



## April 9, 2025 Board Minutes

**Date:** April 9, 2025

**Location:** Zoom/Telephone Call-in Meeting

**Minutes Taken By:** Tracey Edwards

**Time:** Meeting called to order at 11:04 am CST by Chase Christianson

**ELCNWF Staff members present in person:** Suzan Gage, Executive Director; Matt Bonner, Administrative Director; Lindsay Holmes, Education Services Director; Tami Valdez, Community Development and Special Programs Directors; Micaylee Clayton, Grants and Contracts Specialist

**ELCNWF Staff present via Phone/Zoom:** Sam Sweazy, Finance Director; Ken Whitaker, Operations Director; Priscilla Greco, Staff Account; Felecia Dorchuck; Accounts Receivable Specialist; Tracey Edwards, HR and Administrative Support Specialist

**Guests present:** Jeff Carter, Board Attorney;

**Full Board:** ☒ Yes ☐ No Quorum: Yes In attendance: 14/21

**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                      |                 |                   |
| ●                   | Chase      | Christianson |         | 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                      |                 |                   |
| ●                   | Thomas     | Register     |         | 1                      |                 |                   |
| ●                   | Joe        | Seabrook     |         | 1                      |                 |                   |
| ●                   | Joseph     | Taylor       |         | 1                      |                 |                   |
| ●                   | Richard    | Williams     |         | 1                      |                 |                   |
| ●                   | Myrtis     | Wynn         |         | 1                      |                 |                   |
| ●                   | Erin       | Johnson      |         |                        | 1               |                   |
|                     | Veronica   | Watkins      |         |                        | 1               |                   |
|                     |            | <b>Total</b> |         | <b>14</b>              | <b>7</b>        |                   |

### 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  |                                  |                                  |
|---|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
|   | January 2025                     | February 2025                    |
| <u>School Readiness</u><br>Payments to Child Care Providers for Direct Services (Slots) | SR Slot Dollars – \$1,328,981.69 | SR Slot Dollars – \$1,137,889.15 |
|   | Children Paid – 2,389            | Children Paid – 2,437            |
|   |                                  |                                  |
| <u>VPK Program</u><br>Payments to Child Care for VPK services                           | January 2025                     | February 2025                    |
|   | VPK Payments – \$452,709.31      | VPK Payments – \$475,191.59      |
|   | Children Paid – 1,611            | Children Paid – 1,547            |

1. CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTION OF MEMBERS, GUESTS, AND STAFF at 11:04 a.m. CDT by Chase Christianson
2. APPROVAL OF MEETING AGENDA AND CONENT AGENDA – Chase Christianson

*VOTE NEEDED: To approve the meeting agenda and the consent agenda as presented.*

**MOTION:** Dr. Irvin Clark moved to approve the meeting and consent agenda as presented.

*Seconded by* Tiffany Hinds

*Motion carried unanimously* with no members recusing from vote.

3. COMMITTEE/FULL BOARD REPORTS – Chase Christianson

#### 3.1. Executive Committee- Chase Christianson

##### 3.1.1. FY26 Approval for Travel for the Executive Director

Coalition policies require that "Business travel for board members and the Executive Director that is reasonable and outside the normal course of business duties shall be pre-approved by an officer of the Board using the approved Coalition travel authorization form." "Reasonable and outside the normal course of business" has been interpreted to include conferences, symposiums, training, and meetings (or similar) outside of the Coalition's seven-county service area. The Executive Director travels monthly to attend meetings, participates in training or conferences, and requests approval for the upcoming fiscal year for both local travel and reasonable travel outside the normal course of business duties (outside the seven-county service area).

*VOTE NEEDED: To approve travel for the Executive Director, which is both local and reasonable and outside the normal course of business duties, taking place outside the Coalition's seven-county service area for FY26.*

**MOTION:** Joe Seabrook moved to approve the travel for the Executive Director, local and outside the Coalition's seven-county service area for FY26.

*Seconded by* Tiffani Hinds

*Motion carried unanimously* with no members recusing from vote.

3.1.2. FY26 Approval for the Executive Director to Execute Contracts, Agreements, and Documents on Behalf of the Organization

Occasionally, documented permission for the Executive Director to sign and execute contracts, agreements, and documents on behalf of the Early Learning Coalition of Northwest Florida, Inc. to operate the organization is requested. The Executive Director requests annual approval from the board to execute contracts, agreements, and documents on behalf of the Coalition for FY26.

***VOTE NEEDED: To approve for the Executive Director to execute contracts, agreements, and documents on behalf of the organization for FY26.***

**MOTION:** Tiffani Hinds moved to approve for the Executive Director to execute contracts, agreements, and documents on behalf of the organization for FY26.

***Seconded by*** Dr. Irvin Clark

***Motion carried unanimously*** with no members recusing from vote.

3.1.3. Proposed FY26 Officers and Committees

The Vice Chair and Executive Director have prepared a proposed slate of officers and committee appointments for the 2025-2026 fiscal year which are included in the meeting packet. Board members are asked to review the proposed officers and committee appointments prior to the June 11th board meeting and inform the Executive Director if they would like to serve on a different committee(s) or if they are not able to serve on a committee at this time. A final proposed slate of officers and committee appointments will be presented for approval at the June 11th board meeting. Officer nominations will be accepted from the floor at the board meeting per bylaws.

**3.2. Finance Committee – Tiffani Hinds, Treasurer and Committee Chair**

3.2.1. Chipley Lease Renewal – Related Party Contract Below \$25,000

To follow Florida Statute, the Coalition Board must approve any contracts between Coalition employees, Coalition governing board members, and relatives of either group as s.

112.3143(10)(b), F.S.; defines. The Coalition must comply with the following requirements:

- A valid vote of approval requires a two-thirds vote of the entire governing board (not just those in attendance)
- The impacted individual(s) must complete the necessary conflict of interest disclosure forms, and these forms must be available for presentation to the governing board at the time of the board's vote.
- Any governing board member(s) benefitting from the contract(s) must disclose in advance the conflict of interest and must abstain from the vote process.
- A quorum must be established.
- The Coalition will need to provide a detailed breakdown of how each member voted in order to ensure that two-thirds of the entire membership voted in favor of the related party contract.
- Coalitions can enter into contracts below \$25,000 without prior approval from DEL; however, such contracts are required to be reported to DEL within 30 days after approval by the Coalition governing board is obtained.
- Regional Workforce Development Board dba CareerSource Chipola-Chipley office annual rental of \$4,750.56.

Disclosures: Richard Williams is the CEO of Career Source Chipola, Mary McKenzie is on the Career Source Chipola Board of Directors.

***VOTE NEEDED: To approve related Party Contracts Below \$25,000- Chipola Regional Workforce Development Board dba CareerSource Chipola - Chipley office annual rental not to exceed \$5,000.***

**MOTION:** Vote postponed until the June meeting

### **3.3. Policy and Personnel Committee- Joe Seabrook**

#### **3.3.1 School Readiness Wait List Procedures and SR Plan Amendments**

As follow up to the recent visit from DEL Chancellor Cari Miller, the Coalition received guidance from DEL Leadership stating that Coalitions currently have the flexibility to do the waitlist by coalition or county and is at the ELCs discretion. Because placement on the wait list is a first come, first served basis, a family from a rural county and have fewer applications means they could be on the wait list longer and not get placed even if there is capacity in that county. Additionally, part of our justification for prioritizing rural counties is the 2024 Needs Assessment which identified concerns centered on the region's ability to meet increasing childcare, early learning, and housing needs driven by rapid population growth. Coalition staff have made draft revisions to the School Readiness Plan and School Readiness Wait List Policy and Procedures to incorporate the recommendations to prioritize families from rural counties and have included these documents in the board meeting packet.

***VOTE NEEDED: To approve the School Readiness Waitlist Procedures and SR Plan Amendments as presented.***

**MOTION:** Dr. Irvin Clark moved to approve the School Readiness Waitlist Procedures and SR Plan Amendments as presented.

***Seconded by*** Joe Seabrook

***Motion carried unanimously*** with no members recusing from vote.

### **3.4. Education and Program Committee- Dr. Irvin Clark**

#### **3.4.1. May/June Committee Meeting – FY26 Program Plans Review**

The Executive Director will convene a meeting with the Education and Program Committee either in May or June to review all program-specific work plans for the length of time of their respective grant. Work plans will include, but not be limited to CLASS, Literacy Coaching, VPK Progress Monitoring, Infant- Toddler Building Better Beginnings, Family and Community Engagement, Development and Outreach, Child Developmental Screening and Referral, Help Me Grow Northwest Florida, and Mental Health Supports. The Executive Director will work with the committee members to determine the best time to convene a meeting. Final work plan drafts will be presented at the July 9th board meeting for approval.

### **3.5. Development Ad Hoc Committee – Erin Johnson**

#### **3.5.1 No Report.**

## 4. Executive Director Overview

### 4.1. Organization Update

#### 4.1.1. FY26 SR Funding Forecasts

The Executive Director will share the most recent forecast and legislative funding proposals for the 2025-2026 School Readiness (SR) program. A report has been included in the board meeting packet for member's review.

#### 4.1.2. Legislative Updates

The Executive Director will share an update on any legislative visits, committee meetings, bills filed, and other information impacting early learning.

#### 4.1.3. DEL Board Survey

DEL recently informed us that Coalition/RCMA board members are being contacted about responding to the Customer Satisfaction Survey required by s. 1002.82(3) F.S., and Rule 6M-9.120(3), F.A.C. The survey was released on April 1<sup>st</sup> in an email from the University of Florida. The staff at UF have indicated that there will be 2 follow-up reminders, on April 8 and 15, for those who have not completed the survey. Thank you in advance for completing the survey and providing your invaluable feedback.

#### 4.1.4. New Data Dashboard

Coalition staff have created a new monthly dashboard as a way to review and highlight certain monthly services by each department. A copy of the March dashboard has been included in the board meeting packet for the Board's review. The intent is to include this report in the monthly service numbers the Board receives from the Executive Director each month..

#### 4.1.5. April 9<sup>th</sup> Board Orientation

The Executive Director will hold an orientation on April 9<sup>th</sup> immediately following the board meeting for any new members, anyone who has not attended an orientation, and anyone else you would like a refresher on the organization. Please RSVP to Tracey Edwards at [tracey.edwards@elcnwf.org](mailto:tracey.edwards@elcnwf.org).

### 4.2. Monthly Service Numbers

4.2.1. School Readiness and VPK Enrollment Numbers and SR Waitlist (*See SR and VPK Enrollment Numbers and SR Waitlist through March 2025*)

4.2.2. Contracted Providers (*See Total VPK Contracted Providers VS. VPK Programs with CLASS Scores as of March 2025*)

4.2.3. Education Services (*See March 2025 Service and Numbers for Education Services*)

4.2.4. Media Coverage/Activity/Events (*See March 2025 Media Coverage.Activity.Events*)

4.2.5. Child Care Resource and Referral Numbers (*See March 2025 Childcare Resource and Referral Service Numbers*)

4.2.6. Help Me Grow Service Numbers (*See Help Me Grow March 2025 Data Snapshot*)

4.2.7. Inclusion/Child Service Numbers (*See March 2025 Service Numbers for Child Services*)

4.2.8. Early Childhood Care Coordination (*See March 2025 Service Numbers*)

4.2.9. Contracted Provider CLASS Scores (*See March 2025 Service Nurganization Update*)

### 4.3. Coalition Fraud Update

4.3.1. ELCNWF staff have referred one School Readiness recipient case to DEL and the Bureau of Public Assistance Fraud (BPAF). The case is currently under review with BPAF. The Executive Director will continue to provide updates on this case and any new cases at upcoming board meetings.

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

4.4.1. IT and PEO Vendor Contract Monitoring Reports

Internal monitoring reports provided for PEO vendor LandrumHR and IT vendor Inspired Technologies.

**5. DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES REPORT**

5.1. Melissa Lee Announced the upcoming Child Abuse and Death Summit this month.

**6. PUBLIC COMMENT:** Members of the public are allowed up to 3 minutes each to address the board.

**7. NEXT MEETING:** June 11, 2025

**8. ADJOURN:** Meeting was adjourned at 11:33 a.m.