

**Wake County Smart Start
NC Pre-K Committee Meeting
December 4, 2024**

A meeting of the Wake County Smart Start (WCSS) NC Pre-K Committee was held via Zoom call on Wednesday, December 4, 2024, with Vice Chair, Nikia Coates presiding.

Committee members present: Nikia Coates, Dawn Dawson, Susan Evans, Ariel Ford, Matt Glova, Sherry Heuser, Mickey Holt, Nikki Leonard, Ronetta Pearsall, Stephanie Shell, Tonya Venable, Joe White and Stacey Wilson-Norman

Committee members absent: André Anthony, Veronica Creech, Heather Drennan, Matthew Ellinwood, Antonia Pedroza and Katherine Williams

Staff members present: Alex Livas-Dlott, Gary Carr, Gayle E. Headen, Joan Crutchfield, Rob Linens and Nancy Peck

Guests present: Katie Lewis and Cheryl Stallings

Call to Order/Announcements

At 8:30 AM, in the absence of Chair, Katherine Williams, Vice Chair Nikia Coates announced a quorum was present and officially called the meeting to order. She announced the meeting is being recorded and noted the presence of staff and guests attending the meeting as non-committee members. Sherry Heuser moved to adopt the agenda. Mickey Holt seconded the motion. Calling for a vote and with all in favor, the vote was unanimous. (12-24-33)

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 October 23, 2024. Joe White seconded the motion. Calling for a vote and hearing no objection, the motion carried. (12-24-34)

Executive Director's Report

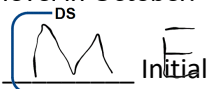
Executive Director, Gayle E. Headen, introduced a three part staff recommendation to reopen the site selection process for the third year in a row in an effort to stay ahead of the need for finding enough providers to provide Pre-K services; and to recruit potential private providers and make available slots in areas of the county where applications are trending that are not currently served by existing sites. Ms. Headen summarized the background information related to the recommendations. She reaffirmed the NC Pre-K Committee is the decision-making body for the local NC Pre-K Program and WCSS is the local contractor, supporting and overseeing the Site Selection Subcommittee. Ms. Headen provided the following additional detail about planning for the site selection process:

- Recruiting sites from North Raleigh and Wake Forest as identified through data analysis of submitted application areas by zip code
- Recruiting in areas where sites have continued compliance concerns, specifically in Fuquay-Varina.
- Sending invitations for a targeted areas interest meeting that WCSS will host in January, 2025.

Question and comment followed regarding the facility requirement limitation to 4- and 5-star licensed child care centers. As the former Director of the Division of Child Development and Early Education, Ariel Ford offered rationale for excluding family homes for Pre-K site consideration. Following discussion, Susan Evans made a motion to approve reopening the NC Pre-K Standardized Site Selection process/timeline and sub-committee members as detailed on Attachment B.2; completion of the NC Pre-K Standardized Site Selection Process electronically through a secure grant management software; and waiving re-application for existing NC Pre-K sites that are maintaining NC Pre-K standards during the site selection process. Stephanie Shell seconded the motion. Calling for a vote, with an abstention by Nikki Leonard, the vote to approve was unanimous (12-24-35)

Gayle Headen provided the following NC Pre-K update:

SY24-25 enrollment status: Current enrollment has been maintained at 98% of available slots since reaching that level in October. WCSS has used data to look at 4-year trends of children enrolled in NC Pre-K by the first

 Initial

2/28/2025 | 10:55 AM EST
Date

program day with the objective of identifying strategies to improve enrollment of children at greatest needs as close as possible to the first day of the program. Trends for enrollment on Day 1 show significant improvement this year and the year prior. Ms. Headen has proposed to staff, a goal of filling all 999 NC Pre-K private slots by the beginning of the 2025-26 school year.

Gayle Headen will meet later this month with Wake Pre-K Collaborative leaders, Tonya Venable, representing Head Start, and Dr. Stacey Wilson-Norman, representing Title I, to examine Wake Pre-K Collaborative barriers to enrollment and explore supports that can be provided to alleviate them.

With no further agenda items to be discussed, Sherry Heuser moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:50 AM. Matt Glova seconded the motion. Calling for a vote and hearing no objections, the motion passed. (12-24-36)

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Secretary

2/28/2025 | 10:55 AM EST

Date