



BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETING
June 4, 2026

MINUTES

On June 4, 2026, 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
Melissa Beylouni, Newtown
Kate Conetta, Danbury
Christine Faressa, Watertown
John Kissko, Torrington
Nora Mocarski, Winchester
Sarah Ethier, Thomaston
Sarah Robichaud, Colebrook

**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

The agenda was amended to move item 6-f “Approval: Executive Director’s Evaluation and Contract Extension” to item 7-f in Executive Session.

2. Approval of May 7, 2026 Minutes

Upon a motion by Joseph Abdella, duly seconded by Deb Bell, the Board approved the minutes of the May 7, 2026 meeting with one abstention. It was noted that one correction was needed to the minutes. The last sentence under 7. Executive Session – Discussion of Executive Director’s Evaluation needs to be changed to “The meeting was declared out of Executive Session.”

3. Questions and Comments from the Public: None

4. Communications

a) Written

Rich spoke about a letter we received from Workers' Compensation Trust informing us that they have declared a \$10,000,000 premium return for 2025, with EdAdvance qualifying for a distribution of \$98,323 based on our premium share, membership history, and loss ratios over the preceding five years.

5. Old Business: None

6. New Business:

a) Action Item: Head Start Annual Self-Assessment and Improvement Plan

Upon a motion by Joseph Abdella, duly seconded by Deb Bell, the Board of Directors approve of EdAdvance's 2025-2026 Head Start Annual Program Self-Assessment and Improvement plan. The motion passed unanimously.

Note: Melissa Beylouni joined the meeting at 4:09 PM.

b) Action Item: Head Start Selection and Enrollment Priorities (ERSEA) for 2026-2027

Upon a motion by Kate Conetta, duly seconded by Joseph Abdella, the Board of Directors approve of EdAdvance's Head Start: Prenatal to Five program's selection and enrollment priorities (ERSEA) for the 2026-2027 program year. The motion passed unanimously.

c) Action Item: Head Start Annual Grant Renewal Application

Upon a motion by Nora Mocarski, duly seconded by Joseph Abdella, the Board of Directors approve of EdAdvance's proposed budget which includes a Head Start & Early Head Base Grant totaling \$3,094,902 complemented by an additional Head Start & Early Head Start T & TA allocation of \$33,776. The motion passed unanimously.

d) Presentation: Workforce Analysis Information

Jonathan shared the Workforce Analysis which is updated annually and submitted to the state. The Workforce Analysis provides demographic data on our employees.

e) Presentation: Personnel Report for June 2025 to May 2026

Jonathan presented the personnel report for June 2025 to May 2026. Because of economic conditions and program priorities, our workforce has shrunk over the last 12 months.

7. Reports/Updates:

a) Special Education – *Annette Miserez-Dillon*

- Annette thanked everyone, noting how much she enjoyed being part of the Executive Team for the last two years.
- The end of the school year is quickly approaching. We have nine students from Steps and two students from ACCESS graduating this month. One of the ACCESS students has been in the program since 3rd grade.
- Partnership Learning Academy (PLA) is expanding to serve students through grade 6 next school year.

b) Talent and Development – *Tracey Lay*

- Tracey reported that our ongoing tuition partnership with Post University offers two pathways for staff to further their education. The 20% discount for EdAdvance employees and members of their immediate household has now been bumped to closer to 70%. The Paid Tuition Program offers staff the opportunity to earn up to 18 credits paid by EdAdvance. This will start again in the fall with seven or eight staff going through the process.
- The Human Resources department has been busy with the completion of open enrollment.
- Our Early Childhood and Family Programs are wrapping up the year with staff events and end-of-year recognition. Michelle Anderson, our Director of Early Childhood and Family Programs, was asked to join the CT Balance of State Continuum of Care Steering Committee. This is a united coalition of private and public-sector service providers with the mission to prevent and end homelessness in Connecticut.
- All Agency Day will be held on Wednesday, August 19 this year. This is our annual agency kick-off to the new school/program year. We will be presenting years of service awards and having a webstore of agency branded items for staff to purchase.
- A very successful American Red Cross Blood Drive was held yesterday with 30 donors.
- We held our agency's spring event on May 22, with food trucks, games, and raffle drawings for staff. We dedicated our new picnic area to the memory of Nancy Luchene with her daughter and granddaughter in attendance.

c) Business and Operations – *Richard Carmelich*

- Rich reported that open enrollment went well with our new broker, One Digital, and our new health benefit management company, Allied Benefit Systems. There are no major changes to our medical coverage. The deductible is the same with only a slight increase in premium cost for staff.
- The Transportation Collaborative (Bethel, Brookfield, Region 14, Region 15, and Watertown) held their final meeting of the fiscal year yesterday. This Collaborative continues to go well. We are in the third year of a five-year agreement.
- TransitWise, our transportation software program is operational and will be in service this summer.
- The underground oil tank at the Litchfield office has been dug up and removed. Soil testing was completed with no issues found, so the replacement propane tank has been installed.
- The electric vehicle charging stations in Litchfield are ready to go with the electrical work and the concrete pads finished. We just need the hook-ups to be completed which will be occurring shortly.
- The church demolition is scheduled to begin in late June or early July, pending final city approval. Asbestos removal must be completed before any structural demolition takes place. Official notification letters have already been sent to all neighboring residents. The church cornerstone will be preserved in the middle of an island in the parking lot.
- The Finance department is busy with grant closeouts and preparing for the end of the fiscal year.

d) Professional Learning Services – *Lisa Bowden*

- Lisa spoke about the Adult Education graduation that was held on June 2. At 25 students, this was the largest graduating class in recent years. The program has a strong teaching staff that supports the students who are juggling many priorities.
- The Professional Learning team continues to be busy. The Learner Engagement and Attendance Program (LEAP) program and Talk Tuesday continue to be well recognized with EdAdvance becoming the fiscal manager for LEAP next year.
- The Data Division continues their work on the school nurses survey in collaboration with the CSDE to track and report on school health services and student health trends across the state.
- The focus on English Language Arts and Math will continue into next year and will be extending into workshops.

- We are continuing to support our districts through the legislative session by creating a catalog of bills that are relevant to districts.
- e) **Executive Director's Report – Jonathan P. Costa, Sr.**
 - Jonathan reported that Governor Ned Lamont's Blue-Ribbon Commission on K-12 Education Funding and Accountability held their first meeting. Governor Lamont specifically highlighted LEAP as an effective initiative.
 - The RESC Director's Critical Issues group is wrapping up their work. State Representative Jennifer Leeper joined them at their last meeting as they work to address nine critical issues facing Connecticut school districts.
 - We are starting to show our TransportWise software to districts. We built this software for ourselves, but it will save districts money. We will charge them a fee for the software based on the district's cost savings.
 - We have decided to migrate our agency email and calendar from Microsoft Outlook to Google. We switched to Outlook about 8 years ago for their customer data management, but that never panned out. Google's AI tools are stronger than Microsoft's and over 60% of our staff use Gmail for their personal email. Our email addresses will stay the same and staff will still have access to Microsoft Office applications such as Word and Teams.
 - Jonathan stated that he is coming to the end of his second year in this position and is looking forward to his third. It was a challenging year, but we came through fine.
- f) **Executive Session:** Discussion of Executive Director's Evaluation and Contract Extension

Upon a motion by Nora Mocarski, duly seconded by Deb Bell, the meeting was adjourned to Executive Session at 4:41 PM and invited Jonathan Costa and Carol Montory to join them to discuss the Executive Director's evaluation and contract extension.

The meeting was declared out of Executive Session at 4:47 PM.

Upon a motion by Joseph Abdella, duly seconded by Deb Bell, the Board unanimously approved the Executive Director's evaluation and contract extension. The current contract of the Executive Director will be extended to a new three-year agreement from July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2029.

8. Adjournment

Upon a motion by Joseph Abdella, duly seconded by Kate Conetta, the meeting was adjourned at 4:49 PM.

Minutes recorded by:
Carol Montory, Board Clerk

Deb Bell, Secretary