

# Board of Directors Regular Business

## APPROVED MINUTES



**Meeting Date:** April 10, 2025

**Draft Posted:** April 15, 2025

**Approved Posted:** May 15, 2025

**Present:** Dale Bernardoni, Chester/Grades K-6; Eric Bauman, East Lyme; W. Scott Brown, Lyme & Old Lyme/Region 18; Mary Ann Connelly, Madison (Zoom); Katherine Ericson, LEARN; Jennifer Favalora, Killingworth/Region 17; Elizabeth Fernandes, Westbrook; Mary Harris, Ledyard (Zoom); Nancy Johnston, Essex/Grades K-6; Cindy Luty, Preston; Robert Mitchell, Montville; Beverly Washington, Groton; and Laurie Wolfley, Waterford

**Not Attending and Not Represented:** Alisha Blake, New London; A. Terri Garrity, East Haddam; Katie Gauthier, Stonington; Gregory Perry, Norwich; Sean Reith, Salem; Chet Stefanowicz, North Stonington; Jane Wisialowski, Old Saybrook; Vacant, Chester, Deep River, Essex Region #4; Vacant, Clinton; Vacant, Deep River/Grades K-6; Vacant, East Hampton; and Vacant, Guilford

**Guests:** Michael Belden, LEARN Chief Financial Officer; Joanne Lund, LEARN Assistant Director of Business; Elizabeth McCaffery, LEARN Director of Human Resources; Sarah Moon, LEARN Director of Special Services; and Adrenna Paolillo, LEARN Assistant Director of Early Childhood Education

**Meeting began at 9:03 a.m.**

- 1. Call to Order:** Pledge of Allegiance
- 2. Audience and Guests:** Introductions
- 3. Public Comment:**

\*Request Motion to move agenda item 10 Educational Perspective to precede regular business meeting agenda items.

**Motion to move agenda item 10 Educational Perspective to precede agenda item 4**

- Presented by Beverly Washington
  - Second W. Scott Brown
  - Motion passed with 12 votes in favor and 0 votes against
- 4. Reading and/or Review of Correspondence:** None
  - 5. Superintendents' Perspective:** None

## **6. Consent Agenda:**

- 6.1 Approval of the DRAFT Minutes, Regular Business Meeting—March 13, 2025
- 6.2 Approval of Budget Summary as of March 31, 2025
- 6.3 Approval of Grant Applications—Worker's Compensation Trust 2025 Safety Grant funds projects or initiatives that improve employee safety or reduce risk for workplace injuries. LEARN will install protective buffers on 32 identified classroom cabinets at the Friendship School (TFS), in the amount of \$5,600.70; and the Title III (\$14,363.00) and the Bilingual (\$9,495.00) sub-grant funds help ensure that English learners (ELs) attain English language proficiency and meet state academic standards.

### **Motion to accept the Consent Agenda as presented.**

- **Presented by Beverly Washington**
- **Second Dale Bernardoni**
- **Motion passed with 12 votes in favor and 0 votes against**

## **7. Information from the Executive Director:**

- 7.1 Hiring—Resignations and new hires, including trend reports: The Executive Director shared that LEARN has a strong pool of TESOL candidates ready for immediate hire and has made several key hires for the upcoming school year, including an Occupational Therapist, Math teachers, and bilingual teachers. Hiring efforts continue, with 43.5 vacancies remaining.
- 7.2 Distributions — None
- 7.3 Executive Committee Meeting Minutes, Regular Business Meeting—March 28, 2025
- 7.4 LEARN Building Committee Meeting Minutes—March 28, 2025
- 7.5 Legislative Updates
- 7.6 LEARN Agency Updates – The Executive Director provided updates on several key agency initiatives and developments: Renovations at RMMS and MSMHS are progressing steadily, with RMMS transitioning to a 3–8 model and undergoing major facility upgrades. In addition, LEARN is pursuing a \$5 million Capital Improvement Grant, and local and state planning efforts are moving forward; LEARN is to be awarded a \$1.3 million Regional Performance Incentive Program (RPIP) grant to expand shared back-office services in areas such as IT, business, and HR, with a focus on efficiency, cybersecurity, and leadership support for districts; A new cybersecurity tool is being implemented to enhance system protection; In recognition of its work, The Friendship School (TFS) is in Nashville to accept an award from Magnet Schools of America (MSA); The lottery process for LEARN's magnet schools is underway, with new student placements reported across multiple campuses; RMMS recently hosted a well-attended Parent Academy in partnership with the Child and Family Agency; LEARN also secured a Public, Educational and Governmental Programming and Educational Technology Investment Account (PEGPETIA) technology grant to support

regional infrastructure upgrades; Additionally, a \$10,000 Immigrant Grant was awarded to Waterford based on data analysis by LEARN’s MLL Supervisor; and lastly, Executive Director Ericson and the Board Officers shared highlights from the recent NSBA conference, where discussions centered on educational innovation, student wellness, AI, and governance best practices from across the country.

**8. Old Business:**

8.1 New Policy #4158.2, Personnel (Certified), Series 4000; “Code of Ethics”

**Motion to approve New Policy 4158.2, Code of Ethics, as presented.**

- **Presented by Cindy Luty**
- **Second Beverly Washington**
- **Motion passed with 12 votes in favor and 0 votes against**

**9. New Business:**

9.1 Revised Policy #6118, Instruction, Series 6000; “Student Nutrition and Physical Activity: Student Wellness”

**Motion to approve Revised Policy 6118, Student Nutrition and Physical Activity: Student Wellness, as presented.**

- **Presented by Beverly Washington**
- **Second Jennifer Favalora**
- **Motion passed with 12 votes in favor and 0 votes against**

9.2 Establish Nominating Committee for the 2025-2026 Slate of Officers

**Motion to approve the following members of the Nominating Committee for the 2025-2026 Slate of Officers: Robert Mitchell, Jennifer Favalora, and Beverly Washington**

- **Presented by W. Scott Brown**
- **Second Laurie Wolfley**
- **Motion passed with 12 votes in favor and 0 votes against**

**10. Educational Perspective:** Adrenna Paolillo, LEARN ECE Assistant Director, and Sarah Moon, LEARN Director of Special Services, provided an exciting update on the upcoming launch of the Creating Connections Early LEARNing Center, a new early childhood program designed to serve infants and toddlers. This initiative addresses a growing need for quality childcare in the region, where many families face long wait times or limited access to childcare. The center will emphasize a warm, community-centered environment that supports early development through nurturing relationships, hands-on learning, and family engagement. Curriculum and activities will be aligned with Connecticut’s Early Learning and Development Standards and tailored to meet the unique needs of each child. The program will open in phases, with a soft launch planned for mid-May and expansion to a second classroom in September. Located at The Friendship School (TFS), the center will initially serve children from 8 weeks to 3 years old, with small group sizes and qualified staff. LEARN is working through licensing and hiring, with a focus on maintaining high-quality care and financial accessibility. The program is supported through a mix

of tuition, grants, and partnerships, with priority given to families in need. As it grows, LEARN plans to expand the program based on community needs and feedback, ensuring it remains a responsive and sustainable resource for staff and local families.

**11.** Roundtable Discussion: District Budget Process, Special Education Discussions, and LEARN Schools' Tours.

**12.** Future Roundtable Topics:

**13.** Adjournment:

**Motion to adjourn at 11:02 a.m.**

- **Presented by W. Scott Brown**
- **Second Dale Bernardoni**
- **Motion passed unanimously with 12 votes in favor and 0 votes against**

**Respectfully submitted by:**  
**Jamella A. A. Etienne**

## JOIN ZOOM MEETING

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88179290855?pwd=L8ZTZ1TTOmeH7Xj47dwTVfgnSADbGa.1>

Meeting ID: 881 7929 0855  
Passcode: 940741

• +1 929 205 6099 US (New York)  
Meeting ID: 881 7929 0855  
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