



## January 14, 2026 Board Minutes

**Date:** January 14, 2026

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

**Minutes Taken By:** Tracey Edwards

**Time:** Meeting called to order at 11:01 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; Ken Whittaker, Operations 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: 17/24

**Executive Comm.** Yes X 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		
	<u>Lee Ann</u>	<u>Case</u>		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		
		<b>Total</b>		<b>17</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.

<b>SCHOOL READINESS</b>		
	<b>October 2025</b>	<b>November 2025</b>
<u>School Readiness</u> Payments to Child Care Providers for Direct Services (Slots)	SR Slot Dollars – \$1,261,479.36	SR Slot Dollars – \$1,132,437.71
	Children Paid – 2,300	Children Paid – \$2,305
SR + Direct Service \$	\$1,206.70	\$959.72
SR + Children Paid	5	5
<b>VOLUNTARY PREKINDERGARTEN</b>		
	<b>October 2025</b>	<b>November 2025</b>
<u>VPK Program</u> Payments to Child Care for VPK services	VPK Payments – \$510,219.28	VPK Payments – \$358,558.83
	Children Paid – 1,509	Children Paid – 1,501

1. CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTION OF MEMBERS, GUESTS, AND STAFF at 11:01 a.m. CDT by Chase Christianson, Chair

2. APPROVAL OF MEETING AGENDA AND CONENT AGENDA – Chase Christianson

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

MOTION: Tony Bennett moved to approve the meeting and consent agenda as presented.

*Secoded by* Tiffani 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. No report.

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

3.2.1. FY26 DEL Fiscal Monitoring and MKA Audit Updates – Information Only

DEL and its contacted monitoring firm, Thomas Howell Furgison (THF), are completing sample testing based on documentation submitted by ELCNWF, as part of the FY26 fiscal monitoring. The Treasurer and ELCNWF staff will continue to keep the Board informed of the monitoring progress and any reports issued by DEL and THF.

The annual single audit which is performed by MKA is also underway. ELCNWF has received the 2024-2025 revenue confirmations from DEL and expects to begin the audit work with MKA in this month.

### **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. FY26 Workplan Goals and Outcomes Status Report – Information Only**

ELCNWF tracks and reports outcomes for its FY26 Education Services and Community Impact workplans on a quarterly basis. Copies of the Quarter 1 reports have been included in the board meeting packet for review. The reports show goals and outcomes that are on track, off track, and have already been met.

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

#### **3.5.1. 2025 United Way of NWFL Workplace Campaign Results**

ELCNWF recently completed its 2025 United Way of NWFL workplace campaign to raise local funds as an affiliated agency. The campaign included various fundraising activities including an employee 50/50 raffle and beach stay giveaway (donated by Origins of Seahaven), a community raffle for a 7-foot, 3D printed dragon (donated by Ramona Riley), an employee basket auction, and general giving and payroll deduction pledges from employees. ELCNWF raised a total of \$4,364. Part of the funds will go back to ELCNWF through designated giving and the rest will go into the community impact grant fund pool, which we will be able to apply for with amounts determined by the local county funding committees.

## **4. Executive Director Overview**

### **4.1. Organization Update**

#### **4.1.1. Organization and Community Engagements**

Below is a list of organization and community engagements attended by the Executive Director during October 2025 that aligns with the ELCNWF's strategic plan, strengthens our partnerships, and advances the focus of early learning at the local, state, and national level.

12/1 and 12/15 Kindergarten Readiness meetings with Bay Co. Superintendent McQueen and FSU-PC Associate Dean Dr. Irvin Clark

12/2 Gulf Coast Impact 100 Grant Kick-off Event

12/5 UWNWFL and ELCNWF Data Collaborative Meeting

12/8 Early Childhood Advocacy Training with providers and The Children's Movement of Florida

12/10 Early Childhood strategic planning meeting with Gulf Coast State College President Mr. Glen McDonald

#### 4.1.2. Legislative Updates

The Executive Director will give an update on the 2026 legislative priorities and any legislation that has been filed ahead of the 2026 legislative session that begins January 13<sup>th</sup>.

#### 4.1.3. 2025-2026 DEL ELC Board Member Survey

DEL recently informed us that Coalition/RCMA board members will be contacted to respond to the Customer Satisfaction Survey required by s. 1002.82(3) F.S., and Rule 6M-9.120(3), F.A.C. The survey should be released by March 1<sup>st</sup> in an email from the University of Florida. Additionally, after completing a two-year baseline implementation phase, DEL will compile the data specified in Rule 6M-9.120(2), F.A.C., to formulate the Early Learning Coalition (ELC) Performance Standards required by s. 1002.82(3), F.S. Thank you in advance for completing the survey and providing your invaluable feedback.

#### 4.1.4. Washington County End of Year Donation

The Coalition recently received a check in the amount of \$25,000 from a generous local resident, Mr. Charles Dunn of Chipley, FL, to be used in Washington Co. A portion of the funds will be used to provide childcare tuition assistance to income-eligible families who are over the School Readiness eligibility threshold. ELCNWF will work on a plan on the most impactful way(s) to utilize the funds.

#### 4.1.5. December Data Dashboard

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

### 4.2 Monthly Service Numbers (December 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 None

**5 DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES REPORT**

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

6.2 Leanne Case reported there may be 1 childcare facility closing soon. Missy Lee reported on upcoming events to support children's development for adopted kids.

**7 NEXT MEETING:** February 11, 2026

**8 ADJOURN:** Meeting was adjourned at 11:35 a.m.