

**Wake County SmartStart  
Board of Directors Meeting  
February 25, 2009**

A regular meeting of the Wake County SmartStart Board of Directors was held on Wednesday, February 25, 2009 in the conference room of the Wake County SmartStart offices located at 1121 Situs Court, Suite 250 in Raleigh, North Carolina.

Board members in attendance were Mary Ellen Anderson, Nell Barnes, Kevin Cain, Dale Cousins, Sandy Dietrich, Shirley Herndon, Randy Innes, Giang Le, Carol Mitchell, Louise Orr, Hannah Poteat, Gemimah Rodriguez, Donna Rutowski, Camille Schaffer, Mike Smith, Norris Thurston, Jerraé Williams and David Zonderman.

Board members absent and excused were Arvelis Byrd, Donna Hargens, Shanté Martin, Peter Morris and Michael Weisel.

Board members absent and unexcused were Michele Miller-Cox, Harold Webb.

Staff members present were Gary Carr, Pat Clements, Pamela Dowdy, Executive Director, John Guenther, Helen Horne, Richelle Johnson, Marie Maguire, Elizabeth Santana, Melinda Schlesinger and Anna Troutman

Guests in attendance were two UNC Chapel Hill students Carol Wait and Min Ding.

**Welcome/Call to Order/Adoption of Agenda and Consent Agenda:**

Board Chair, David Zonderman recognized a quorum, calling the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m. He welcomed the visiting students: Carol Wait who acquired her BS in Nutrition from Ohio State University and is currently enrolled in UNC's Public Health Nutrition Program and Min Ding who is here from Shanghai, China and is also in the Public Health Nutrition Program.

Kevin Cain moved to adopt the agenda, Donna Rutowski seconded. Hearing no objections, the motion carried. (02-09-31)

Hannah Poteat moved to adopt the consent agenda which included minutes from the January 28, 2009 Board of Directors Meeting, the January 2009 Financial Reports and a list of WCSS and DSP decommissioned fixed assets. Camille Schaffer seconded. Hearing no objections, the motion carried. (02-09-32)

**Chairman's Report:**

Board Chair, David Zonderman opened the meeting by providing an update on impending budget cuts. The percentage of cuts is still unknown. Executive Director, Pam Dowdy reported that she had attended a meeting held by the NC Center for Non Profits, at which Governor Perdue spoke. She noted that the Governor's remarks were that "cuts will be across the board, they will hurt and everyone is going to be impacted". The NC Budget and Tax Center predicts the state budget deficit will reach \$4.6 billion dollars. The Governor's budget is not due for release until mid March and we may not know the exact extent of cuts until NC's portion of the federal stimulus package is incorporated. WCSS is planning for a 10% reduction when preparing budgets for 2009-10. Ms. Dowdy updated that NCPC had issued a call for additional reversions to offset the budget deficit which WCSS covered from funds received from two partners who surrendered contracts due to non-SmartStart issues. It is not expected that additional requests for reversions will come in this current fiscal year.

  
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Moving on, Dr. Zonderman and Ms. Dowdy asked the Board to consider criteria for making funding decisions in order to provide guidance to the Allocations Committee as it enters the annual review process. The criteria suggested are as follows:

**Target Population** - ensuring that children with the greatest need are receiving services

**Alignment with WCSS Goals** - is the program "mission critical"?

**Performance** - if a currently funded program, has it successfully met outcomes and contract requirements?

**Need** - what is the current need in the community?

**Preservation of Services to Children** - how can we ensure that all non-essential spending is eliminated and preserve those that are critical for services?

**Expectations for In-house Services same as DSP's** - we cannot ask of our partners anything we are not prepared to do ourselves.

The Board discussed the criteria and the best way to implement them when making funding determinations. The conclusion was that it will be imperative to determine the most critical programs and essential services. Hard decisions will be made and some programs may not be funded. Critical needs may be shifting due to the economic downturn and an adjustment of views may be in order. An example of this could be supporting services that are directly related to families rather than supporting the improvement of quality for child care centers. It was also determined that partners would receive a follow up notice to clarify the funding determination process in light of the current budget situation, reinforcing that the Board has given the Allocations Committee clear direction on funding decisions. Across-the-board cuts will not be given consideration.

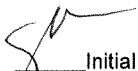
Other topics and trends emerging from the discussion included the leveraging of resources with partners and perhaps parents, looking very carefully at budgets to ensure that 100% of the funds go toward services to families and children, limiting staff development, preparing contingency plans to maintain services, collaborative planning between partners as well as the importance of maintaining rather than expanding services at this critical time.

Chair, David Zonderman moved the meeting forward with an update on the Allocations Committee. Dr. Zonderman announced that due to our strict Conflict of Interest guidelines, Dale Cousins is no longer eligible to sit on the Allocations Committee as her place of employment now receives funding from WCSS. He thanked Ms. Cousins for her outstanding leadership over the years and welcomed Kevin Cain who has agreed to step into the position of Allocations Committee Chair.

### Committee Reports:

Finance Committee Chair, Donna Rutowski, provided a contract update regarding two partners. Lutheran Family Services- Intensive Home Visiting and Raleigh Rescue Missions – Community Links were programs discontinued due to non-SmartStart related issues. Funds received from these two discontinued programs were used to cover additional reversions required by NCPC to offset the NC State Budget deficit.

Program Planning Chair, Mary Ellen Anderson provided the Board with an update on the Results Based Accountability process that two workgroups, Family Support w/Special Needs and Early Child Care and Education, have been working on. The first step for each workgroup was to prioritize indicators. Of all (or put in the total number) the indicators identified, volunteers then chose two indicators to develop strategies to support each indicator. Both workgroups have had interesting and creative conversations yielding good direction for the upcoming year including creative approaches to reaching families and efforts to connect with children and families not in regulated care.

  
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**Executive Director's Report:**

Executive Director, Pam Dowdy, presented the Executive Director's Report, turning the Board's attention to attachment B.1. Ms. Dowdy refreshed the Board on WCSS' work with the school system to identify Kindergarten Initial Assessment (KIA) indicators that led to our priorities and strategies around school readiness. The information from the public school system has been incorporated into the charts in attachment B.1 for the school years 06-07 and 08-09. The charts represent three indicators: Frequency of Parent Reading to Child, Interaction with Adults and Peers, and Oral Language. The first chart, Frequency of Parent Reading to Child, is one of the direct priorities the Board had discussed earlier in the year. The second two indicators were selected with suggestions from kindergarten teachers as being the most relevant indicators of a child's social and emotional readiness upon entering kindergarten. The target population for all indicators is children eligible to receive Free/Reduced lunch.

Ms. Dowdy presented More at Four (MAF) slot reassignments as outlined in attachment B.2. The attachment shows that four slots were removed from the Wake County Public Schools and redistributed to Kiddie Academy, Jordan Child & Family Enrichment Center and Academically Based Child. Ms. Dowdy asked for Board approval for the redistribution of slots. Dale Cousins moved to approve the redistribution of MAF slots as outlined in attachment B.2, Jerrea Williams seconded. Hearing no objections, the motion carried. (02-09-33)

Ms. Dowdy concluded her report with a few updates. First, with regard to the Final Activity Report (FAR) for FY2007-08 which had been distributed to the Board via email, Ms. Dowdy encouraged the Board to pay particular attention to the Executive Summary portion of the FAR which provides a "Big Picture" analysis of trends and information that are significant factors for children in Wake County. The FAR provides specific detail on activity performance, budgetary and outcome information as well as success stories provided by partners outlining the impact their services have on the community. Secondly, Ms. Dowdy distributed a chart that was developed to assist making connections between activities and services. The chart lists the activity name and agency showing how programs align with our priorities. This chart will be updated throughout the year and revisions provided periodically to the Board. Lastly Ms. Dowdy updated the Board on the possible merger of MAF with Smart Start. Currently, legislation is expected but there is no detail. An email was received from NCPD President, Stephanie Fanjul, providing insight on the possible merger which Ms. Dowdy will forward to the Board. Past Board Chair, Michael Weisel, has offered to hold an informational lunch at his office for the Wake County Delegation to provide them with detail about MAF and Smart Start in Wake County so that they may make informed decisions as needed. Chair David Zonderman will also be contacting the delegation via email providing them with additional insight on Wake County practice on how these two programs are working in our community.

With no other business to address Norris Thurston moved to adjourn at 10:00 a.m., Sandy Dietrich seconded. Hearing no objections, the motion carried. (02-09-34)

  
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Board Secretary Signature

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