



BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
September 4, 2025

MINUTES

On September 4, 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 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 June 5, 2025 Minutes

Upon a motion by Kate Conetta, duly seconded by Roxy Fainer, the Board unanimously approved the minutes of the June 5, 2025 meeting.

3. Questions and Comments from the Public: None

4. Communications

a) Written

Jonathan spoke about an initial engagement letter that we received from our auditors, King, King & Associates. It explained the audit scope and responsibilities of the auditor and EdAdvance for the year ended June 30, 2025.

5. Old Business: None

6. New Business:

a) Action Item: Head Start One-Time Supplemental Funding

Upon a motion by Roxy Fainer, duly seconded by Christine Faressa, the Board of Directors approve of EdAdvance's Head Start: Prenatal to Five application for one-time Supplemental Funds for Nutrition & Healthy Eating for Head Start Children and Families. The motion passed unanimously.

b) Action Item: Approval of the Resolutions to Authorize the Executive Director to Proceed with the Sale of WorkspaceCT as Outlined in the Contract of Sale

Upon a motion by Deb Bell, duly seconded by Kate Conetta, the Board of Directors approve of the following motions: 1) to authorize and empower EdAdvance to enter into the Sale Transaction with the Purchaser, upon the terms and conditions set forth in the Contract of Sale; 2) to authorize, empower and direct, Jonathan P. Costa, Sr., the Executive Director of EdAdvance (Authorized Person) in the name of and on behalf of EdAdvance, to execute, deliver and perform EdAdvance's obligations under the Contract of Sale, and to execute and deliver any and all documents required under the Contract of Sale in order to consummate EdAdvance's sale of its interest in the Property to the Purchaser, upon the terms and conditions set forth in the Contract of Sale; 3) to authorize that the executive director is hereby authorized, empowered and directed, in the name and on behalf of EdAdvance, to take all actions, including to execute, deliver and perform EdAdvance's obligations under any other agreements, instruments or other documents required in connection with the consummation of the Sale Transaction, all as in the judgment of the Authorized Person may be deemed necessary, advisable or appropriate in order to consummate the transactions contemplated by the Contract of Sale, and the execution and delivery thereof shall be conclusive evidence that the same were in all respects hereby fully authorized and approved; 4) to authorize that the executive director is hereby authorized, empowered and directed to take all steps and do all acts and things, including the execution and delivery of documents, agreements, certificates, instruments, affidavits and certifications as are or may become necessary or appropriate to effect the purposes and intentions of the foregoing recitals and resolutions and the transactions contemplated thereby, each to be in form and content acceptable to the Authorized Person, his approval shall be conclusively evidenced by his execution and delivery thereof; 5) to authorize that all actions previously taken by the executive director or any officer, agent or attorney of EdAdvance relating to the foregoing resolutions and the transactions contemplated thereby are hereby adopted, ratified, confirmed and approved in all respects as the acts and deeds of EdAdvance.

These motions passed unanimously.

c) Update: 2024-2025 Budget

Rich presented a slide outlining the final 2024–2025 year-end budget closeout. Since the budget was last presented in May, the overall deficit has grown due to expected funding that did not come through but will and will be applied to the 25-26 budget. On a positive note, the deficit in Special Education has decreased. Efforts are underway to secure funding for CCA, and steps have already been taken to address the remaining deficit.

d) Review: All Agency Day

Tracey highlighted All Agency Day, held on August 15, which welcomed all EdAdvance staff and drew over 120 participants. Jonathan shared a PowerPoint presentation encouraging positivity about the new fiscal year despite its challenges. Staff enjoyed a catered barbecue lunch, and a drone captured a group photo. The day also featured the launch of our agency apparel webstore and received excellent feedback from attendees.

e) Review: CSDE Required School Climate Policy – First Read

Jonathan spoke about the Connecticut School Climate Policy that was included in the Board information packets. The state passed a law requiring school climate legislation to be implemented in school year 2025-26. We will be voting to accept this policy at the October Board meeting.

7. Reports/Updates:

a) Special Education – *Annette Miserez-Dillon*

- Annette spoke about the new school year being off to a great start despite the challenges with moving ACCESS Middle and High School to a new location.
- Jonathan visited the Special Education schools and shared his All Agency Day PowerPoint presentation with the staff.
- Annette reported that Michael Nazzaro, a teacher at Steps for the past six years, applied for and was promoted to principal, bringing valuable experience and familiarity with the program.

b) Talent and Development – *Tracey Lay*

- Tracey reported that our Human Resource department has been busy with fingerprinting. Last year, we fingerprinted 851 staff for our member districts and our agency. We will be rolling out a new Human Resources component of Tyler Enterprises ERP, our financial software, in February. This will be replacing AppliTrack, our current recruiting and hiring software. The department has also been busy with the new state laws concerning minimum wage and sick leave.
- The Marketing and Communications department has been working updating program flyers and websites. They are also holding staff trainings on using the design software Canva and accessibility trainings on documents and websites.
- Our Early Childhood and Family Programs department had a successful start to the new fiscal year with all their programs up and running. The Early Childhood department expanded the School Readiness program to new regions.
- The BASES department received a \$2,000 mini grant from a vendor partnership.
- Tracey spoke about a few upcoming agency events. The agency outing to the Hartford Yard Goats is on September 5, the Red Cross Blood Drive is on September 30 from 1:00 pm to 6:00 pm and the Flu & Covid Vaccine Clinic is on October 14. Our agency staff Fall Fest and Farmer's Market is on October 17 and our Veteran's Appreciation Gathering is on November 7. We received a \$2,500 bonus grant from the Connecticut Community Foundation that we will use for staff health and wellness.

c) Business and Operations – *Richard Carmelich*

- Rich reported that he has been working on the budget. There is concern about rising health insurance costs expected next year. He has been meeting with other insurance brokers in an effort to keep costs down.
- The Food Service department has had a busy summer with the free meals program in Torrington and other districts and preparing for the start of the new school year.
- Our Facilities department successfully moved our ACCESS Middle and High School program from WorkspaceCT to Danbury.
- The Transportation Department has acquired electric vans through the grant award from OPM. Progress is underway on the charging stations, with our application submitted to Eversource, and installation is anticipated for mid to late October.

d) Professional Learning Services – *Lisa Bowden*

- Lisa reported the Professional Learning Services team is in high demand. The Title II, III and IV funding has been released, and the team is booked.
- Professional Learning Services has a new website.

- As part of LEAP, we are now hosting the biweekly Talk Tuesday Community of Practice virtual meetings. These are dynamic conversations on improving student attendance and engagement.
 - The Teacher Evaluation contract was reinstated after being paused in May. New workshops and technical assistance will be offered.
 - Our contract with Canton Public Schools has been renewed with two consultants continuing their work.
 - Our Adult Education department has been busy working with our districts.
 - The Regional Healthcare Shadowing Program has 60 students currently participating. Based on feedback from previous participants, this program, which gives students the option to participate in healthcare shadowing opportunities, has had a tremendous impact.
- e) Executive Director's Report – *Jonathan P. Costa, Sr.*
- Jonathan reported that due to the current uncertainty about possible funding opportunities he would like to move the agenda item of approving the 25-26 budget to the November meeting instead of the usual October. This will give us more time to have accurate budget information concerning the proceeds from the sale of WorkspaceCT, the possible funding of \$830,000 to keep our mental health counselors employed through spring, the Employee Retention Tax Credit, and final reconciliations from the CES reimbursement. We won't have these figures in time for the October meeting, but we should know more by November. We will plan on having both the October and the November meetings virtually.
 - We have an agreement with CABA to build an AI policy analysis bot to increase the speed of the policy audits they provide to school districts.
 - Jody Minotti from our Special Education department has been working on a special education AI bot to improve the quality of IEPs to make sure they are aligned with the standards.
 - Our transportation software is almost ready. We purchased the domain name, transitwise.com. This software will not only help our agency, but it also has great commercial potential. There is a Senate bill that was signed into law, that requires coordinated bus routes for special education students attending outplacements. This routing software could be used for this and save districts money.
 - There may be a special session of the General Assembly to discuss the \$190 million in new revenue that was discovered shortly after the regular 2025 legislative session ended in June as well as a revision to education and housing bills that did not make it out of the regular session.

8. Adjournment

Upon a motion by Kate Conetta, duly seconded by Deb Bell, the meeting was adjourned at 5:07 PM.

Minutes recorded by:
Carol Montory, Board Clerk

Deb Bell, Secretary