

**Wake County Smart Start
NC Pre-K Committee Meeting
June 25, 2025**

A meeting of the Wake County Smart Start (WCSS) NC Pre-K Committee was held on Wednesday, June 25, 2025, with Chair Katherine Williams presiding.

Pre-K Committee Members present: André Anthony, Nikia Coates, Veronica Creech, Dawn Dawson, Susan Evans, Ariel Ford, Sherry Heuser, Mickey Holt, Nikki Leonard, Ronetta Pearsall, Cheryl Stallings, Katherine Williams.

Pre-K Committee Members absent: Matthew Ellinwood, Matthew Glova, Tonya Venable, Antonia Pedroza, Stephanie Shell, Joe White

Staff Members present: Gayle E. Headen, Bryce McClamroch, Joan Crutchfield, Robert Linens, Alejandra Livas-Dlott, Carol Orji, Gary Carr, Taylor Young.

Guests present: Roberta Hill

Call to Order/Announcements

At 8:41 AM, Katherine Williams called the meeting to order and recognized a quorum. She announced that staff members were present.

Ms. Williams requested a motion to adopt the agenda. Ariel Ford moved to adopt the agenda. Sherry Heuser seconded the motion. Calling for a vote and with none opposed, the motion carried. (6-25-56)

Ms. Coates requested a motion to approve minutes from the April 23, 2025, meeting. Nikia Coates moved to approve the minutes from the April 23, 2025, meeting. Veronica Creech seconded the motion. Calling for a vote and hearing no objection, the motion carried. (6-25-57)

Executive Director's Report

Gayle Headen reported that the team has placed 462 children for the 2025-26 school year as compared to the same time last year with 277 children placed. The NC Pre-K team will reach out to providers on June 25th to report placements.

Program guidelines for the next school year are expected to be released the week of July 7th. Any pertinent changes will be reported to the Committee at the August meeting.

Earlier in June, the County Commissioners approved additional funds for the 2025-26 school year to support teacher pay increases. A group of WCSS program parents, teachers and providers gave public testimony in May about the importance of their support for Wake County young children and their families. They also thanked the Commissioners for their support of Wake ThreeSchool and NC Pre-K programs.

July 12th NC Pre-K will host its Annual Pre-K Application and Resource Event from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM in the WCSS parking lot. Committee Members are encouraged to participate. Ms. Headen thanked John Rex Endowment as the primary sponsor for the event.

Ms. Headen reported that House Bill 800 is under consideration with the North Carolina Legislature. It is broad, addressing the efficiency of the early childhood system, inclusive of a very directed focus on NC Pre-K and seats that are less than 100% full. WCSS has averaged about 98% over the last several years. There has been discussion of possible mid-year changes in the allotment of seats. Wake County allotment is 1,532 seats. There were several counties whose allocations were reduced. WCSS allocation was not adjusted, and the NC Pre-K team is focused on maintaining the high enrollment rate. The legislation has not yet been passed.

Initial


With no further business to discuss, Katherine Williams asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Sherry Heuser moved to adjourn the meeting. Nikia Coates seconded the motion. Calling for a vote and hearing no objections, the meeting was adjourned by Katherine Williams at 8:59 AM. (6-25-58)

Signed by:

Matt Ellinwood

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9/9/2025 | 4:11 PM EDT

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