

Saint Paul Children’s Collaborative Annual Meeting

December 11, 2024

8:00am – 10:00am

Hybrid via Zoom and in person at 450 Syndicate Street North, St. Paul

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT	Iyannah Burns (virtual), Emmanuel Donaby (virtual), Darlene Fry, Tonya Long (virtual), Nicolee Mensing, Rena Moran (virtual), Hoang Murphy, Rebecca Noecker, Daisy Vang (virtual), Mai Chong Xiong (virtual)
BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT	Erica Prosser, Jackie Turner, Camila Mercado Michelli, Erica Valliant,
STAFF & GUESTS PRESENT	Nicole MartinRogers, Laurie Davis (Advance Consulting – Collaborative Coordinators) Dana DeMaster, Ramsey County non-voting staff rep (in place of Hannah Corbett) Andrew Lowe, Ramsey County fiscal agent (Absent) Dana Abrams, Saint Paul Public Schools (non-voting rep)
Meeting called to order by Mensing at 8:04 am.	
Children’s Fire	
Hoang Murphy lit the Children’s Fire, with a quote:	
<i>Our ability to dream of something different, to name longing, to articulate a vision and commit to it, directly correlates to the likelihood that we will experience it, that it will be realized. It’s the way we bring about change for ourselves, and for the world. When we are besieged by visions that do not match our longing, some of which are sinister, it’s unlikely that we’ll stumble into</i>	

freedom. Freedom is in the gaps, in the nascent and emergent, in the unexamined space between things—but it is there. We can call it down. We call it down when we listen to our dreams. When we let the unconscious and the imaginal show us the way around what it is we see right now. We call it down when our present can be in conversation with what could be. — What It Takes to Heal: How Transforming Ourselves Can Change the World by Prentis Hemphill

SPCC has always been able to dream of something different. He challenged us to keep having difficult conversations, for the benefit of the young people in the community. The board and Nicole/Laurie are very grateful for Hoang's service to the SPCC!

Consent Agenda

Motion by Noecker to approve the minutes from the November 13 board meeting and accept the information contained in the November update from Advance Consulting, as well as the finance report for November. Second by Murphy. Motion approved.

SPCC Administration

The Nominating Committee presented a slate of candidates, including officers for 2025 and the open Community Representative – Alternate position.

Motion by Noecker to appoint the following officers for 2025: Nicolee Mensing as Chair, Rena Moran as Vice Chair, Daisy Vang as Secretary, and Erica Prosser as Treasurer. Second by Murphy. Motion approved.

Motion by Xiong to appoint Zang Vang-Lee as Alternate Community Representative – Alternate. Second by Murphy. Motion approved.

Motion by Noecker to appoint Camila Mercado Michelli as Community Representative. Second by Murphy. Motion approved.

Andrew Lowe, fiscal agent to the SPCC walked through the draft 2025 budget with the board in November. The board did not request any changes. The City Council's budget should be approved today, and the \$15,000 that was requested by SPCC is in the budget. Murphy asked if there would be advantage to having the reserve funds invested differently, but the board also discussed the disadvantages of that. At this point it is not something we will pursue, due to restrictions on the LCTS Medicaid waiver dollars that make up the restricted fund.

Motion by Noecker to approve the 2025 budget as presented. Second by Murphy. Motion approved.

The board discussed invoicing partners for their committed support for SPCC's administration for 2025. There was clarification that all partners' contributions were higher for 2025, except Ramsey County, whose contribution stays the same.

Motion by Noecker to invoice City of Saint Paul for \$35,000, CAP/RW for \$11,000, Ramsey County for \$50,000, and Saint Paul Public Schools for \$70,000 to support and sustain the operation of the Saint Paul Children's Collaborative for 2025. Second by Murphy. Motion approved.

Advance Consulting asked the board to shift to a virtual-only meeting format for January through March 2025. CAP/RW is working toward A/V upgrades which they hope to complete by March, which will hopefully improve the audio on hybrid meetings going forward. The board agreed.

Saint Paul PreK Debrief

In the November election, the Saint Paul voters rejected the Saint Paul PreK ballot measure by a 60% to 40% margin. The board discussed questions that are part of the survey being conducted to recommend next steps to the City Council. CM Noecker thanked the SPCC for their leadership on the PreK issue since 2017. This is an opportunity to step back and gather thoughts from partners.

Dr. Nikole Jones's survey questions:

1. What role should the City have in supporting families with children ages birth to 5 in St. Paul?
2. What steps can be taken now to support those families?
3. What other ideas do you have for funding early opportunities for children?
4. Do you have an interest in being part of the leadership in next steps?
5. Did you read the program plan, and if so, what do you like/feel was missing?
6. Did you read the addendums? If so, which did you read, what did you like, what did you feel was missing?

Noecker talked about what's she heard in community about reasons people voted no on the measure, as did others:

- Mainly, a lot of tax fatigue.
- Some said I like this idea, but don't like my taxes being so high.
- Not a proper role for the City – better for the state.
- Political opposition from the mayor's office and teachers' union.

- Won't reach very many kids.
- Insight Saint Paul report: St. Paul has the highest sales tax in the state — 9.875% — and the city's effective property tax rate — 1.39% — is the highest for all of Minnesota's 20 regions.
- A lot of BIPOC families were not aware of it – need more outreach.
- Teachers union opposition was impactful – they see it as a voucher issue. There is some belief that SPPS could do this.
- People were worried outsiders would move into St. Paul or claim they live here to claim the benefit.
- The example of the rent stabilization initiative was given – that took more time and lots of money to pass.
- There is possibility that SPPS will ask for more support from voters and they could include support for ECE as part of that initiative. It will be important to ask what leaders would like to see to support this.
- The City of Saint Paul should be interested in these children, and childcare is an important issue for everyone.
- It's up to all of us to invest in our children. It was confusing to the average person – how will this happen?
- It is challenging to get information to community around complex issues.
- Hearing more stories about barriers and challenges families face in accessing early care and education can help us make the case for a more universal approach – we all deserve access to childcare and good public education. It's a huge barrier to housing stability and other basic needs.

CM Noecker asked – are there gaps that could be filled by the City, given the huge need families have for early care and education?

DeMaster said Ramsey County has been focused on building the family coach program and getting things up and running. Xiong said the County just pulled back a contract with Think Small for Child Care Assistance, because there was a huge backlog of applications that did not get processed. The County has cleared the backlog, but there is still funding available, which may be related to providers not deciding to participate in the childcare assistance program. This feedback will be sent to Dr. Jones for her report.

Hallie Q. Brown grant

The board has been hearing for several months about the challenges at Hallie Q. Brown Community Center, including at their early childhood program which had received a 2024-25 grant from SPCC. Their report on 2024 activities/outcomes and their proposal for potential ongoing funding for 2025 was included in the November board packet, and at that time the board moved to ask Hallie Q. Brown for a revised proposal for 2025 and provide technical assistance to them in preparing that proposal. Advance Consulting reached out to staff at Hallie Q Brown several times after the November meeting, but did not receive a response. At this point, the board needs to consider stopping the grant at the end of 2024, with the understanding that they can apply for additional funding either during 2025 or during the next RFP, which will likely be released in summer 2025. Donaby and Commissioner Moran offered to reach out to Hallie Q. Brown.

Motion by Noecker to hold Year 2 of the grant to Hallie Q. Brown until we receive and approve a proposal for how they would spend the \$50,000. Second by Xiong. Motion approved.

There was discussion about really valuing the work Hallie Q. Brown's early education program has done in the past, and this board wants to do anything we can to support that work. But we do need more information to make sure SPCC is in compliance with the restrictions on how the LCTS funds can be used. If they are using a research-based assessment of literacy, we should consider that as a step toward the original intent of their grant proposal. There was a request that they submit a new proposal to us by the end of December. SPCC's board really wants to support Hallie Q. Brown and not make more hurdles, we just need the information on how the funds will be used. Cmr Moran and Donaby agreed to reach out directly to the Executive Director of Hallie Q. Brown to encourage him to respond.

Partner updates

Fry shared that the first black youth artist market was a huge success!

SPPS has three finalists for superintendent were announced and there will be opportunities for public input.

Vang recently attended Ramsey County Youth on Boards workshop and shared her experience as a board member with SPCC. The youth identified jobs as a key resource that is missing in the community. They talked specifically about discrimination and labor abuse. Fry shared that they have Right Track staff, and their young people said they'd want full-time jobs, and Right Track isn't necessarily full-time.

Ramsey County does have a strong youth employment program in their Workforce department. Young people need to get information through sources they use! Here is more [information](#). Could there be a job coordinator at the school that connects with employers in the community?

Meeting adjourned at 9:50 am.

Roll call votes for online vote and December 11, 2024, Saint Paul Children's Collaborative Meeting

	Motion 1 – Consent Agenda	Motion 2 – Officers for 2025	Motion 3 – Community Rep/Community Rep	Motion 4 – 2025 Budget	Motion 5 – Invoice for Partner Admin Spt for SPCC	Motion 6 – Hallie Q. Brown 2025 grant hold
Burns	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Donaby	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	
Fry	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	abstain
Long	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	abstain
Mensing	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Mercado Michelli (absent)						
Moran	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	abstain
Murphy	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	
Noecker	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	
Prosser (absent)						
Turner (absent)						
Valliant (absent)						
Vang	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Xiong	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES