



Approved May 20, 2025, Program Review Committee Meeting
Early Learning Coalition of Broward County, Inc.
Program Review Committee Meeting Minutes
March 3, 2025, at 9:00 AM
Zoom Meeting

Members in Attendance	Chair, Monica King; Cindy Arenberg-Seltzer; Amy Hauser; Dawn Liberta; Renee Podolsky; Ellie Schrot
Members Absent (Excused)	Laurie Sallarulo; Krystie Castillo; Richard Campillo
Members Absent (Unexcused)	
Staff in Attendance	Renee Jaffe, CEO; Christine Klima, CAO; Howard Bakalar, CPO; Hubert Cesar, CIO; Melody Martinez, Board Liaison; Amy Moore, Sr. Director of Family Services and Provider Relations; Allison Metsch, Sr. Director of Education & Quality; Ancel Pratt, III, Sr. Director of Communications & Outreach; Gracy Haladjian, Dir. of Family & Customer Services
Others in Attendance	

Item	Action/Discussion
Welcome & Call to Order	Chair Monica King called the meeting to order at 9:01 AM. The roll was called, and a quorum was established.
Consent Agenda 1. Approve December 5, 2024, Committee meeting minutes	There was a Motion to move the Consent Agenda by Dawn Liberta and Seconded by Ellie Schrot. Unanimously approved. Motion Passes.
Regular Committee 1. PRC253RB1 - School Readiness Enrollment/Redetermination Update (Goal 1 of Strategic Plan)	School Readiness Amy Moore provided an update on School Readiness enrollment and redetermination efforts. After pausing new enrollments from the SR wait list in October 2024 we resumed enrolling children from the waitlist on January 29 th , 2025. This year, we successfully enrolled 1,833 children from the School Readiness waitlist. However, due to projected budget deficits, we have paused further enrollments. As of February 24, 2025, 2,508 children are on the SR waiting list. We are selecting fewer families from the waitlist compared to past efforts. While we've resumed pulling eligible families, the smaller selection reflects our current focus on offsetting enrollment drops, making attrition a key factor in maintaining the Broward subsidized childcare system's census. So far, this fiscal year (July 1, 2024–January 31, 2025), 10,023 children have been up for School Readiness redetermination. Of these, 7,321 (73%) were maintained in service, while 2,700 (27%) were terminated. This fiscal year, the leading cause of termination remains “failure to revalidate,” with 32% of families not submitting any reapplication documents. Another 27% began the process but failed to provide all required paperwork. To help eligible families stay

enrolled, we conduct outreach through calls, texts, and emails and offer phone and in-person assistance through our customer service team. This year, 32% of terminations were due to families not submitting any reapplication documents, and 27% were from incomplete submissions. We support eligible families through outreach (calls, texts, emails) and offer phone and in-person help with the process. Despite ongoing efforts to reduce barriers for families during redetermination, the trend of terminations has persisted. To better understand this, we analyzed the age distribution of terminated children using statewide Tableau data from July 1, 2024, to February 24, 2025. The findings show that nearly half (48.9%) of terminations for the top reason, "Failure to Revalidate," involve school-aged children.

Families with school-aged children may be less engaged in the redetermination process, possibly due to a lower perceived need for subsidized care once children enter school. Our goal remains to reduce preventable terminations while ensuring program compliance. Although we'll keep analyzing this data, it's challenging to assess eligibility when families don't submit documentation. To address this, we plan to develop survey questions for families who fail to revalidate, helping guide future case management and outreach improvements.

So far this fiscal year, terminations due to over-income families remain low at 2.7%. We currently have 26 children enrolled in the SR PLUS program, with the number of eligible families gradually increasing locally and statewide. Early signs suggest additional funding may be available next fiscal year, including a rollover of unspent funds. Broward remains one of the top coalitions for SR PLUS enrollment and remains committed to expanding access for eligible families. As expected, pausing new enrollments from the SR waitlist slightly increased monthly enrollments in the CSC-funded Vulnerable Population childcare program. Now that we've resumed SR enrollments, some eligible families are transitioning out of the Vulnerable Population program. We continue to keep CSC informed on enrollment updates. Enrollment in smaller state-funded programs, including at-risk and other mandated categories, has remained stable. Our enrollment strategy focuses on offsetting attrition while adjusting waitlist selections to match budget limits, keeping operations flexible for future changes.

Our Customer Service team is the "front door" to all services, assisting families in person, by phone, and via chat while supporting childcare providers and partner agencies. Our Intermedia phone system monitors daily call data to provide coaching and operational support and manage escalated inquiries. Unresolved questions are routed through a CRM ticket system with a 48-hour response window. Families can also access Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R) services through the call center or submit online requests for self-guided childcare searches.

So far, this fiscal year, we've handled 51,476 calls, answering 86%, including 4,097 CCR&R-related calls that led to 1,980 childcare listings. The Customer Service team

	<p>remains the heartbeat of our operation, with call volume and lobby traffic closely tied to Family Services and organizational activities.</p> <p>Cindy Arenberg-Seltzer expressed her appreciation for the insights provided and noted that many terminations involve school-aged children, followed closely by 4-year-olds, which may be related to pre-K enrollment. She inquired whether childcare centers serving younger children provide insight into why families fail to revalidate.</p> <p>Amy responded that while there is currently no formal system for collecting feedback from childcare providers on this issue, outreach to providers is part of their process. She agreed it would be valuable to begin gathering such feedback, possibly through family services specialists who interact with providers. Amy also noted that providers are encouraged to remind families about redetermination and expressed confidence that the team can find ways to collect meaningful input from the centers.</p> <p>Amy Hauser added that normally, when someone no longer has ELC funds, you have to terminate them from your provider list. They do have a drop-down menu where you have to check one of the boxes. Perhaps add a few more boxes or an empty box where the provider can add more info as to why.</p> <p>Hubert Cesar shared that one of the challenges we experience with termination is that DEL controls it, and we can't make changes. We have asked them to add some features. Amy Moore expressed that the information was valuable and suggested that related questions could be added to the planned questionnaire.</p>
<p>2. PRC253RB2- VPK Enrollment Update (Goal 2 of Strategic Plan)</p>	<p>VPK Enrollment</p> <p>Amy Moore provided updates on VPK. As of February 2025, we have approved 14,232 VPK school-year applications for FY24-25 and 172 summer applications. Currently, 12,343 students are enrolled in the VPK program for FY 24-25.</p> <p>With the launch of the 2025–2026 program year applications, 5,791 school-year VPK applications and 72 summer VPK applications have been approved. The Communications and Outreach team is actively working to increase program awareness, and the organization is on track to approve a similar number of applications as the previous year. The VPK Estimating Conference is scheduled for March 6, 2025, and the team looks forward to reviewing the conference results and aligning them with the county's established estimates.</p>
<p>3. PRC253RB3- Education/Quality (Goals 3 and 4 of Strategic Plan)</p> <p>a. Broward Early Childhood Education Conference</p> <p>b. Help Me Grow Florida</p>	<p>Education & Quality:</p> <p>Allison Metsch reported on Education and Quality. The Early Learning Coalition hosted its first in-person early childhood conference since the pandemic at Boyd H. Anderson High School on February 22, 2025. The event was a great success, with approximately 560 attendees, 25 workshops presented by ELC education staff and community partners, and 14 vendor tables. Key partnerships included the Department of Health (Vaccinations, KidCare, Tobacco Prevention), Early Steps, Children's Services Council, and The Journey Institute, among others. The event received overwhelmingly positive</p>

- c. CLASS Observations Update
- d. VPK Performance Accountability Update

feedback, thanks in large part to the enthusiasm and hard work of ELC staff across multiple departments. Special thanks were extended to Laurie Sallarulo for speaking and to the board members who attended.

Renee Podolsky thanked Allison and shared that her staff had expressed positive feedback and appreciated the opportunity to participate.

Help Me Grow Florida

As previously discussed, ELC Broward was awarded affiliate status with Help Me Grow Florida (HMGF), allowing the expansion of developmental screening services to all families with young children, not just those receiving childcare subsidies. HMGF promotes partnerships with pediatricians and encourages families to use developmental screenings such as ASQ, ASQ SE, PSC, and M-CHAT-R/F.

With HMGF funding, ELC Broward will conduct outreach and provide follow-up for families with potential developmental concerns. A part-time manager and full-time Care Coordinator have been hired, and the first Physician Champion has been secured through Pediatric Associates, with efforts underway to add another. Staff are finishing onboarding, and the Help Me Grow Broward website is set to launch on February 27. Outreach events and doctor visits will begin soon.

CLASS (Classroom Assessment Scoring System) Update

School Readiness

As required by the Division of Early Learning, all ELCs use the CLASS (Classroom Assessment Scoring System) tool to assess School Readiness (SR) providers with over 20% SR-enrolled children or those with a CLASS 1 violation. The tool evaluates teacher-child interactions and overall classroom management. Observations cover 50% of each care level, and providers receive a composite score from 1 to 7; providers scoring below 4.0 cannot contract with the ELC. Providers may also qualify for a Quality Performance Incentive (QPI) differential based on their score: 4% for scores of 4.5–4.99, 7% for 5–5.99, and 10% for 6–7.

To date, 681 of approximately 1,000 observations have been completed, with a current countywide average score of 5.51.

Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK)

Since July 2022, the Division of Early Learning has required that all VPK classrooms, including public-school classes, be observed using the CLASS tool during both the school year and summer. Unlike School Readiness, there is no payment differential tied to VPK CLASS scores.

So far, 518 of approximately 950 VPK observations have been completed. The team is confident all observations will be finished on time. The current countywide average VPK CLASS score is 5.56.

VPK Performance Accountability Update

The State Board of Education approved Rule 6M-8.622, F.A.C., on August 21, 2024 (effective September 24, 2024), establishing the Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Education Provider Performance Metric and Designation. This rule outlines how the

<p>4. PRC253RB4- Outreach/Advocacy Update</p>	<p>Division of Early Learning (DEL) will calculate each provider’s accountability and assign designations based on three components: quality (50%), achievement (20%), and learning gains (30%).</p> <p>Beginning at the end of the 2024–25 VPK program year, DEL will calculate performance metrics and assign designations within 45 days of the program’s end. Using the FAST Star Early Literacy tool, the new model includes three progress monitoring assessments (PM1, PM2, PM3) during the school year—or two (PM1, PM3) during summer. A Unified Scaled Score (USS) of 707+ at PM3 indicates kindergarten readiness.</p> <p>The metrics break down as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality: CLASS Composite Program Assessment Score (50%) • Achievement: % of children demonstrating readiness at PM3 (20%) • Learning gains: Growth of 12+ points between PM1 and PM3 (30%) <p>Using 2022–23 data for reference, most local providers met or exceeded expectations, with a clear link between higher CLASS scores and stronger program designations. We began facilitating workshops in January to help providers understand the new Performance Accountability scoring. Additional workshops, both in-person and via Zoom, are planned for March.</p> <p>We are also partnering with Age of Learning, Inc. and Marco Polo Learning, two contracted technology resources aimed at enhancing VPK children’s learning. Currently, 101 programs are using Age of Learning and 87 are using Marco Polo. Both providers have been offering a mix of on-site and Zoom trainings.</p> <p>Most VPK programs have now completed Progress Monitoring 1 (PM1). Once this data is available, it will serve as the baseline for tracking learning progress through PM2 and PM3. We will analyze results across schools using one of the technologies, those not participating, and overall countywide data to determine how best to support our programs.</p> <p>Outreach/Advocacy Update</p> <p>Ancel Pratt provided an update on outreach and Advocacy.</p> <p>The Communications and Outreach team has intensified efforts to promote VPK enrollment, with the goal of exceeding the VPK Estimating Conference enrollment target for Broward County.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital Marketing: A paid advertising campaign launched on January 1, 2025, has increased traffic to the VPK landing page compared to the same period last year. Ads will continue through June 30, 2025, maintaining consistent outreach. • Community Engagement: VPK flyers and materials are distributed at all outreach events and PLAN (Provider Leadership and Networking) meetings to encourage providers to help raise parent awareness. • Partnerships: We continue to leverage relationships with community partners and childcare providers to promote enrollment and ensure more families benefit from this free program.
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	<p>With these efforts, ELC Broward remains on track to meet or exceed the enrollment target, strengthening our commitment to providing quality early learning opportunities for all eligible children in the county.</p> <p>Broward Bookworms Program</p> <p>The Broward Bookworms program remains a key initiative to promote early literacy and expand book access for young children. Under a new \$200,000 contract with Scholastic, we are distributing approximately 6,500 Bookworm bundles countywide. As of February 27, 2025, over 6,100 bundles have been shipped and paid for, benefiting thousands of children.</p> <p>Given the program’s strong demand, the ELC Finance team is preparing a board request for an additional \$75,000 to sustain the program through June 30, 2025.</p> <p>The Communications team continues to promote Broward Bookworms through social media, email campaigns, and community outreach to maximize participation.</p>
Unfinished Business	
New Business	Howard Bakalar announced that this would be Monica King's last meeting as Chair of PRC, as her term on the Board has concluded. He and the entire ELC team, as well as the committee members thanked her for her years of leadership and friendship.
Matters from the Chair	None
Matters from the Committee	None
Public Comments	None
Next Meeting	TBD
Adjourn	The meeting adjourned at 9:42 AM by Cindy Arenberg-Seltzer

These minutes contain the action items of the Board meeting of the Early Learning Coalition of Broward. They do not include all of the Committee’s discussions or comments on each matter or issue raised during the meeting. A tape recording of the meeting is held in the Coalition office. Corrections from the Committee will be taken before approval at the next meeting.