

**Wake County Smart Start
Board of Directors Meeting
August 23, 2023**

A meeting of the Wake County Smart Start (WCSS) Board of Directors was held on Wednesday, August 23, 2023, with WCSS Board Chair, Katherine Williams presiding. The meeting was held via Zoom conference call.

Board members present: Nikia Coates, Heather Drennan, Matt Ellinwood, Susan Evans, Matt Glova, Sherry Heuser, Mickey Holt, Leslie Ann Jackson, Catherine Lassiter, Amelia Muse, Ronetta Pearsall, Colleen Roache, Tonya Venable, Katherine Williams and Stacey Wilson-Norman

Board members absent: Christine Alvarado, Tonya Kangkolo, Antonia Pedroza and Joe White

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

Guests present: Cheryl Stallings

Call to Order/Announcements

At 9:28 AM, Chair, Katherine Williams recognized a quorum and called the meeting to order. She announced the meeting is being recorded and noted the presence of staff members and guest, Cheryl Stallings. Susan Evans moved to adopt the agenda. Sherry Heuser seconded the motion. Calling for a vote and with none opposed, the motion carried. (08-23-16)

WCSS Manager, Program Coordination and Evaluation, Bryce McClamroch presented the “Mission Moment”, focusing on Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPIY). Bryce explained HIPPIY is one of the three evidence-based home visiting programs funded by WCSS in strong alignment to the Strategic Framework priority of family engagement and leadership. He shared a brief overview of the HIPPIY model, how it is delivered, how parents are empowered as their child’s first and most important teacher and the number of children in Wake County served by HIPPIY last year. Board members viewed a short video clip of parent and home visitor testimonials for the program. Bryce stated that although the program is delivered in the home, it also includes several group sessions throughout the year where parents can come together to share their experiences and learn from each other. The year ends with a group graduation ceremony for the children and their parents which Bryce encouraged staff and board members to attend to witness the impact of the program.

The Board reviewed items on the consent agenda. Matt Glova moved to approve items on the consent agenda including minutes from the June 28, 2023 Board meeting and June 2023 financial reports. Mickey Holt seconded the motion. Calling for a vote and hearing no objection, the motion carried. (08-23-17)

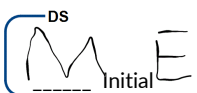
Committee Reports

Advancement Committee

Advancement Committee Chair, Nikia Coates reported on the “Falls for Smalls” online in-kind donation drive that is currently in progress until Aug. 29. Ms. Coates said the in-kind items collected will benefit funded partner, Fiesta Christiana in their Building Family Support program as well as private child care partners enrolled in the Quality Enhancement program. She reported slightly over half of the 600 items goal has been donated thus far and asked the Board to: donate items through the drive portal; share the information and site within their networks; and volunteer to help sort and distribute the collected items. Ms. Coates also reported the committee will begin exploring a reboot/restructuring of the 1996 Society.

Finance Committee

Finance Committee Chair, Matt Glova reported the committee did not meet in August. He provided a quick walk through of the July 2023 financial statements. There being no questions, Leslie Ann Jackson moved to approve July 2023 financial reports. Nikia Coates seconded the motion. A vote was called for, and hearing no opposition, the motion carried. (08-23-18)

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10/25/2023 | 2:04 PM EDT
Date

Chair's Report

Chair, Katherine Williams drew attention to the draft calendar of FY23-24 Board meeting dates. She reported two separate requests have been received for extended meeting time to do a deeper dive into significant topics. One of these topics is preparation for stronger grass roots and parental engagement in the governance structure. The other topic is fund development/fundraising training. Ms. Williams said a brief survey will be sent to Board members by the end of day to gauge their preference for either two dates for in-person meetings including an extended session to cover a single training topic, or a single day long in-person retreat to cover regular board business and both training topics.

Executive Director's Report

Executive Director, Gayle E. Headen presented a staff recommendation for the addition of a full-time staff position with a brief description of the proposed position's functions. She said the position will be funded by DCDEE and was included in the FY23-24 budget. If approved, WCSS would plan to fill the position within the current fiscal year. Following a question, Nikia Coates moved to approve the addition of one full-time position, Pre-K Outreach Specialist, to increase capacity and community support. Leslie Ann Jackson seconded the motion. Calling for a vote and hearing no objection, the motion carried. (08-23-19)

Executive Director updates:

- Ms. Headen said she had planned to review the status of the Wake Early Childhood Action Plan (ECAP), WCSS Strategic Framework Action Plan and Participatory Research Project. In the interest of time, a summary of each will be sent to the board members via email. Ms. Headen encouraged board members to reach out to her with any questions they may have.
- Wake ThreeSchool (WTS) enrollment:
 - 753 eligible applications have been received to date.
 - Current funded capacity equals a total of 202 slots for SY23-24. Wake County Board of Commissioners voted to increase county funding from 100 slots to 200 slots. A \$25,000 grant from Truist will fund an additional two slots.
 - 144 slots in private sites have been assigned.
 - 32 slots are in Head Start sites.
 - The remaining 26 slots have been reserved for families at greatest need who tend to apply at this time. These will be assigned by mid-September.

Commissioner Susan Evans commented on her recent participation as part of a panel at a Raleigh Chamber event where she spoke about WTS and appealed to business leaders for private investment in the program.

- State budget update: Budget approval is expected after Labor Day, 2023
- Representative Ross site visit: WCSS hosted a site visit by Congresswoman, Deborah Ross at Kiddie Academy, Brier Creek on Aug. 22 in conjunction with efforts to call for additional funding for affordable child care as American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds approach expiration in December, 2023. Ms. Headen said that ARPA funds have helped to keep an already fragile child care system from collapse and a loss of this federal funding would impact about 1/3 of the providers in Wake County. Following the tour, Gayle Headen moderated a round table discussion that included Congresswoman Ross; NC DHHS Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE) Director, Ariel Ford; Kiddie Academy co-owner, Cathy Cummings; NCPC President, Amy Cabbage, and two parents. Ms. Headen reported the site visit was covered by several local media outlets, including CBS 17. A link to the CBS 17 story will be shared with the board following the meeting.
- QRIS modernization: Ms. Headen reported the North Carolina Child Care Commission and DCDEE have been working on a project to modernize the child care Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS), better known as the Star Rated License. The project has included a series of public town halls to gather feedback which has resulted in many elements to modernize under consideration.


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WCSS, through the community-based Participatory Research Project with parents has been looking at the definition of “high quality” from the parents’ perspective. WCSS recently met with consultants leading the state project to learn where WCSS can offer support to the project.

Ms. Headen said the consultants are particularly interested in parents’ perspective as their research has included limited parent information. They have requested WCSS to submit a summary of findings recommendations in early January 2024 for the consultants to include in their recommendations to DCDEE and the NC Child Care Commission.

With no further business to discuss, Sherry Heuser moved to adjourn the meeting. Nikia Coates seconded the motion. Calling for a vote and hearing no objections, the meeting was adjourned at 10:09 AM. (08-23-20)

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Secretary

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