



**BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**  
**January 4, 2024**

**MINUTES**

On January 4, 2024, 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  
John Kissko, Torrington  
Alison Plante, Newtown  
Sarah Robichaud, Colebrook

**EdAdvance  
Personnel:**

Jeffrey Kitching, Executive Director  
Jonathan P. Costa, Sr., Assistant Executive Director  
Richard Carmelich, III, Chief Operations Officer  
Tracey Lay, Chief Talent & Development Officer  
David B. Erwin, RESC Alliance Coordinator  
Carol Montory, Board Clerk

**Guest:** Patrice McCarthy, Executive Director and General Counsel, CABE

**2. Approval of November 2, 2023 Minutes**

Upon a motion by Kate Conetta, duly seconded by Deb Bell, the Board unanimously approved the minutes of the November 2, 2023 meeting.

**3. Questions and Comments from the Public: None**

**4. Communications**

**a) Written**

Rich spoke about an article in the December 28, 2023 edition of the Republican-American newspaper. The article featured the construction of our Early Childhood Center in Torrington. Construction is moving along on schedule. The concrete shell is connected to the existing

building and the workers are getting close to enclosing the building, so they can work on it during the winter.

**5. Old Business:** None

**6. New Business:**

a) Presentation: Upcoming Legislative Issues – Patrice McCarthy, CABE

Patrice McCarthy, Executive Director and General Counsel at CABE spoke about the upcoming issues for this short legislative session. CABE has convened a group of superintendents, principals, and teacher union representatives to try to find relief from the unfunded state education mandates. They are also involved in the teacher certification council which is looking at the certification regulations that have not been updated since the 1990's. A special education task force was convened to look at a series of recommendations including more funding. The kindergarten start date changes and the Science of Reading are also creating stress at the local level and CABE is actively involved with these issues. CABE is also advocating for the state to support programs that were funded by ESSER funds.

b) Action Item: Head Start Carryover Grant Funds Request

Upon a motion by Joseph Abdella, duly seconded by Sarah Robichaud, the Board of Directors unanimously approved EdAdvance's Head Start: Prenatal to Five programs carryover request for the FY23 Head Start base grant for \$390,529.40 which is comprised of \$263,951.08 from FY 22 and \$126,578.32 for FY 23 and also to carryover \$10,888.91 of the Head Start and Early Head Start Training and Technical Assistance funds.

c) Presentation/Approval: Addition of Hartland School District as an EdAdvance Member District

Jeff talked about the transfer of Hartland School District from being a CREC member district to an EdAdvance member district. In November, Jeff attended the Hartland Board of Education meeting to speak about this transfer and at that meeting the Hartland Board of Education passed a motion to request the EdAdvance Board of Directors to formally consider the Hartland School District to be added as an EdAdvance district and to be removed from the CREC region. We already provide food services and professional development to Hartland, so approval of this request would be a good decision. If approved, EdAdvance will write a letter to the Commissioner of Education informing the department of this change.

Upon motion by Deb Bell, duly seconded by Kate Conetta, the Board of Directors unanimously approved the addition of Hartland School District as an EdAdvance member district.

d) Approval: Personnel Reports for November and December 2023

Upon motion by Sarah Robichaud, duly seconded by Roxy Fainer, the Board of Directors unanimously approved the Personnel Report for November and December 2023 as submitted.

e) Discussion: Process of Selecting a New Executive Director

Our Executive Director, Jeff Kitching, was planning to retire at the end of fiscal year 2025, but an opportunity was presented to him, so he has decided to retire at the end of this fiscal year instead. John Kissko reported that our Assistant Executive Director, Jonathan Costa, approached him and expressed an interest in the Executive Director position. John and Jonathan met and reviewed a continuation plan that Jonathan drafted. Since we have such a strong internal candidate, John recommends that we do not conduct an expensive and time-consuming search at this time. Dave Erwin, who is a former superintendent and current CES Executive Search Consultant, is willing to assist with this process. The Executive Committee of the Board will interview Jonathan for the position and make their recommendation at the February Board meeting. Once a date has been chosen for this interview, the rest of the Board will be invited to attend the meeting.

## 7. Reports/Updates:

- a) Executive Director's Report – *Jeffrey C. Kitching*
  - Jeff reported that he has received many congratulatory responses from colleagues since he announced his retirement.
  - We will send links to the Board for the updated time lapse video on the construction of the Early Childhood Learning Center, the updated WorkspaceCT website, and the College and Career Accelerator (CCA) website.
- b) Professional Learning – *Jonathan P. Costa, Sr.*
  - Jonathan shared that he is excited about the opportunity to lead EdAdvance.
  - The Professional Learning department will be holding a State Mandate Support and Relief Day on February 9 in Litchfield. We are inviting districts to come together to share resources and seek support on the many state unfunded mandates. A flyer will be emailed to the Board members.
  - Jonathan shared that a follow-up to the Artificial Intelligence conference will be held in March. Also, our Skills21 department is preparing to launch a podcast on AI that will be held every couple of weeks.
- c) Business and Operations - *Richard Carmelich*
  - Rich reported that our Fiscal department is preparing for mid-year projections and working on the agency budget for the next fiscal year.
  - We have a new auditing firm this year and they have asked for an extension. We hope to have the audit ready for the February meeting.
  - The transportation collaborative is progressing well. Pricing for next year was sent to the districts and we have not received any feedback yet.
  - Rich stated that part of the renovations at the Regional Learning Center is an upgrade to the kitchen to modern specifications. The plan is to use that kitchen as a hub for the districts that we provide food services.
  - The facilities department is busy keeping our parking lots and walkways clean from ice and snow.
  - Our technology department is working on a lot of projects supporting our staff, buildings, external customers, and our districts.
- d) Talent and Development – *Tracey Lay*
  - The Torrington/Winchester Youth Service Bureau reached out to us for assistance with their holiday Angels program to provide gifts for the children in our communities. We received a list of 50 children with each one requesting 3 gifts. Our staff was able to fill all the wishes.

- Tracey reported that we continue to provide perks for staff. Our “Cookies and Cocoa for Colleagues” was held, our workplace yoga is continuing, and our agency Winter Breakfast will be held on January 26.

## **8. Adjournment**

Upon a motion by Alison Plante, duly seconded by Joseph Abdella, the meeting was adjourned at 4:50 PM.

*Minutes recorded by:  
Carol Montory, Board Clerk*

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Deb Bell, Secretary