

**Wake County Smart Start  
Executive Committee Meeting Minutes  
July 28, 2021**

A regular meeting of the Wake County Smart Start (WCSS) Executive Committee was convened via Zoom on Wednesday, July 28, 2021 with WCSS Board Chair, Sherry Heuser presiding.

Executive Committee members present: Sherry Heuser, Leslie Ann Jackson, Barbara Morales Burke, Joe White and Katherine Williams

Executive Committee members absent: Liz Hamner

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

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

At 8:34 AM, Board Chair, Sherry Heuser recognized a quorum and called the meeting to order. Barbara Morales Burke moved to adopt the agenda. Joe White seconded the motion. Calling for a vote and hearing no objections, the vote passed. (07-21-01)

Executive Committee members considered draft minutes from the last Executive Committee meeting. Leslie Ann Jackson moved to approve the minutes from the May 26, 2021 WCSS Executive Committee meeting. Katherine Williams seconded the motion. Calling for a vote and hearing no objections, the motion carried. (07-21-02)

**Advancement Committee**

In the absence of Liz Hamner, Advancement Committee Chair, Sherry Heuser provided an update. The WCSS 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Planning Subcommittee met on July 16 and selected an anniversary logo that will brand all materials and communications during the year. Ms. Heuser said the planning subcommittee also began discussion of what the culminating 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary event should look like, to better inform the size and composition of a host committee. Committee members were presented with potential event ideas and found favor in a hybrid combination of two of three scenarios. Ms. Heuser said further updates will be shared as progress occurs.

**Board Governance Committee**

Committee Chair, Barbara Morales Burke said Board Governance has not yet met as a committee, however, she, Sherry Heuser, Gayle E. Headen and Nancy Peck participated in a recent onboarding session with new board member, Nikia Coates. Ms. Morales Burke reported Ms. Coates asked thoughtful questions and was encouraged to offer feedback to enhance the board member onboarding process in the future.

**Finance Committee**

Committee Chair, Joe White reported that the Finance Committee did not meet in July but received the June financial reports and reversion schedule for review via email. Mr. White presented a summary of preliminary financial reports and an overview of the Direct Service Provider (DSP) reversion schedule. He noted spending by direct service providers remains at lower than usual levels for end of year, attributing this to conditions affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. He also remarked on a program that was defunded mid-year, contributing to the amount of unspent funding. Mr. White commented on anticipation that reverted funding will be reallocated to the partnership by the North Carolina Partnership for Children (NCPC) by sometime in December 2021. Barbara Morales Burke moved to approve preliminary Fiscal Year End financial statements for FY20-21 and the DSP reversion schedule for Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2021. Katherine Williams seconded the motion. Calling for a vote, the vote to approve was unanimous. (07-21-03)

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Initial \_\_\_\_\_ Date 9/24/2021 | 3:38 PM EDT

### Chair's Report

Chair, Sherry Heuser began her report with an update on board committee assignments. She informed that she and Barbara Morales Burke are assessing where to place board members with consideration for recent significant changes to committees, reshuffling members to provide them with new committee work experiences and placement of several newer board members who have not been previously assigned to a committee. Ms. Heuser plans to have conversation with board members on an individual basis and anticipates committee assignments to be in place by the August board meeting. She urged committee chairs to think about community volunteers who might serve on their committee, citing the desire for diverse community voices and involvement in decision making processes.

Sherry Heuser provided information about the process and timeline for FY20-21 Executive Director performance evaluation.

### Executive Director's Report

Executive Director, Gayle E. Headen presented a staff recommendation and supporting information for adding a full-time staff position to assist the Pre-K department with applications. Following questions, Katherine Williams moved to approve the addition of one full-time Application Processing Assistant position for the Pre-K Department. Barbara Morales Burke seconded the motion. A vote was called for and all being in favor, the motion carried. (07-21-04)

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

- **Wake ThreeSchool:** Ms. Headen stated that Carol Orji has begun her new role as Manager, Wake ThreeSchool while simultaneously assisting Lynn Policastro transition into her position as Manager, Early Childhood Initiatives (ECI). Ms. Headen said activity is underway to fill the three previously approved Wake ThreeSchool positions, beginning with internal job postings which will be followed by external postings for positions not filled internally. Wake ThreeSchool is also preparing for the completion of a community study including a community assessment. A Request for Proposals (RFP) for a consultant to lead the assessment has been posted on the WCSS website with a deadline of July 30, 2021.
- **Office Reopening Plans:** Ms. Headen informed committee members that plans for office reopening and return to work in the office have been shared with staff. She said plans based on a multi-phase approach built on a framework of workplace options, operational modifications and a mask policy were developed with consideration for staff and visitor safety, staff opinion feedback, CDC, state and local guidelines. Ms. Headen emphasized that plans are subject to change, but currently call for reopening the office to the public on September 7, 2021. She said announcements will be posted for outdoor applications events, however the office will be closed to walk-in visitors and in-person meetings.
  - Ms. Headen said workplace options will include full remote work environment, a hybrid of remote and in-office workplace and fully office-based. WCSS supervisors have evaluated each staff position to determine how specific work requirements suit the various models.
  - WCSS is working with an architect to determine a short-term layout and address identified space priorities: a more welcoming family intake area, community and meeting space, and office, cubicle, and "hoteling" workspace areas. WCSS will use the one-year lease extension to continue evaluating space needs to determine whether major modifications to the current space or relocation to a new building are in the organization's best interests.
  - Ms. Headen reported that WCSS has also developed guidelines for a return to participation in external community outreach events. She said participation in events will be evaluated based on screening priorities including those in most vulnerable communities and mostly family-focused, staff capacity and availability and agency needs.
  - Ms. Headen stated that WCSS has established a mask policy consistent with current CDC guidelines, acknowledging that it may be superseded by any new guidance from specific departments within the state having oversight for Smart Start.

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- Data Dashboard Timeline: Ms. Headen shared a timeline for development of the annual workplan and data dashboard drafts. She reported WCSS is currently in the process of mapping Direct Service Providers (DSPs) activities and in-house work to the Strategic Plan. Metrics under consideration include implementation, saturation, equity and impact. Ms. Headen said she anticipates the process will be completed by mid-September and expects to present a draft of the annual plan and an infographic data dashboard and metrics to Executive Committee at the September meeting.
- Legislative Update: Ms. Headen provided an update of the state budget process. She reported the Senate has proposed a budget including \$15 million in nonrecurring funds for Smart Start which would be exempt from most legislative requirements except the 70/30 split. A proposed budget from the House is expected in mid-August before the two chambers convene to finalize a budget, expected in mid September.
- Racial Equity Update: The Racial Equity Assessment conducted by CounterPart Consulting has been completed and will be shared with staff at a special session in late August with another session soon thereafter for staff feedback. Chair, Sherry Heuser and Executive Director, Gayle E. Headen will review the report and meet with CounterPart to plan for a session to share findings with the Board at the October 2021 meeting.

With no further business to discuss, Joe White moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:31 AM. Katherine Williams seconded the motion. Calling for a vote and hearing no objections, the motion carried. (07-21-05)

DocuSigned by:

*Leslie Ann Jackson*

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Secretary

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Date