

**Wake County Smart Start
Board of Directors Meeting
October 23, 2024**

A meeting of the Wake County Smart Start (WCSS) Board of Directors was held on Wednesday, October 23, 2024 with Chair Katherine Williams presiding.

Board members present: André Anthony, Nikia Coates, Veronica Creech, Heather Drennan, Matt Glova, Sherry Heuser, Nikki Leonard, Ronetta Pearsall, Antonia Pedroza, Stephanie Shell, Tonya Venable, Joe White and Katherine Williams

Board members absent: Matt Ellinwood, Susan Evans, Mickey Holt, and Stacey Wilson-Norman

Staff members present: Alex Livas-Dlott, Carol Orji, Joan Crutchfield, Gary Carr, Gayle E. Headen, Caroline Janes, Sasha Gomez, Bryce McClamroch, Nancy Peck, Lynn Policastro, Tamiko McCullough and Taylor Young

Guests: Ariel Ford, Mendi Nieters and Cheryl Stallings

Call to Order/Announcements

At 9:03 AM, Chair, Katherine Williams recognized a quorum and called the meeting to order. She announced the meeting is being recorded and called attention to the presence of staff members and guests including Ariel Ford. Ms. Williams yielded the floor to Tamiko McCullough, WCSS Healthy Initiative Coordinator who asked all participants to hold up their apples for a Zoom photo in celebration of NC Crunch Day. With the holiday season approaching, Ms. McCullough urged everyone to think about simple ways to add healthy food to family meals and holiday gatherings.


System Improvement and Public Engagement (SIPE) Manager, Sasha Gomez and Wake Connections Project Coordinator, Caroline Janes presented the "Mission Moment" highlighting Wake Connections, a coordinated intake and referral system for connecting families with home visiting and group family support programs. Sasha opened the presentation with an overview of the Wake Connections program; what it is, how it is delivered and its benefits. Caroline Janes summarized the three-phase process of the program: application, referral and enrollment, referring to a family case example as an illustration of how the process works. Caroline spoke about the Wake Connections Advisory Committee, explaining how the advisory group benefits the early childhood system through the development of shared protocols, data sharing and space to convene for partner-led discussion, problem solving and resource sharing. She drew attention to a slide of the advisory group members, representing home visiting program partners and key referral organizations. The presentation concluded with several testimonials from partner programs on the impact of the Wake Connections Advisory Committee. Katherine Williams commented that WCSS is seen as a connector partner within the local community of early childhood. Gayle Headen remarked that only 27% of young children in Wake County are in licensed child care, underscoring why Wake Connections is such an impactful service by connecting families in the Pre-natal -5 age range to home visiting and parent education groups.

Sherry Heuser moved to adopt the agenda. Veronica Creech seconded the motion. Calling for a vote and with none opposed, the motion carried. (10-24-28)

The Board reviewed items on the consent agenda. Matt Glova moved to approve items on the consent agenda including minutes from the August 28, 2024 Board meeting, August 2024 financial reports, September 2024 financial reports, range adjustment and merit increase, Conflict of Interest Summary and Conflict of Interest Master. André Anthony seconded the motion. Calling for a vote and hearing no objection, the motion carried. (10-24-29)

Committee Reports

Advancement Committee

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Initial

12/4/2024 | 1:50 PM EST
Date

Advancement Committee Chair, Nikia Coates introduced Mendi Nieters of Armstrong McGuire who presented a detailed summary of the findings from the Development Resource Assessment collected through individual interviews and survey response focused on stakeholder perceptions of the agency and investment feedback.

After summarizing the findings, Ms. Nieters highlighted opportunities to create a culture of investment and shared recommendations for building a comprehensive development plan, development team and system.

Nikia Coates asked Board members to save the date of November 19 for the Pastries with Partners appreciation event at Union Special Bakery, attend the event and invite a friend or colleague interested in learning more about the work of WCSS, and volunteer to help or provide listed supplies for the event.

Finance Committee

Finance Committee Chair, Matt Glova introduced his report with the purpose of the annual 990 form as a primary tool to share the organization's work and information with the IRS and public. He summarized several noteworthy highlights on the 990 form prepared by Blackman & Sloop, an independent accounting firm and reviewed in detail by the Finance Committee prior to making it available for Board approval. Matt Glova and WCSS Director of Finance, Gary Carr addressed questions about reserved assets and liquidity policy. There being no additional questions, a motion coming from Finance Committee was made to adopt the FY23-24 990 and to approve its electronic submission to the IRS as required. Calling for a vote, and hearing no objections, the vote was unanimous (10-24-30)

Chair's Report

Chair, Katherine Williams commented on the recent NCPC monitoring report summary that was distributed to the Executive Committee. She reported on her meeting with Executive Director, Gayle Headen and NCPC Monitor, Amy Morris, who confirmed the few monitoring findings are typical and that corrective actions have already been undertaken. Ms. Williams reminded Board members about upcoming opportunities to make financial contributions during Giving Tuesday and the WCSS Annual Appeal.

Executive Director's Report

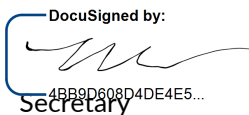
Executive Director, Gayle E. Headen reported that in-person interviews for top candidates for the Director of Advancement position are scheduled for the last week of October. She reminded Board members of the Board Participation form they completed at the beginning of year and pointed out the Pastries with Partners event as an opportunity to participate in an engagement activity outside of Board meetings. She also encouraged them to invite a guest to attend this "friends raising" opportunity.

Gayle Headen drew attention to the written report on Strategic Framework updates. She concluded her report by noting that Ariel Ford has exited the meeting, rendering the closed session listed on the meeting agenda to consider her election as unnecessary.

Board Governance Committee

Board Governance Committee Chair, Sherry Heuser presented a recommendation for an off-cycle election of Ariel Ford to the Board. Sherry explained that Ariel previously indicated her interest in joining WCSS as a Board volunteer but was not available during the regular election cycle due to work commitments. Sherry highlighted Ms. Ford's comprehensive knowledge of the early childhood system and said that she has gone through the full Board nominee vetting process. A motion from Board Governance Committee was made to approve the election of Ariel Ford to the Wake County Smart Start Board of Directors to serve a 3-year term expiring in 2027. Calling for a vote, and hearing no objections, the vote was unanimous (10-24-31)

With no further business to discuss, Sherry Heuser moved to adjourn the meeting. Stephanie Shell seconded the motion. Calling for a vote and hearing no objections, the meeting was adjourned by Katherine Williams at 10:06 AM. (10-24-32)

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 Secretary

12/4/2024 | 1:50 PM EST

Date