



History. Tradition. Community.



Melvin Carter III is Executive Director of Minnesota Children's Cabinet. In this position, Carter works to support positive outcomes and healthy development for children, prenatal through third grade. Under his leadership, the office builds coalitions to raise the profile of the importance of quality investments and to advocate for new resources from various funding sources, when necessary. He collaborates across agencies to leverage existing state supports for synergistic impact.

After graduating from Florida A & M University, Carter worked at a Saint Paul-based insurance and financial services firm. Carter excelled in this work but maintained a passion for community and policymaking. This passion was ignited when as a young college student Carter witnessed his brother being turned away from a Florida polling precinct during the 2000 presidential election. This was a defining moment for Carter. He says, "Here we were in the year 2000, and a young black man has taken time off work to set an example for his family and exercise his right to vote. He is then denied the opportunity to vote, without cause." Carter decided to commit his work to ensuring no one else would ever endure such a disturbing rejection.

Carter became engaged in electoral politics and has a passion for helping others engage – he has trained progressive candidates, community organizers and campaign workers in over 30 states. His work encompasses several renowned national organizations, including Wellstone Action, People for the American Way Foundation, Blacks Organizing for Leadership & Dignity (BOLD) and Progressive Majority.

Carter served on the Saint Paul City Council from 2008 to 2013, sponsoring legislation to address various social justice issues. He played a leadership role in forming Saint Paul's Department of Human Rights & Equal Economic Opportunity (HREEO) and championed “ban the box” laws to eliminate employment discrimination against people with criminal backgrounds. He also sponsored legislation prohibiting the sale of candy cigarettes and toy lighters, to discourage practice smoking among children. From his office in City Hall, Carter also created the Saint Paul Promise Neighborhood, a place-based education initiative designed to bring city, county, school district and community stakeholders together to combat educational disparities and ensure every child has the opportunity to succeed.

Currently, in his role as Executive Director of the Minnesota Children's Cabinet, Carter serves as an advisor to Governor Mark Dayton and works to build energy and support around for increased investments in Minnesota's youngest learners and their families. Carter says, “Instability in early childhood education and care is upstream of every other disparity in Minnesota.” He is cognizant that implicit in his work is an opportunity to create a better future for Minnesota's underserved communities.

Most Rewarding Work Experience

I am very proud of the ground we're taking as a state on behalf of Minnesota's children and families. We have invested hundreds of millions of new dollars into early childhood investments in the past few years alone, and leaders all around the country are watching our progress. I'm excited and hopeful to see that progress continues through this year's legislative session, as we approach a projected budget surplus of nearly \$2 billion with a Governor who is a proven champion for Minnesota children.

Beacons of Leadership

My parents set the example of servant leadership. Growing up, I recall them opening their home to the homeless, feeding the hungry, and investing in the youth in the community. Both of my parents founded non-profit organizations which serve

youth. My father exhibits leadership that focuses on maximizing others' potential. My mother is exceptional in being able to see the best in all people and situations. Together, they are the epitome of leading by example.

Advice for Aspiring Politicians

Don't focus on what you want to 'be'; focus on the impact you want to have on the world and build on your personal mission statement. Start by identifying your own passion, and then allow your work to become a vehicle for exhibiting your passion. Never stop learning.

Hometown

- Saint Paul, Minnesota

Education

- Florida A & M University, B.A.
- University of Minnesota, MPP