To ensure every child enters school ready to succeed, we lead community strategies that support children from birth to age five and their families, promoting healthy development, early learning, and enhance access to high-quality care.

DPFC BOARD MINUTES | April 23, 2026

Location: Durham's Partnership for Children | 1201 S. Briggs Ave, Ste 110, Durham, NC | Microsoft Teams

Board Members Present
Dr. Rod Jenkins, Ileana Vink, Liliana Lara, Josh Hawn, Terry David (Teams), Dr. Deborah Pitman, Dr. Collin McColskey-Leary

Board Members Absent
Commissioner Stephen Valentine, Ethel Vandergriff, DeAnna Vincent, Meytal Barak, Monnie Griggs, Tammy Sneed, Danielle Haynes

Staff Members Present
Kate Irish, Jameka Wells, Shekema Crawford, Eduardo Schoen, Traci Hathaway

A quorum was established.

I. **Gathering and Call to Order**
Dr. Jenkins called the meeting to order at 3:00pm.

II. Introductions and Announcements
No formal announcements were made. Dr. Jenkins invited those present in the room and online to introduce themselves. Traci Hathaway was introduced as a new staff member and Executive Assistant to the Executive Director.

III. **Public Comment**
There were no public comments.

IV. **Presentation: FY 25 Audit**
Auditor Melissa Boone of CohnReznick Advisory LLC introduced herself and provided an overview of the Partnership audit reports for FY 25.

V. Consent Agenda
Board Meeting minutes – February
Finance Committee bylaws

Consent Agenda items were approved. Motion was made by Ileana Vink and seconded by Josh Hawn. The motion was approved.

VI. Finance Committee

Review monthly finance reports
Finance Committee – Revised approval thresholds policy

Eduardo Schoen, CFO, presented the monthly finance reports as of March 31, 2026. He reviewed fiscal year-to-date revenue and expenses at the partnership level and noted that, at 75% through the fiscal year, expenses are below target, primarily within Smart Start Admin and Smart Start Services. Revenue and expenses for each of the Partnership's major programs were reviewed and compared to budgeted amounts. Eduardo also reported that cash on hand is sufficient to support a two- to three-month reserve and that the main operating account includes approximately $71,000 in unrestricted funds, separate from the unrestricted bank account.

The Partnership's financial position remains stable. Management is closely monitoring expenditures to ensure appropriate, mission-driven expenses are made before June 30, 2026.

Eduardo reported that the Early Head Start Focus Area 1 monitoring results were received and that all fiscal areas were compliant with no findings. He also provided an update on the EHS Improper Payment Review audit. Documentation for each of the ten sampled transactions will be uploaded within the next few business days. He also provided an overview of the Balance Sheet and Cash Flow Statement, which are new additions to the monthly financial board packet.

The board packet also included income statements compared to budget for Smart Start Admin, Smart Start Services, NC Pre-K, and both Early Head Start grants. For information and review purposes, the packet included travel requests, purchase orders, invoices paid, credit card transactions, and monthly provider payments, all tied to each applicable fund or allocation.

Eduardo also presented proposed updates to the DPfC Financial Policies, specifically related to approval authority thresholds. Board members asked for clarification regarding the use of the word "notification" in the $25,000 to $99,999 approval band. Eduardo explained that the intent was to ensure the Finance Committee receives the relevant information without creating delays based on Finance Committee and governing body meeting schedules. Board members suggested replacing "notification" with "consultation," which allows the Finance Committee to review the information, ask questions, and suggest updates before the expense is presented to the full governing body for approval.

The Board also requested clarification in the new Executive Director and CFO Expense Oversight section. There was discussion about the process for the Executive Director and CFO to approve each other's expenses and the role for Executive Committee. The Board also discussed how often the Finance Committee should review these expenses and suggested quarterly reviews of expense reports processed and paid during the preceding quarter. Staff will make edits to the Finance policies and take them back to Finance Committee for review again before it comes back to the Board for approval.

A motion to approve the monthly finance reports made by Terry David and seconded by Ileana Vink. The motion passed unanimously.

VII. Program Updates

A. Smart Start update
B. NC Pre-k update
C. Early Head monitoring report

Jameka Wells, Director of Programs, provided updates on both Smart Start and NC Prek programming. Based on the high enrollment level this fiscal year, DCDEE anticipates the same number of Pre-K slots for Durham next year. We are also currently considering how to foster internal capacity with limited support as a result of one-time administrative support ending.

Smart Start is planning for level funding for next year and includes the Allocations Committee reviewing recommendations to extend current RFP for an additional year to allow for needs assessment and strategic planning.

Shekema Crawford, Early Head Start Director, provided an overview of the OHS monitoring report and noted that there were no deficiencies identified but there was an area of noncompliance in the area of Program Governance due to not reporting the number of meals provided through the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). Individual childcare centers are responsible for administering CACFP, as the grantee does not receive these funds. Shekema has begun developing a plan to bring the program into compliance. The Office of Head Start (OHS) monitoring team has allowed 120 days to submit a corrective action plan, with the first meeting scheduled for June. Mr. David indicated he can support the program during this process, and she confirmed she will reach out to him.

There was an area of concern identified around environmental safety in school facilities. Buildings constructed prior to 1978 are required to have lead testing. While all facilities underwent lead testing as part of their initial inspections when the childcare centers opened, each center continues to test water for lead during annual inspections. Shekema is currently seeking additional guidance on lead testing requirements, as the state only conducts testing in childcare centers when a child is identified with elevated lead levels, which has occurred at one site.

Dr. Jenkins thanked both staff members for their great work and continued efforts.

VIII. 30th Anniversary Recap

Kate Irish, Executive Director, provided a recap of the 30th anniversary celebration event last week and reported it to be an overall success and a testament to strong teamwork. She credited Kristen Luft, Community Awareness Manager, with organizing the event and mentioned that all attendees and staff were very pleased with its turnout. She described the event as truly celebratory and happy and also a good reminder of the strong connection with community.

The event surpassed its original goal of $30,000 and raised just above $31,000 (to date). Leadership was pleased to have strong government representation that included the Lieutenant Governor and State and local representatives. Staff attendees and Sponsors continue to share

sentiments and event photos on social media. Dr. Jenkins, who emceed the event, described the evening as “electric,” and all agreed with his sentiments.

IX. Executive Director’s Report

Kate shared updates on staff engagement, including the onboarding of five new team members, and noted two open positions: Chief Strategy Officer and Early Head Start Family Services Coordinator.

Community engagement and continued collaboration efforts were also reviewed, and Kate recently attended the Family Forward NC Summit. The Partnership has started the application process of becoming a certified Family Forward employer. These policies and practices support the health and well-being of working families and a flyer outlining this initiative was shared.

Upcoming events include the Smart Start conference and a Smart Start monitoring visit scheduled for May. The Early Head Start grant reapplication is due June 1.

Kate also reviewed the proposed Board meeting schedule for FY26-27 beginning in July. The group previously discussed holding meetings during lunchtime versus late afternoon and providing pre-ordered meals to encourage regular attendance. Mr. David recommended shorter meetings (one-hour duration), noting that the current schedule is challenging due to conflicts with other commitments. The group discussed the changes and agreed to implement the revised meeting schedule.

A motion was made by Terry David to approve the new Board calendar and seconded by Dr. Deborah Pitman. The motion passed.

X. Meeting Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by Ileana Vink and seconded by Dr. Deborah Pitman. Unanimous approval.

Meeting adjourned at 4:49pm.

Next Board Meeting: June 18, 2026