

**Wake County Smart Start
Executive Committee Meeting
September 27, 2023**

A meeting of the Wake County Smart Start (WCSS) Executive Committee was held on Wednesday, September 27, 2023 with Chair, Katherine Williams presiding. The meeting was held via Zoom conference call.

Committee members present: Nikia Coates, Matt Ellinwood, Matt Glova, Sherry Heuser, Tonya Venable, Katherine Williams

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

Guest: Jason Horton

Call to Order/Announcements

At 8:32 am, Katherine Williams, Chair, announced a quorum was present and officially called the meeting to order. She noted the meeting is being recorded with the exception of the closed session towards the end of the meeting and drew attention to the presence of staff and introduced Jason Horton, Strategic Initiatives Director for Wake County.

Jason Horton announced Wake County is in the early stage of a planning process to develop its first organization-wide strategic plan with an overarching goal of improving outcomes for all Wake County citizens. He opened his presentation by stating Wake County is conducting a community survey asking various key stakeholders, including Wake County Smart Start (WCSS), and community members for input to help in identifying priorities to focus upon in the next 3-5 years. Mr. Horton reviewed the seven questions on the survey. He asked Executive Committee members to complete the survey before Oct. 15, through a unique link that will be shared post-meeting. Mr. Horton remarked that some individuals may be approached from multiple fronts to complete a survey and stressed that it's up to them if they want to complete additional surveys with responses based on their other roles. Gayle Headen asked for a link to share with members of the Early Childhood Action Planning (ECAP) team. Jason Horton responded that it would be preferable to share the general community engagement link. Katherine Williams asked for the WCSS specific link as well as the 3-minute video and general link to be shared with the full WCSS Board of Directors after the meeting.

Matt Glova moved to adopt the agenda. Sherry Heuser seconded the motion. Calling for a vote and with none opposed, the vote was unanimous. (09-23-21)

Committee members reviewed the consent agenda. Nikia Coates moved to approve the consent agenda, including minutes from the Executive Committee meeting on July 26, 2023 and August 2023 financial reports. Sherry Heuser seconded the motion. Calling for a vote and hearing no objection, the motion carried. (09-23-22)

Advancement Committee

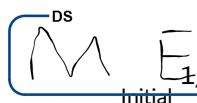
Committee Chair, Nikia Coates reported on results of "Falls for Smalls" in-kind supply drive. The committee discussed if this sort of drive should be repeated in the future. The consensus was in favor of continuing it but at a different time during the year, possibly in early spring when supplies may be running low. Ms. Coates reported the committee discussed the annual "Better Together" partner appreciation event, including a potential new name for the event which is planned for the week before Thanksgiving.

Board Governance Committee

Committee Chair, Sherry Heuser reported the committee will have its first meeting of the fiscal year on Oct. 4. She said the committee will continue work on some of the elements begun last year, including Board rotation and focus on further building board committees with community members to lend expertise to current committee activities as well as develop the pipeline for Board recruitment.

Finance Committee

Finance Committee Chair, Matt Glova briefly reviewed financial statements for August 2023, noting a few highlights.


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Matt Glova presented a Finance Committee recommendation for an increase in the range adjustment and merit wage pool. He explained the recommended increase, totaling \$117,178 is included in the approved budget for FY23-24 and is fully funded by Smart Start, DCDEE and Wake County. The recommended increase is based on compensation studies and performance evaluations. Following a question about range adjustments, Sherry Heuser moved to approve a 5.0% range adjustment and merit wage increase pool retroactive to July 1, 2023 for permanent staff positions as of June 30, 2023 excluding the Executive Director and MAC Accountant. Nikia Coates seconded the motion. Calling for a vote, and hearing no objections, the motion carried. (09-23-23)

Matt Glova presented a committee recommendation for changes to specific sections of the WCSS Policies and Procedures Manual, outlined on Attachment C.1, to bring them up to date with current state requirements and practices in the post-COVID environment. He gave a reminder that the Board is responsible for the approval of all policies, while staff are responsible for developing procedures to implement policies. Sherry Heuser moved to approve changes to the following policy sections of the Policy and Procedures Manual: Cash Management 1.1.; Expense Reimbursement 9.1.; Cell Phone Allowance 10.1.; Fixed Assets 12.1; and Form 1099 Processing 13.1. Nikia Coates seconded the motion. Calling for a vote, and hearing no objections, the motion carried. (09-23-24)

Matt Glova presented a final committee recommendation for changes to the WCSS Employee Handbook, including an updated reimbursement policy for remote staff, which was previously part of the WCSS Policies and Procedures Manual and a new policy to provide clarity and consistency to staff regarding having their children in the office workplace. Nikia Coates moved to approve updates to the WCSS Employee Handbook, including the reimbursement policy for remote workers as specified on Attachment D.1 and establishment of a Children in the Workplace policy as outlined on Attachment D.2. Sherry Heuser seconded the motion. Calling for a vote, and hearing no objections, the motion carried. (9-23-25)


Executive Director's Report

Executive Director, Gayle E. Headen provided the following updates:

- State budget update: the budget was passed by the legislature on September 22 and will be enacted into law without signature or veto by Governor Cooper. Budget highlights of interest include:
 - Administrative overhead allowance increased from 9 to 10% of total allocation for Smart Start
 - \$1.5 million in non-recurring funds for each of the next two years for the Dolly Parton Imagination Library (DPIL) program
 - \$900,000 in non-recurring funds for each of the next two years to establish a pilot of the Tri-Share program with three local partnerships serving as facilitator hubs.
 - Family child care homes allowed to serve 10 children at once, up from the previous maximum of eight. Pre-K classroom sizes are permitted to increase from 18 to 20 children.
 - Increase in salary cap for non-profit staff from \$120,000 to \$140,000
 - \$525,000 in non-recurring funds for each year of the biennium to provide business and financial assistance for family child care homes and to open new home-based programs.
 - \$1.2 million allocation in annual recurring funding for childcare support for parents attending community college.

In other state news, Ms. Headen reported Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE) has been directed to use the remaining ARPA funds by June 2024 to continue sustainability grants.

- Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER): Governor Cooper has announced he will release \$8 million in federal GEER funding to be directed specifically to NC Pre-K classrooms. Each classroom will receive a one-time grant of about \$3,800 to support high quality early learning and may be used for classroom materials, toys, playground equipment, staff professional development and other needs.
- Racial Equity Institute (REI) training: 35 staff participated in a two day in-person REI Groundwater Phase I training in early September. Remaining staff will complete the training virtually by Oct. 13. Departmental debriefs are also occurring before an all-staff in-person debrief led by a facilitator on Oct. 16.


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- Program Coordination and Evaluation (PCE) staff hosted the 1st in-person funded partners meeting. The purpose of the meeting was for relationship building and networking among new and returning partners and WCSS staff who provided updates and technical assistance for family engagement and leadership.
- Enrollment updates:
 - Wake ThreeSchool has assigned 200 slots.
 - Pre-K has only 3 vacancies remaining.
- Raleigh Kiwanis Club: Ms. Headen reported she was invited to attend a lunch meeting of the Raleigh Kiwanis Club by Sanford Bailey, a WCSS friend and donor of \$20,000 for Wake Pre-K. Ms. Headen is in conversation about potentially speaking before the Raleigh Kiwanis sometime in 2024.

Sherry Heuser moved to enter a closed session at 9:27 am. Nikia Coates seconded the motion. Calling for a vote and hearing no objections, the motion passed. (09-23-26) Recording of the meeting was stopped and staff dismissed.

Executive Committee members discussed a recommendation for an increase in compensation for the Executive Director, based on the performance evaluation. Sherry Heuser moved to approve the recommended compensation increase for WCSS Executive Director, Gayle E. Headen. Matt Glova seconded the motion. A vote was called and all being in favor, the motion passed. (09-23-27)

With no further business to discuss, Nikia Coates moved to exit the closed session and adjourn the meeting at 10:03 AM. Matt Glova seconded the motion. Calling for a vote and hearing no objections, the motion carried. (09-23-28)

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Secretary

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Date