

Wake County Smart Start Executive Committee Meeting Minutes January 25, 2023

A regular meeting of the Wake County Smart Start (WCSS) Executive Committee was convened via Zoom on Wednesday, January 25, 2023, with WCSS Board Chair, Sherry Heuser presiding.

Executive Committee members present: Nikia Coates, Sherry Heuser, Leslie Ann Jackson, Barbara Morales Burke, Joe White and Katherine Williams

Staff members present: Gary Carr, Diana Fenves, Gayle E. Headen, Alex Livas-Dlott and Nancy Peck

Call to Order

At 8:32 AM, Board Chair, Sherry Heuser called the meeting to order. She informed committee members of staff members in attendance as non-committee members and reported the meeting was being recorded for the purpose of ensuring accurate meeting minutes. After the minutes are approved, the recording will be deleted.

Leslie Ann Jackson moved to adopt the agenda. Katherine Williams seconded the motion. Calling for a vote and hearing no objections, the vote passed. (01-23-36)

Barbara Morales Burke moved to approve the minutes from the Executive Committee meeting on September 28, 2022. Joe White seconded the motion. Calling for a vote and hearing no objection, the motion carried. (01-23-37)

Advancement Committee

Advancement Committee Chair, Nikia Coates reported the Advancement Committee is in the process of obtaining sponsors for the May 13 Building Bright Futures event. She said a “save the date” announcement will be disseminated in early February and encouraged Executive Committee members to share names of potential sponsors within their personal network.

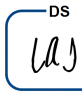
Board Governance Committee

Board Governance Committee Chair, Barbara Morales Burke reported the January 18 committee meeting kicked off a discussion about board member recruitment. The committee will be bringing a recommendation for updates to the WCSS by-laws relevant to board terms and composition to the full Board at their February 22 meeting. An additional Board responsibilities refresher presentation to be led by Wren Davisson of North Carolina Partnership for Children (NCPC) is planned for the additional session following the Board meeting.

Finance Committee

Finance Committee Chair, Joe White reported Finance Committee did not meet in January but have received and reviewed December financial statements. He reviewed highlights of expenditures in the December financial statements. Katherine Williams moved to approve December 2022 financial statements. Barbara Morales Burke seconded the motion. Calling for a vote and hearing no opposition, the motion carried. (01-23-38)

Joe White presented a staff recommendation for personnel expense increases in the planning budget for the next fiscal year based on Catapult’s NC wages projections for 2023, the 2022 Consumer Price Index and historical information included on Attachment C.1. Mr. White explained that the proposed budget for compensation encompasses both a merit increase pool as well as market rate salary range adjustments to be determined by a compensation rate study.

 3/24/2023 | 12:06 AM EDT
Initial _____ Date _____

Following questions and discussion, Barbara Morales Burke moved to approve inclusion of a 5% increase in salaries for merit increases and salary range adjustments in FY23-24 and inclusion of a 7% increase in employee health insurance cost for calendar year 2024 in the FY23-24 planning budget. Nikia Coates seconded the motion. Calling for a vote and hearing none opposed, the motion passed. (01-23-39)

Joe White presented a staff recommendation for insurance renewals in 2023. He noted a slight cost increase to Commercial Package and Umbrella Coverage due to office renovation and an increase to workers' compensation due to additional staff. A motion to accept the insurance renewal package including Commercial Package and Umbrella Coverage, Renewal of Directors' and Officers' Employment Practices and Fiduciary Liability with Selective Insurance, Directors' and Officers' Liability, Commercial Crime and ERISA Bond coverage, Workers Compensation and Cyber Liability coverage as detailed on Attachments D.1 and D.2 was made by Leslie Ann Jackson and seconded by Katherine Williams. Calling for a vote and hearing no objections, the vote was unanimous. (01-23-40)

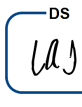
Chair's Report

Chair, Sherry Heuser reported the development of a new Executive Director annual performance evaluation is still a work in progress. She and Executive Director, Gayle E. Headen are continuing to research and discuss examples that will assist in creating the best model to reflect leadership expectations for the Executive Director and measure performance as the scope of work being done by the agency continues to evolve. Ms. Heuser invited committee members to offer ideas or examples that might be used to develop an updated ED performance evaluation.

Executive Director's Report

Gayle E. Headen provided an update on the following topics:

- New Funding Cycle: Ms. Headen said new funding cycle information sessions have begun, including a general overview, introduction to the new Strategic Planning Framework, funding process overview and a fiscal overview. Staff will make themselves available for one-on-one sessions as needed. Request for proposals for funding will go live in February with an application deadline of March 6.
- Ms. Headen reported on a recent meeting with Senator Jay Chaudhuri, leader of the NC legislative Education Caucus. The primary topic of conversation was to gather information about broad early education needs in the state, but focused on the workforce crisis, specifically compensation. Ms. Headen also shared the following legislative priorities with Senator Chaudhuri:
 - Increasing funding for Smart Start
 - Increasing the administrative rate cap from 8% to 10%
 - Increased funding for Dolly Parton Imagination Library (DPIL) program
- Early child care apprenticeships: Ms. Headen informed Executive Committee members that board member, Catherine Lassiter put into motion an opportunity for a collaborative effort between Wake Tech, WCSS and Wake County Public Schools (WCPSS) to develop an early child care apprenticeship for high school students to help mitigate the current workforce crisis as well as creating a local pipeline for early child care professionals. She explained WCSS will recruit interested providers, WCPSS will recruit students and Wake Tech will administer the apprenticeship program through WakeWorks, a partnership between Wake Tech and Wake County. Local providers have been invited to a February 28 information session to determine their interest. Compensation to apprentices will be provided by WakeWorks, funded by a Wake County grant, at no cost to participating providers.
- Ms. Headen reported on the NCPC change in direction in Early Literacy initiatives:
 - The DPIL program is funded by the NC General Assembly separately from Smart Start funding. The current contract with the state expires on June 30 and funding has not been increased.


3/24/2023 | 12:06 AM EDT
 Initial _____ Date _____

Any new applicants to the program after June 30 will be placed on a wait list, although any children enrolled in the program before that time will continue to receive books through DPIL until they age out at five years old.

- Reach Out and Read (ROR) program reaches about 14,000 children in Wake County each year through pediatric and family medical practices. Legislative requirements mandate signed agreements from anyone receiving state funding and to date there have been signed agreements with each of the practices participating in ROR. Reach Out and Read has instituted a change in policy to not allow signed agreements. As a result, ROR as a Smart Start program will dissolve effective immediately but will continue to have direct relationships with the practices offering the program.
 - Next steps for WCSS to adapt to changes to Early Literacy programs
 - Early Literacy Coordinator is working on community project to gather input about what sort of Early Literacy support is needed
 - Sharing resources from Wake County libraries
 - Program Coordination & Evaluation (PCE) is reaching out to local Early Literacy programs
 - Consideration of evidence based Early Literacy programs on list provided by NCPC
- NC Pre-K and Wake ThreeSchool: Ms. Headen reported the new and improved application processes that were developed earlier are now in place for both programs. She said there is an emphasis on the importance of positive experiences for families through the entire application process. As of the third week of January, there are 790 applications for NC Pre-K and 83 applications for the 100 Wake ThreeSchool slots. WCSS is in conversation with Wake County about a modest funding increase to support additional Wake ThreeSchool slots.

With no further business to discuss, Katherine Williams moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:42 am. Barbara Morales Burke seconded the motion. Calling for a vote and hearing no objections, the motion carried. (01-23-41)

DocuSigned by:


9F878EFED0574A8...
Secretary

3/24/2023 | 12:06 AM EDT

Date