EARLY LEARNING
COALITION OF HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
MEETING APPROVED MINUTES

Monday, February 23, 2026 at 3:00 pm
6302 E. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., Suite 100
Tampa, FL 33619

MEETING ATTENDANCE

Facilitator: Aakash Patel, Chair

Board Members Present:
Rebecca Bacon, Dr. Larissa Baia, Commissioner Gwendolyn Myers, Beth Pasek, Dr. Shawn Robinson, Annette Eberhart, Kelly Flannery, Bob Hyde, Amanda Jae, Dr. Jacquelyn Jenkins, Keidrian Kunkel, Wynton Geary, Adam Giery*, Keidrian Kunkel, Aakash Patel, Ashley Porch, Alina Shaffer, Noelle Wostal, Dr. Emily Hudkins-Shaffer and Cameron Cassidy

Board Members Absent:
Dr. Daira Barakat, Tracye Brown, Gino Casanova, Annette Eberhart, Jonathan Ferro, Brian Mays, Chantal Porte, Alina Shaffer and Felicia Thomas

ELCHC Staff:
Dr. Fred Hicks, Nancy Will, Yarima Hernandez Tamayo and Rick Rampersad

Other Attendees:
Attorney Paul Quin, and Alex Ochoa

CALL TO ORDER

Quorum Verification
Noting a quorum was not established, Chair Patel called for the meeting to continue.

Pledge of Allegiance
Chair Patel asked Rebecca Bacon to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENT I

No, public comment I.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Mission Moment
Dr. Shawn Robinson shared why he serves on the ELCHC Board of Directors. Dr. Robinson shared that he attended the Day of Play that the coalition put on, and he stated it was a great event as usual. Dr. Robinson shared that the Day of Play was held in Plant City, Florida and enjoyed seeing the families and it was great opportunity to interact with the community.

Nancy Will, ELCHC Board of Directors Liaison, shared that a quorum had been established.

Chair Patel shared with the board about his time at Hillsborough Day in Tallahassee. Chair Patel thanked all ELCHC Board members who also stumped the halls of the capitol to share the message of the importance of early education.

Chair Patel shared a date for the Summit, and a location had been secured and that all members should have received a save date notice.

Chair Patel also shared that the current building leased by the ELCHC was going to be torn down and that ELCHC would need to find another building to office in.

CONSENT AGENDA

The following items were included under the Consent Agenda:
Approval of February 23, 2026, Board of Directors Meeting Agenda
Approval of November 1, 2025, Annual Board of Directors Draft Meeting Minutes

Dr. Shawn Robinson made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Amanda Jae made a second. The motion carried unanimously.

Legal Report

Paul Quin, shared there are no changes to any state policies that would effect the ELCHC. Mr. Quin also shared that he is working with a provider who had a lien placed on their center.

Adam Geary, asked Dr. Hicks about personal change and if that had been communicated to the board of directors. Dr. Hicks stated that personal change had been made known to the board of directors and that some loose ends with banking were being taken care of. Dr. Hicks also shared that another ELC would loan their CFO while the CFO search was on-going. Dr. Hicks stated that finance and accounting has a strong manager with Yarima Hernandez Tamayo and great supporting staff.

Adam Geary asked if all the legal documentation including a release had also been taken care of.

Dr. Hicks stated that all documentation had been taken care of. Chair Patel asked about the legal documents for clarification as to Mr. Geary's question. Paul Quin, ELCHC Board of Directors legal counsel stated that all documentation had gone through Human Resources and their legal counsel.

There was further discussion on whether providers were made aware of the resignation of Gary Meyer, former Chief Financial Officer. There was also discussion on whether the CFO position had been posted internally and would be posted externally. There was also discussion about change had impacted any grants.

There was question on whether a legal release of liability and claims had been signed by the former Chief Financial Officer. Paul Quin stated that he had advised Dr. Hicks on the process of how this type of situation should be handled however, this was being handled by the legal counsel through the ELCHC's Human Resource. Dr. Hicks stated he did not believe there had been a legal release of liability and claims. Dr. Hicks shared that this event had been handled under the supervision of Human Resources' legal counsel.

Adam Geary advised that the ELCHC have additional documentation besides a letter of resignation when a situation like this happens in the future.

There was discussion to have the Human Resources legal counsel review nothing would fall back to the organization as a results of the resignation of the Chief Financial Officer.

There was board discussion to have formal documentation drawn up for future use.

Action Item

Approval to accept $300,000 and release the subsequent RFQ toward accreditation coaching/consultant services in the target zip codes 33603, 33610, and 33619.

Commissioner Gwen Myers made a motion to approve to accept $300,000 and release the subsequent RFQ toward accreditation coaching/consultant services in the target zip codes 33603, 33610, and 33619. Keidrian Kunkel made a second. The motion passed.

Board member Rebecca Bacon abstained from the vote as a conflict of interest.

Approval of the name change on contract for legal services from Saxon, Gilmore & Carroway to DarrowEverett, LLP.

Adam Geary made a motion to approve the name change on contract for legal services from Saxon, Gilmore & Carroway to DarrowEverett, LLP.

Discussion Items

Dr. Hicks reported on the following three items for discussion:
Blue Ribbon Review-raising the awareness of the importance of early education
Board of Directors- Table Sponsorships for the Education of Young Children Summit
ELCHC-Office Lease Space; using state-approved vendors to assist in finding a new building space
Board of Directors-Survey

Committee Reports

Executive Committee

Chair Patel read through the memo included in the agenda packet.

Governance Committee

Dr. Shawn Robinson shared the memo details with the board of directors.

There was discussion about allowing the board of directors’ meetings to be virtual.

Finance Committee

Dr. Jacquelyn Jenkins shared the details of the memo included in the agenda packet.

Service Delivery & Efficiency Committee

Amanda Jae shared the details of the memo included in the agenda packet. Ms. Jae also encouraged the board to attend the Day of Plays put on by ELCHC staff.

Development & Outreach Committee

Dr. Shawn Robinson shared the details of the memo included in the agenda packet.

Provider Review Hearing Committee

Dr. Jacquelyn Jenkins shared the details of the memo included in the agenda packet with the outcome of the case heard at the last committee meeting.

Legislative Affairs Committee

Dr. Hicks shared that he was in attendance for Children's Week in Tallahassee.

Finance Report

Chair Patel introduced Yarima, Manager of Accounting and Finance, to give the finance report. Yarima highlighted the following:

- Right on target for expenditures and revenues
- Continue to work on School Readiness (SR) and Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) to bring in more children to providers
- On target for match and local funders
- Admin is under 5% for SR and VPK

Adam Geary asked who was overseeing the operations of the finances.

Dr. Hicks shared Yarima Hernandez Tamayo and Casie Haines, Director of Provider Supports, with a CFO borrowed from the Southwest Florida Coalition and Pinellas County were overseeing the finances of the coalition.

Mr. Geary asked if the borrowed CFO from other coalitions were going to be reviewing the internal close of the ELCHC staff. Dr. Hicks stated that after the internal review of the close the borrowed CFO's would be review.

Adam Geary expressed his concern with the ELCHC not having a certified public accountant and suggested one be hired while the search for a full-time chief financial officer was being conducted.

There was discussion as to the oversight of fiduciary responsibility of the ELCHC Board of Directors in the current situation.

CEO Report

Legislative Update

Dr. Hicks shared the latest projected loss from FY25-26 budget to the upcoming FY is an estimated $5 million dollars. Dr. Hicks also shared that legislators are shifting to the budget pre-covid. Dr. Hicks shared that fewer School Readiness (SR) children would be served as it is projected to date.

Waitlist Update

Dr. Hicks also stated that there is no waitlist to date.

Education of Young Children Part I and Part II

Dr. Hicks stated that this was already covered earlier in the meeting. Dr. Hicks announced that part II of the Summit would be held on October 3, 2026 at The Skill Center targeting providers and parents.

Lease Next Steps

Dr. Hicks stated currently, the ELCHC was within the Cone of Silence and what was shared at the start of the meeting is all that can could be shared.

ANNOUCEMENTS

Board Member Ashley Porch announced on April 29, 2026 from 5:00 pm-7:00 pm at The Tampa Club "Gathering For Good Event" event would be taking place. Ms. Porch shared that 13 nonprofit organizations would be represented.

Dr. Hicks shared that the ELCHC would be represented to pass out sponsorship packets.

Board Member Bob Hyde shared that he and Chair Patel attended an event at the Glazer Children's Museum Annual Fundraiser. Mr. Hyde shared that they use a lot of early learning data to encourage giving.

Board Member Rebecca Bacon shared that she attended the 'State of the Region' and shared that third grade reading levels have gone up a little bit but the biggest challenge with families is affordability.

Dr. Larissa Baia shared that $5 million dollars were cut from the Ybor City Hillsborough College campus that supported childcare on campus for students with children. Dr. Baia did also mentioned that currently, they were working with HeadStart to possibly take over the on-campus childcare center otherwise the center would be closing its doors in May 2026.

Board Member Cameron Cassidy shared that he was assisting in creating an endowment for the ELCHC and there would be more details to come.

PUBLIC COMMENT II

There was no Public Comment II.

ADJOURNMENT
Chair Patel called for a motion to adjourn the meeting.
Dr. Shawn Robinson made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 4:30 pm. Dashley Porch made a second. The motion carried unanimously.

Read and approved by: Robert Hyde 21/07/2026

Bob Hyde, ELCHC Board of Directors Secretary ***Date***

Signature: Robert Hyde
Robert Hyde (Jul 21, 2026 13:25:15 EDT)

Email: robert.hyde@suncoastcreditunion.com

2.23.2026 Board of Directors Meeting Minutes_Approved

Final Audit Report 2026-07-21

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