

**Wake County Smart Start
NC Pre-K Committee Meeting
December 7, 2022**

A meeting of the Wake County Smart Start (WCSS) NC Pre-K Committee was held on Wednesday, December 7, 2022 with Chair, Sherry Heuser presiding. The meeting was held via Zoom conference call.

Committee members present: Nikia Coates, Dawn Dawson, Heather Drennan, Susan Evans, Matthew Ellinwood, Matt Glova, Sherry Heuser, Mickey Holt, Leslie Ann Jackson, Tonya Kangkolo, Catherine Lassiter, Catty Moore, Kimberly Shaw, Tonya Venable, Joe White

Committee members absent: Christine Alvarado, Veronica Creech, Liz Hamner, Sharon Loza, Barbara Morales Burke, Antonia Pedroza, Colleen Roache, Michael Wasilick and Katherine Williams

Staff members present: Gary Carr, Joan Crutchfield, Carol Orji, Diana Fenves, Gayle E. Headen, Alex Livas-Dlott, Sasha Gomez, Bryce McClamroch and Nancy Peck

Call to Order/Announcements

At 8:31 am, Chair, Sherry Heuser announced a quorum was present and officially called the meeting to order. She noted the meeting is being recorded for minute taking purposes only and drew attention to the presence of staff attending the call as non-committee members.

Joe White moved to adopt the agenda. Kimberly Shaw seconded the motion. Calling for a vote and with none opposed, the vote was unanimous. (12-22-24)


NC Pre-K Committee members reviewed minutes from previous meeting. Tonya Venable moved to adopt the minutes from the NC Pre-K Committee meeting on October 26, 2022. Catherine Lassiter seconded the motion. Calling for a vote and hearing no objection, the motion carried. (12-22-25)

Executive Director's Report

Executive Director, Gayle E. Headen shared background about a recent state communication advising an increase in the Pre-K reimbursement rate as a result of legislative action by the NC General Assembly in July, 2022. She reminded those present; the NC Pre-K Committee is the body responsible for approving provider reimbursement rates and presented a staff recommendation for consideration. Following questions, Matt Glova made a motion to approve new reimbursement rates including 5% from the Legislative reimbursement rate increase to all site types for the 2022-23 school year retroactive to August 2022 as indicated on the chart Attachment B.1. Mickey Holt seconded the motion. A committee vote was called for with noted abstentions by Dawn Dawson, Heather Drennan, Susan Evans, Catty Moore, Kim Shaw and Tonya Venable. Hearing no objections, the vote to approve was unanimous (12-22-26)

Ms. Headen provided the following NC Pre-K program updates:

- NC Pre-K site selection application period has begun. All completed electronic applications are due December 12, 2022, by 5:00 pm. Staff are connecting with sites within targeted zip codes (27613, 27545, 27560, and 27597) to encourage them to submit applications.
- The NC Pre-K Collaborative has been working to develop the application for the 2023-2034 School Year. The application is now in the final stages of development and will be released to the public in January, 2023.
- NC Pre-K will be offering a series of Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS®) trainings to directors and teachers to support effective teacher/child interactions.
- SY2022-23 Pre-K enrollment across all site settings in Wake County is currently at 87%. There are a number of qualified applicants who have been waitlisted due to the diminished number of available slots for placement as a result of teacher shortages. Five sites were unable to continue their NC Pre-K programs at the beginning of the year, leaving 77 unallocated slots. Fairview Children's Center has been able to increase their capacity to an additional 9 slots.

DS
 Initial 3/9/2023 | 11:04 PM EST
Date

Ms. Headen provided context about growing early childhood workforce challenges locally, state and nationwide. She reminded committee members of earlier measures taken to increase teacher compensation at private sites to achieve parity with their peers in the public-school classrooms through allocated funding from Wake County. Despite this action and other efforts, providers are challenged in recruiting and retaining teachers. Ms. Headen opened the topic for discussion by asking committee members what they've been hearing about these workforce challenges and (with the realization that the root cause is inadequate compensation) potential solutions that might be offered to help mitigate the issue. Highlights of the discussion included:

- Are private providers offering additional benefits such as 401k plans and is this important to the teachers?
- Flexible work schedules
- Use of Smart Start funding for marketing campaign to recruit teachers
 - “ambassadors” sharing why they love working with young children
- Working with Wake Tech to develop apprenticeship program as possible measure to bridge the gap
 - Possibility of Wake County helping to fund paid apprenticeships
- Opportunities to collaborate with Capital Area Workforce Development

There being no further business, Catherine Lassiter made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 am. Susan Evans seconded the motion. Calling for a vote and hearing no objections, the motion passed. (12-22-27)

DocuSigned by:

Leslie Ann Jackson

9F878EFED8574A8...

Secretary

3/9/2023 | 11:04 PM EST

Date