



**The North Carolina Partnership for Children
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
June 18, 2024
10 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.**

MISSION: Advance a high quality, comprehensive, accountable early childhood system that benefits each child in North Carolina beginning with a healthy birth.

Members Present: Charles Bowman – Chair, Rev. Renee B. Bethea, Cassandra Brooks, Victoria Brown, Yvonne Copelend, Madison Shook Downing, Sherry Heuser, Dr. Anthony Jackson, Betty Crow Kennedy, Page Lemel, Ashley Neal, Dr. Mary Olvera, Joe Patterson, Amy Rhyne, Dr. Khadijia Tribié Reid, Dr. Rebecca Simpkin, Elizabeth Star, Dr. Laurie Stradley, Laurie Urland, and Channah VanRegenmorter

Members Absent: Ariel Ford, Fran Gary, Rosa Maria Matthews, Nell Rose, Tina Sherman, and Sandy Weathersbee

Others in attendance: Amy Cabbage, Joseph Brownlee, Melissa Cheston, Safiyah Jackson, Casey Strange, other NCPC staff, and Maura Pherson – recording secretary.

Call to Order and Establish Quorum

The North Carolina Partnership for Children, Inc. (NCPC) Board of Directors (Board) met on June 18, 2024 via Zoom video conference. Chair Bowman called the meeting to order and established the presence of a quorum.

Approval of Agenda

The agenda was accepted by unanimous consent. The chair and NCPC president set the agenda. Any member may add an item to the agenda.

Connect to the Mission

Amy Cabbage shared the literacy project Dolly Parton's Imagination Library: Bilingual English/Spanish Book Option!

Consent Agenda

A motion was made by Page Lemel and seconded to approve the Consent Agenda which includes:

- Minutes of the March 19, 2024 Meeting
- Conflicts of Interest
- Acceptance of the Form 990

Motion carried.

NCPC Financial Reports

The Board reviewed the Financial Reports for grants and contracts, private funds, and cash flow as of April 30, 2024 including:

1. Summary of each grant and contract and notes related to the period from July 1, 2023, through April 30, 2024.
2. Budget to actuals for each grant, contract, and private fund source.
3. Summary of cash flow.

A motion was made by Laurie Stradley, on behalf of the Finance & Audit Committee, to approve the NCPC Financial Reports. **Motion carried.**

Allocation Methodology for FY 2025

The North Carolina General Assembly has not yet released its fiscal year (FY) 2025 budget. NCPC expects the Smart Start base appropriation for FY 2025 to be \$157 million recurring.

The Finance & Audit Committee determines the most equitable way to allocate Smart Start funds using the following primary goals:

- Meet legislative requirements while protecting stability of services for children and families.
- Minimize disruption for local partnerships and their service providers.
- Protect infrastructure to ensure all mandates are satisfied.
- Make the best use of any carry forward funds to accomplish goals.

ALLOCATION METHODOLOGY FOR FY 2025

1. **HOLD HARMLESS:** The following methodology is recommended:
 - a. NCPC shall not reduce the allocation for the counties with less than 35,000 in population below the FY 2012-2013 funding level as required in S.L. 2017-57 § 143B-168.12.(a)(6). This helps meet the goals of stability and minimum disruption.
 - b. This calculation is applied to counties not partnerships, so that multi-county partnerships may have some of their counties held harmless and some that do not qualify.
 - c. As it has always been, it will be the responsibility of the boards of the multi-county partnerships to determine which programs will be funded within the individual counties that make up their multi-county partnership.
2. **SMART START BASE APPROPRIATION:** The Smart Start base appropriation for FY 2025 is recurring at \$157 million. The Board was provided with a summary of the NCPC budget and the local partnership allocations for FY 2025.
3. **SET-ASIDES:** Staff recommends the following expenditures be taken off the top of the total appropriation. This will help achieve the first three primary allocation goals listed above.
 - a. Funding for local partnership audits – \$416,498 to fulfill local partnership audit requirements for FY 2023-2024.
 - b. Funding for MAC Grants – \$1,340,000.
 - c. Funding for local partnership support – \$40,327.
4. **USE OF CARRY-FORWARD FUNDS:** Per legislation, state funds that are allocated to local partnerships that are unexpended at the end of the fiscal year shall remain available to NCPC to reallocate to local partnerships. The exact amount of unexpended funds from FY 2023-2024 will be calculated when local partnerships submit their year-end close to NCPC in July and will be included in the September update. The carry-forward will be available to NCPC and the local partnerships that reverted funds in FY 2023-2024.

A motion was made by Laurie Stradley on behalf of the Finance & Audit Committee to approve the Allocation Methodology for FY 2025 as presented. Further, recommend NCPC management has the authorization to use the allocation recommendations to distribute funding to local partnerships for FY 2025. **Motion carried.**

NCPC FY 2024-2025 Budget

The Finance & Audit Committee reviewed the NCPC FY 2024-2025 budget. The approval request includes allowing NCPC to make budget changes among line items throughout the year as circumstances arise since: (1) the State Smart Start appropriations, Dolly Parton's Imagination Library (DPIL) special appropriation, DCDEE Tri-Share, DHHS HRCI, and other funders are fixed and cannot be exceeded; and (2) there are time constraints when amending budgets with the Division of Child Development and Early Education.

In Smart Start legislation G.S. 143B-168.15(h), unexpended State funds allocated to local partnerships at the end of a fiscal year shall remain available to NCPC, to reallocate to local partnerships. The actual amount of FY 2023-2024 unexpended funds will be determined when local partnerships have completed the year end close in July 2024 and will be updated in September 2024. These funds will be available for NCPC to distribute in FY 2024-2025 in accordance with legislation. Local partnerships will be required to spend at least \$59 million in subsidy for the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) maintenance of effort (MOE) requirement and the Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) and Block Grant.

The Board reviewed:

- The NCPC budget assumptions for FY 2024-2025.
- NCPC grants and contracts.
- Proposed NCPC State and Federal budget for FY 2024-2025.
- Proposed NCPC private budget for FY 2024-2025.

A motion was made by Laurie Stradley on behalf of the Finance & Audit Committee to approve the NCPC preliminary budget for FY 2024-2025 as presented with authorization for NCPC management to make changes among line items during the year as necessary, including adjustments to the total budget if additional funds are increased or decreased. A final budget will be presented at the September Board meeting. **Motion carried.**

Smart Start Accountability Plan

Annually, both the Accountability Committee and Finance & Audit Committee review the Smart Start Accountability Plan. This year there are minor revisions in the body of the document. The Accountability Committee reviewed the plan at its May 28, 2024 meeting and the Finance & Audit Committee reviewed the plan at its June 7, 2024 meeting. Both committees presented and answered questions.

A motion was made by Becky Simpkin and seconded that on behalf of both the Accountability Committee and the Finance & Audit Committee to accept the recommend changes to the 2025 Smart Start Accountability Plan as presented. **Motion carried.**

Guidelines for Local Partnership Representation on Committees

The current version of the NCPC Guidelines for Local Partnership Representation on NCPC Board Committees, approved May 2021, states that one of the local partnership representatives must be an executive director or a current or past board chair or current duly elected officer. Each committee has had vacancies for a local partnership representative and LPAC consistently has challenges filling these vacancies. Lately there has been interest from local partnership staff in filling these vacancies. LPAC requested the Board Development Committee review the policy and recommend changes.

The Committee suggested allowing one local partnership representative to be a local partnership staff with at least one year of experience, their job responsibilities relate to the committee, and they have a recommendation from their executive director.

A motion was made by Elizabeth Star on behalf of the Board Development Committee to allow local partnership staff to serve on Standing Committees with the requirements as described. **Motion carried.**

The Basics, Inc. Grant

NCPC is partnering with Invest Early NC, a funding collaborative of several NC-based foundations, and The Basics, Inc., to launch and scale “The Basics North Carolina” over the course of 3 years. The Basics Strategy uses a public health approach to support local backbone organizations to convene multisector coalitions and recruit implementation partner organizations to expose parents/caregivers to The Basics’ Three Gears: awareness, reminders/nudges, and encouragement in their role as critical influences on their children’s development.

NCPC will collaborate with The Basics, Inc. and non-profits across NC to raise awareness of the critical importance of early childhood from birth-to-five and co-brand and distribute open access materials of The Basics, Inc. NCPC will also work to enroll 33,000 families in The Basics Insights text message platform, which sends weekly messages to parents and caregivers with science-based facts and activities to do with their children (available in English, Spanish, Brazilian Portuguese, and Arabic). Additionally, a full-time staff member (The Basics North Carolina Director) will be hired at NCPC to support implementation, technical assistance, and broad adoption across the state. This partnership opportunity seeks to leverage the existing infrastructure of the Smart Start network, weaving private and public investments, to advance positive outcomes for children and families at a community and state level through early childhood education and awareness.

The NCPC president is authorized to accept grants up to \$100,000, over this amount requires the Board or Executive Committee. A motion was made by Yvonne Copeland and seconded to accept this grant of \$1,125,000, \$375,000 per year for 3 years. **Motion carried.**

President’s Report

Amy Cabbage highlighted key topics of the President’s Report. Julie Fogg will be leaving as Director of Development on July 12, 2024. Amy Cabbage also provided the Public Policy update as Marta Hester was at the General Assembly.

Fundraising Consultant Presentation

Dan Gerlach provided an update on his consulting contract. He has been a Smart Start advocate since the 1990s. NCPC will share the guidelines that demonstrate how to market Smart Start to foundations, funders, and donors as many think it is all state funded. While the private sector can help sustain innovative projects, it can’t substitute for government. Keeping the business community informed with consistent messaging and creating awareness to advocate for state funding is important. Child care is currently in the news, so it’s timely to advocate for Smart Start.

Baseline Findings from the Sustainable and Impactful Self-Assessments

At its May 28, 2024 meeting, the Accountability Committee reviewed the results from the Sustainable & Impactful Self-Assessments. Areas of strong and low impact were identified. Casey Strange presented the Smart Start network and NCPC responses.

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Local Partnership Advisory Committee

Betty Kennedy provided an LPAC update. She joined the planning meeting for the July LPAC meeting as they work to streamline meetings by spending less time on updates and more on specific concerns.

Her goal is to facilitate the feedback loop between the Board and LPAC, tasked with bringing issues from the local-level to the state-level and vice versa in order to improve the Smart Start network communication. LPAC is mandated to act in an advisory capacity communicating Smart Start emerging issues and potential policy decisions between local partnerships and NCPC.

LPAC is preparing for the July 11 meeting using a shifted approach to the meeting structure by focusing on identified priority issues that have emerged from regional meetings. LPAC members will provide formal recommendations on how to support local partnerships on the identified priority issues, which for July are:

- 1) Developing a process for communicating opportunities, projects, initiatives, etc. that are brought to NCPC and made available to and/or implemented through local partnerships.
- 2) Building and sustaining the financial infrastructure of the network by:
 - a. Developing and providing a structured onboarding and training for local finance staff
 - b. Automating financial processes including exploring software options to reduce administrative burden.
 - c. Creating short-term back up support for when financial staff turnover, and long-term succession planning for financial staff.

Standing Committees Updates

Amy Cabbage provided Board Development updates.

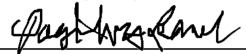
Follow-up and Action Items for the Network

- Approved the Financial Reports for fiscal year 2023-24
- Approved the Allocation Methodology for 2024-25
- Approved the preliminary NCPC Budget for 2024-25
- Approved the Smart Start Accountability Plan
- Revised the Guidelines for Local Partnership Representatives on Committees
- Accepted the Form 990
- Accepted The Basics, Inc. grant
- Board Retreat – Sept. 16-17, 2024
- Will provide all presentations that were shared

Adjourn


Having no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:20 p.m.

Approvals:

DocuSigned by:


Date: 9/18/2024 | 11:19 AM MDT

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DocuSigned by:


Date: 9/17/2024 | 2:49 PM EDT

Maura Pherson, Recording Secretary