

**Wake County Smart Start
Board of Directors Meeting
December 6, 2023**

A meeting of the Wake County Smart Start (WCSS) Board of Directors was held on Wednesday, December 6, 2023, with WCSS Board Vice Chair, Nikia Coates presiding. The meeting was held via Zoom conference call.

Board members present: Nikia Coates, Matt Ellinwood, Susan Evans, Matt Glova, Sherry Heuser, Mickey Holt, Leslie Ann Jackson, Tonya Kangkolo, Amelia Muse, Ronetta Pearsall, Tonya Venable, Joe White, and Stacey Wilson-Norman

Board members absent: Christine Alvarado, Heather Drennan, Catherine Lassiter, Antonia Pedroza, Colleen Roache and Katherine Williams

Staff members present: Alex Livas-Dlott, Joan Crutchfield, Gayle E. Headen, Gary Carr, Sasha Gomez, Marta Maldonado, Bryce McClamroch, Jennifer MacPherson, Nancy Peck and Lynn Policastro

Call to Order/Announcements

At 8:51 AM, Chair, Nikia Coates recognized a quorum and called the meeting to order. She announced the meeting is being recorded and noted the presence of staff members. Amelia Muse moved to adopt the agenda. Ronetta Pearsall seconded the motion. Calling for a vote and with none opposed, the motion carried. (12-23-41)

The Board reviewed items on the consent agenda. Susan Evans moved to approve items on the consent agenda including minutes from the October 25, 2023 Board meeting, August 2023 financial reports and FY23-24 Conflict of Interest. Sherry Heuser seconded the motion. Calling for a vote and hearing no objection, the motion carried. (12-23-42)

WCSS Family Engagement and Leadership Specialist, Marta Maldonado presented the “Mission Moment”, focusing on Family Engagement and Leadership (FEL). Ms. Maldonado opened with a definition of Family Engagement and Leadership and the three areas where WCSS carries out this work: cultivating family leaders; capacity building to develop the skills that empower parent to be leaders in their community; and technical assistance to direct service providers and community partners to support their work with families. She followed with slides illustrating examples of what the work looks like in each of the three areas. Ms. Maldonado concluded the presentation with what lies ahead for FEL - developing new collaborations with other non-profit, social services, and faith-based organizations in Wake County.

Committee Reports

Advancement Committee

In her role as Advancement Committee Chair, Nikia Coates provided the following updates:


- Approximately 100 stakeholders (Board members, providers, funded program and other community partners, home visiting educators, and elected officials) annual partner appreciation event, *Pastries With Partners* on Nov. 14. Although donations were not expected, \$500 was contributed through the GiveButter platform. Ms. Coates gave a shout out to Union Special Bakery for providing the treats and their space for the event.
- Giving Tuesday: The 2023 Giving Tuesday fundraising goal was \$1,000 with a stretch goal of \$5,000. WCSS exceeded the goal with donations totaling \$1,007, contributed by 10 donors, compared to a total of \$800 contributed during Giving Tuesday in 2022.

Ms. Coates reported there will not be a formal Annual Campaign this year due to the lack of Community Relations and Development (CRD) staff capacity. She asked all board members to consider a donation to WCSS in their end of year charitable giving plans.

Allocations Committee

Committee Chair, Tonya Venable reported the Allocations Committee has held three meetings in the current fiscal year to prepare for the allocations process. She provided the following updates:

- Based on recent guidance by North Carolina Partnership for Children (NCPC), the committee determined the Systems Improvement and Public Engagement (SIPE) activity is not required to participate in the

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funding application process because NCPC views SIPE as essential to the goals/operation of a local partnership.

- In April, 2023, the Board approved funding for the UNC Horizons Maternal-Infant Early Intervention Services activity supporting young children of mothers participating in a substance abuse treatment program. Based on challenges in navigating the UNC contracting process, WCSS staff and program staff have come to a mutual agreement to not go into contract this year.
- The committee affirmed the 3-year funding cycle.
- The committee reviewed application questions and rubric for the upcoming funding cycle and made updates to make the language more user-friendly and accessible to programs with varying levels of grant application experience.

Board Governance Committee

Board Governance Committee Chair, Sherry Heuser provided the following committee updates from their Nov. 14 meeting:

- reviewed and discussed Board survey results. Responses indicated an overall satisfaction with the level of Board meeting engagement and a high level of satisfaction with committee engagement. Committee members discussed how engagement should be defined and ways to make sure Board members feel connected to the mission and work. The committee is also looking at providing information and other resources for areas that board members have indicated interest in learning more about (e.g., EC issues - local and nationwide)
- Reviewed upcoming board vacancies and members eligible for re-election in FY24-25
- All three of the newest Board members have been paired with a “Board Buddy”
- WCSS has been accepted as a nonprofit participant by BoardLead in the matching program. Candidate matches, if any, will be announced in January and Board Governance will begin the vetting/recruitment process.

Finance Committee

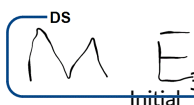
Finance Committee Chair, Matt Glova, reported the committee did not meet in October. He summarized highlights of each of the October 2023 financial statements, providing additional detail for several of the reports. There being no questions, a motion from the committee was made to adopt the October 2023 financial reports. Joe White seconded the motion. A vote was called for, and hearing no opposition, the motion carried. (12-23-43)

Matt Glova presented a committee recommendation for a one-time longevity payment to eligible staff to support staff retention. He commented that the source of funding for \$45,000 payments would come mainly from Smart Start reverted and carry-forward funds with the remainder from NC PreK and other grant funds. Coming from Finance Committee, a motion was made to approve a one-time longevity payment to staff based on years of service as of December 31, 2023 as follows: greater than 1 but less than 5 years of service - \$750; 5 years but less than 10 years of service - \$1,250; 10 years but less than 15 years of service - \$1,750; 15 years but less than 20 years of service - \$2,250; 20 plus years of service - \$2,750. Ronetta Pearsall seconded the motion. Calling for a vote and with all in favor, the vote to approve was passed. (12-23-44)

Executive Director’s Report

Executive Director, Gayle E. Headen reported with the following updates:


- State budget highlights related to Early Childhood:
 - Although not specific to Early Childhood, Medicaid expansion is now in effect in North Carolina. This accessibility to health insurance has a large and positive impact on children and families served by WCSS.
 - The budget includes \$1.5 million in non-recurring funds for each of the two years of the biennium for the Dolly Parton Imagination Library (DPIL) program. WCSS will submit an application due in December to continue the DPIL program work in Wake.
 - \$900,000 in non-recurring funds for each of the next two years to establish a pilot of the Tri-Share program, a model based on sharing child care costs across public funding, employers and parents. Three local partnerships will serve as regional hubs. (WCSS will not apply as a hub due to an insufficient administrative allotment for implementing the program as well as a shortened timeline for implementation once the funds are received.)

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- Increase in allowable number of children to be served per classroom in family child care homes and Pre-K classrooms. (increase of 9-10 in family child care; increase of 18-20 in Pre-K classrooms). WCSS will not exercise this legal option to increase the child to teacher ratio for its programs, electing instead to maintain the current ratio.
- Wake County Commissioner, James West: Ms. Headen acknowledged the recent passing of Commissioner West, a long-time advocate of Wake families at greatest need.
- State of the County: This year's theme was "Better Together" focusing on partnerships. Panelists from various sectors included: Katherine Williams in her role as Executive Director of Wake Cty. Cooperative Extension; Sheriff Willie Rowe; Wake County School Board President, Lindsay Mahaffey; and Gayle Headen speaking on partnership with Wake County in Early Childhood Education. A link to the presentation will be shared with the Board following the meeting.
- Wake ThreeSchool (WTS): WTS is currently serving 202 children, more than double the number served in last year's pilot program due to increased funding from Wake County for an additional 100 seats and a one-time grant from Truist that funds two seats. WCSS is applying for a grant from State Employees Credit Union (SECU) Foundation and has begun working with Wake County to develop a sustainable plan for expansion of the WTS program through private/public funding investment.
- Racial Equity Point of View (RE POV): Ms. Headen shared RE POV affirmations and examples of how WCSS is implementing these affirmations through action.
 - A commitment to not ignore race.
 - The Leadership Team has developed its North Star and the following purpose statement – "the WCSS Leadership Team will act as thought leaders and think strategically to create a context where all children succeed by addressing systemic inequities" to guide their work going forward. This is in alignment with the WCSS mission and Strategic Framework.
 - Commitment to a shared vision to shift power back to BIPOC communities so that BIPOC children are set up for success in school and in life.
 - In preparation for the upcoming funding cycle, WCSS staff used the POV to guide the development of questions and rubric with the Strategic Framework around Racial Equity for the Allocations application.
 - Commitment to building equity as a skill.
 - In September all WCSS attended two full days of Racial Equity training followed with a half day facilitated debrief session.
 - WCSS has contracted with a consultant for a three year period to lead staff through the next phase of equity skill building.
 - Commitment to prioritize the lived experience of BIPOC people when recruiting new team members.
 - In establishing the Wake County Early Childhood Action Plan Executive Committee, black and brown community leaders with various professional expertise and lived experience were identified and recruited.
 - Gather feedback from children and families regularly and report back to families how their insight is used to make improvements.
 - Consistent with the focus on data informed decision making and FEL, WCSS is distributing many more family surveys and then sharing with those families, the summary of findings and what we plan to do with the information.

Ms. Headen reported the next Board meeting will be an all-day in-person meeting and retreat on February 28, 2024 at the NC State University Club. WCSS is working to finalize the facilitators to lead two training topics: fund development and Board readiness for grassroots participation.

With no further business to discuss, Matt Glova moved to adjourn the meeting. Susan Evans seconded the motion. Calling for a vote and hearing no objections, the meeting was adjourned at 9:45 AM. (12-23-45)

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Secretary

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