

Lawrence D. P. “Larry” Vellani, MPA
Executive Director/Chief Executive Officer
Smart Start of Forsyth County, Inc.
Winston-Salem, NC



Larry Vellani is the Executive Director/Chief Executive Officer of Smart Start of Forsyth County, Inc. (SSFC), an eight-million dollar, community-based, early education service and policy organization in Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

As a partnering organization with the North Carolina Partnership for Children, Inc. (NCPC) in Raleigh, North Carolina, SSFC is the only organization in Forsyth County, charged by statute, to care about the quality and progress of the community’s early learning system.

Vellani has an extensive career in organizational change, public policy formation, and higher education advancement. Before assuming his leadership position in Winston-Salem in May 2012, he led research, education, and direct service organizations in Ohio, Indiana and North Carolina, holding previous posts in the private, non-profit sector in Columbus, OH, and Durham, Greensboro and Winston-Salem, NC, and in the judicial branch of state government in Indianapolis, IN, and Raleigh, NC. Vellani has also provided contractual service and consultation in fifteen US states, two Canadian provinces, one Mexican state, and one Italian region.

From 2002 to 2010, Vellani served as the director of corporate and foundation relations at Elon University in Elon, NC, where he worked with senior faculty and administrators on major university initiatives, including the expansion of the Kenan Scholars Program, and establishment of the James P. Elder Lecture Series, the Elon Academy, Elon’s signature college access and retention program, and the School of Law in Greensboro.

From 2003 - 2012, Vellani served on the board of directors of the Alamance Partnership for Children, Inc., in Burlington, NC, the NCPC-affiliated program serving the Greater Alamance-Burlington Community.

As a volunteer with the Alamance Partnership, he co-chaired Alamance County’s NC Pre-K Committee, presented at the National Smart Start Conference, and served two years as the Partnership’s board chair. He led a crucial board self-study that guided a reorganization of the board and staff in Alamance County, and later helped apply for and lead participation in a joint-venture board

development and training program in partnership with NCPC in Raleigh, NC, and BoardSource, Inc., of Washington, DC.

A Phi Beta Kappa graduate of the Ohio State University, with degrees from the Ohio State University and Indiana University in history, education, and public administration, Vellani has held faculty appointments at Martin University and Indiana University, both in Indianapolis, IN, and at Elon University, where he remains associated with the Elon Center for Public Affairs. He has authored and taught courses on organizational behavior, judicial administration, leadership, and Italian language and culture.

An avid performing artist, Vellani has been privileged to perform with some of the recent generations' most respected interpreters of narrative song, including Guy and Candy Carawan, Barbara Dane, Fran McKendree, Mimi Fariña, Ronnie Gilbert, Beverly Grant, Si Kahn, Rhiannon Giddens Laffan, Michela Musolino, Holly Near, Bruce Phillips, and Baldemar Velasquez. He has also performed with some of the Southeast's most renowned traditional musicians, including Lonny Austin, Marvin Gaster, Tommy Jarrell, Mike Seeger, Lauchlin Shaw, Paul Taylor, and Joe Thompson. A solo and ensemble musician, his musical performances draw upon source material from lands and peoples on both sides of the Atlantic, as well as the waters of the Mediterranean and the Gulf of Mexico.

Vellani lives in Mebane, NC with his wife, Peggy Boswell, the curator of the Scott Family Collection at the Alamance Community College, Graham, NC. Their son, Ben (Elon '09), works for J Crew Corporation in Mebane, NC, and their daughter, Ginny (Agnes Scott '10), serves on the staff of Elon Hillel at Elon University in Elon, NC.