



# National Coalition for Literacy

## Board Meeting

April 9, 2025

### Attendees:

Board Members: Cynthia Bell, Rachel DeVaughan, Todd Evans (Treasurer), Chrissie Klinger, Eric Nesheim (President), Christy Rhodes, Meghan McBride, Gwenn Weaver  
Ex officio: Jeff Fantine (*executive director*), Deborah Kennedy (*senior consultant*)  
Absent: Jody Angelone, Jamie Harris (Vice President), Kevin Maher (Secretary), Tom Nash  
Note-taker: Michele Diecuch

## MINUTES

### 1. Meeting Business

- Approval of the minutes of the March 12 meeting

A motion was made by Chrissie to approve the minutes; seconded by Gwenn; approved unanimously.

### 2. Executive Director Report

- Monthly ED Report

- o Issues & Policy Update

Jeff posted a policy update to the NCL discussion list. The policy call is today (shifted one week due to the COABE conference).

Budget reconciliation process – when the CR was passed, there was a fear that there is an item included by Republicans that allows for targeting certain programs to adjust funding levels (even though AEFLA was level-funded). So far, adult ed funding has not been touched, but other related programs have been impacted. Jeff will mention on policy call.

Jeff received a message from Senator Reed that he and Senator Young plan to introduce the Adult Education WORKS Act. This act, which has been introduced several times, only includes additions to Title II. A second act is the Stronger Workforce for America Act, which aligns with the version that nearly passed in December. This should restart the WIOA reauthorization process. Jeff is being told that the Adult Education WORKS Act calls for a funding level of \$800 million/year (increases over five years to \$1 billion/year). Now is the time to contact legislators to support this legislation. Jeff was told that Senator Thune and Mike Johnson are the contacts to help get this on congress's agenda. Jeff will be reaching out to both today.

Jeff has heard no update on the new budgeting process for next year.

Jeff is also waiting for the adult education office to determine state allocations – they are working on a formula.

- o Strategic Planning

This process is moving forward. A website has been created for organizing and collecting info from various NCL stakeholders. The plan is to do group meetings and one-to-one interviews. Laura W., Lauren, Nadia Cator (sp?) (from New Mexico) are all involved. Jeff mentioned that NCL tends to be East-coast centric, so we want to bring in others from different areas. Nadia has a lot of ideas about the website, social media presence, etc.

#### o May Board and Member Meetings

Jeff wants to take advantage of the Members' meeting to move the strategic planning process forward. It will be part of the board and Members' meeting agendas. Jeff would like to get all organizations collectively thinking about how adult education is defined/language used...advocacy, literacy, adult ed (related to conversations at COABE conference). Cynthia emphasized including numeracy as part of the conversation. Jeff will include Sarah Abernathy (CEF ED) in the meeting. Sarah has been helpful in deciphering info and pointing to appropriate contacts. Jeff is working on a gathering after the board meeting (meeting has been changed to 1:00-3:00 with the gathering at 4:00).

Megan McBride joined the meeting from WestEd. Todd made a motion for Megan to be added to the NCL board as the new representative from WestEd to fill the current board term (previously held by others at WestEd) which runs through September 2025; Chrissie seconded; approved unanimously. (Note: this term can be renewed again after September).

### 3. Finance and Development Report

#### • Fund Development Discussion

Jeff announced that NCL is the recipient of a \$35,000 grant from the Ingram White Castle Foundation. The foundation has historically only funded Central Ohio but they have expanded to national grants (NCL is the first). Jeff requested \$50,000 originally. The check will be cut after July 1. Jeff is looking to get someone to do a formal check presentation at the May Members' meeting. Jeff's friend at the foundation, Erica, wants to do this. The money is for general support. Eric mentioned that NCL can now think more broadly about work to be done (ex: travel). Kevin Maher mentioned some other foundations that could possibly be approached, noting that this new funding gives leverage with them.

Jeff plans to use this momentum to reach out to additional funders – mentioned that Dollar General is largely tapped. Jeff reached out to someone at Verizon. He added that the Ingram White Castle grant also has the potential to have some longevity. They plan to fund adult education efforts going forward.

#### • Review Monthly Financial Statements

Had a budget deficit of \$37,000, which will now be \$2,000 with the new funding coming in. Expenses – Deborah raised that GoDaddy (online storage, website, NCL mailbox) was above budget due to more work done in the last couple of years to help with the security of NCL's information (noted previous website hack). This adjustment is approximately \$700.

### 4. Membership Committee Report

#### • 2025 Membership Update

Not sure if Jamie is going to be able to continue. Member update, which Jeff sent, explains the current status of renewals and new members. Jeff is suggesting adding vendors as possible members, some of which are interested in advocacy. Aztec, Burlington, Pearson, Essential ED are some that Jeff has communicated with (would be Associate Member level). The bylaws state that for-profit entities must be Associate Members. There are some orgs that can never be members – they either cannot pay the membership fee OR can't be publicly associated to an organization that does advocacy (ex: World Ed, RTI, NASDAE). Jeff suggests adding a non-voting category such as "partners," "allies," "friends," that are nonpaying, non-voting members, and are not listed publicly as members. Possible benefits for this category could be policy calls and discussion list. Jeff mentioned expanding what NCL does – blog series, webinars, other. If NCL expands benefits, there would be more of a distinction between types of members.

Todd raised that we should think about NASDAE and others and how they can help NCL's efforts (vs. focusing too much on fairness w/dues). As a free category, NCL can choose who is part of that category. Deborah agreed and added that another benefit of the relationship would be to help

NCL share info more widely, get info from others, and ensuring consistency in messaging overall. Suggestion in chat to call this category “expert advisors.”

Jeff mentioned that we wouldn’t promote this category. The board decides on a case-by-case basis. Jeff is reaching out to state directors to become individual members of NCL. Deborah mentioned creating something like an MOU.

If a new membership category is created, the board needs to vote on it. Todd asked whether there is a need to add a category. Jeff does like having a policy around it to ensure consistency and transparency. Board members suggested developing a policy with details about what the category includes and how it functions.

Note: Eric left at 11:10 so Todd ran the remainder of the meeting.

## 5. Communications Committee Report

- LinkedIn and FB/Communications Committee

Jeff put a call out to ask for assistance on a Communications Committee. Jeff asked if anyone else could do this in Kevin’s stead. Idea would be for some membership orgs to help NCL with social media presence and communications. Todd will reach out to the discussion list.

Two places to increase presence are LinkedIn and Facebook. Jeff actively asks people to connect via LI and FB and asked board members to do the same (do not need to be members).

## 6. Other Business

- TESOL and COABE Conference Highlights

The COABE and TESOL conferences were good opportunities to network, get new info, discuss all of the changes happening. Also served as a way to somewhat escape the uncertainty and changes. Jeff thinks it’s good to talk about conferences to compare notes and share information.

There is a lot of tension about how adult ed leader orgs approach work in a bipartisan way and that there is not necessarily national alignment on approach to adult education.

## 7. Upcoming Board and Member Meeting Dates

- **Board Meeting – May 14 (1-3:00 p.m. EST) in-person and virtual**
- **Member Meeting – May 15 (9:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. EST) in-person and virtual**
- Board Meeting – June 11 (10-11:30 a.m. EST)
- No Board Meeting in July
- Board Meeting – August 13 (10-11:30)
- **Board Meeting – September 17 (2-4:00 p.m. EST) in-person and virtual**
- **Member Meeting – September 18 (9:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. EST) in-person and virtual**

## 8. Coming events

- National Skills Coalition Summit, May 5-7, Washington, DC
- Net Inclusion Conference, May 20-22
- ALA Annual Conference & Exhibition, June 26-30, 2025, Philadelphia, PA
- **2025 AEFL Week – September 14-20, 2025**
- AAACE Conference – October 6-10, Cincinnati, OH
- National Center for Families Learning Conference – November 2-5, 2025 – Charlotte, NC