

**Wake County Smart Start  
NC Pre-K Committee Meeting  
December 3, 2025**

A meeting of the Wake County Smart Start (WCSS) NC Pre-K Committee was held on Wednesday, December 3, 2025, with Chair Nikia Coates presiding.

Pre-K Committee Members present: Kelsey Camarena, Nikia Coates, Susan Evans, Ariel Ford, Matthew Glova, Jason Horton, Kerry McCarthy Adams, Denise Tillery, Joe White, Michele Woodson.

Pre-K Committee Members absent: André Anthony, Veronica Creech, Matthew Ellinwood, Nikki Leonard, Ronetta Pearsall, Stephanie Shell, Cheryl Stallings, Antonia Pedroza, Tonya Venable, Katherine Williams

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

**Call to Order/Announcements**

At 8:30 AM, Nikia Coates announced a quorum was present and officially called the meeting to order. She noted the presence of staff.

Ms. Coates requested a motion to adopt the agenda. Matt Glova moved to adopt the agenda. Ariel Ford seconded the motion. Calling for a vote and with none opposed, the motion carried. (12-3-15)

Ms. Coates requested a motion to approve minutes from the October 22, 2025, meeting. Michele Woodson moved to approve the minutes of the October 22, 2025, meeting. Jason Horton seconded the motion. Calling for a vote and hearing no objection, the motion carried. (12-3-16)

**Executive Director's Report**

Executive Director Gayle E. Headen welcomed Denise Tillery, Interim Senior Director for the Office of Early Learning, as the newest member of the NC Pre-K Committee. She is with Wake County Public Schools (WCPSS) on an interim basis and has joined the committee in place of Dawn Dawson. Ms. Tillery has been with WCPSS for 28 years in various roles and worked closely with Ms. Dawson.

Ms. Headen reported that NC Pre-K remains full and the team fills vacancies as they occur. The team is gearing up for next year. DCDEE will be monitoring WCSS this year. This occurs every three years and is no surprise to the team.

With no further business to discuss, Ms. Coates asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Joe White moved to adjourn the meeting. Kerry McCarthy Adams seconded the motion. Calling for a vote and hearing no objections, the meeting was adjourned by Ms. Coates at 8:40 AM. (12-3-17)

Signed by:

*Matt Ellinwood*

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2/26/2026 | 9:00 AM EST

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*ME*