackson, the Consent Agenda, consisting of the Agenda, Financials for January and February 2022 and Minutes of February 24, 2022, was approved without objection.

IV. Status Reports

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

1. SR/VPK Fiscal Year Benchmark Report:

The Coalition is over \$2 million under budget in SR. This is due to both insufficient enrollment applications at the beginning of the fiscal year, and since the beginning of the calendar year a slowdown in Wait List pulls because parents cannot find openings to place their children.

Currently every facility that employs more than two people have a staffing shortfall. Both SR and VPK are within statutory ratios for spending.

2. Enrollment/Wait List Status Report:



Early Learning Coalition of Escambia County

There are 2,794 children enrolled in the School Readiness Program. The Coalition slowed pulling from Wait List each week to keep the number of children whose parents cannot find a child care provider to no more than 30 children. Future pulls will be dependent upon the number of children waiting for a provider, as opposed to funding available to place children in care. In February SRMT numbers were adjusted to keep enrollments in this category capped to 90 children. This is to ensure that Match expenditures for the year do not exceed the combined grants for this purpose from the County and DEL.

3. Contracting and Fraud Summary Report:

There are 83 SR providers and 71 VPK providers. There is no fraud to report for the year.

V. Committee Recommendations

- a. None.

VI. Old Business

a. DEL CRRSA Phase VI - Coalition Workforce Initiatives for Early Educations (CWIEE)

Providers were notified of the terms and conditions of the Coalition Workforce Initiatives for Early Educations (CWIEE) portion of the CRRSA funding. The \$531,253 must be obligated no later than June 30, 2022. This will be a challenge and will limit how much assistance, and what type of assistance, the Coalition can provide in the time allotted.

b. ARPA Grants

The Coalition received \$4.3 million advance of the almost \$9 million total ARPA allocation. Coalitions were somewhat unprepared when after getting the advances DEL informed everyone that the portion of ARPA that is direct payments to Providers would be administered in three installments over the course of 180 days. The first installments for the Providers that have already submitted applications will begin the end of March.

c. DEL 2021-2022 Finance Review – Update

The DEL Finance Review will commence with the Entrance conference on March 29, 2022. The Coalition has been uploading the requested documents for the past two weeks. The Exit Conference is tentatively scheduled for Friday, April 1, 2022.

d. Legislative Update – Update

The Legislative Session for 2022 has adjourned. Most significant is that bills were approved to establish a funding allocation methodology for administering funds to the Coalitions. This will be developed and possibly implemented in FY 2022-2023. One of the key components is the State is taking over setting SR Provider rates for all the Coalitions.

VII. New Business

a. Attempted Theft of Coalition Funding by Use of Counterfeit Checks



Early Learning Coalition of Escambia County

On February 23 the Executive Director (ED) received a call from a woman in Georgia stating she had applied for job doing health care transcription telework and received a check for \$4,550 to buy computer equipment. However, when she got the check, she saw it had the Coalition's name and address on it, vice the company she thought she would be working for. She became suspicious and looked the Coalition up on line and then contacted the ED. The next day the ED got a similar phone call from a woman in California. At that time, it became apparent that something was going on that was not right. The ED contacted the bank and learned that three checks for similar amounts had been posted and were pending payment. The ED put a block on the payment of these checks and others with similar check numbers. In looking at scan copies of the three checks it was obvious someone was counterfeiting checks that had the Coalition's account number and bank routing number, as well old address. The ED contacted the bank and put a stop payment on all checks until each one was approved for payment by the ED. The Escambia County Sheriff's Office was contacted and a case was opened. Over the course of the next month more checks were presented, all were in the \$4,000-\$5,000 range, and were tied to either offers of employment or the purchase of items for sale on line.

As a result of quick action on the part of the Coalition no money was paid on any of these counterfeit checks, and no money was lost. The bank advised and the ED agreed that the only way to protect the interest of the Coalition long term was to close the old account and open a new one. A new account was opened, and check stock was ordered. Once all the checks written on the old account had cleared, and all agencies that either deposit or debit the Coalition checking account were notified of the change, and in the case of ADP and the State of Florida, transactions are complete using the new account, then the old account will be closed.

b. Opening and Closing of Coalition Checking Account

Time did not afford the Coalition the opportunity to follow normal procedure and ask for the approval before action was taken to open a new account. At this time, it is requested that approval be granted to close the old account. Upon a motion by Mr. Thompson and seconded by Ms. Jackson, the Executive Committee's closing the old and opening a new checking account was approved without objection.

c. New Headstart Board Member Application

The Board Chair and Executive Director make it a point to monitor the number of Board members and keep the number close to 20 members. To do this periodically new private sector members are recruited. The Coalition seeks private sector members that are representative the of the wide range of interest of the community. With the efforts the Studer Community Institute (SCI) to contribute to improving the readiness of the children in Pensacola to start school, and to make Pensacola the preeminent Early Learning city of America, it was decided to recruit someone from SCI's early development division. That someone is Mr. Reggie Dogan, the SCI Early Learning Program Manager. Upon a motion by Mr. Thompson and seconded by Ms.



Early Learning Coalition of Escambia County

Jackson, the Executive Committee's nomination of Mr. Dogan to the Board was approved without objection.

d. Forensic Review of Financial Program

The Coalition's annual financial audit is ongoing. As this effort progresses it is apparent that the pass down of the former Finance Director has left much to be desired. Many aspects of the Coalition's financial processes and procedures were not taught to, nor properly discussed, with the new Finance Director. Consideration is being made to hire someone to assist the new Finance Director in conducting an in-depth review of the Coalition accounting system and books to identify errors, improvements and definition of where everything has been recorded or filed. This topic is raised as an initial proposal pending receipt of the annual audit results, after which based on the findings alternatives can be discussed.

VIII. Adjourn: Meeting was adjourned at 9:50 a.m.

Next Meeting: April 28, 2022, at 8:30 a.m. at the Early Learning Coalition Office, 1720 West Fairfield Dr., Suite 100/400, Pensacola, Florida 32501