To ensure that every child enters school ready to succeed, we lead community strategies for children birth to 5 and their families that promote healthy development and learning and enhance access to high quality care.

DPFC BOARD MINUTES – February 26, 2026

Location: Durham's Partnership for Children 1201 S. Briggs Ave., Suite 110 and Microsoft Teams

Board Members Present

Dr. Rodney Jenkins, Monnie Griggs, Meytal Barak, Tammy Sneed (Teams), Collin McColskey-Leary, PhD, Ileana Vink

Board Members Absent

Dr Deborah Pitman, Terry David, Commissioner Stephen Valentine, Josh Hawn, Liliana Lara, Ethel Vandergriff, DeAnna Vincent, Danielle Hayes

Staff Members Present

Kate Irish, Eduardo Schoen, Jameka Wells, Shekema Crawford (Teams), Kristin Luft

A quorum was established.

I. GATHERING AND CALL TO ORDER

Dr. Jenkins called the meeting to order at 3:05 PM.

II. INTRODUCTIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

No formal announcements were made. Those present in the room and online introduced themselves by name and role or title.

III. PRESENTATIONS – Christy Thalheimer and Monnie Griggs (Early Years)

Christy Thalheimer and Monnie Griggs with Early Years presented on the childcare landscape in Durham and North Carolina's new Quality Improvement Rating System. There was discussion about the changing childcare landscape in Durham including:

- Fewer childcare providers but more childcare slots are available due to new centers.
- Lost 20% of family childcare homes between 2020- 2025.
- Cost of childcare is rising. Infant and toddler slots cost the most and are the most difficult to find.
- Childcare quality is high in Durham; new QRIS reduced education requirements.

Presentation materials will be distributed following the meeting. Dr. Jenkins thanked the presenters.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

V. AGENDA MODIFICATIONS

There were no changes to the agenda.

VI. CONSENT AGENDA

Motion to approve December 18, 2025, Board Meeting Minutes: Collin McColskey-Leary and Meytal Barak. Unanimous approval.

VII. FINANCE UPDATES (Eduardo Schoen)

Eduardo Schoen, Chief Financial Officer, presented the monthly finance dashboard and packet with data thru January 31, 2026. The Partnership is slightly below target in Expenses compared to the budget and Eduardo will be meeting with the program directors to discuss options and plans for the rest of the fiscal year. The Financial Statement and Single Audits were completed with one repeat finding related to federal reporting for the Early Head Start program in the Single Audit. This issue has been corrected and all reports due have been submitted.

Eduardo discussed the new sweep account and the interest earned for both the primary operating account and our unrestricted account. The interest earned increased by approximately twenty-fold. Monnie Griggs inquired about the use of the funds and if unused funds would have to be returned to the funding source. Eduardo stated he has an interest earned allocation spreadsheet to move the interest earned to the appropriate funds based on their cash balance at month end. Monnie recommended having a plan to spend the additional funds, so we do not have excess funds to revert.

Eduardo discussed plans to bring Smart Start Administration to spend more in line with the budget. Options include adjusting the administration allocations and updating office space and network equipment. Primary cause of the underspending is unfilled administration positions while last year's actual expenses included unusually large amounts of contractor spending on temporary fiscal staff.

Kate added that unfilled positions and new ARPA grants over the last couple years impacted the Smart Start administration spending. Plans to share spending plan with the Finance Committee.

Fiscal Year 2027 Budget planning process is underway looking at historical data back to FY2020.

Collin McColskey-Leary inquired about the dates of the credit card expenses. The report is for the active month. He inquired about the travel approvals and possible need to obtain a travel credit card. Eduardo

indicated that he has spoken with M&F to obtain new card but there will need to be board approval for a new account.

Collin inquired about the credit card charges wanting to make sure the flights are in line with the current travel policy the board recently approved. Kate indicated that they were shared with Finance Committee and reflect our current policies.

Collin inquired about the Statement of Financial Position and Statements of Financial Activities. The FA1 EHS monitors inquired about what financial statements the Board receives. Eduardo explained the different names of the financial statements and that the board received the Income Statement in the Budget to Actual format. Eduardo will modify any report provided to be consistent with requirements.

Motion to approve Finance Reports: Meytal Barak and Collin McColskey-Leary. Unanimous approval.

VIII. PROGRAM UPDATES

Smart Start

Jameka Wells, Director of Programs, presented the Smart Start funding recommendation for unallocated funds totaling $88,0000.

The recommendation includes:
$60,000 to Smart Start Scholarship
$18,000 to WAGE$
$10,000 to Community Outreach, Information and Resources (In House).

Meytal Barak inquired about the process for the revised allocations and the reasoning for developing the recommendation. Jameka indicated the recommendations were developed in collaboration with Direct Service Providers based on need. Collin inquired about how many children will be served by the scholarship funds and if it is reasonable to be able to spend that amount before the end of the year. There were no concerns about spending it as the childcare scholarship program has a waitlist of over 1,000 kids.

Motion to approve Smart Start Allocation Changes: Meytal Barak and Collin McColskey-Leary. Monnie Griggs abstained due to conflict of interest. Motion passed.

Early Head Start

Shekema Crawford (Early Head Start Director) presented the 2026-2027 program year ERSEA Criteria. These are the criteria used for screening and enrolling children. The program prioritizes families with the greatest needs in Durham County considering the Community Needs Assessment including income, language, or those with food insecurities.

Ileana Vink inquired about how food insecurity is screened and Shekema indicated this was through discussion with the family during the application process.

Motion to approve 2026-2027 ERSEA Criteria: Monnie Griggs and Ileana Vink. Unanimous approval.

IX. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Kate gave an overview of the goals for the upcoming 30th Anniversary Event, April 16, 2026. The event is an opportunity to reintroduce ourselves to friends and partners and deepen those relationships. The goal is to have 125 attendees and raise $30,000.

Kate will follow up with Board members with an sponsorship toolkit after the meeting and asked that Board members:

- Register to attend the event
- Invite 5 stakeholders to the event
- Identify potential sponsors

Collin and Rod inquired about reaching out to our vendors. Kate confirmed this is being done by staff.

Other updates included:

- Early Head Start FA1 monitoring Review was completed, staff were well prepared and the visit went well.
- Onboarding of new staff: Brianna (Pre-K Teacher Quality Specialist) and Lician Hernandez (Community Outreach Coordinator)
- Open Positions include Chief Strategy Officer, Executive Assistant, Office Coordinator, Pre-K Application Associate
- Audit Reports will be presented by Cohn Reznick to the full board in April.
- DPfC was randomly selected for the Improper Payment Review. Finance Team is working on that.
- New Board Member orientation completed with 4 new members.
- Prek application process starts next week.
- Smart Start Conference is in Early May and open to Board Members.

X. CLOSED SESSION

Closed Session canceled.

XI. MEETING ADJOURN

Motion to adjourn: Collin McColskey-Leary and Meytal Barak. Unanimous approval.

Meeting adjourned at 5:03 PM.

Next Board of Directors Meeting: April 23, 2026