



National Coalition for Literacy

Board Meeting

June 11, 2025

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

MINUTES

1. Meeting Business

- Approval of the minutes of the April 9 meeting

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

2. Executive Director Report

- Federal Funding Updates

Allocations letters were sent to states for release of AEFLA funds, which were at level funding, as expected. It did not include IELCE funds, however. NCL notified hill staff that IELCE funds were not yet “committed.” Jeff sent attachments, for reference, to show the state allocations, and also to show the impact of the IELCE funds not being allocated (\$85 million). There is conversation about re-directing funds, which would involve legal action, which, of course, takes time. It would be a significant burden for the AE system if those funds aren’t able to be used. Jeff has heard anything from congress that there is an issue with these funds – he is receiving this info from someone within the administration. Seems to be related to anything ELL or immigrants. DOE is preventing IELCE funds from going to states.

President’s new budget calls for elimination of AE federal funds, noting that states are better for handling this than the federal government. Next step will be for getting congress to appropriate funds for AE. Other programs are suggested to be eliminated, which would be devastating.

- May AE Open House for Legislative Staff

Jeff updated about the very successful open house event – great turnout with legislative contacts. Ryan McSweeney (R) and Jose Garcia (D) were thankful for info shared with them (from OCTAE).

- May Board and Member Meetings/Strategic Planning

Jeff showed the OCTAE slides and reiterated that we can’t share the slides themselves, but can share the info that is within the slides. Jeff noted that we keep hearing that skill gain data is the worst for Title II, but the number of participants far exceeds the other programs (Titles I and IV). Questions arose around the denominator used for Title II data. We’re not sure how this is determined. Jeff pointed out that it’s important to consider context when the administration makes

these decisions about programs. Noted that not all students who enter programs are looking for movement with MSGs. Noted that NCL also doesn't want to make Title II look good at the expense of other programs. Jeff also highlighted the number and percentage of Title II program students served from 2022 to 2023.

Meetings also went well with strategic planning discussions. Jeff just got the summary info yesterday and will get it out to the board. Virtual conversations will be planned over the next couple of months. Conversations at the NCL board meeting led nicely into the Members' meeting the next day. Some things that came in conversation were: how we define literacy, how we define advocacy, being too Title II focused. Number one issue was funding for NCL. Jeff commits to working on funding this summer, but is asking for support from the board.

- Upcoming Efforts

Summer – Jeff will continue to contact legislators about the value of adult education, continue work on the strategic plan, and focus on funding. NCL members do want a policy call in July, so it will be on July 9. NCL will not have a July board meeting. Will reconvene in August.

Jeff made a post on social media to find contacts to help with funding efforts. Found out his college roommate is an executive at KeyBank. He will work on a funding request to KeyBank next week. They indicated they support the type of work NCL does. Jeff asked board members to reach out to contacts and make introductions to help with funding requests.

3. Finance and Development Report

- Review Monthly Financial Statements
- Funds Development Discussion

Continue to encourage board members to make donations to NCL. Jeff has seen some movement with new/potentially new members. He continues to have conversations with different organizations. His focus has been on building individual membership. The \$35,000 grant will come in next month. We will still be in the negative, although we budgeted for a deficit.

Expenditures – event catering bill of \$279 was for the open house event where we budgeted \$0; catering for Members' meeting is under general expenses. Everything else spent is covered other than senior consultant. Overall doing well with expenses.

Jeff would like to do other work – travel, website revision, etc. Not having budget is hindering some work Jeff would like to do for growth of NCL. Looking for ideas on this.

4. Membership Committee Report

- 2025 Membership Update

Jeff sent a file showing where we are with membership – new and renewing members covering all categories. Orgs in bold have paid dues. Reminders were sent on June 10 for those who haven't renewed. Notes on some orgs that have expressed they are unable to renew.

5. Communications Committee Report

- LinkedIn and FB
- Communications Committee

Kevin didn't have a lot to report at this time. Jeff has been doing work to encourage connection to NCL's social media channels. He noted that followers have doubled on both LinkedIn and Facebook in the past month. Jeff discussed the need for more consistent posting and also for posts by others outside of Jeff and Deborah. Noted that there are thoughts around creating some volunteer committees to help with this type of work (some may not want to join the board but offered to help with committee/social media work).

6. Other Business

- Anyone attend the National Skills Coalition Summit in May to Provide Highlights?

Nobody from the NCL board attended. Jeff mentioned that it's always a quality conference with good speakers. Jeff was asked to attend but couldn't due it being too costly.

- NCL Members' meetings:

Jeff asked for suggestions on how best to facilitate and present the meetings. He also asked about what to do as a hill event – breakfast? Deborah mentioned the previous adult literacy awards, which didn't yield a lot to help NCL. Eric noted that COABE does awards, so we don't necessarily want to compete. Gwenn offered to brainstorm an awards program that helps bring publicity to NCL and adult education. Todd will help as well. Plans for an awards program can also be part of the strategic planning discussions.

- NCL board members:

Deborah mentioned that a new slate will need to be presented before October 1. Rachel, Tom, Megan, and Chrissie all have terms ending on September 30. All other than Rachel can be re-elected for a second term. Rachel's second term is ending. Tom will reach out to Jeff separately about his plans.

- Jeff made a note to remind people about the questionnaire he sent after the Members' meeting.
- Jeff also asked about NCL presence at the coming events/conferences coming up. See notes in section below re: attendees. Jeff hopes that we will have display info/materials for an NCL booth by the end of the summer.

7. Upcoming Board and Member Meeting Dates

- No Board Meeting in July
- Board Meeting – August 13 (10-11:30)
- **Board Meeting – September 17 (1-3:00 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

- TESOL Hill Advocacy Days – June 16-18, 2025, Washington, DC (*Deborah attending*)
- ALA Annual Conference & Exhibition, June 26-30, 2025, Philadelphia, PA (*Kevin attending*)
- AAACE's Adult Education Research Conference – June 26-28, 2025 - Troy University, Montgomery, AL
- **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 (*Todd may attend*)