

## **Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Directors of Early Learning Coalition of Southwest Florida.**

May 14th, 2025

### **Time and Place of Meeting**

A meeting of the Board of Directors of the Early Learning Coalition of Southwest Florida, was held on May 14th, 2025, commencing at approximately 9:00am EDT at the offices of the Early Learning Coalition of SW FL Company 2675 Winkler Ave Suite 300, Fort Myers FL 33901. In person and via Microsoft Teams video conference.

### **Call to Order; Roll Call**

The following directors, constituting a quorum, were present in person or by teleconference:

- Kae Moore Board Chair, Govenor's Appointee
- Laura R. Bright Vice Board Chair
- Jamie Merchant, Govenor's Appointed Board Chair
- Sean Kempton, Govenor's Appointee
- Dr. Elizabeth McBride, Human Resources Committee Chair

- Dr. Bethany Quisenberry
- Michele King, Program Committee Chair
- Dr. Derek Burkholder
- Dr. Kelly Ross
- Chantel Porte
- Tanya Williams
- Barbara Short
- Char-Nequa Smith

Members Absent:

- Brooke Goldstein
- Rebecca McKellar
- Aaron Stitt
- Alex Breault

Coalition Staff Present

- Dr. Melanie Stefanowicz, Chief Executive Officer
- Richard Cocchieri, Chief Financial Officer
- Gilda Duran, Chief Program Officer
- Wynetta Upshaw, Chief Admirative Officer
- Monica Gaddy, Administrative Coordinator

## **Presiding Officer; Secretary**

Kae Moore presided as Chairman of the meeting; Monica Gaddy served as secretary of the meeting and kept the minutes. A quorum of the Board being present, Kae Moore Board Chair called the meeting to order at approximately 9:00 a.m. EDT.

## **Adoption of the May 14, 2025, Meeting Agenda**

Kae Moore initiated a discussion regarding adoption of the May 14, 2025, meeting agenda. Upon motion duly made and seconded, the Board of Directors unanimously adopted the May 14, 2025 meeting agenda.

## **Approval of March 26, 2025, Meeting Minutes**

Kae Moore initiated a discussion regarding approval of the March 26, 2025, meeting minutes. Upon motion duly made by Jamie Merchant and seconded by Dr. Kelly Ross, the Board of Directors unanimously approved.

## **Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP)**

Dr. Melanie Stefanowicz presented the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP), providing an opportunity for discussion. Upon motion duly made by Dr. Beth McBride and seconded by Michele King, the Board of Directors unanimously approved.

## **Proposed Meeting Calendars FY 2026**

Dr. Melanie Stefanowicz presented slight changes to the meeting calendar. After having discussed with the Nominations and Bylaws committee. The pro-

posed new calendar omits the March committee meetings. Over the past several years holding meeting during this time period has been difficult to meet quorums expectations for many of the committees. A full discussion regarding the five (5) meeting schedule and amendment to the bylaws, eliminating the March meetings. Upon motion duly made by Jamie Merchant and seconded by Sean Kempton, the Board of Directors unanimously approved the 2025-2026 meeting schedule. The meeting dates include *September 11, 2025, November 6, 2025, February 12, 2026, April 16, 2026, and June 11, 2026.*

### **Approval of Financial Statements**

Kae Moore, Board Chairman requested that the Chief Financial Officer, Rick Cocchireri provide overview for financial statements to include, the Direct Service Utilization report, for School Readiness (SR) and Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK) numbers.

Financial Statements included:

The Statement of Financial Position 03.31.2025, the Statement of activities from 07.02.2024-03.31.2025, the Summary of Fiscal Year Budget FY24-25, the Procurement Requests, and the Surplus inventory list. Discussion followed. Upon motion duly made by Laura Bright and seconded by Barbra Short, the Board of Directors unanimously approved the financial statement.

Informational item: The penalty for Tax Year 202 was completely abated. No more penalties are outstanding. The 2023 and 2024 filings are being amended, but have no penalties attached to them.

### **Adoption of the 2025 HR Audit Report and Accompanying Exhibits**

Dr. Beth McBride initiated a discussion regarding adoption of the 2025 HR audit report and accompanying exhibits. A full discussion followed. Upon motion duly made by Jamie Merchant and seconded by Tara Sharrod, the Board of Directors unanimously approved the HR Audit Report and accompanying exhibits.

### **Approval of Policy Changes to Policy 304: Background Screening**

Dr. Beth McBride initiated a discussion of the policy changes to policy 304: Background Screening. The Coalition will now only be conducting level one (1) background screenings for all staff. A full discussion followed. Upon motion duly made by Sean Kempton and seconded by Michele King, the Board of Directors unanimously approved.

### **Nominations & Bylaws Committee Report and Approvals**

Dr. Melanie Stefanowicz presented on behalf of the committee chair Rebecca McKellar in her absence. The Nominations & Bylaws Committee Reports for SWFL Bylaws, ELC SWFL Governance and the November 6, 2024, meeting minutes, will be moved forward for a voting during the June 11, 2025, meeting. The NB Committee did not have enough participants to meet Quorum.

The board reviewed an application for a new board member: Emily Budd. Application was reviewed and a full discussion followed. Upon motion made by Sean Kempton and second by Dr. Beth McBride the board of directors unanimously approved. All in favor with no one opposed.

### **Events Committee Report**

Tarra Sherrod committee chair provided updates. The committee is helping plan the ELC annual staff appreciation luncheon to be held on June 6, 2025. It would be nice to have the board assist with serving lunch and making a contribution to support the cost of lunch or by providing a dessert. If you would like to participate, please respond to Tara's email. All board members are encouraged to participate.

## **Program Committee Report**

Michele King Program Committee Chair's Report. A waitlist has been created while we wait for the funding allocation model that will impact early learning coalitions statewide. We will be awaiting the results of the HB 1255/SB 1382: School Readiness Eligibility bill. A full discussion regarding No formal actions taken or required.

## **CEO Report**

Dr. Melanie Stefanowicz presented her report, high lights where that our new website has been officially launched with improved functionality and new design. New website will make it easier for families and providers to access critical information faster. To date all staff have been provided with new laptops, monitors and docking stations. The old equipment has been added to this month's surplus inventory. The team has been successful in prioritizing several successful outreach opportunities. We were able to provide books to the community during the Books, Balls, and Blocks events, the Children's museum of Naples (CMON) Spring Fling and the Labelle Kiwanis Kids Day's celebration.

## **New Business**

Kae Moore presented new business. Request in person staff meeting for September's meeting. Emily Budd will be invited to attend the June 25, 2025, board meeting. Dr. Melanie will provide an updated copy of the 05.20.2025 revised Bylaws for the June 25, 2025, board meeting.

### **Next Meeting; Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 10:13 a.m. EDT. The next meeting was scheduled for June 25, 2025.

Respectfully submitted,