



BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
November 6, 2025

MINUTES

On November 6, 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 4:02 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 Faressa, Watertown
John Kissko, Torrington
Sarah Robichaud, Colebrook
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 October 9, 2025 Minutes

Upon a motion by Roxy Fainer, duly seconded by Deb Bell, the Board unanimously approved the minutes of the October 9, 2025 meeting.

3. Questions and Comments from the Public: None

4. Old Business: None

5. New Business:

- a) Action Item: Head Start Continuation of Program During Government Shutdown

Upon a motion by Joseph Abdella, duly seconded by Kate Conetta, the Board of Directors approve of EdAdvance's Head Start: Prenatal to Five program's Plan for Government Shutdown Loss of Funding. The motion passed unanimously.

b) Presentation: Agency Direction, Goals, and Financial Position

Jonathan presented and discussed a PowerPoint with the Board outlining the agency's direction, goals, and financial status.

c) Approval: 2025-2026 Budget

Upon a motion by Kate Conetta, duly seconded by Deb Bell, the Board unanimously approved the 2025-2026 final budget as presented.

6. Reports/Updates:

a) Special Education – *Annette Miserez-Dillon*

- Annette shared that the Special Education programs continue to move forward focusing on high quality programs.

b) Talent and Development – *Tracey Lay*

- Tracey shared that the Head Start department hosted a Narcan training session, conducted by the McCall Behavioral Health Network, on October 28 at the Early Childhood Learning Center. The training was open to all staff, and 25 team members attended.
- Our EAP program continues to be utilized with staff accessing 57 different services.
- Our Culture Committee held a successful Fall Fest Farmers Market & Vendors Fair on October 17. There were 11 vendors selling their wares and lunch was provided by the Big Green Pizza Truck.
- The Energy Healing class scheduled for today was cancelled due to the instructor's illness. Thirty staff signed up, and the class was rescheduled till next week.
- The United Way of Northwest Connecticut campaign at the agency started today. The focus of this year's campaign is ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) households.
- Once again this year, we're proud to support the Torrington Youth Service Bureau's Holiday Angel Program. A total of 25 children have each shared a wish list with three gift items, and our staff will be choosing one or more of these items to purchase and help make their holiday a little brighter.
- We are monitoring the effects of the government shutdown on our Head Start program.

c) Business and Operations – *Richard Carmelich*

- Rich shared that he has been working on the oil consortium that was established years ago by Ed Arum. The consortium involves multiple districts in the Northwest region and focuses on heating oil and unleaded gasoline. We are currently seeking pricing proposals for the 2026–2027 period. While we have previously worked with East River Energy, we are now meeting with additional vendors to explore more competitive pricing options.
- EASTCONN previously established a food services purchasing consortium with Thurston Foods but has since stopped overseeing it, leaving districts struggling to meet strict food regulations and lower costs. Our Food Service Director Becky Tyrrell is actively exploring options to reestablish a cooperative, which could help reduce costs and ensure compliance.
- Our 12 electric vehicles have been purchased, but charging stations are not yet in place, so staff are using alternative locations to charge. Progress has been slowed by Eversource's red tape. However, the agreement letter for Torrington charging stations was received today, with Litchfield and Danbury hopefully following soon.

- Rich reported that he has been collaborating with Justin Pascoe in the Skills21 program on budget projections by leveraging AI to incorporate historical cyclical spending, enabling faster, more efficient, and accurate budgeting.
- d) Professional Learning Services – *Lisa Bowden*
 - Lisa shared that her team has hit the ground running, with administrative cabinet meetings helping to guide their work throughout the school year.
 - Caroline Calhoun has become a trusted expert in the Learner Engagement & Attendance Program (LEAP) serving as a state-wide coordinator of this exceptional program.
 - Lisa reported that staff are focused on math, social studies, science, ELL, and strengthening the middle school transition from 5th to 6th, 7th, and 8th grades. Emphasis is being placed on reading, writing, and developing students into independent learners.
 - The Teacher Evaluation System in Connecticut's Alliance Districts using the Review of Practice (ROP) model is going strong.
 - We are in the process of developing a new rate scale to adjust our pricing. While some districts will pay the updated rates, others may require discounted pricing based on their needs.
- e) Executive Director's Report – *Jonathan P. Costa, Sr.*
 - Jonathan shared that he has been meeting with superintendents across our districts, with only Brookfield remaining. His focus will now shift to internal tours of our programs, attending staff meetings or gatherings.
 - We usually cancel our December Board meeting unless something comes up, so our next meeting would be January 8.

7. Adjournment

Upon a motion by Joseph Abdella, duly seconded by Kate Conetta, the meeting was adjourned at 5:00 PM.

Minutes recorded by:
Carol Montory, Board Clerk



Deb Bell, Secretary