



Early Learning Coalition of Escambia County

**Executive Finance Committee Meeting Minutes**

February 27, 2020 8:30 a.m.

**Members in Attendance**

Van Mansker

Roger Thompson

Mona Jackson

**Members Called In**

None

**Members Absent**

Sheryl Rehbeg

**Staff**

Bruce Watson

Vicki Pugh

Becki Rutchland

Jamie Phelps

Dawn Engel

Paula Rollins

**I. Welcome and Introductions**

Notification of this Executive Committee meeting was posted to the Coalition Public Calendar Board and the Coalition website on January 31, 2020 and sent to the Pensacola New Journal for publication on January 27, 2020. The meeting was called to order by Mr. Mansker.

**II. Public Comments**

There were no public comments.

**III. Consent Agenda**

Upon a motion made by Mr. Thompson and seconded by Ms. Jackson, the Consent Agenda, consisting of the Agenda, Minutes of the January 23, 2020 Executive Committee Meeting, and Financial Statements for December 2019 and January 2020, 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 School Readiness Program still lags behind in spending goals due to lack of applicants. However, even if the Coalition were able to enroll enough children to spend 100% of funding, there is nowhere to place additional children. There are 100 children currently enrolled but whose parents have not found a facility. Of these 50 are PS children. Mr. Watson indicated that he intends to contact OEL regarding the possibility of using Coalition funds to run advertising to attract childcare workers. Mr. Watson further indicated that he will reach out to the Pensacola News Journal and WEAR TV about running articles as well. Coalition administrative percentages remain under 5% but have recently risen to over 4%. The Coalition is exploring the



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possibility of leasing additional space next to the Eligibility suite and Mr. Watson is meeting with the contractor on Monday to discuss possible modifications. Mr. Watson further noted that renting the suite and consolidating the Operations Department within the new space will provide a more coherent and effective chain of command.

### 2. Enrollment/Wait List Status Report:

The Coalition is currently at just under 3,300 enrollments. Mr. Watson noted that about three years ago, the Coalition overspent by about \$150,000 and that at that time, that was to get the Coalition to over 3,000 children. At this time, the Coalition is serving about 200-300 more children per day than three to four years ago and State funding has increased steadily over that period. Even though the Coalition is underspending, the Coalition is serving at least as many, if not more, children than in the last several years. There are almost 100 children in the SRMT category, which is close to the goal of 120 children. Why less than half of qualified applicants do not complete the enrollment process still has not been determined. Mr. Watson asked Ms. Rollins if there is a way to identify families who may be reapplying. Ms. Rollins indicated that information is not available via EFS MOD, but she will check Tableau reports to see if the information is available there.

### 3. Contracting and Fraud Summary Report:

The Coalition currently has 83 SR Providers and there may be one or two new homes and one new center opening. There was one recent termination. Three DCF staff responded to a call they received from a staff member at the facility and four Coalition staff joined them in response. Because the facility had already accumulated an excessive number of Class 2 and Class 3 Violations, they were given their contract termination notification at the same time.

## V. Committee Recommendations

- a. None.

## VI. Old Business

- a. Escambia Children's Trust Update

Mr. Watson reported that the Escambia Children's Trust monthly update meeting was held the day before the committee meeting and that fundraising continues. The CSC campaign will not go public before June to limit the time any opposition can have to get organized. Mr. Watson noted that there is a need for written materials regarding the initiative as interested parties are asking questions and donors need documentation to support their donations. The Indian River County Commission brought up the subject of establishing a CSC at a recent meeting and it appears that a vote on getting a CSC referendum will be held by the end of the month. There is a three-step process that includes putting the matter on the agenda for public discussion, followed by a public hearing, followed by the vote. There is a chance that elected officials who are up for reelection may not support the initiative due to concerns they may be perceived as supporting a tax increase. Mr. Mansker commended Mr. Watson for his contribution to a recent article in the Pensacola News Journal. Mr. Watson noted that the article focused on the recent release of



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FLKRS numbers and did not focus on VPK. Escambia County Kindergarten Readiness went up about 2% and the rest of the state went up about 1%. Santa Rosa County went down 2% which may be due to a recent influx of service industry workers. Upon a motion made by Mr. Thompson and seconded by Ms. Jackson, a motion to recommend to the Board that the Coalition donate funds from unrestricted funds to the CSC campaign as well as officially name the Coalition as supporting the CSC campaign was passed without objection.

### b. Coalition Reorganization

Mr. Watson noted that the Coalition Reorganization is pending Board approval and that in the meantime, changes will take place effective Monday, March 2, 2020. Upon a motion made by Ms. Jackson and seconded by Mr. Thompson, a recommendation to the Board for approval of the reorganization was passed without objection.

### c. Board Vice Chair and RDC Chair

The RDC needs a Chair, preferably a Board member. The RDC Chairmanship comes with the additional responsibility of being Executive Committee member. The Board also needs a Vice Chair. In support of finding candidates a summary of Board meeting attendance for fiscal year 2018-2019 as well as fiscal year 2019-2020, to date, was reviewed. Mr. Watson noted that although attendance improved in the case of several Board members, that was not the case for all Board members. Attendance records indicate that Dr. Edler attended two meetings at the beginning of her term but has not attended in person nor called in the past year. Mr. Mansker suggested following the Board meeting attendance guidelines in the By-Laws which allow for three absences after which, the Board Member is removed from the Board. Mr. Watson noted that Dr. Edler is the School Board Designee and as such cannot be removed. Ms. Patty Hightower, President of the School Board, will be contacted to inquire about replacing Dr. Edler with another designee. CareerSource ESCAROSA will be assigning another designee after Ms. Rehberg's retirement in July 2020. Attendance records indicate that Ms. Ochs attended four out of six Board Meetings in fiscal year 2018-2019 and has attended only one out of four Board Meetings in fiscal year 2019-2020, year to date. Mr. Watson indicated that he will follow up with Ms. Ochs regarding her irregular attendance. The Coalition is down to 18 Board Members due to the recent departure of one of the Provider Representatives. Mr. Watson noted that careful consideration should be given as to who the Board would like to target to replace the Private Sector Representative. There has been good feedback from Tallahassee indicating that the original proposal to reduce Board membership from 30 to 15 has been rescinded. Mr. Watson noted that most Boards are well under the current limit of 30 Board Members and that Miami has only 22 Board Members. The burden for participation in Coalition Board related activities has been significantly reduced the past eight years as the number of Committees has been reduced from six to one.

### d. Third Term Approval Edna Williams

Ms. Williams' second term with the Board expired two weeks ago and she has expressed interest in serving a third term. Upon a motion made by Mr. Thompson, and seconded by Ms. Jackson, a



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motion to recommend to the Board to approve a third term of service for Ms. Williams was approved without objection.

### e. Board Provider Representative Position

Nominations for the Provider Representative position are open until the first of May, at which time, nominations will be taken to the RDC and subsequently to the Executive Committee for consideration. So far, one application for Provider Representative has been received. Mr. Watson and Ms. Pugh will review the list of Providers for potential candidates.

### f. Local Provider Rates and State Market Rates

Next week, Mr. Watson and Ms. Engel will be reviewing provider rates and market rates. To date, OEL has not released the 2019 Market Rate Survey which is required by law. Mr. Watson has held off on doing the rate change analysis as he had planned to compare changes between the 2017 and 2019 Market Rate Surveys. Lacking the more current data the rate change proposals will be based only upon analysis of data from the 2017 survey. The proposed rate changes should be ready for RDC consideration at the upcoming meeting in March then Board approval in April. The goal is for OEL to grant their approval in time for the rate changes to go into effect July 1, 2020 pending. Mr. Watson noted that a significant increase in rates for Infant and Toddler care will most likely be proposed as well as a proposal to reduce parent fees.

### g. 2020 Legislative Actions and Rule Making

House Bill 1013, known as the early learning bill, has been significantly amended since it was first proposed. The Bill proposes the most significant number of changes to the early learning statutes since the changes made in 2013. The proposed changes have a minimal impact on the SR Programs but a huge impact on VPK as VPK class assessments will be required in the upcoming fiscal year. Training requirements for VPK staff will also be raised significantly. The Office of Early Learning will become the Division of Early Learning operating under more direct oversight of the Department of Education. This change is largely in response to the statewide low level of Kindergarten readiness rates. In addition, there will be significant changes to the rule making guidelines which will bring the process in closer alignment with the Department of Education and DCF processes.

The SRPA rule is pending its final public hearing and Mr. Watson noted that several changes are needed in order for the rule to be effective in accommodating Providers who fall in the 3 to 3.5 range. Mr. Watson has drafted language and will participate in the conversation regarding the proposed changes.

### h. 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Early Learning Summit – May 26, 2020

Mr. Watson and Ms. Pugh will be visiting the Amos Theatre and discussing rates and other logistics for using the space for the upcoming summit. Ideally, both the morning and afternoon sessions would be held at the theatre. Mr. Watson informed the Children's Trust PAC as well as three Kiwanis Clubs about the summit and has solicited their support. At a minimum, the



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Coalition may expect about \$100 dollars from each club to subsidize summit costs. Sponsor logos will be printed on handouts for the summit. In addition, the summit will be the soft kickoff for the CSC Campaign as the CSC will have a table in the lobby and will be offering information on the CSC efforts.

### i. Match Funding Requests for 2020

Board approval of this item was not possible since quorum was not met at the last meeting. However, the deadline for submission has passed and no application for funding was submitted to the United Way for funding this fiscal year. The County package will be submitted by Monday and the same amount of funding as last year will be requested .

### j. EFS Modernization Transition Update

The Finance Department is testing samples of several kinds of adjustments and so far, the adjustments reviewed have been good to the penny. A trial 5045 run is pending and scheduled for February 27. Mr. Watson noted that there are still significant differences being discovered from trial to trial.

## **VII. New Business**

### a. Census Support

The Coalition will function as a Census Champion this year promoting the Census and offering work space for parents and Providers to complete the process. The Census will be a topic at the upcoming Coalition Staff Meeting and an announcement will be made that paid positions are available with the Census and the hourly rate is \$20. Since funding is tied to Census statistics, it is critical that the public accurately completes the process so that the community is properly represented. Up to six postcards will be mailed to remind the public to complete the process and Ms. Pugh will be conducting outreach efforts, particularly with the Latino community. The Coalition will likely offer workspace in the main conference room and provide laptops. Staff will also be available to assist.

**Adjourn: Meeting was adjourned at 9:29 a.m.**

**Next Meeting: March 26, 2020 at 8:30 a.m. at the Early Learning Coalition Office, 3300 North Pace Boulevard, Suite 210, Pensacola, Florida 32505**