

**Wake County Smart Start
Board of Directors Approved Meeting Minutes
October 28, 2020**

A regular meeting of the Wake County Smart Start (WCSS) Board of Directors was held on Wednesday, October 28, 2020 with WCSS Board Chair, Barbara Morales Burke presiding. The meeting was held via Zoom conference

Committee members present: Christine Alvarado, Dale Cousins, Veronica Creech, L'Teisha Curtis, Heather Drennan, Matthew Glova, Liz Hamner, Sherry Heuser, Jessica Holmes, Tonya Kangkolo, Katie King, Catherine Lassiter Cathy Moore, Barbara Morales Burke, Antonia Pedroza, Kimberly Shaw, Kristi Tally, Charlotte Turpin, Michael Wasilick, Angie Welsh and Joe White

Committee members absent: Leslie Ann Jackson, Sharon Loza and Katherine Williams

Staff members present: Gary Carr, Gayle E. Headen, Joan Crutchfield, Sasha Gomez, Bryce McClamroch, Carol Orji, Nancy Peck and Anna Troutman

Call to Order/Announcements/Adoption of Agenda

At 8:34 AM, Board Chair, Barbara Morales Burke recognized a quorum and called the meeting to order. Sherry Heuser moved to adopt the agenda. Jessica Holmes seconded the motion. Calling for a vote and hearing none opposed, the vote was unanimous. (10-20-24)

The Board considered items on the consent agenda. Angie Welsh moved to approve items on the consent agenda including the minutes from the August 26, 2020 WCSS Board of Directors meeting and financial reports for September 2020. Liz Hamner seconded the motion. Calling for a vote and hearing no objections, the motion carried. (10-20-25)

Committee Reports

Governance Ad-Hoc Committee

Committee Chair, Sherry Heuser reported the committee is working with all the other board committees to review their present committee descriptions for accuracy in reflecting role, purpose and responsibilities. She said the Ad-Hoc Committee plans to meet two additional times before the end of the year and will share updates as they occur with the full board.

Advancement Committee

Committee Chair, Liz Hamner reported that during the committee's recent meeting, members reviewed the committee description for clarity, made some edits and will provide the updates to the Ad-Hoc Committee for its review. Ms. Hamner reported on the outcome of the summer mailer sent to a list of 2,300 known supporters of early childhood education in Wake County. She said that the committee decided against following up with a second mailing in the Fall due to the abundance of political mailings before the election, however the Annual Appeal mailer will be sent as planned. Ms. Hamner invited board members to mark their calendars for the Better Together appreciation event for early childhood professionals and community advocates scheduled for November 23 as a drive through curbside event. She said board members interested in assisting at the event may look for forthcoming communication on opportunities and additional information.

Finance Committee

Finance Committee Chair, Joe White summarized the information included several highlights of note in the FY 2019-20 IRS 990 form prepared by WCSS fiscal department and reviewed by the MAC accountant and the Finance Committee prior to making it available for Board approval. Dale Cousins made a motion to accept the FY2019-20 990 and to approve its submission to the IRS as required. Matthew Glova seconded the motion. Calling for a vote, and hearing no objections, the vote was unanimous. (10-20-26)

Joe White presented a Finance Committee recommendation for an increase in the merit wage pool. He drew attention to historical information on wage increases detailed on Attachment C.1 and remarked that full funding

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was received for FY20-21 from NCPD and Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE) to support the budgeted increase. Matt Glova made a motion to approve a 2.5% merit wage increase pool retroactive to July 1, 2020 for permanent staff positions as of June 30, 2020 excluding the Executive Director and MAC Accountant. Liz Hamner seconded the motion. Calling for a vote, and hearing no objections, the vote passed. (10-20-27)

Board Development Committee

Board Development Chair, Angie Welsh announced this would be the last meeting for Commissioner Jessica Holmes as her term representing Wake County Board of Commissioners is ending. Ms. Welsh summarized highlights of Commissioner Holmes’ advocacy leading to a permanent place for NC Pre-K in the Wake County education budget. Chair, Barbara Morales Burke presented the Board Development Committee recommendation for a resolution to recognize Commissioner Holmes for her service and leadership in supporting Wake County Smart Start and the NC Pre-K program.

Angie Welsh moved to adopt the following resolution:

In Recognition of Extraordinary Service and Leadership, The Wake County Smart Start Board of Directors Presents a Resolution in Honor of Wake County Commissioner Jessica N. Holmes:

Whereas, Commissioner Holmes is a member of the Wake County Smart Start Board of Directors since February 2015 representing the Wake County Board of Commissioners;

Whereas, among her many noteworthy achievements, Commissioner Holmes initiated and supported inclusion of the NC Pre-K program in the Wake County budget, resulting in \$325,728 in funding during her first year of service;

Whereas, Commissioner Holmes has over the past five plus years acted as the early education liaison for Wake County and has tirelessly cultivated exponentially increased county funding for the expansion of and permanent inclusion of the NC Pre-K program in the Wake County budget to serve 4-year-old children in Wake County;

Whereas, in 2017, Commissioner Holmes was elected as Chair of the Wake County Board of Commissioners, becoming the fourth woman of color and youngest person ever to do so, and assuming even greater leadership responsibilities while continuing her support of the NC Pre-K program in Wake County;

Whereas, Commissioner Holmes’ contributions as a hardworking, committed leader and champion for early education are unparalleled and will be greatly missed by Wake County Smart Start Board members and staff;

Therefore, be it resolved that the Wake Smart Start Board of Directors expresses its deepest appreciation for the outstanding contributions made by Commissioner Jessica Holmes during her three terms of board service; and extends its best wishes as she continues her career as a public servant.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be entered permanently into the minutes of the Wake County Smart Start Board of Directors.

Charlotte Turpin seconded the motion. A vote was called for and all being in favor, the resolution was approved. (10-20-28)

Executive Director, Gayle E. Headen expressed gratitude to Commissioner Holmes for her support and drew attention to thank you messages framing the printed draft resolution created by NC Pre-K students as evidence of the difference her advocacy has made on their behalf.

Commissioner Holmes thanked the assembled board members and staff for the honor and opportunity to serve children in Wake County. She commented on her pride in seeing WCSS moved out of the non-profits category into a permanent education category in the Wake County budget. She vowed to continue her advocacy for early childhood.

Chair’s Report

Chair, Barbara Morales Burke recapped the following highlights from the September 23, 2020 Executive Committee meeting

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- Review of August 2020 financial statement
- Discussion of plans for the December board seminar on the topic of racial equity
- Approval of a correction to the FY20-21 allocation amount for Child Care Subsidy program due to a mathematical error discovered on the document.
- Updates from WCSS Executive Director, Gayle Headen on Racial Equity consultant proposals, results of a child care provider survey, COVID-19 relief initiatives and a new AmeriCorp Vista volunteer to assist Community Relations and Development team work.
- During a closed session, discussed and approved a merit salary increase for the Executive Director contingent upon board approval of a merit wage increase for all WCSS staff.

Ms. Morales Burke reminded board members if they haven't yet submitted their Conflict of Interest disclosure statements, these are due to Nancy Peck by Oct. 30, 2020.

Executive Director's Report

Executive Director, Gayle E. Headen provided an update on the following topics:

- Racial Equity work: Seven consulting proposals were received by the RFP deadline, reviewed and scored by a team of ten staff members resulting in the selection of CounterPart Consulting to provide racial equity training and consultation from October 2020 to September 2021. An Equity Leadership Team (ELT) of seven WCSS staff has been formed representing diversity of level of position and length of service in the organization, race, ethnicity, age, gender and external relationships with stakeholders. The ELT will have a first meeting with CounterPart on Nov. 7. Planning will start immediately for the Dec. 2 board seminar and will allow for differences in the level of training that some board members may have already received on the topic.
- COVID-19 Initiatives: NCPC and the Smart Start network has fast tracked the development and implementation of three initiatives to leverage \$5 million in federal CARES Act funds allocated to Smart Start by the state. Ms. Headen said that WCSS has chosen to participate in each of the initiatives and is moving quickly to fully expend the budgeted amount by the end of the year. Ms. Headen outlined the three initiatives as follows:
 - Resources for Resilience: WCSS is recruiting and registering parents, teachers and funded partners to participate in 14 trauma informed, resiliency focused workshop trainings and one hour Listening Circles to provide them with tools and strategies to promote resilience and mitigate the effects of ongoing stress experienced by young children and their families.
 - Wonderschool focusing on support of licensed family home child care providers through one year business automation subscriptions to improve and sustain their operations. The WCSS ECI team has recruited family home providers in excess of the allotted amount and has received encouraged to continue recruitment.
 - System Improvement and Public Engagement (SIPE) team along with two community partners are distributing forty loaded tablets including WhatsApp and packaged with a hot spot with 1 year paid subscription for internet service to provide information and technology access to in-need families and linking them to Parent Education and Home Visiting services.
- NCPC updates
 - Evaluation of the allocations methodology which NCPC is required by law to develop for funding local partnerships. NCPC has contracted with WestEd to evaluate its funding formula. Smart Start local partnership ED teams are participating in a series of input sessions and conversation with Local Partnership Advisory Council (LPAC) to inform WestEd in developing recommendations for the funding formula, anticipated to take two years for completion.
 - FY19-20 Smart Start funding reversions to NCPC will be returned to WCSS in the current fiscal year in the form of carry forward funding. WCSS staff will make a recommendation to Finance Committee at its November meeting for the best uses of allocating these one-time funds. If accepted, the recommendation will be brought to the full Board in December.

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- Provider Surveys: Following an initial survey in April, 2020, WCSS conducted a second child care provider survey in late August which received nearly 200 responses. Major themes that emerged were the significant negative financial impact COVID-19 has had on providers' businesses, worry about teacher health and average of only 30% enrollment at site. 57% of survey participants responded that WCSS support has been very important or essential, specifically: check in calls, supply drives, information sharing and technical assistance.
- Hunt Institute District Discussion; Ms. Headen participated in the September Hunt Institute "State of Education in Wake County" forum with members of the NC General Assembly Wake Delegation and other advocates from early education, public education K-12, community college and university. The common theme shared by all was that in the face of adversity, systems are adjusting successfully in the interim, but these interim successes can only be sustained if the legislature provides more financial support.

With no further business to address, Christine Alvarado made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:50 am. Matthew Glova seconded the motion. Calling for a vote and hearing no objections, the vote passed. (10-20-29)

Kimberly Shaw

Secretary

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Date

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