



**Early Childhood Family Services Advisory Council Minutes**  
**April 15, 2025**

**Minutes**

**Members present:** Megan Bollinger, Adriana de la Cadena, Manuel Diaz, **Jamie Duffey**, **Melissa Dunlay**, Meredith Eilertson Azeem, Jessica Glenn, Sasha Hiatt-Blenkush, Dave Kerber, Emily Poole, Brianna Riofski, Mark Riofski, Katie Rudolph, Adrienne Rysavy and Sabrina Silver.

**ISD 196 Staff present:** Zachary Gonsioroski and Ruku Viswanathan

**Call to Order**

Chairperson Melissa Dunlay called the meeting to order at 6:15 p.m. Introductions were made.

**Approval of March 18, 2025 minutes**

Chairperson called for motion to approve the minutes from the March 18, 2025 meeting and full council approved.

**ECFS Program Overview – Zachary Gonsioroski**

**Early Childhood Education (ECFE)**

- **Enrollment:** 319 families enrolled; 431 children served.
- **Status:** Program is currently full.
- **Summer Brochure:** Finalized, printed, and scheduled to be mailed out.

**Connections Preschool**

- Strong enrollment numbers; Friday was the deadline for turning in all required paperwork for the initial round of placements.
- **Capacity:** Just under 500; enrollment will continue throughout the year.
- Tuition increase has had minimal impact on enrollment.
- ECFS serves approximately **20% of incoming kindergarteners**.
- Implementing **Letters Training** into curriculum—16 hours allocated to discuss curriculum changes.
- Collaboration with Director of Instruction and Achievement, who expressed interest in the program—emphasis on aligning with district values, especially in math.
- **Pathways Scholarships (I & II), School Readiness Scholarships, VPK (Voluntary Pre-K)**
- State restrictions now require VPK students to meet qualifying risk factors.
- ECFS currently has **110 VPK seats**.
- Applications submitted for **six additional schools** to qualify for VPK.

**Liaison Updates**

**District 196 Legislative Advisory Council – Sabrina and Dave**

- Attended information meeting with Director of Communication.
- Discussed Governor's proposed **\$240M cut in education**.
- **Read Act** to receive **\$40M**.
- Disappointment with Senate and House budget allocations.
- Superintendent predicts ongoing federal vs. state funding issues, though no immediate concern

## Committee Updates

### Fundraising

- Upcoming: Little Gym
  - Event: Friday, April 25, 2025 from 10-11:30 a.m.
  - Geared for ages 0-3
  - Registration in advance
  - 10% to corporate; remaining proceeds to the Foundation.

### Hospitality

#### **Teacher Appreciation Week (May 5-9, 2025)**

- Teacher Appreciation Plan:
  - Baskets with Bananas, chocolates, oranges, post-its, paperclips and pens.
  - Assembly: May 5 at 5:30 p.m.
  - Delivery: Tuesday, May 6.

### Outdoor Spaces – Katie

- Collaborating with Anna D. for gravel path installation
- **Weeding Event:** May 17, 9:30–11:30 AM – Open to all families; children may attend but not supervised
- Tree installation support from Peter (ABE Teacher)
- Shop class to build **mud kitchen**
- Additional approvals needed for play structures (e.g., playhouse)
- **Backyard Get-Together/Open House:** Tentatively late September; opportunities for donations and sponsorship (e.g., bird feeders)

### Family School Book Drive – Meredith

- **Book Collection & Sort Event:** Tuesday, May 6 at 5:30 PM
- Open to all volunteers

## Upcoming Events

|                         |                                                                       |                 |                                                               |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| Wednesday, May 7, 2025  | ECFS Foundation Meeting – Katie and Laura                             | DVLC            | 6:00-7:30 p.m.                                                |
| Tuesday, May 13, 2025   | Superintendent Parent Leader Meeting – Meredith (a.m.) & Laura (p.m.) | Zoom            | Group 1:<br>9:30 – 10:30 a.m.<br>Group 2:<br>5:00 – 6:00 p.m. |
| Tuesday, May 13, 2025   | Community Education Advisory Council – Melissa                        | DVLC            | 6:00-7:30 p.m.                                                |
| Wednesday, May 28, 2025 | 196 Legislative Advisory Council                                      | District Office | 6:00-7:30 p.m.                                                |
| Saturday, June 7, 2025  | End of Year Picnic                                                    | DVLC Backyard   | 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.                                             |

## **Other Business**

### **End of Year Picnic:**

- **Date:** June 7, 9:30–11:30 AM
- Attendees may bring a breakfast snack (for self or to share)
- **Invite:** Foundation members (Katie to coordinate)

### **Fall Open House/Event**

- To be discussed next meeting
- Outdoor Spaces and Hospitality Committees will be involved
- Awaiting further discussion with Anna

### **2025-2026 Committee Sign-Ups:**

- Sign-ups to occur at year-end
- Members can also join during the next school year
- Encouragement to consider personal interests and leadership roles
- Need for **Social Media Advocate/Committee**
- Possible addition of **Auction or Winter Event Committee**
- Contact **Melissa or Jamie** for sign-up link

### **Recruitment for 2025–2026**

- Share application within personal and professional networks
- New members welcome year-round
- Inform parent educators of council involvement

### **2025-2026 Co-Chair Position**

- Council voted on the two co-chair nominations, Megan Bollinger and Dave Kerber. The next co-chair to replace Melissa Dunlay for 2025-2026 is Dave Kerber.

### **New Business**

- **Shared Calendar Request:** Suggestion to add a calendar to the shared drive for ECFS-related events.

## **Adjournment**

There being no further business Sabrina Silver made a motion to adjourn, Manuel Diaz seconded and full council approved. The meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

## **Future Meeting Dates**

3rd Tuesday, every month - May 20, 2025

Respectfully submitted, Dacia Liszka