



May 13, 2026 Board Minutes

Date: May 13, 2026

Location: Zoom/Telephone Call-in Meeting

Minutes Taken By: Tracey Edwards

Time: Meeting called to order at 11:00 am CST by Tony Bennett, Vice Chair

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

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

Guests present: none

Full Board: Yes No Quorum: No In attendance: 11/24

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		
	Lee Ann	Case			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		11	13	

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		
	February 2026	March 2026
<u>School Readiness (SR)</u>	SR Slot Dollars – \$1,144,692.15	SR Slot Dollars – \$1,277,376.76
Payments to Child Care Providers for Direct Services (Slots)	Children Paid – 2,415	Children Paid – 2,437
SCHOOL READINESS PLUS		
	February 2026	March 2026
<u>School Readiness PLUS</u>	SR Slot Dollars – \$1,044.39	SR Slot Dollars – \$867.84
Payments to Child Care Providers for Direct Services (Slots) for eligible families above the SR exit threshold.	Children Paid – 6	Children Paid – 7
VOLUNTARY PREKINDERGARTEN		
	February 2026	March 2026
<u>VPK Program</u>	VPK Payments – \$442,799.85	VPK Payments – \$401,138.66
Payments to Child Care for VPK services	Children Paid – 1,478	Children Paid – 1,455

1. CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTION OF MEMBERS, GUESTS, AND STAFF at 11:00 a.m. CDT by Tony Bennett, Vice Chair

2. APPROVAL OF MEETING AGENDA AND CONENT AGENDA – Tony Bennett

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 Kenneth Griffin

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. Little Sharks Learning Center School Readiness Contract Termination – *Vote Needed*

Coalition staff have been working with Little Sharks Learning Center, a School Readiness (SR) provider in Gulf Co., for several months on a variety of issues, including not submitting monthly attendance records, not completing the annual provider profile, not responding to multiple communication attempts, and lapse in their general liability insurance requirement which exposes

the Coalition to a suit if a SR child gets injured. The Coalition has issued prior notices to the provider to resolve these matters and gave a corrective action period to comply, which the provider did not do. It is Coalition staff's and its attorney's position that it is in the best interest of the Coalition to terminate the SR contract for cause effective May 22, 2026. If approved, parents/caregivers will be notified of the situation and to explain their options.

VOTE NEEDED: To approve Little Sharks Learning Center's SR provider contract termination for cause effective May 22, 2026.

MOTION: Kenneth Griffin moved to approve Little Sharks Learning Center's SR provider contract termination for cause effective May 22, 026.

Seconded by Jeanne Hitchcock

Motion carried unanimously with no members recusing from vote.

3.1.2. FY27 Approval for Travel for the Executive Director – *Vote Needed*

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 FY27.

MOTION: Dr. Irvin Clark moved to approve travel for the Executive Director, which is both local and reasonable and outside the normal course of business duties, taking place outside Coalition's seven-county service area for FY27.

Seconded by Jeanne Hitchcock

Motion carried unanimously with no members recusing from vote.

3.1.3. FY27 Approval for the Executive Director to Execute Contracts, Agreements, and Documents on behalf of the Organization- *Vote needed*

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 FY27.

VOTE NEEDED: To approve for the Executive Director to execute contracts, agreements, and documents on behalf of the organization for FY27

MOTION: Kenneth Griffin moved to approve the Executive Director to execute contracts, agreements, and documents on behalf of the organization for FY27

Seconded by Missy Lee

Motion carried unanimously with no members recusing from vote.

3.1.4. Proposed FY27 Officers and Committees – *Information Only*

During the month of May, the Chair and Executive Director will prepare a proposed slate of officers and committee appointments for the 2026-2027 fiscal year. Members will be notified ahead of the meeting of the proposed officer positions and committee assignments. If any board member would like to change their current officer position and/or committee assignment, please inform the Executive Director, and if they would like to serve on a different position or committee(s) or if they are not able to serve at this time. A final proposed slate of officers and committee appointments will be presented for approval at the July 8th board meeting. Officer nominations will be accepted from the floor at the board meeting per bylaws.

3.1.5. Information Technology Managed Services RFP Scoring Results – *Vote needed*

ELCNWF staff recently released a Request for Proposal (RFP) for our Information Technology Managed Services. Our current 3-year contract that was procured via RFP in 2023 will expire on 6/30/2026. Five (5) proposals were accepted by the April 7, 2026 due date and were reviewed and scored by an internal scoring committee with the results as follows:

RFP 2026-01 Information Technology Support Services Final Scoring					
Scorer	SNH	Inspired	Outview	Gnosys	Consultadd
Scorer 1	92	100	81	88	93
Scorer 2	94	98	90	98	91
Scorer 3	98	100	98	100	96
TOTAL POINTS	284	298	269	286	280

VOTE NEEDED: *To approve to award the contract to Inspired Technologies of North Florida, Inc. as scored and recommended by the scoring committee.*

MOTION: Dr. Irvin Clark moved to approve to award the contract to Inspired Technologies of North Florida, Inc. as scored and recommended by the scoring committee.

Seconded by Jeanne Hitchcock

Motion carried unanimously with no members recusing from vote.

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

3.2.1. Chipley Lease Renewal – Related Party Contract below \$25,000 – *Vote needed*

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 CareerSource Chipola, Mary McKenzie is on the CareerSource 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.

Two thirds of the board members are not present. Unable to vote on this topic. Item will be moved to next meeting's agenda.

3.2.2. FY26 DEL Fiscal Monitoring Update – Information Only

DEL and its contacted monitoring firm, Thomas Howell Furgison (THF), concluded its fieldwork during the week of February 2nd from their sample selections. ELCNWF received the draft report from DEL which resulted in one finding for ELC management inadvertently excluded overtime hours when creating the December 2024 cost allocation percentages which led to inaccurate percentages that were used to allocate indirect costs in January 2025. ELCNWF staff have already provided their response and once the final report is released, it will be shared with the Board with any corrective action measures, if needed.

3.3. Policy and Personnel Committee- Joe Seabrook

3.3.1. School Readiness and VPK Eligibility Policy Amendments – *Vote needed*

Coalition staff have completed amendments to the Coalition's School Readiness Eligibility, Waiting List, and Sliding Fee Scale and Waiver policies and its VPK Eligibility policy to align with recent changes to DOE/DEL's rules in the Florida Administrative Code (FAC). Copies of the draft policies have been included in the board meeting packet for the Board's review.

VOTE NEEDED: To approve the proposed changes to the Coalition's School Readiness Eligibility, Wait list, and Sliding Fee Scale and Waiver policies and its VPK Eligibility policy as presented.

MOTION: Dr. Irvin Clark moved to approve the proposed changes to the Coalitions's School Readiness Eligibility, Wait List, and Sliding Fee Scale and Waiver policies and its VPK Eligibility policy as presented.

Seconded by Kenneth Griffin

Motion carried unanimously with no members recusing from vote.

3.4. Education and Program Committee- Dr. Irvin Clark

3.4.1. June/July Committee Meeting – FY27 Program Plans Review – *Information Only*

The Committee Chair and Executive Director will convene a meeting with the Education and Program Committee in June or July 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, Development and Outreach, Child Developmental Screening and Referral, Help Me Grow Northwest Florida, and Mental Health Supports. The Committee Chair and 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 August 12th board meeting for approval.

3.4.2. 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 3 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. No Report

4. Executive Director Overview

4.1. Organization Update

4.1.1. 1-Year Plan Outcomes Report Update

The Executive Director has included in the board packet a status report of ELCNWF’s fiscal year 2025-2026 1-Year Plan through the third quarter. Most goals and objectives are on track to be met by the end of the fiscal year, and some goals have already been met.

4.1.2. Organization and Community Engagements

Below is a list of organization and community engagements attended by the Executive Director during March 2026 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.

- 4/2: Early Childhood Advocacy Meeting with AELC
- 4/9: Community Collaboration Meeting with Doorways of NWFL
- 4/10: Gulf Coast CAC Marianna Office Ribbon Cutting
- 4/15: Professional Learning Group in Panama City
- 4/16: Bay Co. Chamber Board Meeting
- 4/16: Tri-County Airport After Hours in Bonifay
- 4/17: Impact 100 Grant Application Site Visit in Panama City
- 4/21-4/24: Annual AELC and Board and DEL Meetings in Ocala
- 4/27: Developmental Screening Provider Meeting in Panama City
- 4/28: Developmental Screening Provider Meeting in Marianna

4.1.3. Legislative Updates

The Executive Director will provide an update on the FY27 budget process and potential impacts to our Coalition. We are still hopeful that a “compression factor” will be adopted that will result in no more than a +/- 5% variance from the prior year’s ending budget allowing Coalitions to plan and adapt to future funding without the wild swings in funding as experienced in years past.

4.1.4. April Data Dashboard

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

4.2 Monthly Service Numbers (April 2026)

- 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 IT and PEO Contract Monitoring

5 DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES REPORT

5.3 No Report

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

7 NEXT MEETING: June 10, 2026 (no meeting in July)

8 ADJOURN: Meeting was adjourned at 11:19 a.m.