Wake County Smart Start
NC Pre-K Committee Meeting
June 28, 2023

A meeting of the Wake County Smart Start (WCSS) NC Pre-K Committee was held on Wednesday, June 28, 2023 with Chair, Sherry Heuser presiding. The meeting was held via Zoom conference call.

Committee members present: Nikia Coates, Veronica Creech, Dawn Dawson, Matt Ellinwood, Susan Evans, Liz Hamner, Sherry Heuser, Mickey Holt, Leslie Ann Jackson, Catherine Lassiter, Catty Moore, Barbara Morales Burke, Antonia Pedroza, Colleen Roache, Kimberly Shaw, Mike Wasilick, Joe White and Katherine Williams

Committee members absent: Christine Alvarado, Heather Drennan, Matt Glova, Tonya Kangkolo, Sharon Loza, and Tonya Venable

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

Guests present: Katie Lewis and Cheryl Stallings

Call to Order/Announcements

At 8:35 am, Sherry Heuser, Chair, announced a quorum was present and officially called the meeting to order. She noted the meeting is being recorded and drew attention to the presence of staff and guest attending the meeting as non-committee members.

Veronica Creech moved to adopt the agenda. Catty Moore seconded the motion. Calling for a vote and with none opposed, the vote was unanimous. (06-23-72)
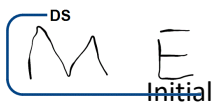
NC Pre-K Committee members reviewed minutes from previous meeting. Joe White moved to adopt the minutes from the NC Pre-K Committee meeting on April 26, 2023. Veronica Creech seconded the motion. Calling for a vote and hearing no objection, the motion carried. (06-23-73)

Executive Director's Report

Executive Director, Gayle E. Headen provided background information before introducing a staff recommendation for reimbursement rates to private sites intended to replace a monthly supplemental payment from the Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE) in the 2022-23 program year that they will no longer have the flexibility to make in the upcoming year. She reminded those present that the NC Pre-K Committee is the decision-making body for the local NC Pre-K Program. Antonia Pedroza moved to approve new reimbursement rates to private childcare sites for the 2023-24 school year as indicated on Attachment B.1. Mickey Holt seconded the motion. A committee vote was called for with noted abstentions by Dawn Dawson, Susan Evans, Catty Moore and Kimberly Shaw. Hearing none opposed, the vote to approve was unanimous (06-23-74)

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

- SY2022-23 final enrollment: 92% attendance rate (this calculation is based on monitoring attendance starting from November 2022 when the NC Pre-K program converted back to attendance-based reimbursement). Pre-K enrollment for the current school year peaked at 87% of capacity.

- SY2023-24 application status: Ms. Headen reported 610 children have been placed in slots to date, a sixfold improvement in placement over the same time period from last year. She informed those present that 910 slots are available to fill, however the loss of providers continues to be an issue. WCSS is exploring options to address challenges expressed by child care providers including teacher shortages and a shift in the marketplace to private pay from the current NC Pre-K program as a business model.

8/25/2023 | 4:02 PM EDT

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Ms. Headen recognized the entire Pre-K staff team led by Manager, Joan Crutchfield and supported by Data Manager, Alex Setzer for taking on the challenge to rethink and develop a new, streamlined applications process designed to improve family experience. The new process has resulted in a significant reduction of application completion time as well as shortening the amount of time for applications to be fully processed and includes routine communication with families.

There being no further business, Veronica Creech moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:50 am. Liz Hamner seconded the motion. Calling for a vote and hearing no objections, the motion passed. (06-23-75)

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Secretary

8/25/2023 | 4:02 PM EDT

Date