

**Wake County Smart Start  
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes  
December 2, 2020**

A regular meeting of the Wake County Smart Start (WCSS) Board of Directors was held on Wednesday, December 2, 2020 with WCSS Board Chair, Barbara Morales Burke presiding. The meeting was held via Zoom conference call.

Board members present: Dale Cousins, Veronica Creech, L'Teisha Curtis, Heather Drennan, Matthew Glova, Liz Hamner, Sherry Heuser, Leslie Ann Jackson, Tonya Kangkolo, Katie King, Catherine Lassiter, Sharon Loza, Barbara Morales Burke, Antonia Pedroza, Kristi Tally, Charlotte Turpin, Michael Wasilick, Angie Welsh, Joe White and Katherine Williams

Board members absent: Christine Alvarado, Cathy Moore and Kimberly Shaw

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 9:00 AM, Board Chair, Barbara Morales Burke recognized a quorum and called the meeting to order. Board members viewed a short video clip of a six-year-old boy rapping with a different career profession for every letter of the alphabet. Following the video, Sherry Heuser moved to adopt the agenda. Charlotte Turpin seconded the motion. Calling for a vote and hearing none opposed, the vote was unanimous. (12-20-40)

The Board considered items on the consent agenda. L'Teisha Curtis moved to approve items on the consent agenda including the minutes from the October 28, 2020 WCSS Board of Directors meeting, financial reports for October 2020 and FY20-21 Conflict of Interest Master and Summary documents. Dale Cousins seconded the motion. Calling for a vote and hearing no objections, the motion carried. (12-20-41)

**Committee Reports**

**Finance Committee**

Finance Committee Chair, Joe White offered a Finance Committee recommendation to give authorization to staff for re-allocating reverted Smart Start funding received from North Carolina Partnership for Children (NCPC) after the end of the previous fiscal year to current program activities. Mr. White reviewed a summary of current estimates of re-allocations as detailed on Attachment B.1. Sherry Heuser moved to authorize staff to fully allocate reverted Smart Start funding from FY19-20 to WCSS in-house programs or approved activities with the provision that any unexpended funds be reverted to NCPC at the end of FY20-21. Matt Glova seconded the motion. Calling for a vote, and hearing no objections, the vote passed. (12-20-42)

Mr. White announced as noteworthy that WCSS recently received a health insurance renewal quote at a 6% decrease as opposed to the 10% increase that was budgeted for.

**Advancement Committee**

Committee Chair, Liz Hamner began with a reminder of the two main purposes for the Advancement Committee: 1) raising awareness of WCSS and early childhood programs 2) raising private funds to support WCSS work which is primarily accomplished by identifying and cultivating supporters. Ms. Hamner followed with highlights from the Better Together appreciation event for early childhood professionals and community advocates, held as a drive through curbside event on November 23. Board members viewed a projected photo collage featuring participants and volunteers at the event. Ms. Hamner acknowledged staff and volunteers for their efforts in making it a successful event with special recognition of Veronica Creech for her assistance in connecting WCSS with the Raleigh Police Department to assure an orderly flow of vehicles at the venue.

Ms. Hamner reported the FY20-21 Annual Appeal is in the final stages of preparation with mailing targeted for December 9. She announced the theme of the appeal is "Be the Bridge" focusing on family support and critical child care needs related to the COVID-19 crisis. She encouraged members of the WCSS Board to give thought to supporting the Appeal through their own contribution as well as sharing the message within their network.

KS \_\_\_\_\_ 02/25/2021 \_\_\_\_\_  
Initial Date

## Chair's Report

Chair, Barbara Morales Burke informed Board members that the Executive Committee held an ad hoc closed session meeting on November 17, 2020 to review compensation for the Executive Director. She reported that committee members determined a merit salary adjustment was warranted and voted to approve the increase.

Ms. Morales Burke thanked board members for making time to participate in the racial equity seminar immediately following the board meeting. She remarked on the opportunity to learn and think about racial equity from the board perspective in terms of oversight of the organizations as well as evaluation of funded partner programs. Ms. Morales Burke announced a separate debrief session planned to immediately follow the seminar for the exchange of initial reactions to the information presented.

## Executive Director's Report

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

- Shape NC project close out: The initiative funded by a \$500,000 grant from Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina Foundation and required matching funds met by John Rex Endowment and NCPC supported approximately 1,500 children at 15 participating early childhood programs across Wake County. Ms. Headen shared a PowerPoint presentation highlighting key enhancements to outdoor learning environments and Farm2ECE components made possible through the project. She said that WCSS will soon file programmatic and fiscal close out reports with NCPC.
- Subsidy & TANF spending: Ms. Headen remarked that over half of the NC Pre-K program funding from the Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE) has Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) spending requirements tied to child eligibility. She said the announcement from DCDEE that payment will be made to providers for all NC Pre-K slots in the current year regardless of whether children are attending or not, poses a challenge to meeting TANF eligibility requirements with vacant slots. WCSS has asked DCDEE for guidance how to meet both requirements going forward and is awaiting their reply. In the interim, WCSS has made October payments to providers with November payments to be issued shortly.

Veronica Creech commented on a request by the Mayor of the City of Raleigh for a report on the impact of COVID-19 on child care from an economic development perspective. Ms. Creech asked for additional information that could be shared with the mayor. Ms. Headen said she would provide a written summary but offered the following highlights:

- NC Pre-K enrollment in Wake County currently at 50%, increasing each month since August
  - Total enrollment in child care programs in the county is below 50%
  - Continuing concern from providers about their ability to maintain operations and retaining staff from both pay and health perspectives
  - Reports of COVID-19 clusters in Wake County child care sites have involved mainly adults and very few children. Child care programs continue to be a safe environment for children.
- NCPC: Ms. Headen shared a projection of the following legislative priorities from NCPC
    - Ensure comprehensive funding for Smart Start
    - Address short term and long term child care challenges
    - Expand Home Visiting and Parent Education and other programs that support strong families

There being no further business to address, Angie Welsh made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:45 am. L'Teisha Curtis seconded the motion. Calling for a vote and hearing no objections, the vote passed. (12-20-43)

*Kimberly Shaw*

02/25/2021

Secretary

Date

