



March 13, 2024 Board Minutes

Date: March 13, 2024

Location: Zoom/Telephone Call-in Meeting

Minutes Taken By: Tracey Long

Time: Meeting called to order at 11:04 am CST by Jon McFatter

ELCNWF Staff members present in person: Suzan Gage, Executive Director; Matt Bonner, Administrative Director; Lindsay Holmes, Education Services Director

ELCNWF Staff present via Phone/Zoom: Sam Sweazy, Finance Director; Tami Valdez, Communications and Development Director, Chelsea Ranew, Special Projects Director; Tracey Long, Administrative Support Specialist

Guests present: None

Full Board: Yes No Quorum: Yes In attendance: 15/22

Executive Comm. Yes No

Roll Call to Include Board Members on Zoom/Telephone: Yes

Executive Committee	First Name	Last Name	Present	Present Via Phone/Zoom	Excused Absence	Unexcused Absence
●	Tony	Bennett		1		
	Rachel	Chima			1	
	Traci	Corbin			1	
●	Irvin	Clark		1		
●	Sharon	Gaskin		1		
●	Zach	Gilmore		1		
●	Kenneth	Griffin		1		
●	Tiffani	Hinds		1		
●	Jeanne	Hitchcock		1		
●	Miatta	Jalaber		1		
●	Missy	Lee		1		
	Gina	McAllister			1	
	Mary	McKenzie			1	
	Juliana	Melara			1	
	Johanna	Plummer			1	
●	Renae	Rountree		1		
	Joe	Seabrook			1	
●	Joe	Taylor		1		
●	Richard	Williams		1		
●	Myrtis	Wynn		1		
●	Erin	Johnson		1		
●	Veronica	Watkins		1		
		Total		15	7	

Utilization Report for Direct Services

We reimburse contracted providers in each of the seven counties served. The information below shows the payment to School Readiness and VPK providers for direct services (slots) and compares the previous month.

SCHOOL READINESS		
	December 2023	January 2024
<u>School Readiness</u> Payments to Child Care Providers for Direct Services (Slots)	SR Slot Dollars – \$1,200,005.70	SR Slot Dollars – \$1,330,506.67
	Children Paid – 2,210	Children Paid – 2,215
VOLUNTARY PREKINDERGARTEN		
<u>VPK Program</u> Payments to Child Care for VPK services	December 2023	January 2024
	VPK Payments –\$359,880.77	VPK Payments –\$405,051.92
	Children Paid – 1,604	Children Paid – 1,593

1. CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTION OF MEMBERS, GUESTS, AND STAFF

2. APPROVAL OF MEETING AGENDA – Tony Bennett

VOTE NEEDED: To approve the meeting agenda as presented.

MOTION: Richard Williams moved to approve the meeting agenda as presented

Seconded by Kenneth Griffin

Motion carried unanimously with no members recusing from vote.

3. ADOPTION OF CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS – Tony Bennett

3.1. Minutes: Board Meeting January 10, 2024 (*See DRAFT Minutes*)

3.2. Credit Card Transaction Report (*See Regions Credit Card Analysis & Statement December 2023*)

3.3. Revenue and Expenditures (December 2023)

3.4. Surplus Inventory Disposal (Surplus Property Form)

VOTE NEEDED: Approve the consent agenda as presented.

MOTION: Sharon Gaskin moved to approve the consent agenda as presented

Seconded by Zach Gilmore

Motion carried unanimously with no members recusing from vote.

4. COMMITTEE/FULL BOARD REPORTS – Tony Bennett

4.1. Executive Committee- Tony Bennett

4.1.1. March Executive Committee Meeting

The Executive Committee will meet virtually on Monday, March 25th at 11:30 CDT to review the FY23 draft audit report before the auditing firm files it by the March 31st filing deadline. Members

of the Executive Committee include Tony Bennett, Tiffani Hinds, Renae Rountree, and Myrtis Wynn, but any other board members are able to attend if they would like. A copy of the approved report will be shared with the full board at the April 10th board meeting.

4.2. Finance Committee – Tiffani Hinds

4.2.1. FY23 Audit Update

The ELCNWF’s audit firm, Moss, Krusick and Associates are completing their work on the FY23 audit. As shared above, the Executive Committee will meet on March 25th to review the FY23 draft audit report before the auditing firm files it by the March 31st filing deadline. A copy of the approved report will be shared with the full board at the April 10th board meeting.

4.2.2 Audit RFP Update

The audit RFP was released on February 21st to prospective vendors via email as well as the Coalition’s website and myfloridamarketplace.com. An intent to submit must be submitted to the Coalition by March 8, 2024 at 5:00 PM (CST). Submissions are due by March 29, 2024 at 1:00 PM (CDT). The Board Treasurer and Coalition staff anticipate presenting a recommendation for an intent to award to the board at the April 10th board meeting. Once approved, the notice of intent to award will be posted to the Coalition’s website later that afternoon and staff will begin contract negotiations with the selected vendor by April 15th so a signed contract can be in place by July 1st.

4.3. Policy and Personnel Committee- Mary McKenzie

4.3.1 ELCNWF staff recently received response from DEL regarding revision and recommendations to School Readiness and VPK policies. Several policies needed additional revisions to align with Florida Statutes and/or DEL Guidelines. The following is a list of policies that needed revisions and are presented for approval:

- 4.3.1.1 School Readiness Application and Waiting List Procedures
- 4.3.1.2. Eligibility and Enrollment
- 4.3.1.3. Sliding Fee Scale and Fee Waiver
- 4.3.1.4. Child Screening
- 4.3.1.5. Program Assessment
- 4.3.1.6. Use of Observation Based Child Assessment
- 4.3.1.7. Provider Payments Rates
- 4.3.1.8. Quality Improvement Strategies
- 4.3.1.9. Voluntary Prekindergarten Provider Contract Monitoring Policy

VOTE NEEDED: Approve the policy as presented.

MOTION: Joseph Taylor moved to approve the School Readiness and VPK Policy Revisions as presented.

Seconded by Renae Roundtree

Motion carried unanimously with no members recusing from vote.

4.4. Education and Program Committee- Suzan Gage

4.4.1 No report

5. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

5.1. Organization Update

5.1.1. FY24 Additional Funding Request Update

After reviewing expenditure projections for the remainder of FY24, ELCNWF staff submitted a re-obligation request of \$500,000 to DEL as approved by the Board at the February board meeting. This funding will allow the Coalition to continue serving children in the SR program at the current level as well as provide additional quality supports to providers.

5.1.2. Legislative and FY25 Preliminary Funding Updates

March 8th will mark the 60th day of the 2024 legislative session and the last day of the 2024 regular session. Draft bill and budget highlights that have potential impact to early learning and our Coalition include:

- Additional School Readiness (SR) funding – increase of base funding to ELCNWF of \$4,984,216 for a total projected allocation of \$19,199,973
- Increase to Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) base student allocation (BSA) of 3% - increase base funding to ELCNWF of \$450,525 for a total projected allocation of \$4,879,871
- Increase to VPK administrative costs expenditure threshold from 4% to 5%
- New proposed SR provider reimbursement rates with funding included in SR base funding allocation – slight increase to a few of our age and provider categories, mainly to school age, registered family child care homes, and part time rates. New proposed SR rates are now by county, meaning each county now has different rates rather than one set of rates for all seven counties.
- SR Match Program eligibility threshold changed to align with state median income (SMI) rather than using federal poverty level (FPL) guidelines.
- New VPK Summer Bridge Program – funding to school districts to provide additional assistance to certain VPK students during the summer.
- SR Eligibility (HB 929/SB 916) – At this time, we do not see any language in the conforming bill to align SR eligibility to SMI. This will be a priority for next session.
- Deregulation Bills (SB 7002 and SB 7004) passed both chambers. These bills include the following changes related to VPK:
 - o Allows school districts to contract with private providers to comply with summer VPK requirement.
 - o Revises frequency of coalition plan submission to DEL from 2 years to 3 years.
 - o Provides 45 days for newly hired VPK teachers to meet early literacy training requirements

5.1.3. HB1 Online Portal

DOE and DEL are developing an online portal aimed at helping parents determine the best early learning and K-12 educational options for their students. They are working in partnership with Wonderschool to create a fully integrated online portal that will connect early learning providers and all schools, public and private, with families throughout Florida. The online portal will allow parents to navigate a variety of educational options and help them identify the best learning experience for their children.

For parents searching for an early learning provider that best meets their child’s needs, the online portal will provide families with real-time, searchable information on child care openings, tuition and fees, curriculum, health and safety violations, quality initiatives, CLASS scores and other services offered.

A full copy of the DEL memo has been included in the board meeting packet. More information about the deployment of the online portal will be shared as it is made available.

5.1.4. 2022-2024 DEL Accountability Monitoring

The Division of Early Learning (DEL) will conduct its biennial programmatic accountability monitoring review next month. The review begins on Wednesday, April 10th and includes Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) and School Readiness (SR) child eligibility and payment validation, VPK provider eligibility, data accuracy (DA), educational services delivery (ESD), coalition governance (CG), operations and program management (OPM) and child care resource and referral (CCR&R). The eligibility review sample period will be June, November & December 2023. The programmatic review period will be July 1, 2022 – April 30, 2024. Preliminary results are expected sometime in May. A final report will be shared with the Board when it is available, which is expected to be in July.

5.1.5 Fall 2023 Kindergarten FAST Scores

DEL released the Kindergarten FAST results from Fall 2023! Statewide, the results show overall improvements in kindergarten readiness, improving from 49 percent to 51 percent of students entering kindergarten ready. For students who participated in Florida’s VPK program, 64 percent entered kindergarten ready. The results prove that students who participate in Florida’s VPK program are more likely to enter kindergarten prepared for school.

Key takeaways for ELCNWF:

VPK students:

58% of VPK students entered kindergarten ready. This is below the state average of 64%. However, individual districts may have scored higher or lower than the average.

All Kindergarten students:

46% of all kindergarten students entered kindergarten ready. This is below the state average of 51%. However, individual districts may have scored higher or lower than the average.

As the Coalition prepares next year’s work plans, improving kindergarten readiness will be one of the five priorities for the organization in 2024-2025.

5.2. Monthly Service Numbers

5.2.1. School Readiness and VPK Enrollment Numbers and SR Waitlist *(See SR and VPK Enrollment Numbers and SR Waitlist through January 2024)*

5.2.2. **Contracted Providers** (*See Total VPK Contracted Providers VS. VPK Programs with CLASS Scores as of January 2024*)

5.2.3. **Education Services** (*See January 2024 Service Numbers for Education Services*)

5.2.4. **Media Coverage/Activity/Events** (*See January 2024 Media Coverage Activity Events*)

5.2.5. **Childcare Resource and Referral Numbers** (*See January 2024 Childcare Resource and Referral Service Numbers*)

5.2.6. **Help Me Grow Service Numbers** (*See Help Me Grow December 2023 Data Snapshot*)

5.2.7. **Inclusion/Child Service Numbers** (*See January 2024 Service Numbers for Child Services*)

5.2.8. **Early Childhood Care Coordination** (*See January 2024 Service Numbers*)

5.2.9. **Contracted Provider CLASS Scores** (*See January 2024 Service Numbers*)

5.3. Coalition Fraud Update-

No report.

5.4. Internal Monitoring (*See Internal Monitoring Reports*)

5.4.1. No report

6. DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES REPORT

Miata Jalaber reported that DCF continues to conduct School Readiness Inspections. Currently, one provider has closed and an additional closure is expected. Mrs. Jalaber reported a trend forming for closures due to the hardships of keeping their centers open.

Mylissa Lee reported there is an emphasis on Batterer Intervention programs in circuit 14. Mrs. Lee announced other events and opportunities to provide additional resources to the community.

7. PUBLIC COMMENT:

Dr. Clark commended the ELC staff on a professionally organized and well received PowerUp Conference.

8. NEXT MEETING: April 10, 2024

9. ADJOURNED at 11:50 p.m. by Tony Bennett