September 9, 2026 Board Minutes

Date: September 9, 2026
Location: Zoom/Telephone Call-in Meeting
Minutes Taken By: Tracey Edwards
Time: Meeting called to order at 11:03 am CST by Chase Christianson, Chairman
ELCNWF Staff members present in person: Matt Bonner, Administrative Director
ELCNWF Staff present via Phone/Zoom: Suzan Gage, Executive Director; Sam Sweazy Finance Director; Ken Whittaker, Operations Director; Priscilla Greco, Staff Accountant; Felecia Dorchuck; Fiscal Specialist; Tracey Edwards, HR and Administrative Support Specialist; Jeff Carter, Board Attorney
Guests present: none
Full Board: _x_ Yes ___No Quorum: yes In attendance: 19/24
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	
	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		**19**	**5**	

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		
	June 2026	**July 2026**
School Readiness (SR) Payments to Child Care Providers for Direct Services (Slots)	SR Slot Dollars – $1,401,644.23	SR Slot Dollars – $1,462,958.05
	Children Paid – 4,310 (includes prior month adjustments)	Children Paid – 2,713
SCHOOL READINESS PLUS		
School Readiness PLUS Payments to Child Care Providers for Direct Services (Slots) for eligible families above the SR exit threshold.	**June 2026**	**July 2026**
	SR Slot Dollars – $456.80	SR Slot Dollars – $565.57
	Children Paid – 8	Children Paid – 4
VOLUNTARY PREKINDERGARTEN		
VPK Program Payments to Child Care for VPK services	**June 2026 (summer program)**	**July 2026 (summer program)**
	VPK Payments – $59,937.27	VPK Payments – $40,241.43
	Children Paid – 109 (44 in summer program)	Children Paid – 44

1. CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTION OF MEMBERS, GUESTS, AND STAFF at 11:03 a.m. CDT by Chase Christianson, Chairman
2. APPROVAL OF MEETING AGENDA AND CONENT 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 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. Board Member Resignation – Voted needed

Erin Johnson announced her resignation from the Board as a Governor appointee, effective October 1st.

VOTE NEEDED: To accept Ms. Johnson's resignation and thank her for her years of service to children and families in Northwest Florida.

MOTION: Mary McKenzie moved to accept Ms. Johnson's resignation and thank her for her years of service to children and families in Northwest Florida.
Seconded by Dr. Irvin Clark
Motion carried unanimously with no members recusing from vote.

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. No report

3.4. Education and Program Committee- Dr. Irvin Clark

3.4.1. 2025-2026 VPK Provider Performance Metrics and Designation Results – Information Only

Florida's Department of Education, Division of Early Learning, recently released the 2025-2026 Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) provider performance metrics and designation results. ELCNWF staff will present information and plans to recognize providers for their achievements and to work with Providers on Probation.

3.5. Development Ad Hoc Committee – Missy Lee

3.5.1. Annual Pineapple Willy's Beach Clean-Up
On August 15th, ELCNWF was that day's sponsored nonprofit organization for Pineapple Willy's annual beach clean-up fundraiser. 136 staff and volunteers attended the event, which was the largest turnout of the season so far. Pineapple Willy's donated $2,700 to the Coalition as a result.

4. Executive Director Overview

4.1. Organization Update

4.1.1. 2024-2025 Help Me Grow Northwest Florida (HMGNWF) Monitoring Report
The Children's Forum recently completed its 2024-2025 program monitoring of HMGNWF. The monitoring resulted in zero findings. A copy of the full report has been included in the board meeting packet for members' review.

4.1.2. 2025-2026 NWFHN EC3 Program Monitoring
Northwest Florida Health Network (NWFHN) will begin its 2025-2026 monitoring of ELCNWF's Early Childhood Care Coordination (EC3) program on September 10th. A copy of the monitoring report will be provided to the Board upon completion.

4.1.3. 2025-2026 DEL Accountability Review Monitoring Update
At the April 8th board meeting, the Executive Director shared that DEL would complete its biennial Accountability Monitoring at the end of May to evaluate the Coalition's effectiveness in implementing early learning programs under the DEL grant agreement. ELCNWF staff met with DEL monitoring staff on August 25th to review the preliminary report and receive the Coalition's initial responses. Once the final report is complete, a copy will be shared with the Board.

4.1.4. Road to Readiness Update

ELCNWF has officially kicked off its Road to Readiness Initiative. Road to Readiness is the organizing framework that brings ELCNWF's vision of helping to grow healthy children, parents, and the relationship between them by providing access to quality early learning opportunities that set a course for lifelong success to life across Northwest Florida. It connects our programs, services, partnerships, family engagement, provider support, and community initiatives around a shared understanding: kindergarten readiness is a birth-to-five journey.

Phase 1 will be conducted through October 2026, and milestones include listening tours and data walks with families, partners, and the community at large to inform the next steps.

4.1.5. DOE/DEL IT Security Risk Assessment

Florida's Department of Education and the Division of Early Learning are currently completing an IT security risk assessment of each Early Learning Coalition (ELC) in the state. The assessment includes asset management, asset controls, data security, security events and detection processes, event mitigation and response planning, and recovery processes. For the first phase, ELCNWF and Inspired Technologies staff completed and submitted a self-assessment questionnaire to DOE/DEL and their vendor. The next phase will include an interview to review our responses to the questionnaire. After DOE/DEL completes their reports, the results and recommendations will be shared with the Board.

4.1.6. Semi-Annual All Staff Meeting

ELCNWF held its semi-annual All Staff Meeting on August 27th, where the Executive Director kicked off the Road to Readiness initiative and staff presented on other initiatives and activities, such as our annual United Way NWFL workplace campaign, Buddy AI, mySidewalk data visualization system, The Only Adult in the Room podcast, and Core Award recognitions. The meeting was a fun and engaging time and set the stage for this fiscal year's collective impact work.

4.1.7. Organization and Community Engagements

Below is a list of organizational and community engagements attended by the Executive Director in August 2026 that align with the ELCNWF's strategic plan, strengthen our partnerships, and advance the focus on early learning at the local, state, and national levels.

8/1: Bay County Chamber Government Affairs Committee Meeting
8/1: Early Learning Impact Network Meeting
8/10: Early Childhood Collaborative Meeting
8/19: Bay County EDA Meeting
8/20: Bay County Chamber Board Meeting
8/24: FAIMH Board Meeting
8/26: Washington Co. EDA Meeting with Florida's Great Northwest
8/28: Goshen 32401 FCI Monthly Meeting

4.2 Monthly Service Numbers (August 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)
4.2.10. August Data Dashboard

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 by BPAF and has 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

4.4.1 ESD-A (Child Development Screening and Intervention Practices)

4.4.2 CCR&R and Family Engagement Plan

4.4.3 FY27 Internal Control Questionnaire (ICQ)

5. DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES REPORT

Lee Ann Case reported that new rules for providers became effective September 1st and will now be enforced. Additional, the department is holding trainings for providers September 18, 2026.

6. **PUBLIC COMMENT:** Members of the public are allowed up to 3 minutes each to address the board.
7. **NEXT MEETING:** October 14, 2026
8. **ADJOURN:** 11:25 a.m.