



Jefferson Ready Start Network
December 8, 2025 Meeting Minutes

Welcome and Introductions

Charmaine Caccioppi called the meeting to order at 11:01 am. She asked for a roll call and introductions.

Members in Attendance

Donna Austin
Jolena Broussard
Charmaine Caccioppi
Yossi Chesney
Lili Guilbault
Arielle Hughes
Ruth Lawson

Larry Manshel
Yolanda Motley
Paula Polito
Monique Rouege
Libbie Sonnier
Kate Wendel

Absent

Gina Easterly
Anita Kennedy
Chad Nugent
Diane Schnell

Scott Walker
Shondra Williams

Guests Present

Christine Briede
April Catarella
McKenzie Esta

Janai Garrison
Rochelle Rabathaly
Jessica Rouquette
Olivia Stricklin

Charmaine then offered a special welcome to guests, including Rochelle Rabathaly and Janai Garrison from Jeff CAP Head Start. Sarintha discussed changes in membership, noting that Dr. Allison Trigg and Jerry Bologna had rolled off the board, while Kate Wendell continued her involvement to represent JEDCO.

Charmaine noted that the minutes from the September meeting had been emailed to board members for review. She asked for any questions or edits. There being none, the board approved the minutes then moved to a discussion of the Jefferson Ready Start Network Bylaws.

Board Approves Revised Bylaws

Paula Polito, Bylaws and Nominations committee chair, presented the updated bylaws for review and approval. The board reviewed and approved revised the bylaws, which included a 25% minimum requirement for provider representation and updated meeting notice procedures. The bylaws established five committees with initial chairs appointed by the board chair, all of whom are providers. Charmaine announced the initial committee chairs including:

- Bylaws and Nominations: Paul Polito
- Programs and Projects: Ariel Hughes
- Finance: Rabbi Chesney
- B3 Seat Protocols: Monique Rouege

- Executive Committee: Charmaine Caccioppi

Charmaine asked board members to sign up for committees by emailing Sarintha. Christine Briede noted that Jolena Broussard would serve as the JCF representative on the Finance Committee. Discussion continued around the need to expand board membership to ensure proper representation of providers and families and asked the Bylaws and Nominations Committee to review the current composition to ensure 25% provider representation and seek nominations for parent representatives.

The bylaws call for an annual meeting of the organization in January to elect a Board Chair and Board Vice-Chair. Board members were asked to send nominations for board leadership positions to the Committee Chair, Paula Polito.

Update on MOU

Charmaine updated the board on meetings and communications with Jefferson Parish Schools representatives regarding an MOU. Charmaine noted that we had reached out to the state Ready Start leadership requesting clarification on MOUs and examples of MOUs currently in place in the state. Charmaine then recommended that we continue with an informal relationship with JPS until further guidance is provided from the LDE. Sarintha explained that while there were previous concerns about JCF's role in SRTCs, JPS has moved forward with SRTC promotion and JCF has collaborated by including JPS SRTC information in their newsletter. All organizations have committed to working together to increase access to high-quality early care seats for underserved children in Jefferson Parish. The discussion concluded with a consensus that we should communicate with providers for clarity about the roles and responsibilities and ongoing collaboration between JRSN and JPS.

JRSN Programs and Projects

Early Education Investment Collaborative (EEIC)

Monique Rouege provided an update on the current efforts of the EEIC grant, highlighting collaboration with the Childcare Coalition to launch a grassroots initiative for child care access and funding in Jefferson Parish. This grassroots initiative will kick off in January and is designed to engage providers and parents. The Childcare Coalition will identify a Grassroots Advisory Team and identify Ambassadors to lead efforts across communities in Jefferson, ultimately with provider leadership to leverage community support for local funding for early care and education.

B3 Local and State-Match Seats

Jessica Rouquette provided updates on the current status of B3 local and state-match funded seats in partnering child care sites. She shared that 63 replacement seats have been filled, and emphasized the need for a transparent and equitable funding process moving forward. The board discussed the challenges of funding stability and the need for a coordinated approach to seat allocation. The board agreed it is important to revisit the application strategy due to uncertainty in funding allocations each year. Monique highlighted concerns about the demand for state match dollars exceeding the available funding, particularly given the amount of state-match dollars drawn down by Orleans Parish. Jessica announced the LDE deadline of January 30th for securing local funding to receive the state match. Thus, the Seats Committee will have firm funding and seat numbers to begin meeting and establishing a process for applications and seat commitments for seats that begin July 1, 2026 and run through June 30, 2027.

Communication Updates and Announcements

The group discussed recent communications efforts, including a messaging workshop and upcoming events to promote early education initiatives. Early ED month will kick off in February

in Southeast Louisiana at Carlie Care Kids, Monique's center in Gretna. Please be on the lookout for numerous Early ED events in February, sponsored by the Ready LA Coalition, LPIC, and UWSELA.

Additionally, Sarintha announced that JRSN had submitted grant applications to the Gayle and Tom Benson Community Foundation, the Sharpiro Foundation, and an LOI to the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Foundation of LA. Charmaine announced that JRSN would be participating in an upcoming webinar to learn more and possibly apply for a WIN grant. Jessica shared that JRSN would be monitoring communications from UWSELA for the opportunity to reapply for a Prosperity Grant to continue funding seats for Latino children at Prime Step.

Charmaine and Jessica shared that JRSN had a very positive visit to and tour of the Bright School for the Deaf in Metairie, which could potentially collaborate with the Ready Start Network. Board members agreed that JRSN needs increased representation from and collaboration with organizations serving very young children with special needs and disabilities.

Lili Guilbault provided an update on School Readiness Tax Credits sharing significant progress in meeting and likely exceeding their initial goal of \$100,000. Charmaine asked Lili to keep the board posted on progress.

With a motion and second to adjourn, Charmaine closed the meeting at 12:18 and wished everyone a happy holiday season.