



October 8, 2025 Board Minutes

Date: October 8, 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, Chair

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

ELCNWF Staff present via Phone/Zoom: Sam Sweazy, Finance 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: 15/24

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				
	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		15	9	

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		
	July 2025	August 2025
<u>School Readiness</u> Payments to Child Care Providers for Direct Services (Slots)	SR Slot Dollars – \$1,458,891.26	SR Slot Dollars – \$1,197,297.13
	Children Paid – 2,414	Children Paid – 2,389
	SR + Direct Services - \$1,357.82	SR+ Direct Services - \$1,005.94
	SR+ Children Paid - 4	SR+ Children Paid - 4
VOLUNTARY PREKINDERGARTEN		
<u>VPK Program</u> Payments to Child Care for VPK services	July 2025 (VPK Summer Only)	August 2025
	VPK Payments – \$29,951.10	VPK Payments – \$312,735.11
	Children Paid – 38	Children Paid – 1,429

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

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. Board Member Term Renewals – *Vote Needed*

The following board members will be ending their 1st 4-year term and have expressed interest in being reappointed to a 2nd term:

- Richard Williams, Local workforce board executive director (Calhoun, Holmes, Jackson, and Washington)
- Miatta Jalaber, DCF child care regulation representative (All counties)
- Dr. Gina McCallister, President-designee of a Florida College System institution (Calhoun, Holmes, Jackson, and Washington)
- Sharon Gaskin, Head Start Director (Calhoun and Gulf)

- Mary McKenzie, Private Sector (Calhoun)
- Kenneth Griffin, Private Sector (Jackson)
- Tony Bennett, Private Sector (Bay)
- Rachel Chima, Private Sector (Bay)

VOTE NEEDED: To approve the reappointments to a 2nd term on the Board of Directors in their respective positions.

MOTION: Dr. Irvin Clark moved to approve the reappointments to a 2nd term on the Board of Directors in their respective positions with the correction that Miatta Jalaber will be resigning from her seat.

Seconded by Joseph Taylor

Motion carried unanimously with no members recusing from vote.

3.1.2. Annual Government in the Sunshine Law Training – Information only

The Coalition's attorney, Jeff Carter, will present information on Florida's Government in the Sunshine Law and relevance to the ELCNWF and its Board of Directors. A copy of the presentation and the 2024 Government in the Sunshine Law Manual have been included in the board packet.

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

1. No Report

3.3. Policy and Personnel Committee- Joe Seabrook

- 3.3.1. No Report

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. Save the Children Handle with Care Program Planning Grant

The Coalition recently applied for and received a \$10,000 planning grant from Save the Children to plan, and potentially, pilot a program in Gulf Co. called Handle with Care. The program is intended to support B-5 children and help them succeed in child care by alerting staff when a child experiences a traumatic event involving law enforcement or Child Protection Services (CPS). We will share more information on the status of the program as we progress through the process.

4.1.2. County Chambers of Commerce Sponsorship Events First Friday ELCNWF Sponsorship

4.1.2.1. Bay County Chamber's First Friday

For the 3rd year in a row, the Coalition sponsored a Bay County Chamber's monthly First Friday event. This year's event was on October 3rd. Suzan presented important information about the services and outcomes since last year. Board members were

encouraged to attend with the Executive Director and staff to help garner support for the Coalition's efforts.

4.1.2.2. Gulf County Chamber's Monthly Lunch and Learn

Suzan will be speaking at Gulf County Chamber's monthly Lunch and Learn to present important information about the services the Coalition provides families access to in Gulf and surrounding counties. Board members are encouraged to attend with the Executive Director and staff to help garner support for the Coalition's efforts. The event will be held on October 16th at Pomodoro's Italian Bar and Grill in Port St. Joe at 12:00 pm EDT.

4.1.3. Organization and Community Engagements

9/5 VPK Performance Designation Presentation with Bay District Schools

9/8 20-Year Anniversary Proclamation at Franklin Co. County Commissioners Meeting

9/8-9/11 VFHK PN-3 Workgroups Conference, St. Paul, MN (Executive Director)

9/12 Panama City Beach Chamber of Commerce's Friday at the Beach Presentation

9/16 20-Year Anniversary Proclamation at Bay Co. County Commissioners Meeting

9/16 20-Year Anniversary Proclamation at Calhoun Co. County Commissioners Meeting

9/16 20-Year Anniversary Proclamation at Holmes Co. County Commissioners Meeting

9/23 1st Session of the Early Childhood and Childcare Provider Advocacy Group

9/23 20-Year Anniversary Proclamation at Gulf Co. County Commissioners Meeting

9/23 20-Year Anniversary Proclamation at Jackson Co. County Commissioners Meeting

9/25 20-Year Anniversary Proclamation at Washington Co. County Commissioners Meeting

9/29-9/30 Florida Early Learning Impact Network, Miami, FL (Executive Director)

4.1.4. Federal Government Shutdown Impact

The HHS plan calls for furloughing approximately 41% of staff. While immediate impacts to the Child Care & Development Block Grant (CCDBG) and Head Start programs are expected to be limited, a prolonged shutdown beyond November 1 could disrupt services, delay reimbursements, and limit agency capacity. School Readiness funding (SR) is a federally funded program through the Child Care & Development Block Grant (CCDBG). States have already received partial FY2025 discretionary awards. Because states have two years to obligate these funds and receive an annual \$3.5 billion in mandatory funding, most should be able to maintain current enrollment levels in the short term. The Division of Early Learning (DEL) has notified coalitions that it is business as usual unless there are further developments, at which time DEL will notify Coalitions. VPK is state funded and should not be impacted.

4.1.5. September Dashboard

Coalition staff have created a new monthly dashboard to review and highlight certain monthly services by each department. A copy of the September dashboard has been included in the board meeting packet for the Board's review.

4.2. Monthly Service Numbers (September 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 with a pending assignment status. 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. Internal Controls – DEL Internal Controls Questionnaire (ICQ)

5. DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES REPORT

Miatta Jalaber reported that Chapter updates have been completed and sent to providers. Changes include violation standards, CPR requirements, safety, and more. The chapter is now offering free training to providers. Missy Lee reported that the Community Development team is focusing on Prevention and Post Adoption services.

- 6. **PUBLIC COMMENT:** Members of the public are allowed up to 3 minutes each to address the board.
- 7. **NEXT MEETING:** November 12, 2025
- 8. **ADJOURN:** Meeting was adjourned at 11:38 a.m.