



June 29, 2011

PUBLIC INFORMATION STATEMENT

Durham's Partnership for Children has worked for more than 16 years to support and expand high-quality early care and education for all children birth to age 5 and their families in Durham County. Durham's Partnership for Children (the Partnership) is integral to the community because:

- Early childhood services work. The lives of children and families are improved;
- Local leaders prioritize community needs and decide how Smart Start funds are used in Durham; and
- The Partnership meets the highest standards of fiscal management based on independent audits.

At the **June 16, 2011 Board of Director's meeting**, two members of the Civitas Institute, an organization that has called for the elimination of Smart Start, attended and videotaped the meeting. On June 28, 2011, Civitas posted an article and video clip about the meeting on their Web site. **This statement aims to correct the misleading information published by Civitas regarding important funding decisions for Durham's children.**

Background:

State budget cuts impact real people. Over the past 10 years, in Durham Smart Start funding has declined by almost half while the number of Durham's young children birth to age 5 has grown by more than 30%. Decisions this year were especially difficult with an anticipated \$1,662,700 (24%) fewer dollars than the initial allocation for fiscal year 2010-2011.

Funding Allocations:

On June 16, 2011, the Board of Directors voted on where to direct Smart Start funds in Durham to make the greatest positive impact on young children and families.

- The Partnership uses a rigorous, multi-faceted, volunteer led process to determine funding allocations that have served the community well.
- Each year the Allocations Process is reviewed with many opportunities for Board, funded partner, child care provider, and community input.
- The Partnership will continue to seek community input for a strong process that has integrity, accountability, and transparency.

Decision Making Process:

The **Allocations Committee** is a Board Committee comprised of volunteers who are unaffiliated with prospective and current Smart Start funded organizations. Committee members bring expertise and experience including but not limited to early education, health, mental health, early intervention, finance, community planning and programming, and higher education. The intensive six-month committee review process includes proposal reviews, bidder presentations and questions, an objective priority-based rating system, an assessment of community needs and other measures to best optimize the organization's limited funds.

Funding recommendations are based on proposal ratings, which incorporate many factors including community need, program design, prior performance of funded agencies, impact on school readiness, criteria based on the state's Performance-Based Incentive System (PBIS), and legislative mandates and priorities. Once each proposal is rated, a formula allocates the available funds to each proposed activity based on rating score, with higher rated proposals receiving a higher proportion and lower rated proposals receiving a lesser proportion of their current

funding levels. The Allocations Committee votes to approve this recommendation, which is then presented to the Board of Directors for final approval. Only Board members without a conflict of interest may vote.

Current Situation:

The Partnership, during its open funding process for FY 2011-12, received two competing proposals for child care subsidy and only one could be funded. The Allocations Committee considered many factors and the entire history related to both applicants.

Child Care Services Association (CCSA) submitted a proposal to request continued funding for their Smart Start Scholarship program. It was a strong proposal, well aligned with the Partnership's mission of high-quality early education. The proposal included a need-based approach (rather than first come first served) and an emphasis on strong outcomes, infant and toddler care, as well as bilingual services. The Subsidy Administration proposal submitted by the **Durham County Department of Social Services (DSS)** was the lowest rated of all proposals received this year and its program was not recommended for funding.

At its June meeting, the Partnership's Board approved the FY 2011-12 funding recommendations brought by the Allocations Committee. Board members with conflicts of interest abstained. Vibrant discussion and diverse opinions are regular parts of the Board's deliberations. The Partnership stands on the principles of integrity, accountability, and transparency on critical matters that impact our young children and our community's future.



Angie Welsh, Board Chair



Laura J. S. Benson, Executive Director