



August 13, 2025 Board Minutes

Date: August 13, 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; Lindsay Homes, Education Services Director; Tami Valdez, Community Development and Special Programs Director

ELCNWF Staff present via Phone/Zoom: Sam Sweazy, Finance Director; Ken Whitaker, 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: 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		
	May 2025	June 2025
<u>School Readiness</u> Payments to Child Care Providers for Direct Services (Slots)	SR Slot Dollars – \$1,284,690.35	SR Slot Dollars – \$1,259,181.71
	Children Paid – 2,503	Children Paid – 2,532
VOLUNTARY PREKINDERGARTEN		
<u>VPK Program</u> Payments to Child Care for VPK services	May 2025	June 2025 (VPK Summer Only)
	VPK Payments – \$378,874.60	VPK Payments – \$26,757.78
	Children Paid – 1,633	Children Paid – 38

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 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 with noted correction to minutes and consent agenda as presented.

Seconded by Doug Crosby

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 – Vote Needed

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 Executive Director's 2024-2025 performance evaluation form will be shared at the board meeting.

VOTE NEEDED: To approve the Executive Director's 2024-2025 performance evaluation as presented.

MOTION: Miatta Jalaber moved to approve the Executive Director's 2024-2025 performance evaluation as presented.

Seconded by Kenneth Griffin

Motion carried unanimously with no members recusing from vote.

3.1.2. Review Hearing Committee Update – Information Only

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. No Report

3.3. Policy and Personnel Committee- Joe Seabrook

3.3.1. *Employee Stipend Policy Amendment– Vote Needed*

An amendment to the ELCNWF's Employee Stipend Policy is being recommended as a result of the FY25 DEL fiscal monitoring. The amendment is presented as follows:

2.13 Merit Performance Stipends

The Coalition may consider compensation adjustments or merit stipends for regular full-time employees to recognize satisfactory and higher employee performance related to current job duties, or additional job duties for implementing new grants and programs or to improve overall employee morale. The decision to award such a stipend depends upon the Executive Director's approval and other factors, including the Coalition's budget and the availability of funds.

Employees in their 90-day probationary period are ineligible to receive a merit stipend. Typically, employees on a performance improvement plan (PIP) are also ineligible to receive a merit payment stipend, however, the Executive Director may approve such stipend at their discretion.

Merit Stipends extended to non-exempt employees must be counted in the employees' hourly rate when calculating overtime pay for that specific work week in which the payment is issued.

VOTE NEEDED: To approve the amendment to the ELCNWF Employee Stipend Policy as presented

MOTION: Kenneth Griffin moved to approve the amendment to the ELCNWF Employee Stipend Policy as presented.

Seconded by Mary McKenzie

Motion carried unanimously with one member recusing from vote.

3.4. Education and Program Committee- Dr. Irvin Clark

3.4.1. FY25 Quarter 4 1-Year Plan and Workplan Reports

ELCNWF has been tracking and reporting outcomes for its 1-Year Plan and FY25 Workplans on a quarterly basis. A copy of the Quarter 4 reports have been included in the board meeting packet for review.

3.4.2. Meeting with Bay County Superintendent Mark McQueen – *Information Only*

On July 23, 2025, Education and Program Committee Chair Dr. Irvin Clark and Executive Director Suzan Gage met with Superintendent Mark McQueen of Bay District Schools. Items discussed were:

- Strengthening the "Cradle to Career" understanding related to education so that early learning is recognized as the foundation that supports children being ready for school
- The importance of Bay County and each county, for that matter, of determining "What does it mean to be ready for kindergarten?"
- The need for the ELCNWF to convene relevant stakeholders to work on establishing that definition, to drive collective action for Bay County
- Review of Bay District Kindergarten Readiness Rates

It is recommended that the ELCNWF continue working on the convening and report to the committee/ full board on progress for all counties monthly.

3.4.3. **2024 Kindergarten Readiness Rates – *Information Only***

The Florida Department of Education released 2024 Kindergarten Readiness Rates for school districts and individual schools in July 2025. Both documents are included in your packets. Critical points for discussion include:

- Of the seven counties in the ELCNWF service area, no county was above the statewide average (43%) for Kindergarten Readiness
- The scoring considers all children tested in the first 30 days of Kindergarten, regardless of their participation in VPK, School Readiness, formal child care, and includes children who had no formal participation in an early learning program (family, friend, and neighbor care)
- While not shown in the information presented, historically, children who participate in VPK score higher than those who do not.

It is recommended that staff share with the Education Committee monthly how ELCNWF is working with providers and families throughout the service area.

3.5. Development Ad Hoc Committee – Erin Johnson

3.5.1 No Report.

4. Executive Director Overview

4.1. Organization Update

4.1.1. 2025-2026 Annual Organizational Development Planning Report

The Executive Director, along with the ELCNWF executive team, completed their annual organizational development planning for FY26. The team reviewed the focus areas from the 10-year and 3-year plans and created a new 1-year plan/goals for 2025-2026. The Executive Director has included an overview of the five focus areas and goals established for FY26 in the board meeting packet.

4.1.2. July Dashboard

Coalition staff have created a new monthly dashboard to review and highlight certain monthly services by each department. A copy of the July 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 (July 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. Child Care Resource and Referral
- 4.4.2. ESD-A Developmental Screening and Intervention Practices
- 4.4.3. St. Joe Community Foundation Access for ALICE Expenditure Report

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

Miatta Jalaber reported updates on upcoming changes to licensing for providers.

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

7. **NEXT MEETING:** September 10, 2025

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