

Saint Paul Children's Collaborative Board Meeting
September 10, 2025

8 am – 10 am
Virtual Only Via Zoom

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT	Iyannah Burns (arrived at 8:20, left at 8:45), Emmanuel Donaby (left at 9am), Darlene Fry, Tonya Long, Nicolee Mensing, Rena Moran, Rebecca Noecker (left at 9:20), Jackie Turner (joined 8:30), Daisy Vang, Zang Vang-Lee, Erica Valliant, Mai Chong Xiong
BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT	Camila Mercado Michelli, Erica Prosser
STAFF & GUESTS PRESENT	Nicole MartinRogers & Laurie Davis (Advance Consulting – Collaborative Coordinators) Hannah Corbett, Ramsey County non-voting staff rep Andrew Lowe, Ramsey County (fiscal agent) Ling Becker and Kirsti Cobbs (Ramsey County) (absent) Dana Abrams, Saint Paul Public Schools (non-voting rep)
Meeting called to order by Mensing at 8:04 am.	
Children's Fire Long lit the Children's fire with a poem, The Misunderstood Mind. My brain is quite unique My mouth can be quick to speak I don't mean to interrupt I'm always told I'm abrupt I just want to have a normal mind	

For people to be more kind
I want people to see my heart
And not just pick me apart
I have so much more to give
I am always quick to forgive
You have no idea how hard it can be
I wish there were more who would agree
I really don't choose to be this way
Someone always has something to say
If only they'd try to understand me
Thoughts would change I guarantee
I am so much more
Deep down in my core
Don't be quick to judge
I might just need a nudge
I want to be known for my versatility
To show you all of my abilities
Let me show you the true me
I am just longing to be free
My mind is a beautiful place
Please, just show me a little grace
Destiny Long

She spoke about her grandson Princeton, who needs that kind of understanding and expressed her frustration with things in kindergarten not going how they should have gone for him. She pled for people to take time to recognize the needs of each child.

Consent Agenda

Motion by Noecker to approve the minutes from the July 9 meeting and accept the information in the July and August update from Advance Consulting and the July and August 2025 finance reports. Second by Long. Motion approved.

Collaborative Evaluation

Ramsey County Manager Ling Becker presented on the Acet Consulting evaluation of the three Ramsey County Collaboratives. The report was shared with the board in advance of the meeting. She began with an overview of the [County's 2026-27 budget](#). The County is having to raise levy and reduce staff at the same time.

The evaluation has given Ramsey County a lot of feedback about they can support the collaboratives. One of the challenges is that County staff involved in collaboratives have not been coordinated in the past. There is also some housekeeping around conflicts of interest and other guardrails across all three collaboratives. She talked about the collaboratives are an arm and tool of the County. They want to create an orientation on the collaboratives for County staff. Combining the collaboratives was NOT a recommendation of this report. Becker talked about the benefits of joint meetings of the collaboratives to help us better coordinate. She also talked about that there is a need to build more trust across collaboratives and the County to talk about shared measurement. Noecker stressed that she'd like to have the work going forward focus on outcomes, more than process. For example, in terms of joint meetings with other collaboratives have a very clear purpose. Same with the idea of a County shared point of contact – it's a good idea, and let's be clear what the goal is. How can we use same/similar foundational tools (data, resources, etc.) to improve outcomes for young people and families. There is no indication that LCTS funding is at risk at this point. Of course, there is a huge risk with larger cuts to supports for the larger ecosystem. Xiong talked about a convening of the executive committees from all three collaboratives being a key first step, to identify areas of shared work to have more impact. Becker talked about a planning team to get that work underway. Part of it would be identifying areas where work/resources could be aligned. Valliant spoke to duplication of services across the collaboratives – how would we even track that? Ramsey County has been investing heavily in family coaches, and it would be helpful to have them understand the services that the collaboratives are funding. Next steps will be a memo from Becker with next steps.

2026-27 Learn, Grow, Thrive Grants

The review team submitted recommendations for 2026-27 grants (included with the board packet). The review team included board members Long and Vang, as well as community reviewers Robert McClain and Reyna Davilla-Day. The review process was extensive and described in the board packet. Turner supported the review team's recommendation to use the remaining \$78K for emerging needs. Moran talked about the African American Family Preservation and Child Welfare Disproportionality Act and Ramsey County's pilot work on this, and the opportunities that may create for synergy with the SPCC grant funding. We need whole family support for families who have been reported to child protection. There may be strong opportunity to use the funds strategically for this goal. Fry talked about perhaps one of the challenges is the wording of the "young people safe and free from abuse and neglect" goal is why the proposals did not address that goal well. It also relates to the diversity of families and their needs. Long talked about the two generation piece of the RFP not being a requirement and questioned whether it should be required next time. Long talked about the fact that the community needs healing, as a first step toward that goal. Xiong is supportive of using the remaining funds for addressing the safe/free from

abuse/neglect goals. Xiong thanked the committee members for the time and thoughtfulness. Long talked about not funding any proposals that specifically address health insurance coverage. The size of the request in that area was very large and there are many organizations in the community working toward that goal. MartinRogers disclosed her conflicts with Interfaith Action, Wilder (Freedom School), the Montessori American Indian Childcare Center, and MAWA. Turner disclosed that many of the organizations partner with Saint Paul Public Schools, and she is a board member of Wilder Foundation. Fry has a conflict due to being employed by Irreducible Grace Foundation and therefore abstained from this vote.

Motion by Xiong to accept the recommendations for 2026-27 funding the 13 organizations recommended by the review committee. Second by Mensing. Motion approved unanimously. (Fry recused herself from the vote due to conflict of interest, since her organization applied for funding. She has disclosed this conflict multiple times throughout this process.)

Motion by Long to do a RFP focused specifically on the goal of young people safe and free from abuse and neglect. Second by Moran. Amendment offered by Moran to allocate no more than \$168,000 to this RFP. Second by Xiong to that amendment. Motion approved.

There was discussion about how to run the RFP – should it be limited to just the organizations who already applied vs. opening it to other organizations? Moran suggested it should be open to all orgs in the community doing work in that area. There is a subcommittee including Long, Fry, Moran who will convene to work out details to recommend to the board.

Board Updates

Mensing gave an update on the administrative support RFP – county issued an RFP and there is a date for interviews. There is an issue because Commissioner Moran's participation is creating an ethics issue.

Meeting adjourned at 10:04 am.

Roll call votes for September 10, 2025, Saint Paul Children's Collaborative Board Meeting

	Motion 1 – Consent Agenda	Motion 2 – 2026-27 Learn, Grow, Thrive grants	Motion 3 – safe/ free RFP
Burns	absent	absent	absent
Donaby	YES	absent	absent
Fry	YES	ABSTAIN	YES
Long	YES	YES	YES
Mensing	YES	YES	YES
Mercado Michelli (absent)	absent	absent	absent
Moran	YES	YES	YES
Noecker	YES	absent	absent
Prosser (absent)	absent	absent	absent
Turner	absent	YES	YES
Valliant	YES	YES	YES
Vang	YES	YES	YES
Vang-Lee	YES	YES	YES
Xiong	YES	YES	YES