

**Wake County Smart Start  
NC Pre-K Committee Meeting  
October 23, 2024**

A meeting of the Wake County Smart Start (WCSS) NC Pre-K Committee was held via Zoom call on Wednesday, October 23, 2024, with Chair Katherine Williams presiding.

Committee members present: André Anthony, Nikia Coates, Veronica Creech, Dawn Dawson, Matt Glova, Sherry Heuser, Nikki Leonard, Ronetta Pearsall, Stephanie Shell, Tonya Venable, Joe White, Katherine Williams

Committee members absent: Heather Drennan, Matt Ellinwood, Susan Evans, Mickey Holt, Antonia Pedroza and Stacey Wilson-Norman

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

Guests present: Katie Lewis

**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 attending the meeting as non-committee members. Veronica Creech moved to adopt the agenda. Nikki Leonard seconded the motion. Calling for a vote and with none opposed, the vote was unanimous. (10-24-25)

NC Pre-K Committee members reviewed minutes from the previous meeting. Matt Glova moved to adopt the minutes from the NC Pre-K Committee meeting on August 28, 2024. Nikia Coates seconded the motion. Calling for a vote and hearing no objection, the motion carried. (10-24-26)

**Executive Director’s Report**

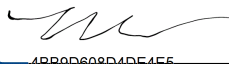
Executive Director, Gayle E. Headen provided the following NC Pre-K updates:

- SY24-25 enrollment status: Current enrollment is 98% full slots with 28 vacancies. Most of the vacancies are in two sites.
- WCSS is recruiting potential private providers in communities where applications are trending and will bring a site selection recommendation to the NC Pre-K Committee for the third subsequent year at the December meeting.

In response to a question about seeking sites that can provide student transportation, Ms. Headen said the organization is broadly looking at how to evaluate data differently and anticipate some solutions to emerge that can help to improve the process across the lifecycle with the goal of serving the maximum number of children possible in a more seamless fashion: locations, recruiting, application processing, and the decision tree among the Pre-K Collaborative partners.

Carol Orji reported on a September 14 meeting with Wake County to request the flexibility to place children from families over the 75% state median income threshold in open slots. The request was approved to use county funds to serve families with income between 76%-85% of the state median. In return, WCSS has promised to prioritize placement of children at or below the 75% income threshold before placing children between 76%-85% threshold. During the meeting, there was also conversation about assisting families with transportation challenges. Through an introduction by Commissioner Susan Evans, WCSS has reached out to GoTriangle and learned the income threshold is at or below \$35,000/yr. to be eligible for free fare. WCSS is exploring other options to support family transportation needs. Commissioner Evans has also provided WCSS with a connection to Capital Area Workforce Development (CAWD) as a resource for offering employment and job training opportunities to parents.

With no further agenda items to be discussed, Sherry Heuser moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:53 AM. André Anthony seconded the motion. Calling for a vote and hearing no objections, the motion passed. (10-24-27)

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 Secretary

12/4/2024 | 1:50 PM EST  
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