



BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
April 3, 2025

MINUTES

On April 3, 2025, the EdAdvance Board of Directors held a Zoom online meeting during which a quorum was present. President John Kissko called the meeting to order at 4:01 PM and recorded the following members in attendance:

1. Roll Call:

Name (District): Joseph Abdella, Region 12
Deb Bell, Region 7
Kate Conetta, Danbury
Roxy Fainer, Thomaston
Christine Faessa, Watertown
John Kissko, Torrington
Sarah Robichaud, Colebrook
Kelly Tilton, Plymouth
Deirdre Tindall, New Hartford

**EdAdvance
Personnel:**

Jonathan P. Costa, Sr., Executive Director
Lisa Bowden, Assistant Executive Director
Richard Carmelich, III, Chief Operations Officer
Tracey Lay, Chief Talent & Development Officer
Annette Miserez-Dillon, Director of Special Education
Carol Montory, Board Clerk

2. Approval of March 6, 2025 Minutes

Upon a motion by Sarah Robichaud, duly seconded by Deb Bell, the Board unanimously approved the minutes of the March 6, 2025 meeting.

3. Questions and Comments from the Public: None

4. Communications

a) Written

Jonathan spoke about a letter we received from our auditors, King, King & Associates, P.C. The letter provided information related to the audit. Also included in the communications packet was an article from The Journal, a Connecticut Association of Board of Education (CABE) publication, which recommended using EdAdvance for technical and transformational support on Artificial Intelligence.

5. Old Business: None

6. New Business:

a) Action Item: Healthy Food Certification – Healthy Food Option

Upon a motion by Kelly Tilton, duly seconded by Joseph Abdella, the Board of Directors unanimously approved of EdAdvance’s *Healthy Food Certification - Healthy Food Option* pursuant to C.G.S. Section 10-215f, EdAdvance certifies that all food items offered for sale to students in the schools under its jurisdiction, and not exempted from the Connecticut Nutrition Standards published by the Connecticut State Department of Education, will comply with the Connecticut Nutrition Standards during the period of July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2026. This certification shall include all food offered for sale to students separately from reimbursable meals at all times and from all sources, including but not limited to school stores, vending machines, school cafeterias, culinary programs, and any fundraising activities on school premises sponsored by the school or non-school organizations and groups.

b) Action Item: Healthy Food Certification – Food and Beverages Option

Upon a motion by Kate Conetta, duly seconded by Joseph Abdella, the Board of Directors unanimously approved of EdAdvance’s *Healthy Food Certification – Food and Beverage Exemption* as stated: EdAdvance will allow the sale to students of food items that do not meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards and beverages not listed in Section 10-221q of the Connecticut General Statutes provided that the following conditions are met: 1) the sale is in connection with an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on the weekend; 2) the sale is at the location of the event; and 3) the food and beverage items are not sold from a vending machine or school store. An “event” is an occurrence that involves more than just a regularly scheduled practice, meeting, or extracurricular activity. For example, soccer games, school plays, and interscholastic debates are events but soccer practices, play rehearsals, and debate team meetings are not. The “regular school day” is the period from midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day. “Location” means where the event is being held and must be the same place as the food and beverage sales.

c) Presentation/Approval: Updated Board Meeting Schedule for FY 2025-2026

The 2025-2026 Board meeting schedule was updated. The October 2 meeting was moved to October 9 due to the Yom Kippur holiday occurring on October 2.

Upon a motion by Joseph Abdella, duly seconded by Deb Bell, the Board of Directors unanimously approved the meeting schedule for FY 2025-2026.

d) Presentation: Audit Report for FY 2023-2024

Rich spoke about the results of the Financial Statement, the State Single Audit, and the Federal Single Audit completed by our auditor, King, King, & Associates. There is no indication from the auditors that our agency has failed to comply with any major state or federal program requirements. Our fixed assets increased to \$19,527,641. Fixed assets include land, building, vehicles, furniture, and equipment. Our notes payable increased to \$11,395,310 due mainly to the change in completion of construction projects at the Early Childhood Learning Center and Dr. Jeffrey C. Kitching Regional Learning Center in Torrington.

e) **Appoint: Nominating Committee for Officers for FY 2025-2026**

The Board of Directors appointed the Executive Director to act as a nominating committee and proceed with bringing forward our current officers for reelection for next year. Jonathan will present the slate of officers for election at the May Board meeting.

7. Reports/Updates:

- a) **Executive Director – *Jonathan P. Costa, Sr.***
 - Jonathan spoke about the current uncertainty being driven by policy changes in the federal government. This week, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) abruptly closed 5 regional Head Start offices without notice including the Boston office that we worked with. This is a challenging event that we are monitoring closely.
 - Jonathan reported that he has a follow-up meeting on April 7 with Representative Leeper about the CCA funding. Senator Osten stated that if we were to receive any funding, it should come from the school choice line item.
 - We learned that the federal government rolled back the extensions in the ARP ESSER funding in Connecticut. This money supported some state work that we were involved in, and it will impact us if it stands, but two other opportunities came about to replace some of this funding for the agency.
 - Jonathan reminded the Board that at the May meeting there will be an executive session for his evaluation and contract. Jonathan shared his self-evaluation with the Board President John Kissko and will send it to the rest of the Board after today's meeting.
- b) **Professional Learning Services – *Lisa Bowden***
 - Lisa reported that the Professional Learning Services team has been very busy providing curriculum instruction to our districts.
 - We received an email that the ARP ESSER funding extension deadline was abruptly cancelled on March 28. This has impacted the state teacher evaluation contract for which we were providing services.
- c) **Business and Operations – *Richard Carmelich***
 - Rich stated our Fiscal department is continuing to work on the budget. All our program directors have been asked by Jonathan to present a balanced budget for next fiscal year.
 - Our Food Services department just completed a state review of the districts that we sponsor. The state reviewers commented that it was the largest review that they have conducted. The report is not complete, but we are not anticipating any problems. The next review will be in 3 years.
 - Paving work is occurring at the Regional Learning Center. Once complete, it will add additional parking.
 - As part of the Head Start regulations, the Grove Street location was tested for radon gas. The school side of the building tested fine, but high levels were detected on the convent side where the staff is located. The staff have been relocated to the school side. We tested for radon when we purchased the building, but possibly the construction might have caused the levels to rise. In the next week or two, mediation equipment will be installed and staff returned to their original locations.
 - Our Transportation department submitted a bid on 10 runs for New Milford, and we were the low bidder on 5 of the runs. We hope to eventually pick up all of the runs.
- d) **Talent and Development – *Tracey Lay***
 - Tracey reported that the Human Resources department has been busy with the upcoming open enrollment for healthcare benefits, hiring for the next academic year, and preparing summer and fall employment letters.

- We have been providing support to our Head Start department since the uncertainty after the closing of the Head Start Regional office in Boston.
 - Our BASES program received an \$18,000 Youth Mentoring Grant award from National PAL (Police Athletic League) to support youth mentoring activities at Torrington Middle School and Forbes School After School programs.
 - Our Early Childhood School Readiness program was funded again. As of July 1, 2025, the state is changing the name of the program to Early Start CT.
 - We had a great spirit week from March 24-28. Staff actively participated and shared many photos.
 - Our March 21st agency outing to the Hartford Wolfpack game was attended by 46 staff members.
 - Our Spring event is scheduled for May 23. We are scaling the event back a little to keep the costs down.
- e) Special Education – *Annette Miserez-Dillon*
- Annette reported that our Special Education students are completing the SAT, NGSS, and SBAC State testing.
 - The RESC Alliance Professional Services team is finishing up their work on co-teaching with some districts continuing next year.
 - We continue our work on the Individualized Education Program (IEP) and the Special Education Data System (CT-SEDS).

8. Adjournment

Upon a motion by Joseph Abdella, duly seconded by Deb Bell, the meeting was adjourned at 4:39 PM.

Minutes recorded by:
Carol Montory, Board Clerk



 Deb Bell, Secretary