

## Wake County Smart Start Executive Committee Meeting Minutes May 26, 2021

A regular meeting of the Wake County Smart Start (WCSS) Executive Committee was convened via Zoom on Wednesday, May 26, 2021 with WCSS Board Chair, Barbara Morales Burke presiding.

Executive Committee members present: Liz Hamner, Sherry Heuser, Leslie Ann Jackson, Barbara Morales Burke, Kim Shaw, Angie Welsh and Joe White

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

### Welcome/Call to Order/Adoption of Agenda

At 8:30AM, Board Chair, Barbara Morale Burke recognized a quorum and called the meeting to order. Ms. Morales Burke welcomed new WCSS Director of Programs, Alex Livas-Dlott and asked for a round of introductions from members of the committee. Liz Hamner moved to adopt the agenda. Kim Shaw seconded the motion. Calling for a vote and hearing no objections, the vote passed. (05-21-69)

Executive Committee members considered items on the consent agenda. Sherry Heuser moved to approve items on the consent agenda including the minutes from the March 24, 2021 WCSS Board of Directors meeting and financial reports for April 2021. Joe White seconded the motion. Calling for a vote and hearing no objections, the motion carried. (05-21-70)

### Advancement Committee

Advancement Committee Chair, Liz Hamner reported the committee is continuing to develop the groundwork for WCSS 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary planning.


- Preparation is underway for an open-ended question survey to be mailed to existing 1996 Society members with questions including: what inspires them to donate, what being a member means to them, preferred method of communication, events they see themselves involved in. The purpose of the survey is to learn what motivates existing supporters and better inform WCSS how to engage with prospective members.
- Ms. Hamner announced Veronica Creech & Jen McPherson will co-chair the 25th Anniversary planning subcommittee.
- The committee is continuing discussion on formation of an honorary host committee. Ms. Hamner invited Executive Committee members to provide feedback on who they would like to see on this committee.

### Board Development Committee

Committee Chair, Angie Welsh reported the Board Development Committee met in early May to identify candidates for Board officer positions and chairs of Board committees for a 2 yr. cycle, board members eligible for re-election to another term and a new board candidate representing business leadership. Angie Welsh, Barbara Morales Burke & Sherry Heuser are reaching out to existing board members to determine their interest. Gayle Headen is communicating with a business candidate proposed. A committee recommendation for elections will be presented to the full Board at the June meeting

### AdHoc Governance Committee

Committee Chair, Sherry Heuser confirmed that all committee level documents have been finalized and are ready to present to the full Board of Directors at the June 2021 meeting. By-laws have been reviewed by an attorney specializing in non-profit organizations and recommendations have been sent to the committee for

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consideration before presenting to the Board for their vote. Ms. Heuser commented that all board governance work planned for FY20-21 has been completed and revisions to the Board dashboard and development of an annual plan will be carried out early in the next fiscal year.

**Finance Committee**

Finance Committee Chair, Joe White presented a committee recommendation to recognize staff for their performance and hardship endured during the pandemic through a contribution to their retirement accounts. Leslie Ann Jackson moved to approve a one-time employer contribution of 3% to eligible employees' 401k accounts in accordance with the WCSS 401k Plan and Profit-Sharing Provision. Angie Welsh seconded the motion. Calling for a vote, and hearing no objections, the vote passed. (05-21-71)

**Chair's Report**

Chair, Barbara Morales Burke expressed her appreciation to staff for their efforts in ongoing work.


**Executive Director's Report**

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

- US Secretary of Education visit: Ms. Headen reported on a recent site visit by US Secretary of Education, Cardona at Bright Beginnings Child Development Center in Cary. The visit was centered on the interest by the Biden administration in universal Pre-K for three and four year olds and to learn how the American Family Plan will benefit families of young children in North Carolina. Ms. Headen shared a comment by Secretary Cardona that North Carolina will serve as a model in its comprehensive approach to early childhood care and education. She also remarked that following the visit, North Carolina Partnership for Children (NCPC) has requested WCSS to build a toolkit for planning future site visits to share within the Smart Start network.
- Blue Cross Blue Shield Grant: Ms. Headen informed committee members that BlueCross BlueShield of North Carolina Foundation has awarded WCSS a \$155,000 grant to lead a one-year pilot study in five counties to understand the experiences of pre-school expulsion by black families. The interest in the study stems from six data roundtables held last year and is aligned with WCSS priorities of advancing racial and ethnic equity and parent leadership. Parent research coordinators will be hired to recruit families to complete surveys. Ms. Headen said the first step is convening an advisory group composed of parents, providers, other local partnerships and early childhood social/emotional experts.
- Federal Funding to States for Early Childhood: Ms. Headen said operational grants will continue through August. She reported that over the next three years approximately \$1.3 billion in federal funding that may be directed toward early childhood will be provided to North Carolina through three federal acts: CARES Act, Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act and the American Rescue Plan. Ms. Headen provided detail on three sources of funding included in the American Rescue Plan that may be used by Smart Start to meet identified priorities.
- Connectivity Bundles: Ms. Headen announced the expansion of an earlier project to provide digital connectivity to families in need. WCSS is finalizing an agreement with Verizon for 200 customized tablets and two years of service to narrow the digital divide in Wake County. WCSS has prioritized support for Best Babies Zone which targets the reduction of infant mortality rates of African American families in specific Wake County zip codes.
- Pre-K Curbside Distribution Event: Ms. Headen said another Pre-K curbside distribution was held in mid-May focusing on transitioning to Pre-K. Pre-K sites picked up backpacks for children filled with puzzles, literacy activities and flash cards. Literacy kits were also provided to remote learning sites.

With no further business to discuss, Sherry Heuser moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:13 AM. Joe White seconded the motion. Calling for a vote and hearing no objections, the motion carried. (05-21-72)

DocuSigned by:

  
Secretary

8/2/2021 | 9:16 AM EDT

Date