

**Wake County Smart Start  
Executive Committee Meeting  
January 24, 2024**

A meeting of the Wake County Smart Start (WCSS) Executive Committee was held on Wednesday, January 24, 2024 with Chair, Katherine Williams presiding. The meeting was held via Zoom conference call.

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

Committee member absent: Tonya Venable

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

**Call to Order/Announcements**

At 8:35 am, Katherine Williams, 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.

Sherry Heuser moved to adopt the agenda. Nikia Coates seconded the motion. Calling for a vote and with none opposed, the vote was unanimous. (01-24-46)

Committee members reviewed the consent agenda. Matt Glova moved to approve the consent agenda, including minutes from the Executive Committee meeting on September 27, 2023, December 2023 financial reports and Form 990. Sherry Heuser seconded the motion. Calling for a vote and hearing no objection, the motion carried. (01-24-47)

**Advancement Committee**

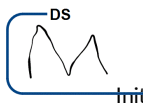
Committee Chair, Nikia Coates reported with the following updates:

- The committee received an update on the fund development training during the full day Board retreat on Feb. 28. Katherine will provide full details during her update under Chair's Report. The committee is looking forward to the learning opportunity along with the full Board and staff as fund development, donor relationship building and stewardship will take the efforts of all.
- Community Relations and Development (CRD) staff have engaged a consultant to reconcile donor data in Little Green Light and will issue End of Year acknowledgment letters to donors contributing in 2023 when the reconciliation is completed.
- The committee reviewed examples of website donor pages and provided feedback for layout design and recommended donation content to be included in the website re-design.
- The committee received an update on plans for the 2024 Valentine's Day campaign and a call to action to help package Valentine card mailings to donors, County Commissioners and Board members on Feb. 8. Gayle E. Headen will hand deliver Valentines to the legislative offices of the Wake Delegation on Feb. 14. Ms. Coates stressed the importance of maintaining connection with funders through occasional communication without an "ask".

**Board Governance Committee**

Committee Chair, Sherry Heuser reported with updates from Board Governance Committee.

- All members eligible for re-election have confirmed their willingness to serve another term. The committee discussed strategies for dealing with a few unexpected potential vacancies and their impact on board composition.
  - Amelia Muse (representing community mental health) is moving out of state in mid-Feb. for a new job. Bylaws require Board members to be NC residents, but not a requirement for community committee members. She has agreed to continue her participation on Allocations Committee through this cycle.
  - Tonya Kangkolo (representing family home childcare provider) is potentially resigning due to conflict with family healthcare issues. Gayle Headen following up with Tonya as she makes her decision.

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- Catherine Lassiter (president of community college designee) has retired but if willing, can still participate as board member until end of fiscal year. If Board Governance decides to fill this position, they will talk with the President of Wake Tech about the attributes that would make a new designee a good fit for this Board.
- The committee analyzed WCSS's current board composition model, Option 1 which calls for specific role representation against anticipated vacancies and found that the Board can maintain compliance with Option 2 requirements, which are broader and more flexible. NCPC allows for change between board composition models with no restriction, other than board approval. Board Governance will bring this as recommendation to the Board at the February meeting to remain in compliance, as well as a recommendation to accept board resignations.
- The committee agreed on priorities of filling vacancies for community mental health, non-profit childcare organization and family child care home and will follow the vetting and recruitment process to identify candidates who are the best fit for the Board.
- BoardLead update: There were no matches this year.

### Finance Committee

Finance Committee Chair, Matt Glova presented a summary of the Financial Audit Report and the Single Audit Report, noting highlights from each report. He commented that both audits have resulted in a clean report with no findings and acknowledged Gary Carr and the fiscal team for their efforts.


Matt Glova presented a Finance Committee recommendation for a budget increase in the range adjustment and merit wage pool. He drew attention to supporting information on Attachment D.1 and noted there has not been a major increase in the costs for health insurance over the past several years. Sherry Heuser moved to approve budgeting a 5% increase in salaries for merit increases and salary range adjustments. And a 7% increase in employee health insurance cost for calendar year 2025. Nikia Coates seconded the motion. Calling for a vote, and hearing no objections, the motion carried. (01-24-48)

Matt Glova presented a committee recommendation for 2024 insurance renewals. He noted most of the policies have no premium increases, a few have minor increases resulting in a total premium cost increase of \$933 for Commercial insurance renewal package A motion to accept the insurance renewal package including Commercial Package and Umbrella Coverage, Renewal of Directors' and Officers' Employment Practices and Fiduciary Liability with Selective Insurance, Directors' and Officers' Liability, Commercial Crime and ERISA Bond coverage, Workers Compensation and Cyber Liability coverage as detailed on Attachment E.1 was made by Sherry Heuser and seconded by Nikia Coates. Calling for a vote and hearing no objections, the vote was unanimous. (01-24-49)

### Chair's Report

Chair Katherine Williams shared details of the proposed agenda for the WCSS Board Retreat scheduled on February 28, 2024, at the NC State University Club.

Ms. Williams explained that the fund development training designed by the consultant, Armstrong McGuire involves an assignment to be completed by all Board members. The Board will have the opportunity to review strategies involved during all phases of the fund development cycle, consider where their skills, abilities and interests best align and choose one component to practice before a one-hour group follow-up session. She said the follow-up will be an opportunity to process learnings and experiences from the assignment and will have the benefit of helping Board members choose where they're comfortable in contributing to fund development and for the Advancement Committee know who is willing and able to support them in various ways. Ms. Williams opened discussion to determine how and when to hold the follow-up activity. Following discussion, the Executive Committee unanimously agreed to schedule the fund development follow-up session as meeting extension following the April 24, 2024, NC Pre-K Committee and Board meetings, condensing time spent on topics on the regular agendas where possible to minimize the extended time. Nikia Coates suggested a reminder or communication to the Board between the February Fund Development training and the April follow-up.

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### **Executive Director's Report**

In the absence of Executive Director, Gayle E. Headen, Carol Orji presented a staff recommendation for allocation of unexpended funds to make them available in the current fiscal year to current partners for staff trainings supporting Strategic Framework objectives. She explained the unspent funds are available due to not going into contract with a previously approved activity through UNC Horizons. Following questions, Matt Glova moved to approve making unspent funds available to current partners to support staff participation in workshops/trainings related to Strategic Framework key objectives (racial equity, family engagement and leadership, culturally affirming care, data-informed decision making). Nikia Coates seconded the motion. Calling for a vote and hearing no objections, the vote was unanimous. (4-50)

Ms. Orji shared a presentation and update on efforts at the state level to modernize the Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS). The Division of Child Development and Early Education has developed a draft plan for modifying QRIS based on public feedback. She shared the timeline of January to March for review of the plan and submission due to the North Carolina Legislature. From April 2024 to August 2025 there will be a period for rulemaking with opportunity for public comment and planning for implementation. Under the currently proposed modification, providers would choose an option from three separate pathways to earn a 2-5 star rated license.

- Program Assessment (most similar to the current system)
- Classroom and Instructional Quality
- Accreditation and Head Start


Ms. Orji provided detail in the presentation on each of the pathways.

Ms. Orji also gave an update on the Building Bright Futures Early Childhood Apprenticeship program that is being developed as a state funded initiative by the North Carolina Business Committee for Education. As a convener and collaborator with Wake Tech and Wake County Public School System, WCSS held a meeting in December for interested child care providers, resulting in 7 providers registering for the program. Currently, 9 providers have been approved as business partners, 3 providers are in the process of being approved; 5 students have been approved so far and 3 students are in the process.

- Pre-apprenticeship program for high school students enrolled in Wake County public schools
- Full apprenticeship program for adults

Ms. Orji confirmed that students will have fees waived for their classes at Wake Tech and will receive payment for work at the centers. A grant from the state will fully fund these costs through December of 2024.

With no further business to discuss, Sherry Heuser moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:52 AM. Matt Glova seconded the motion. Calling for a vote and hearing no objections, the motion carried. (01-24-51)

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Secretary

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