

Minutes of a Meeting of the Program Committee, an ad hoc committee of the Board of Directors of Early Learning Coalition of Southwest Florida.

September 5th, 2025

Time and Place of Meeting

A meeting of the Program Committee of the Early Learning Coalition of Southwest Florida was held on September 5th, 2025, commencing at approximately 9:00am EDT at the offices of the Company located at 2675 Winkler Avenue, Suite 300, Fort Myers, Florida and via Microsoft Teams.

Call to Order; Roll Call

The following members of the Coalition Board of Directors were present in person or via Microsoft Teams:

- Michele King, Program Committee Chair



- Bethany Quisenberry, Board Member
- Jamie Merchant, Board Member
- Tara Sherrod, Board Member

Other Members Present:

- Breeden, Danna
- Rodrigo Gaboa Dominguez
- Patricia Doningez de Gamboa
- Stacie Britton
- Joanne Pachiva
- Joanne Moran
- Jami Slack
- Amanda Thomas
- Stephanie Rode
- Marie Liebensohn
- Schofield, Jamie

- Damaris Boone
- Angela Anderson
- Ana Neuhauser
- Mandy Willis
- Marie Liebensohn

Coalition Staff Members:

- Melanie Stefanowicz, Chief Executive Officer
- Gilda Duran, Chief Program Officer
- Brenda Griffin, Director of Professional Development
- Bronwyn Gogia, Director of Assessment and Screening
- Cheryl Carpenter, Director of Early Childhood

Presiding Officer; Secretary

Michele King presided as Chair of the meeting; Melanie Stefanowicz served as secretary of the meeting and kept the minutes. Michele called the meeting to order at 9:00am EDT.

Agenda

Welcome & Public Comment

The section, Welcome & Public Comment, was presented. Since there were no members of the public present, no formal action was taken or required.

Meeting Agenda & Adoption

The Meeting Agenda was adopted as presented. No formal action was taken or required.

June 6, 2025, Meeting Minutes

The June 6, 2025 Meeting Minutes were presented. Upon a motion to approve the June 6, 2025, meeting minutes by Joanne, which was seconded by Rodrigo, the minutes were unanimously approved a presented.

Program Services Department

Gilda Duran, Chief of Program Services presented updated SR and VPK application and enrollment data as well as CCR&R data:

- 883 Children / 598 families are on the waitlist.
- 337 CCR&R Requests
- 8815 VPK Applications received as of 8/22/2025
- 7753 VPK applications were approved as of 8/22/2025
- 7269 SR Enrollments as of 8/25/2025

A full discussion followed. No formal action was taken or required.

Early Childhood Education

Cheryl Carpenter presented the VPK Performance Metrics, highlighting the following data:

- 245 providers earned performance designations.
- 87.5% of children assessed at PM3 met or exceeded the readiness benchmark (707+).
- The average CLASS Composite score was 5.16.
- Over two-thirds of our providers scored "Meets Expectations" or higher, with 21% achieving "Excellent."

- 20 providers are Below Expectations or Unsatisfactory, placing them on Provider on Probation (POPs) status.
- 6 Providers are incomplete. Most incomplete providers are at that designation because they did not have 4 children who took PM 1 and 3.

CLASS observations were discussed and important reminders regarding protocols were shared. No formal action was taken or required.

Contracts and Professional Development

Brenda Griffin, Director of Professional Development provided an update regarding contracts and professional development initiatives including Marco Polo training, Connect with CLASS trainings in English and Spanish, and LENA Grow.

There are approximately 15 new providers engaged in the contracting process.

Health and Safety updates were provided by Danna Breeden.

A full discussion followed. No formal action was taken or required.

Assessment and Screening

Bronwyn Gogia provided Assessment and Screening updates including a Child Assessment/Teaching Strategies update:

- 68 providers contracted to complete Child Assessments using Teaching Strategies
- 48 were qualified to complete the fall checkpoints.

VPK Child Assessments and the first progress monitoring (PM1) window was discussed:

- There are 491 VPK classrooms currently.
- PM1 must be conducted within the first 30 classroom days.

ASQ Child Screenings were discussed with data shared through August 31, 2025:

- 55 children scored in the monitoring or "grey" area of the assessment.
- 84 children scored in the below cutoff or "black" area of the assessment.
- Of the 84 children, 61 children received individualized learning plans (ILPs) to support development in identified skill areas.

A full discussion followed. No formal action was taken or required.

Strategic Initiatives

Melanie Stefanowicz shared several Strategic Initiatives:

- 2024-2025 DEL Accountability Monitoring
 - The Division of Early Learning's May 30, 2025 Accountability Monitoring Report outlined both repeat Coalition findings and provider-level errors. The Coalition has implemented corrective action plans, new tracking tools, and strengthened procedures to ensure compliance.
 - The Coalition will be monitoring VPK Child Eligibility files and VPK/SR Payment validations more closely and be requiring providers to meeting contractual deadlines specifically related to the submission of sign-in/sign-out sheets and attendance.
- Hurricane Ian Disaster Relief Grant
 - The Coalition is awaiting DEL's approval of the Hurricane Ian Disaster Relief grant.
- Grant specifics include:
 - Grant period: **July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2028**

- Eligible counties: Collier & Lee Counties were approved by the DEL
- Four funding priorities: Materials, Supplies, Furnishings, and Equipment, Child Care Supply Building, Mental Health, and Quality Initiatives.

A full discussion followed. No formal action was taken or required.

New Business

Cheryl Carpenter shared the new CLASS observation summary requirements with the committee members.

A full discussion followed. No formal action was taken or required.

Next Scheduled Meeting & Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 10:00 a.m. EDT. The next meeting was scheduled for October 31, 2025, at 9:00 a.m. EDT in person and via Microsoft Teams.

Respectfully submitted,

Melanie Stefanowicz

Chief Executive Officer