



## Executive Committee

# MEETING SUMMARY

Date: October 24, 2025  
Time: 8:30 – 9:45 a.m.  
Location: LEARN, Room 216/ 44 Hatchedts Hill Road, Old Lyme, CT 06371

**Present:** Robert Mitchell, Chair; Jennifer Favalora, Fiscal Officer; Beverly Washington, Secretary; Dale Bernardoni, Vice Chair; Dr. Cynthia Ritchie, Superintendent of Schools New London; Maryann O'Donnell, Superintendent of Schools Clinton; and Kate Ericson, LEARN Executive Director

**Not Attending:**

**Meeting began at 8:32 a.m.**

**1. Review November 2025 Board of Directors' Agenda**

Executive Director Ericson reviewed with the Executive Committee the November Board Agenda. The Executive Committee added topics for the roundtable discussion.

**2. Review Executive Director's Goals (included in Agenda Packet)**

Executive Director Ericson provided an overview of her agency goals for the year. The first bucket of work is around Educational Leadership. Specifically, in supporting the magnet schools' instructional improvements around literacy and purposeful play. These initiatives are the keystone of ensuring the magnets continue to strive toward becoming schools of excellence. Another large transition for the agency is around the shifting priorities of the Office of Early Childhood (OEC) and how those shifts will impact LEARN's early childhood department.

In the area of Operational Management, an intense focus will be concentrated on supporting the building project of the Early LEARNing Magnet School (ELMS). By year's end we will finalize the demolition phase of the current building at 51 Daniels Avenue and plan to begin construction by the end of January. In preparation for opening the new school in 2027, the agency is preparing for

the next grade level shift to take place in the 2026-2027 School Year. This work requires coordination and support. Finally, in Operations, Executive Director Ericson and the team are mobilizing the Regional Shared Service Solutions (RSSS) program. LEARN's IT, Human Resources, and Business departments are working to retain current customers and to communicate with districts on how they can benefit from the regional grant funding.

Finally, Executive Director Ericson has created a year-long advocacy campaign to support two major issues pertaining to RESCs. The Executive Director is working to increase the knowledge and understanding of LEARN's public outplacement programs, specifically communicating the structure and oversight of RESCs. The goal is to preserve the LEARN Board's authority and oversight. The second critical issue of focus is — magnet school funding. In this case, the goal is to find legislative champions to support an increase in per pupil funding for magnet students.

### **3. CREST Collaborative Tour**

Through the AESA Leadership Academy, Executive Director Ericson connected with Robert Jokela, a colleague from Massachusetts. Mr. Jokela, is the Executive Director of CREST Collaborative, an educational service agency (ESA). In October, Mr. Jokela and his team visited LEARN to tour the outplacement programs and magnet schools. Executive Director Ericson and the LEARN team are scheduled to visit Massachusetts next week to tour the CREST facilities.

**4. Rural Health Federal Grant collaboration with Cartwheel**

Executive Director Ericson has been working with the staffers in the Governor’s office to promote a collaboration that would provide mental health supports to rural districts in Connecticut. The RESC Alliance is advocating for the state of Connecticut to partner with Cartwheel, a telehealth program that provides evidence-based mental health care. If the State includes Cartwheels program into the grant, all of Connecticut Rural School districts would have access to this program for free over the next five years.

**5. National School Board Association (NSBA) 2026 Annual Conference**

LEARN Board of Directors Chair and Secretary, Robert Mitchell and Beverly Washington, will attend the National School Board Association (NSBA) Conference in April 2026.

**6. Adjournment**

**Motion to adjourn at 9:20 a.m.**

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Respectfully submitted by: Jamella A. A. Etienne