

**Wake County Smart Start
Executive Committee Meeting
September 25, 2024**

A meeting of the Wake County Smart Start (WCSS) Executive Committee was held on Wednesday, September 25, 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, and Tonya Venable

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

Call to Order/Announcements

At 8:33 am, Chair Katherine Williams 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 to adopt the agenda was unanimous. (09-24-18)

Committee members reviewed the minutes. Matt Glova moved to approve the minutes from the Executive Committee meeting on March 27, 2024. Matt Ellinwood seconded the motion. Calling for a vote and hearing no objection, the motion carried. (09-24-19)

Advancement Committee

Committee Chair, Nikia Coates reported with the following updates:

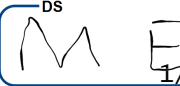
- At their last meeting, the committee engaged in discussion about the annual “Pastries with Partners” stakeholder appreciation event and how it may be used to leverage development. Nikia is sending an invitation to the full Board to save the date of Nov. 19, attend the event which will be at Union Special Bakery and invite a friend who might be interested in learning more about WCSS, volunteer for event and/or contribute needed material supplies.
- Mendi Nieters of Armstrong McGuire shared Resource Development assessment findings and recommendations and Case for Support questions that will be the focus of the Advancement Committee meeting in October.
- Resource Development assessment findings and recommendations will be shared with full Board in advance of Oct. Board meeting when Mendi Nieters will present a summary during the Advancement Committee segment of the agenda.

Board Governance Committee

Committee Chair, Sherry Heuser reported Ariel Ford has indicated her interest in joining WCSS Board now that she has left her position as the former Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE) Director. The vetting process is underway which will include a candidate interview by Sherry Heuser and Matt Ellinwood. Board Governance Committee anticipates bringing an off-cycle recommendation for Ariel’s election to the October Board meeting. Ariel plans to attend the October Board meeting as an observer,

Finance Committee

Finance Committee Chair, Matt Glova, presented a committee recommendation for a range adjustment and merit wage increase. Matt provided a few highlights of supporting information: the increase is included in the FY24-25 WCSS budget previously approved by the Board and WCSS has received full funding from the State and Wake County. The breakdown is approximately .34% for range adjustments and 4.66% for merit increases. The total increase in salaries is \$122,743. All increases are retroactive to 7/1/2024. After a question about why the MAC Accountant position is excluded was addressed, Sherry Heuser moved to approve a range adjustment and merit wage increase pool of 5.0% of wages for permanent positions as of June 30, 2024, excluding the Executive Director and MAC Accountant. Nikia Coates seconded the motion. Calling for a vote, and hearing no objections, the motion carried. (09-24-20)


Initial _____ Date 9/22/2025 | 3:04 PM EST

Executive Director's Report

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

- Director of Advancement search: Ms. Headen reported that since the position was posted, 33 applications have been received. The posting will expire at close of business, Mon. Sep. 30. The current timeline is selection of the top candidate by November. Ms. Headen commented that so far, most applicants do not have the specific skills set and expertise that is being sought, including expertise in building a development program and proven track record in raising funds focused on major gifts and grants.
- State budget update: State legislators reconvened in session on Sep. 9. Ms. Headen reported on House Bill 10 allocating \$463.5M for Opportunity Scholarship vouchers to serve 54,000 children waitlisted for the program. Ms. Headen gave a reminder that during the last session, no funds were allocated to Early Childhood work with the exception of stabilization grants in July. She said that without additional financial supports for the Early Childhood system, particularly child care, it's estimated that as many as 30% of early childhood programs statewide may close, which translates to the loss of approximately 7,000 seats in Wake County.
- The Smart Start network has completed a review of the NC General Statutes for Smart Start, and compiled a draft of recommendations that will be included in the 2025 Smart Start Network Policy Agenda currently under development.
- Ms. Headen reported WCSS staff attended a full day in-person Racial Equity training on Sep. 16. Based on one of the Racial Equity assessment recommendations for next steps related to internal culture, the training focused on beginning the work to develop shared language which resulted in a robust discussion of "greatest need" As a follow-up, Dr. Ashley Gaddy Robbins will be working with a small group of staff to develop the shared language. Ms. Headen reported the Leadership Team is planning a two-day retreat in early October focusing on "Managing Diverse Teams" training led by Dr. Gaddy Robbins.
- Ms. Headen gave a presentation on WCSS work to the Wake Forest Kiwanis on Sep. 12. Although the group size was small, out of the nine Kiwanians present, three commented to affirm the value they recognize in the work and the need for support of the Early Childhood system.

Following the Executive Director's report, Matt Ellinwood remarked that Governor Cooper has vetoed House Bill 10, however there's a possibility the veto will be overridden when the General Assembly reconvenes in session on October 9 or later in November.

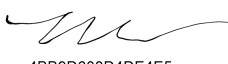
At 9:12 AM, Sherry Heuser made a motion to enter a closed session to discuss the Executive Director's performance evaluation. Matt Glova seconded the motion. Calling for a vote and hearing all in favor, the motion was approved and all staff members were dismissed from the meeting. (09-24-21)

Matt Glova moved to approve a 7% merit increase for the Executive Director in recognition of the exemplary work that has taken place under her leadership. Nikia Coates seconded the motion. Calling for a vote and hearing all in favor, the motion was unanimously approved. (09-24-22)

Matt Glova made a motion to exit the closed session. Matt Ellinwood seconded the motion. A vote was called for and with none opposed, the motion carried. (09-24-23)

With no further business to discuss, Matt Glova moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:40 AM. Nikia Coates seconded the motion. Calling for a vote and hearing no objections, the motion carried. (09-24-24)

DocuSigned by:



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Secretary

1/22/2025 | 3:04 PM EST

Date