



**JRSN Advisory Board
September 19,2025 Meeting Minutes**

Charmaine Caccioppi, JRSN Advisory Board Chair, called the meeting to order at 11:02 am and asked for Roll Call.

Members in Attendance

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

Larry Manshel
Yolanda Motley
Ajit Pethe
Paula Polito
Monique Rouege
Libbie Sonnier

Absent

Jerry Bologna
Gina Easterly
Anita Kennedy
Chad Nugent
Diane Schnell

Allison Trigg
Scott Walker
Kate Wendel
Shondra Williams

Guests Present

Christine Briede
April Catarella

McKenzie Esta
Olivia Stricklin

Meeting Summary

The meeting focused on the administrative transitions and governance structure changes as the Jefferson Ready Start Network transitioned to the Jefferson Community Foundation. The board reviewed and approved key documents including draft bylaws, a Memorandum of Understanding with Jefferson Parish Schools, and discussed funding challenges particularly for Birth to Three programs. The conversation ended with updates on early care and education initiatives in Jefferson Parish, including reports from the Early Education Investment Collaborative and plans for upcoming events and recognition activities.

JRSN Transition Under JCF

The meeting began with introductions and welcome remarks, with Charmaine Caccioppi, Board Chair, thanking members for their continued commitment to the work of the JRSN. Sarintha Stricklin, JRSN Executive Director, also thanked board members for their dedication and directed them to the JRSN Advisory Board Membership Agreement in their packets. Board members wishing to continue should sign and return the form at the end of the meeting.

The first agenda item focused on the transition of the Jefferson Ready Start Network to operate under the Jefferson Community Foundation (JCF). Sarintha reported that the BESE approved JCF at their June 2025 meeting and the Louisiana Department of Education (LDE) notified JCF in July 2025 of their official Ready Start Lead Agency status. Sarintha explained the administrative steps that were subsequently completed including (1) setting JCF as a vendor in the LA.GOV system, (2) creating accounts in the electronic Grants Management System (eGMS), (3) setting up the initial JRSN budget in eGMS, (4) establishing an indirect rate with the LDE, and (5) finalizing a fiscal agreement with JCF. Christine Briede, JCF Executive Director,

reported that JCF contracted with Sarintha to serve as the JRSN Executive Director, with her first assignment to complete the 5 transition tasks. A copy of the fiscal agreement between JCF and JRSN was shared. The group discussed the organization's purpose, which remains focused on increasing access to high-quality early education through local and sustainable funding sources, as outlined in Bulletin 140.

Advisory Council Bylaws and Governance

The Advisory Board discussed draft bylaws as a Board newly operating under JCF. Paula Polito presented the draft bylaws on behalf of the committee, which outlined officer positions including chair and vice chair to be elected annually in January, and requirements for amending bylaws with 30-day notice periods. The board discussed different categories of community representatives including providers, parents/caregivers, and business representatives across East and West Banks. Two key recommendations were made: (a) add standing committees, and (b) set a minimum percentage of provider representatives to the Board. Paula and the committee will make the recommended changes and email the final draft to the Chair 30-days prior and to the Board 15 days prior to the next meeting in early December. The Board also discussed strategies for meeting transparency and public notice requirements, considering options like website posting, newsletters, Google Calendars, and partner agency communications.

MOU Requirement of Bulletin 140

Charmaine Caccioppi directed Board members to their packets for a copy of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) drafted by the Executive Committee. Bulletin 140 notes that Ready Start Networks shall be responsible for working with designated Community Network Lead Agencies (CNLAs) in meeting the requirements of §307.B.1. The CNLA for Jefferson is Jefferson Parish Schools (JPS). Charmaine presented the MOU, which outlined collaboration across JRSN, JCF, and JPS. AJ Pethe reported that he had been working on an MOU between JPS and JCF. Christine Briede added that there had been back and forth communications around the JPS drafted MOU but noted that JRSN needed to be added. The discussion revealed some confusion about whether there were two separate MOUs in development, but it was clarified that the Board was being asked to authorize Charmaine to move forward with negotiations on the current draft. The conversation also touched on the importance of maintaining the existing fundraising process for School Readiness Tax Credits (SRTC), with concerns raised about timeline constraints and the need for clear protocols. AJ reported that JPS, as the Child Care Resource and Referral (CCRR) for Jefferson had already moved forward with their own SRTC process. Discussion concluded as the Board authorized Charmaine to move forward with MOU development with JCF and JPS as quickly as possible.

Early Care and Education Project Updates

Monique Rouege and Olivia Stricklin provided a comprehensive report on their work with the Early Education Investment Collaborative, highlighting research conducted over the past year, including focus groups, cost analysis, and stakeholder mapping. They discussed plans for using the collected data to focus on teacher compensation and mobilizing sustainable funding post-COVID.

Adjournment

Board members choosing to remain on the Board were reminded to sign and return Board Member Agreements to Sarintha.

The meeting concluded with announcements of upcoming initiatives, including a presentation to the Jefferson Parish Council on October 1st; updates to the JRSN newsletter, which will now be bi-monthly; the LPIC Symposium on October 3rd; and plans for Early Care and Education Month activities in February, including the recognition of Early Childhood Champions.

The next meeting date will be determined via email and a Doodle poll, likely in late November or early December. Meeting adjourned at 12:25 pm.