



Early Learning Coalition of Escambia County

RDC Committee Meeting Minutes

November 16, 2021 10:00 a.m.

Committee Members in Attendance

Roger Thompson (Chair)	Marcus McBride	Angela Strumeyer
Cindy Kirk	Tammy Hicks	Shannon Nickinson
Jessica Czuprynski	Shanna Robinson	Brenda Hardy

Staff in Attendance

Bruce Watson	Paula Rollins	Dawn Engel
Nina Daniels	Vicki Pugh	Melissa Jennings

Providers and Partners in Attendance

Misty Lambeth	Roselyn Sukal	Hitomi Wright
Victoria Jordan	Lawanna Hamilton	Netisha Rogers
Shanna Bailey	Deidre Patton	Mya McCray
Juanita Lindsey	M. Koch	Lynn Vuncannon
Terrance Savage	Kabrina Turner	Jacki Cotton
Toniya Nevins		

I. Welcome, Call to Order, and Approval of Agenda

Notification of this meeting was posted to the Coalition Public Calendar Board and sent to the Pensacola New Journal on November 1, 2021. The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by Mr. Thompson, the Committee Chair.

II. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

III. Approval of Agenda and Minutes for July 20, 2021

Upon a motion made by Ms. Kirk and seconded by Ms. Hicks, the Agenda and the Minutes of the September 8, 2021, meeting were approved without objection.

IV. Program Reports

a. Medical Support Services Report

Ms. Pugh reviewed the Medical Support Services report. Satisfaction surveys from directors and parents are positive. She reminded providers that the CPR/First Aid requirements will be more stringent starting January 1, 2022. The Coalition is offering a December training and certification which is still open. Ms. Kirk asked if PSC students could register for the course. Ms. Pugh asked that they wait to see if childcare workers register first.

b. CCR&R Update



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Ms. Jennings reported there is a need for infant, two and three-year-old slots as well as school age. The VPK program has availability. The CCR&R Specialists are gearing up for Financial Literacy coursework to families who are interested. She requested directors to send in pictures and/or narratives on family engagement to showcase on the Coalition's Facebook.

c. Program Support Summary

Ms. Engel stated coaches are making 2-3 daily visits to programs. Two MMCI classes have been concluded with the hope that after the move, more face-to-face training will occur.

d. SR/VPK Status Report and Contract Activity Summary

School Readiness enrollment is sustaining below three thousand children. Eligibility is regularly pulling from the Waitlist, but parents can't find care due to capacity issues stemming from staffing shortages. The SRMT enrollment cap has been lifted to 140 slots. These are families that normally would not be served received much needed assistance. VPK enrollment numbers are 1,606 which is well below the goal of 2,400. There are 2,135 approved applications for the year; therefore, there are over 400 COEs that have not been acted upon. CCR&R and VPK staff are reaching out for feedback from families. One uplifting point of order is it has been over two years since the Coalition has had a case of fraud.

Removing children from the Waitlist is being regulated to ensure no more than 30 children at a time are authorized care but have not been placed in a program. Although not the maximum use of dollars, it increases parents' odds of finding a place for their child. SRMAT has nine children waiting for a facility due to capacity issues.

There are currently 80 school readiness providers with three new contracts signed in November. Two new VPK programs have recently contracted with the Coalition. These programs will offer a whole day program. Families can still enroll their child in VPK. Only one provider was terminated due to low CLASS scores this year. Mr. Watson praised the provider community on their outstanding performance, especially this past eighteen months.

V. Old Business

a. Coalition Relocation

Due to supply chain issues and contractor setbacks, a partial move will occur the first week of December for the front offices. The second week of January will result in the move being completed. Officially January 12, 2022, we will be operating out of the new offices with the goal of February 1, 2022, as the full opening of the training room for testing, CPR/First Aid and other training. Please check the Coalition website for the new address.

b. DEL Disaster Relief Grants for Teachers/Directors 21/22



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Mr. Watson announced there will be a second round of CRSSA Disaster Relief Grants in the March/April time frame with the same third-party process & distribution as the first round. These dollars that are distributed to teachers will not be taxed.

c. 2021 Legislative Actions – DEL Reorganization, VPK Assessments

The Office of Early Learning (OEL) is now Department of Early Learning (DEL) within the Department of Education (DOE). There is a new chancellor as opposed to an Executive Director. The chancellor is Matt Mears. Mr. Watson has met Chancellor Mears on a few occasions. Additionally, for 20-21 VPK assessments are in the works. That assessment has not been announced but hopefully it will be the CLASS assessment. The Gulf Power Foundation funding will be used for resources for VPK providers to prepare for the assessment. New readiness rates will be tied to a formula using CLASS, FLKRS and STARS scores.

d. Vehicle Alarm Requirement – Grant Status

Mr. Watson reminded those programs that transport children to apply for the funding. The ELC will reimburse for the alarm device after installation of a DCF approved device. Four applications have been received to date.

VI. New Business

a. DEL CRRSA Phase VI and ARPA Grants

Three meetings with Providers are scheduled to provide details regarding upcoming CRSSA awards. Mr. Watson summarized that this Phase 6 will be more than double the Phase 5 funding. There are differences namely a threaded-out piece for workforce recruitment, retention and upskilling. Funding is for providers who do not otherwise receive Federal Funding, therefore Head Start programs are ineligible. The goal is for applications to be submitted to the Coalition by December 15, 2021. Mr. Watson reminded the group that the application form is fillable, and funding may not be used for food. For more information, please attend one of the meetings.

There will also be a needs survey released to providers for ideas on how to allocate future funding. In addition to CRRSA funding, there will be additional ARPA funding released after the holidays. This funding will be aligned with provider performance measures. The ARPA funding is taxable.

b. Child Assessment Program Implementation Policy, ELCEC 302.1A

Ms. Engel complemented providers on their hard work in this area of compliance. This assessment affects the 5% rate differential. Upon a motion made by Ms. Kirk and seconded by Ms. Strumeyer, the recommendation to the Board for approval of the Child Assessment Program Implementation Policy was approved without objection.



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c. School Readiness Program Assessment Implementation Policy, ELCEC 4301.1B

Ms. Engel highlighted the cut offs for contracting for school readiness and Mr. Watson reiterated there will be no exemptions in the 2022-2023 contract year. This fiscal year is the last year for Quality Improvement Plans (QIP). Ms. Engel affirmed the Coalition's commitment to assistance for providers to improve CLASS scores. Mr. Watson confirmed the coaching staff's dedication to an aggressive strategic plan for improvement. Upon a motion made by Ms. Kirk and seconded by Mr. McBride, the recommendation to the Board for approval of the School Readiness Program Assessment Implementation Policy was approved without objection.

d. Developmental Screening Process Policy and Procedure, ELCEC 4300.1C

The biggest change in this policy update is the shift from paper to technology which improves timelines for intervention. The timelines have changed for developmental screenings to increase family involvement. DEL insists on the parents' having the right to do the assessment if desired. Although there are still some growing pains with the intervention process, the Operations Department continues to educate and show leniency for the process. Upon a motion made by Ms. Strumeyer and seconded by Ms. Kirk, the recommendation to the Board for approval of the Developmental Screening Process Policy and Procedure was approved without objection.

e. Board and Committees Meeting Schedule for 2022

The 2022-23 meeting schedule is posted on the ELC website. It has been approved by the Executive Committee and takes into consideration holidays.

VII. Community Partner Updates

a. Achieve Escambia

No representative was available to report.

b. ARC Gateway

No representative was available to report.

c. CareerSource ESCAROSA

Job fairs are on-going.

d. DCF Regulation

Ms. Strumeyer expressed gratitude to all the providers in appreciation of their work with families. DCF counselors compliment the amazing and heartening work the childcare workers are delivering. She reminded the group that it's been five years since the Clearinghouse was launched therefore time will begin expiring for the five-year background screening. Mr. Thompson asked if there will be waivers for the new CPR/FA requirements to which the answer is no. Ms. Strumeyer cautioned providers on scammers who will promise certification. Her office is available to assist in choosing the correct provider. The Coalition has an open training



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in December with only two registrants. It is recommended that everyone have one extra staff person certified. The average program will need a minimum of three.

e. Department of Health 5-2-1-0

No representative was available to report.

f. Early Steps

No representative was available to report.

g. Florida Association for Infant Mental Health (FAIMH)

No representative was available to report.

h. Gulf Coast Kids House

No representative was available to report.

i. Pensacola State College

Ms. Kirk reported that registration is open for Spring semester with classes starting January 7, 2022. CARES funding is available, and students can apply through the PSC website. This funding doesn't not have to be paid back. Early education classes are not at capacity. She is offering hybrid classes. There will be an Advisory meeting on Friday, November 19, 2021.

j. Ready Kids

No representative was available to report.

k. School District Education Career Academy

No representative was available to report.

l. School District VPK

Ms. Czuprynski reported that VPK is fully enrolled with few transfers. Ms. Kim Edmonds will attend the January and March meetings as Ms. Czuprynski will be on maternity leave. She asked for info on how to help with follow up referrals to Child Find after the pediatric physical. The group gave several options to which one might be to have 2-1-1 be a conduit of information for the parent.

m. Studer Community Institute

Ms. Nickinson reported that brain bags continue to be distributed at area hospitals. The newest partner is Community Health and Pensacola Pediatrics where families can enroll in the Back-to-Basics program. The program is free for families with birth to 3-year-old children. Both health providers have videos and handouts in waiting rooms.

n. Western Panhandle Early Steps

No representative was available to report.



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VIII. Adjourn: Meeting was adjourned at 11:15 a.m.

Next Meeting: January 18, 2022, at 10:00 a.m. at the Early Learning Coalition Office, 1720 West Fairfield Dr. Suite 100/400, Pensacola, Florida 32501