Burke County Smart Start, Inc.
Board of Directors' In-Person/Zoom Meeting Minutes
BCSS Large Conference Room
Thursday, March 26, 2026
4:00 p.m.

DIRECTORS PRESENT	DIRECTORS ABSENT	OTHERS PRESENT
Stephanie Ashley*	Kay Milton (excused)	Kathy Smith
Brian Barrier	Miranda Smith (excused)	Vickie Deal
Kasey Gardner		Tammy Roper
Jacquie Grady		Al Smith
Jasper Hemphill, Jr.		
Thadd Hodge*		
Denise Hudson*		
Jessica James*		
Rebecca McLeod*		
Tina Mosley		
David Rust		
Sally Sandy		
Chuck Schlein		
Valerie Shook		
Joset Taylor		
Jim Wilson*		

**Attended via Zoom*

Prior to the meeting, Mrs. Kathy Smith presented a video recognizing Connie Adams and Vickie Deal for their longevity which encompassed 20 years of service through photos and music. Both Ms. Adams and Ms. Deal received a crystal award, gift card, and card of appreciation from the agency.

A. Establish a Quorum; Call to Order and COI Reminder – Joset Taylor
1. Request any attendees via Zoom to please sign the chat box.
Board Chair Joset Taylor established a quorum with 16 of 18 directors in attendance and called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. Mrs. Taylor requested attendees participating via Zoom sign the chat box as a record of their attendance.

The agenda and supporting documentation were emailed to all the committee directors on 3/26/26.

B. Approval of Agenda
Motion: To approve the agenda as presented. Motion: Jacquie Grady, seconded by: Valerie Shook, unanimously carried by the board.

C. Approval of January 15, 2026, Board of Directors' In-Person/Zoom Mtg. Minutes (emailed 2/9/26)
Motion: To approve the 1/15/25 Board of Directors' In-Person/Zoom Meeting Minutes as submitted. Motion: Jacquie Grady, seconded by: Kasey Gardner, unanimously carried by the board.

D. Approval of February 2026 Financial Reports
Motion: To approve the February 2026 Financial Reports as submitted. Motion: Valerie Shook, seconded by: Tina Mosley, unanimously carried by the board.
Mrs. Smith reviewed the Financial Reports including the Private/Restricted and Non-Restricted Funds and Grant Report, the Smart Start Administrative Financial Report, and the Direct Service Provider (DSP) Financial Reports with the board.

Board donations were at 33% with six directors contributing.

There were no questions regarding the financial reports.

E. Discussion Items – Kathy Smith

1. Kinderpalooza/ChildFest - 4/17/26 – 4:00 – 6:00 PM-Collett St. Rec. Center

Mrs. Smith stated the tenth Kinderpalooza/ChildFest would be held April 17, 2026, from 4:00 – 6:00 p.m. at the Collett Street Recreation Center. Bluey and Chase from Paw Patrol characters, along with some local characters, would be at the event. Community partners have donated many great door prizes. Flyers were included in the packet. Please share throughout the community.

G. <u>Action Items</u>

<u>Note: At this time, Chuck Schlein and Al Smith, Program Evaluator, briefly reviewed the small changes (differences) in some of the CADs, the new Read and Grow with Me (RGM), and the motions from the Grant Review Committee (GRC) for BCSS's Annual Submission of Activities (ASA) for FY 2026-2028.</u>

There was specific discussion regarding the new director for the Burke County Literacy Council; the Read and Grow with Me (RGM) Activity, and the bid process. There was also discussion regarding NCPC's removal of Quality Maintenance for Non-Subsidized Children from the Smart Start Solutions catalog. Therefore, it will be transitioned into the Dual Subsidy for Non-TANF Eligible Children.

Mr. Schlein stated that although this was the beginning process of funding for the next fiscal year, this vote did not guarantee funding for any activity.

The EC recommended the following activities to be submitted to The North Carolina Partnership for Children (NCPC) for consideration of approval in BCSS's Annual Submission of Activities (ASA): (Each one is an individual vote.)

1. **Burke County Public Schools Part Day Program (STEPS Academy) Activity**
   Motion: EC, seconded by David Rust, carried unanimously by the board. Brian Barrier and Jacquie Grady conflicted out of the vote.

2. **Burke County Literacy Council Family Literacy Activity**
   Motion: EC, seconded by David Rust, carried unanimously by the board. Jim Wilson conflicted out of the vote.

3. **Child Care Connections (CCC) Provider Insurance Benefit Package Activity**
   Motion: EC, seconded by Sally Sandy, carried unanimously by the board. Stephanie Ashley, Kasey Gardner, Denise Hudson, and Valerie Shook conflicted out of the vote.

4. **CCC Technical Assistance & DCDEE Approved Training Activity**
   Motion: EC, seconded by David Rust, carried unanimously by the board. Stephanie Ashley, Brian Barrier, Kasey Gardner, Jacquie Grady, Denise Hudson, and Valerie Shook conflicted out of the vote.

5. **CCC Dual Subsidy & Dual Subsidy Support Activity**
   Motion: EC, seconded by Tina Mosley, carried unanimously by the board. Stephanie Ashley, Brian Barrier, Kasey Gardner, Jacquie Grady, Denise Hudson, and Valerie Shook conflicted out of the vote.

6. **WAGE$ Activity**
   Motion: EC, seconded by Kasey Gardner, carried unanimously by the board. Stephanie Ashley, Brian Barrier, Jacquie Grady, and Denise Hudson conflicted out of the vote.

7. **In-house BCSS Program Evaluation/Coordination Activity**
   Motion: EC, seconded by Sally Sandy, carried unanimously by the board. There were no conflicts of interest.

8. **BCSS Administration Activity**
   Motion: EC, seconded by Thadd Hodge, carried unanimously by the board. There were no conflicts of interest.

9. **Motion from the EC: To approve BCSS to administer an additional $36,875 in Administration for the FY 25-26 NC Pre-K Program. Motion: EC, seconded by Rebecca McLeod, carried unanimously by the board. Stephanie Ashley, Brian Barrier, Jacquie Grady, and Denise Hudson conflicted out of the vote.**
   Mrs. Smith stated that these funds constituted quality TANF allocations that had been consistently received over a number of years. However, this funding was discontinued during Fiscal Year 2023–2024. In January 2026, BCSS was notified that, due to the availability of funds, it would receive an additional allocation.

10. **Motion from the EC: To approve to authorize the Executive Director or Board Chair to sign contracts on behalf of the Partnership; only one signature is required for FY 26-27. Motion: EC, seconded by Thadd Hodge, carried unanimously by the board. Stephanie Ashley, Brian Barrier, Kasey Gardner, Jacquie Grady, Denise Hudson, Valerie Shook, and Jim Wilson conflicted out of the vote.**

11. **Motion from the EC: To approve BCSS as the Contractor and Administrator for the NC Pre-K Program for FY 26-27. Motion: EC, seconded by Valerie Shook, carried unanimously by the board. Stephanie Ashley, Brian Barrier, Jacquie Grady, and Denise Hudson conflicted out of the vote.**

12. **Motion from the EC: To approve Kathy S. Smith, Executive Director, as an authorized signature for NC Pre-K Financial Statement Reports (FSRs) for FY 26-27. Motion: EC, seconded by Chuck Schlein, carried unanimously by the board. Stephanie Ashley, Brian Barrier, Jacquie Grady, and Denise Hudson conflicted out of the vote.**

13. **Motion from the EC: To approve the disposal of one Dell intel vPRO D17S OptiPlex PC, Inventory #10284, purchased 6/5/23. The motherboard was irreparable. Motion: EC, seconded by Valerie Shook, carried unanimously by the board. There were no conflicts of interest.**

H. Adjournment

The meeting scheduled for May 21, 2026 has been cancelled. The next meeting will be **June 18, 2026, at 4:00 p.m.**, instead of June 11, 2026.

There being no further business, the committee adjourned the meeting at 4:35 p.m. upon Motion by Valerie Shook, seconded by: Thadd Hodge, unanimously carried by the committee.

These Minutes are hereby certified as the official Board of Directors' Meeting Minutes.

Submitted by: _____

Vickie Deal, BCSS Executive Assistant

Approved by: _____
Chuck Schlein, Board Secretary

Dated Approved by the Board of Directors: _____