



July 9, 2025 Board Minutes

Date: July 9, 2025

Location: Zoom/Telephone Call-in Meeting

Minutes Taken By: Tracey Edwards

Time: Meeting called to order at 11:01 am CST by Chase Christianson

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

ELCNWF Staff present via Phone/Zoom: Sam Sweazy, Finance Director; Ken Whitaker, Operations Director; Tami Valdez, Community Development and Special Programs Director; Priscilla Greco, Staff Accountant; 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: 18/24

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		
●	Irvin	Clark		1		
	Doug	Crosby		1		
	Sharon	Gaskin		1		
	Zach	Gilmore		1		
	Kenneth	Griffin			1	
●	Tiffani	Hinds		1		
	Jeanne	Hitchcock			1	
	Miatta	Jalaber			1	
	Erin	Johnson			1	
	Missy	Lee		1		
	Gina	McAllister		1		
	Mary	McKenzie			1	
	Juliana	Melara		1		
	Crista	Miller		1		
	Sarah	Quantara		1		
	Thomas	Register		1		
●	Joe	Seabrook		1		
	Joseph	Taylor			1	
	Richard	Williams		1		
●	Myrtis	Wynn		1		
	Veronica	Watkins		1		
		Total		18	6	

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		
	April 2025	May 2025
<u>School Readiness</u> Payments to Child Care Providers for Direct Services (Slots)	SR Slot Dollars – \$1,283,093.95	SR Slot Dollars – \$1,284,690.35
	Children Paid – 2,462	Children Paid – 2,503
VOLUNTARY PREKINDERGARTEN		
<u>VPK Program</u> Payments to Child Care for VPK services	April 2025	May 2025
	VPK Payments – \$536,899.64	VPK Payments – \$378,874.60
	Children Paid – 1,547	Children Paid – 1,633

1. CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTION OF MEMBERS, GUESTS, AND STAFF at 11:01 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: Sharon Gaskin moved to approve the meeting and consent agenda with noted correction to minutes and consent agenda as presented.

Seconded by Dr. Irvin Clark

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. Executive Director Annual Review – Information Only

Rule 6M-9.120 requires that The Early Learning Coalition Board Chair or other delegated member(s) to annually complete the Chief Executive Officer/Executive Director Annual Performance Evaluation, Form DEL-SR 120, August 2022, for the ELC's CEO or executive director. A copy of the evaluation form has been included with the board meeting packet. Board members who are interested in providing feedback to assist the Board Chair in completing the Executive Director's annual performance evaluation are asked to do so by emailing their responses to Tracey Edwards at tracey.edwards@elcnwf.org no later than August 1st. A final review will be completed by the Board Chair and presented to the Executive Director prior to the August board meeting.

3.1.2. Review Committee for Termination of Provider Contract

The Coalition received a request for a review hearing from a provider whose School Readiness contract was terminated for failing to meet the contract minimum program assessment and reassessment threshold of 4.0. The Chair selected certain board members to serve on the review hearing committee who will meet in August to hear the provider's dispute and make a determination whether or not to uphold the termination. The Chair and Executive Director will

share the results with the board at the next board meeting.

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

3.2.1. FY26 Initial Budget Proposal – Vote needed

A copy of the proposed FY26 ELCNWF initial budget has been included in the board meeting packet for the Board's consideration and approval.

VOTE NEEDED: To approve FY26 Initial Budget Proposal as presented

MOTION: Sharon Gaskin moved to approve FY26 Initial Budget Proposal as presented.

Seconded by Dr. Irvin Clark

Motion carried unanimously with one member recusing from vote.

3.3. Policy and Personnel Committee- Joe Seabrook

3.3.1. Travel Policy Amendment – *Vote Needed*

The Executive Director and Coalition staff have prepared an amendment to the ELCNWF Travel Policies to ensure travel requests and approvals are applied consistently for employees who are working remotely or teleworking and live outside of the ELCNWF service area. The proposed language aligns with federal and state guidelines and is as follows:

DRAFT Travel Policy for Employees with Residence Outside of ELCNWF Service Area

This policy is intended to address travel reimbursement for employees who live outside of the ELCNWF service area (perform remote work/telework) and travel to the service area for official job-related purposes. Travel for these purposes must meet the following criteria and be approved by the Executive Director:

- 1. The purpose of the travel is reasonable, necessary, mission-critical, and funding is available or within budget.*
- 2. The employee lives more than 50 miles from their assigned work location or outside of the ELCNWF service area, whichever is longer.*
- 3. The use of teleconferencing and other forms of electronic communication cannot be used or cannot achieve the purpose of the travel (a statement must be provided).*
- 4. The requested travel uses the most economical means as documented using an approved method(s).*

VOTE NEEDED: To approve the amendment to the ELCNWF Travel Policies as presented

MOTION: Dr. Irvin Clark moved to approve the amendment to the ELCNWF Travel Policies as presented.

Seconded by Tony Bennett

Motion carried unanimously with one member recusing from vote.

3.4. Education and Program Committee- Dr. Irvin Clark

3.4.1. No Report

3.5. Development Ad Hoc Committee – Erin Johnson

3.5.1 No Report.

4. Executive Director Overview

4.1. Organization Update

4.1.1. School Readiness Funding and Wait List Update

The initial FY26 School Readiness (SR) funding allocation is expected to be approximately \$2.1M less than FY25. This requires ELCNWF to reduce expenditures on SR direct services by \$1.7M along with reducing other operating costs. ELCNWF staff will manage the reduction in SR direct services by only placing priority 1 and 2 children (per ELCNWF's SR Plan approved by DEL), attrition the SR child enrollment counts when they are not redetermined eligible, and keeping children in priorities 3-9 on the wait list for at least the first quarter of the fiscal year. Staff will then reevaluate the SR direct service expenditures and projections through the September service period to determine if children in the higher priority categories are able to be offered SR funding or if we need to continue them on the wait list.

4.1.2. Legislative Updates

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

4.1.3. Provider Termination – Minimum CLASS Contracting Threshold

ELCNWF had to terminate its first provider contract due to the provider not meeting the minimum CLASS score of 4.0 on their 2nd assessment to contract for SR services. The provider, who is in Bay Co., was notified on June 26th as soon as the new score was determined. ELCNWF staff began calling parents the next day to offer support to those who wished to transfer to another eligible SR provider.

4.1.4. June Dashboard

Coalition staff have created a new monthly dashboard to review and highlight certain monthly services by each department. A copy of the June 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.

4.2. Monthly Service Numbers (June 2025)

- 4.2.1. School Readiness and VPK Enrollment Numbers and SR Waitlist (*See SR and VPK Enrollment Numbers and SR Waitlist Report*)
- 4.2.2. Contracted Providers (*See Total VPK Contracted Providers VS. VPK Programs with CLASS Scores Report*)
- 4.2.3. Education Services (*See Service and Numbers for Education Services Report*)
- 4.2.4. Media Coverage/Activity/Events (*See Media Coverage.Activity.Events Report*)
- 4.2.5. Child Care Resource and Referral Numbers (*See Childcare Resource and Referral Service Numbers Report*)
- 4.2.6. Help Me Grow Service Numbers (*See Help Me Grow Data Reports*)
- 4.2.7. Inclusion/Child Service Numbers (*See Numbers for Child Services Report*)
- 4.2.8. Early Childhood Care Coordination (*See Service Numbers Report*)

4.2.9. Contracted Provider CLASS Scores (*See Service Numbers Report*)

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

- 4.4.1. None

5. DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES REPORT

Miatta Jalaber reported updates on back-to-school preparations.

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

- 7. NEXT MEETING:** August 13, 2025

- 8. ADJOURN:** Meeting was adjourned at 11:20 a.m.