



BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
October 9, 2025

MINUTES

On October 9, 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): Deb Bell, Region 7
Kate Conetta, Danbury
Roxy Fainer, Thomaston
John Kissko, Torrington
Mary Kate Terzini, Barkhamsted
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
Carol Montory, Board Clerk

2. Approval of September 4, 2025 Minutes

Upon a motion by Roxy Fainer, duly seconded by Deb Bell, the Board unanimously approved the minutes of the September 4, 2025 meeting.

3. Questions and Comments from the Public: None

4. Old Business: None

5. New Business:

a) Approval: CSDE Required School Climate Policy

The EdAdvance Connecticut School Climate Policy, introduced at the September 4th Board meeting, requires approval from the Board of Directors. A new state law mandates the implementation of school climate legislation beginning in the 2025–26 school year. To provide clarity on the practical implications for schools and districts, staff from our School Climate and Mental Health program will provide a presentation at the January Board meeting.

Upon a motion by Deb Bell, duly seconded by Roxy Fainer, the Board of Directors unanimously approved of EdAdvance's School Climate Policy.

b) Presentation/Approval: Proposed EdAdvance Membership Dues for FY2026-2027

Jonathan shared the proposed membership dues for FY2026-2027. He reviewed the history of the annual due's structure. This year's proposed dues are based on enrollment figures provided by the Connecticut State Department of Education's Grade by District report.

Upon a motion by Deb Bell, duly seconded by Roxy Fainer, the Board of Directors unanimously approved the proposed EdAdvance Membership Dues for FY 2026-2027.

c) Action Item: McKinney-Vento Grant Continuation Application

Upon motion by Kate Conetta, duly seconded by Deb Bell, the Board of Directors approve of EdAdvance's McKinney-Vento grant continuation application to the CT State Department of Education to support homeless children and youth in Torrington and throughout school districts located in NW CT.

6. Reports/Updates:

a) Talent and Development – *Tracey Lay*

- Tracey reported that the Marketing and Communications department held staff trainings on accessibility of documents and websites and using the design software Canva. New trainings on maximizing our cell phone features and using Employee Self Service (ESS) are being planned.
- Our Employee Assistance Program (EAP) saw strong engagement in the first quarter, with a 32.15% utilization rate and 46 staff trainings completed.
- The American Red Cross Blood Drive held on September 30 was a success with 18 donors and 22 units donated.
- The United Way of Northwest Connecticut has restructured with a new executive director. We will be providing our staff with information to learn how to donate to the United Way through the Workplace Campaign. Also, Michelle Anderson, our Director of Early Childhood, has been working with our districts to get them involved with the United Way.
- Our Fall Fest Farmers Market and Vendors Fair will be held on October 17. The Big Green Pizza Truck will be providing food and dessert with local farms and vendors selling their wares.
- Our Head Start program will be affected if the government shutdown continues past the end of the month.

b) Business and Operations – *Richard Carmelich*

- Rich reported that our Facilities department continues to be busy. After all the moves and repairs completed over the summer, the focus now is on preventative maintenance of our buildings. Paving at 103 Miry Brook is scheduled for Monday, but that may be delayed due to the weather.
- Our Fiscal department has been actively engaged in finalizing state reports, supplying necessary documentation to auditors, and overseeing our cash flow management. Historically, revenue tends to decline during August and September, with cash flow typically improving by mid to late October.
- Throughout the summer, the Technology department provided significant support to our districts. Following the retirement of an Information Technology staff member at Winchester Public Schools, our team stepped in to provide support.

- Jody Minotti from our Special Education department helped secure \$150,000 from the Department of Labor to offset work at the College and Career Accelerator (CCA).
 - We were notified that we received \$250,000 from the state to support our school climate work.
 - Our Transportation department had a smooth start to the school year. They have been diligently resolving minor issues and ensuring that all drivers are familiar with their routes. The Regional Transportation Collaborative recently met and expressed great satisfaction with the team's efforts.
 - The Food Services department remains highly valued and appreciated by our districts, and it has continued to expand.
 - We continue to have concerns about the possibility of rising health insurance costs next year. We are investigating joining the CT state partnership plan to reduce costs.
- c) Professional Learning Services – *Lisa Bowden*
- Lisa reported the Professional Learning Services department has been very busy supporting large contracts including LEAP and Talk Tuesdays. The Teacher Evaluation contract was reinstated in August and is funded through February 2026.
 - Our contracts with school districts are smaller due to district budget challenges.
 - The RESC Alliance has launched an AI Leadership Consortium with district teams from across the state leveraging work started at EdAdvance.
 - The RESC Alliance is offering six workshops on Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) designed to improve behavioral outcomes for all students, particularly marginalized and vulnerable populations.
- d) Executive Director's Report – *Jonathan P. Costa, Sr.*
- Jonathan received a response regarding the appeal of the mental health grant. The grant was denied due to a single line mentioning the hiring of a diverse group of counselors. In response, the U.S. Department of Education has issued a revised proposal that now mandates the inclusion of school psychologists. We are currently advocating for \$830,000 in funding from the CT legislature, should a special session be held, to support program continuation through the remainder of the year.
 - The buyer for WorkspaceCT has withdrawn due to internal resource constraints, so the property is once again on the market. We have slightly reduced the asking price.
 - Our fifth AI Conference, held on October 3, was a sold-out event. Representative Jennifer Leeper, Chair of the Education Committee, attended and joined Jonathan for a Q&A session during the conference.
 - The government shutdown is most significantly affecting our Head Start program. While funding is secured through the end of October, there may be challenges in covering payroll beyond that point. We are meeting with the Head Start Director to explore available options.
 - Our Employee Retention Tax Credit process is also being impacted by the government shutdown. Due to the shutdown, the IRS is currently unresponsive, which has caused delays for us.

7. Adjournment

Upon a motion by Roxy Fainer, duly seconded by Deb Bell, the meeting was adjourned at 4:37 PM.

Minutes recorded by:
Carol Montory, Board Clerk



Deb Bell, Secretary