



# National Coalition for Literacy

## Board Meeting

October 8, 2025  
10:00 – 11:00 a.m. EST

### Attendees:

Board Members: Eric Nesheim (President), Kevin Maher (Secretary), Lauren Osowski (Treasurer), Cynthia Bell, John Chick, Jamie Harris, Jake Hofstetter, Tom Nash, Tony Peyton, Gwenn Weaver

Ex officio: Jeff Fantine (*executive director*)

Note-taker: Michele Diecuch

Absent: Meghan McBride (Vice President), Jody Angelone

## MINUTES

### 1. Meeting Business

- Approval of Minutes – September 17, 2025 board meeting

Motion made by Eric to approve the minutes; seconded by Gwenn; approved unanimously.

- Announce NCL Board Officers

Eric thanked everyone for the online vote. NCL board officers are: Eric (President), Meghan (Vice President), Kevin (Secretary), Lauren (Treasurer). Two new board members are Jake Hofstetter and Tony Peyton. John Chick replaced Chrissie. Meghan was not present but is the new vice president, replacing Jamie. New directors introduced themselves.

- Board Orientation Plans

Eric is working on the orientation now and will set up some dates for it soon.

### 2. Executive Directors Report

Rather than provide a full update on legislative activities, Jeff referenced the monthly policy calls and recent discussions.

- Members Meeting & AEFL Week Debrief

A number of activities occurred to promote AEFL week. The official resolution was passed in the House and Senate. On Sept. 16, Jeff participated in the COABE Flood the Hill event. Several NCL members put together articles, which were shared via social media and through a media blitz. Jeff learned that media outlets prefer to have content ahead of time, so he will adjust this for future promo. Jeff encouraged everyone to continue promoting the articles.

Members' meeting – Jeff has been connecting with different partners—such as NAWB, NAWDP, ACTE—for presentations/discussions at the meetings. These organizations have since reached out to indicate they are interested in potential collaborative efforts. Jeff will also meet with them about adult literacy messaging. Taylor Hansen from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation attended to discuss their initiatives around skills-based practices, including LER (Learning and Employment Records), and agreed to continue meeting with NCL for further

collaboration. General feedback was that the presentation was well-received and attendees think it's important to continue conversations with partners, especially as it relates to digital literacy skills.

Jamie noted that it's important for the Foundation to have a voice within adult education. Jeff thinks it would be beneficial to have a two-way exchange between NCL and the Foundation where both could be involved in their respective presentations.

- Future Member Activities / Events

Jeff will continue conversations with the organizations that presented at the members' meeting for possible collaborations including dual membership-like relationships, presenting at each other's events/panels, etc. Membership would need to be a mutual understanding between NCL and the organization without having a formal dues' submittal. Part of strategic planning is to develop a path for these types of partnerships, possibly through a new membership category. Jeff would like NCL and these organizations to support each other through webinars, podcasts, etc. – likely occurring quarterly based on current NCL capacity. A suggestion was made to form an NCL group to discuss interest about these future collaboration opportunities. Jamie suggested also asking the orgs to listen in on policy calls.

Related, Jeff suggested a potential new membership category (outside of traditional dues' paying membership). The board agrees it's worth trying out. If a partnership with these 3-4 orgs works well, NCL could add this type of partnership as a new membership category – a pilot of sorts to determine viability for other partners.

Jeff mentioned that based on messaging from the current administration, there is a shift at the federal level for CTE to usurp adult education. Jeff thinks a connection to CTE is important.

For the December board meeting, Jeff intends to focus on strategic planning—changes to bylaws, membership categories, etc.

Jeff mentioned that NCL should consider the potential for a national conference, which could also generate revenue. It would need to be different than what currently exists. By the November meeting, Jeff hopes to present a proposal for an annual event (summit, conference).

Jeff referenced a letter from DOE to state directors emphasizing that any entity that receives federal money cannot lobby. It appears they are cracking down on this and that it could impact NCL's membership. Therefore, new funding streams are needed. If the board wants to pursue an annual event, a decision needs to be made quickly given that it would take a year to develop. The hope would be to find seed funding. Two potential funders are Dollar General and Ford Foundation. Jeff asked for participation from the board to explore an annual event that aligns with the strategic plan, is unique, and is not in competition in other NCL members' events. Jamie, Tom, Lauren, and Eric expressed interest in discussing.

- Strategic Planning Update

The plan includes five strategic priorities: advocacy, increasing public awareness, stakeholder collaboration, system capacity/change (related to local programs), and operational capacity. Some NCL members (about 20 people) have indicated interest in being involved in actions around these priorities. They will meet in small groups, and there will be a template provided to help them further develop goals and actions. It's important for NCL members to be involved and have buy-in.

Tony asked about a narrowing down of the five priorities. Jeff indicated that part of the group

discussions will involve narrowing down priority actions within each area in order to help NCL make decisions about what is realistic.

- **ALL IN Transition Status**

ALL IN is being transitioned due to the BBF departing from this type of work and returning to making grants to support adult education. NCL has been in conversations with BBF about the potential for NCL to be a landing place for ALL IN's work. All of ALL IN's members are also members of NCL. Conversations have been around ALL IN's priorities folding into NCL's work – both orgs have same strategic priorities. NCL does not have the capacity for ALL IN to be a separate entity. Some orgs want ALL IN to be a separate organization, and it's clear there will be competition (Proliteracy and COABE are interested in taking it over). NCL does not think it should compete to do this work and that competition is not aligned with ALL IN's intent, so Jeff has asked NCL not to be considered any longer. There are side conversations among organizations, including about NCL's capacity. Jeff indicated that any model to do this work should be a collaborative approach, which is the original intent of the ALL IN initiative. Jamie emphasized the importance of continuing NCL's collaborative and transparent history. If NCL took it on, it would be because of aligned missions and with support from member orgs, which does not appear to be the case right now.

### **3. Finances**

- **Review Monthly Statements**

Lauren just received access to QuickBooks. Going forward, Jeff and Lauren will meet before the board meetings to reconcile the finances. Lauren will set up meetings to do this.

- **Building Revenue Strategies**

Jeff emphasized the need to find new revenue sources. It is difficult to get operational capacity funding, but requests could emphasize systems change and direct impact to learners. All board members need to be involved in building revenue and making connections to orgs/corporations to do so.

Jeff mentioned growth in individual membership and the return of members/other contacts after some absence from NCL. The board can help make connections for membership also.

John referenced the Peter and Carmen Lucia Buck Foundation, and will link Jeff with colleagues who have a contact (<https://pclbfoundation.org/program-areas/education/>).

### **4. Membership**

- **Review 2025 Membership Report**

- **Building Membership Strategies**

Eric suggested a committee to continue discussions about membership. Jeff mentioned that Meghan may would want to drive this area. Member orgs may have fear around paying dues based on the current climate and messaging about advocacy and lobbying.

### **5. Communications**

- **Social Media/Website**

Jeff has been doing a lot to grow LinkedIn and Facebook presence, and encouraged all board members to repost to increase visibility. Jeff will also use the NCL discussion list to request help in reposting and posting.

Website – Jeff is having NCL's website redone with a new, updated look. He hopes it will be launched by the end of October.

## **6. Other Business**

- Upcoming Board Meetings: November 12<sup>th</sup> and December 10<sup>th</sup> (10-11:30 a.m. EST)
- Upcoming Member Events:
  - AAACE Conference – October 6-10, Cincinnati, OH
  - MAEA Conference – October 16-17, Bangor, ME
  - National Center for Families Learning Conference – November 2-5, 2025 – Charlotte, NC