

## MINUTES

Workforce Solutions Coastal Bend – Child Care Services Committee Meeting  
Bayview Tower- Administrative Office- 400 Mann Street, Suite 800  
Bayview Large Conference Room  
Corpus Christi, Texas 78401

### Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/Y24aLYIMDJl4Y2ErKHsvAVrcduKC12Qx5EftGcnxIMJ82uxHEARppv4RTrlV-IF.bpQEm0SrYkcU7r64>

### Toll-Free Call In

888 475 4499 US Toll-Free

Meeting ID: 602 310 6124

Passcode: 205402

Tuesday, February 10, 2026 – 3:00pm

### **Committee Members**

#### **Present**

Marcia Keener, Chair  
Dr. Michelle Cavazos  
Dr. Criselda Leal  
Dr. Zachary Suarez  
Michelle Tobar

#### **Other Board Members Present**

### **Absent**

Cynthia Alegria

### **Others Present**

Ken Treviño, Workforce Solutions  
Alba Silvas, Workforce Solutions  
Shileen Lee, Workforce Solutions  
Valerie De La Cruz, Workforce Solutions  
Christina Gonzalez, Workforce Solutions  
Sarahi Vasquez, Workforce Solutions  
Milanda Ballesteros, Workforce Solutions  
Valerie Ann De La Cruz, Workforce Solutions  
Ernest Everett, Workforce Solutions  
Tracy McAfee, Workforce Solutions  
Allyson Riojas, Workforce Solutions  
Valerie De La Cruz, Workforce Solutions  
Harvey Pina, Workforce Solutions  
Kristen Bily, Workforce Solutions  
Vicki Stonum, Workforce Solutions  
Imelda Trevino, Workforce Solutions  
Celina Leal, Workforce Solutions  
Catherine Cole, Workforce Solutions  
Robert Reyna, CSGPS  
Geri Escobar, C2GPS  
Kenia Dimas, Baker Ripley

### **I. Call to Order**

Ms. Keener called the meeting to order at 3:00pm.

### **II. TOMA Rules**

Ms. Vasquez provided information on the Texas Open Meetings Act (TOMA) Rules.

### **III. Roll Call**

The roll call was called, and a quorum was present. Mr. Trevino made note that Chair Perez was in attendance.

### **IV. Announcement on Disclosure of Conflicts of Interest**

Attention was called to the Disclosure of Conflicts of Interest and disclosures were requested by the chair Keener, at this time. None were made.

**V. Public Comments**

Due to the new TOMA Rules, there is a laptop at meeting location 400 Mann Street; Suite 800 and is noted on Zoom call that it is Public as per TOMA Rules. The laptop is available and open to the public.

**VI. Discussion and Possible Action on Minutes of September 9, 2025, Child Care Committee Meeting**

Ms. Keener proposed a motion to approve the minutes of the September 9, 2025, Child Care Services Committee meeting. Dr. Cavazos seconded the motion; the motion was then passed

**VII. Review of Committee Charter, Initiatives, and Strategic Board Goals of BCY 2026:**

Ms. Keener explained that their Committee Charter is what we look for, talking about, and are concerned with in relation to Strategic Board Goals, and how they handle child care services. She advised they get looked at every year to make sure they everyone is on board with that purpose. No questions were asked regarding the Committee Charter. (included on page 6 of the February 10 packet)

**VIII. Information Only:**

1. *Child Care Services Update (Q1 Oct.-Dec.) (Q2 Jan-Mar.) (Q3 Apr-Jun.) (Q4 July-Sept.)*

a. TWC: Governor Abbott Directs Investigations into Potential Child Care Funding Fraud in Texas

Ms. De La Cruz reported on Governor Abbott directing investigations into potential child care funding fraud. Ms. De La Cruz began by stating that in January, Minnesota was investigated for seven, several million dollars in childcare fraud. She advised there were investigations on childcare centers that were receiving funds from the state without children at these sites. Ms. De La Cruz stated that Governor Abbott directed the Texas Workforce Commission, (TWC) to work with the Health and Human Services Department (HHS) to implement anti-fraud measures and launch investigations into potential fraud. Ms. De La Cruz added that TWC needed to provide a report by January 30th on how these measures were being implemented. Mrs. De La Cruz explained that there are strong anti-fraud processes in place, such as routine audits, and where our Texas Rising Star mentors go out to sites and do face-to-face visits. to verify that those sites are running with kids. Ms. De La Cruz stated the Federal Administration of Children and Families have implemented Defend the Spend process, and are now requiring, or can ask for, when providers are going to get their money, or they can ask for more information, and that could look like, pictures of the site, attendance records, or any those tracking systems information, and are to remain in effect. Mrs. De La Cruz stated there have been no changes or delays in CCS funding, and we don't anticipate any at this time. No questions were asked at the end of Mrs. De La Cruz's explanation. (included on page 7 of the February 10 packet)

2. a. Early Access Funding BCY2026

Ms. Lee provided a summary of Child Care Performance Update in relation to the early access funding. Ms. Lee stated that in the first report they had zero centers. Ms. Lee credited the team, as she stated this was a week-over-week transaction, as a directive from the governor's office, right to them, she wanted to give credit to the team for the quick response and being out in front of it, even prior to the Texas Workforce Commission giving a directive without policy guidance. Ms. Lee stated that there had been some talk about this on the national stage, when Minnesota was going through what they were going through, that gave them a head this was about to happen. Ms. Lee stated that the good thing about this is that they have a very strong relationship with our directors, so we're a phone call away. Ms. Lee stated that one of our directors did get to sit in one of those calls, he advised them not to be worried about it, and felt confident he could call on their board, Child Care Services, for anything that they need, and felt they're headed in the right track. Ms. Lee stated that they requested our TX3C system, how attendance is monitored, etc., and are requesting they give that report by the 30<sup>th</sup> and will give an updated report. Ms. Lee stated there's an average between 7 and 14 cases that some board areas have. Ms. Lee explained that through the 28 board areas, they were one of the 8 that didn't have any at all. Ms. Lee explained that this is good because if they do have to investigate and move forward and prosecute those things, a whole fraud Group would need to get created. Ms. Lee stated that the team is getting training on different systems so that we know how to record and move forward with that

process of it happens. Lastly, Ms. Lee explained a provider would be in this report, then it would come to her, and would be on a need-to-know basis who then she would work with to approach the provider, to run through a series of questions, and why that provider's on that list. Ms. Lee explained that this would be down with gentle messaging, because they're our partners. Mr. Trevino continued by adding the first thing he thought about was what they're going to be asked to do, as they've developed relationships with their providers for such a long period of time, and are now having to they're deploy people into their centers to mentor them. Mr. Trevino advised it is important to be very deliberate in saying this is being generated by the state of Texas, and is not being generated by our local offices, and we as an organization are not going in to investigate child care providers. Dr. Suarez advised that he had a further inquiry, looking at the percentage, it seems like a very low percentage in comparison to other boards, and was curious as to kind of where they came from as it seems like students being over-reported discrepancy. Ms. Lee explained that there was a discrepancy in a center, as the name had changed from the EIN number, Ms. Lee explained they received about \$9.8 million in COVID funds. And that had a very specific requirement on what we could spend those funds on. Ms. Lee explained the CAP and working with TWC to this Corrective Action Plan. Ms. Lee stopped by for any questions. (included in page 8 on the February 10 packet)

3. *Performance Update BCY2026 (Q1 Oct-Dec.) (Q2 Jan.-Mar) (Q3 Apr-Jun.) (Q4 Jul -Sep)*

a. First Quarter (Q1) Performance

Ms. Dimas explained what the performance plan is, and began by stating that, as Ms. Lee mentioned, a whole year was spent trying to attrition out. Ms. Dimas stated that a couple of the reasons why our attrition rate was so high unfortunately from last year, due to the new implementation of TX3C, (a new system for child care and provider assistance) that they have all been learning. Ms. Dimas stated that due to that new system, TWC made it a mandate that all programs provide seasonal care. Ms. Dimas stated that during the year they're very strategic with their child care needs, and will decide to not enroll, or, disenroll their children from the program through voluntary withdrawal. Ms. Dimas continued that if they can come back again, they would have to access a waitlist, reapply, and then go ahead and wait to get called off of that waitlist. Ms. Dimas stated because they were trying to attrition out this year, they allowed enrollment to be as often as they needed it due to eligibility being 12 months. Ms. Dimas stated the attrition rate was not what we were expecting, and started their year at 2,717 children, which was different as they had served over 4,000 children at one point and was a significant drop, not just in the numbers but what they actively noted in person. Ms. Dimas stated that moving forward to this fiscal year, they got together with the board to set new targets to ensure they would be at an affordable rate. Ms. Dimas stated they set their own goals for January, and the numbers that they see in the packet and on screen is what was done month after month. Ms. Dimas stated that TWC was not allowing some children to be called off their waitlist, and once allowed to call off the waitlist, it does take us a process to get them started. Ms. Dimas stated they went through all mandatory priority groups first, then went on to call and continued to build through a very strategic plan to process them all timely. Ms. Dimas explained that they have seen that their unit cost go up due to quality initiatives and the Texas Racing Star certifications. Ms. Dimas stated there are lot of moving parts, and to submit a narrative for the CAP, there's a lot of variables to take into consideration. (included on page 9 of the February 10 packet).

b. Second Quarter (Q2) January Outcomes & Action Plans

Mrs. Dimas shared that with this quarter, they were very busy. Ms. Dimas stated that staff like to provide activities that are close to their heart. Ms. Dimas stated the American Cancer, Walk for cancer, breast cancer, are events planned all-out month of October called Pinktober. Ms. Dimas stated this year they raised \$687, and they donated to separate causes. Ms. Dimas shared experiences from the Mother Theresa Event, as well as the Coastal Bend Food Bank Donations. (included on page 10 of the February 10 packet).

4. *Operations & Management of Child Care Services*

a. BakerRipley Update

Ms. Dimas provided an update on the BakerRipley Operations and Management of Child Care Services. Ms. Dimas went over the implementation of TX3C, basic operations, work experience participation, provider meetings, and staff vacancies within Baker Ripley. She emphasized their attention to attendance in accordance

with new programs such as TX3C and fraud mandates. (included on page 11 of the February 10 agenda packet).

5. *Child Care Quality Services (CCQS)*

a. Texas Rising Star (TRS) Program Update:

Ms. De La Cruz presented updates on the Texas Rising Star Program. Ms. De La Cruz stated the TRS in October moved over to our contractor, Baker Ripley, where they were at the board level, and have since moved over. During that time out of the 172 providers, 38 of those providers are a TRS 4-star. She stated they have 64 at a 3-star level, and 30 at a 2-star level. Additionally, they have 37 providers that still need to be certified. She advised they are fairly new providers that have just onboarded, and they have 2 years, to become certified. She explained they work with mentors on a monthly basis, where a mentor will go out there and help them. She explained information on what that assessment looks like, and things that they may need to do to their center to come in at those different STAR levels. She stated they currently we have 5 TRS mentors, and they average about 35 childcare centers per mentor that they go out and visit monthly. (included on page 12 of the February 10 packet)

6. *CCQS Activities & Events – Fourth Quarter (Q4)*

Ms. De La Cruz provided updates on the CCQS activities and events in the fourth quarter. Ms. De La Cruz stated that the curriculum and the resources that they provided this last quarter, they were able to give 11 providers, Frog Street Curriculum from Lakeshore Resources for an amount of \$86,062. She stated with that curriculum, they're also providing training for them at the end of this quarter, so they'll know how to implement that curriculum. She added that through Lakeshore resources such as toys are provided that they can use in the classroom. Ms. De La Cruz explained through a collaboration with the ITSN program, (the Infant and Toddler Specialist Network), they we had infant and toddler teachers come out, as well as directors, and provide education on some professional development. She stated they were able to take home an infant and toddler kit through this program. Ms. De La Cruz also explained that there were a literacy kits provided where they could use the books to read to the children, that totaled \$10,245. Ms. De La Cruz stated the event was just held two Saturdays ago with 133 participants in attendance. (included on page 13 of the February 10 packet)

7. *Local Child Care Advisory Council Requirements*

Mr. Pina then presented information on requirements for the local childcare advisory council. Mr. Pina stated that according to the Texas Workforce Commission, they are required to have a local child care committee. He stated that this committee is not a governing committee, but more of a sit-down, roundtable discussion about anything regarding child care, resources, strengths, weaknesses, what they can change, and what they can improve. Mr. Pina stated that part of the requirements is for them to have a licensed child care provider, a licensed registered home provider, a current parent from the child care services, our contractor, Baker Ripley, Board staff and a community stakeholder. Mr. Pina stated that the first time we met was on October 22nd, they had a good, roundtable discussion, where they got providers at the staff level to help them in the classroom and get more professional insights there. Mr. Pina stated their last meeting on January 21st, and stated meetings are quarterly, so the next meeting will be in April. (included on page 14 of the February 10 packet)

**IX. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 4.23pm.