

Durham PreK Governance Committee Meeting NOTES

January 19, 2023 (9:30 – 11:30)

The meeting was live streamed on the Durham PreK You Tube Channel and conducted on Zoom. [Recording here.](#)

In Attendance, listed in random order:

Voting Members: Dr. Iheoma Iruka, Leigh Bordley, June Shillito, Joy Spencer, Kate Goodwin, Xavier Cason, Michelle Lynn, Dr. Wykeshia Glass, Cathy Collie-Robinson, Sharon Hirsch, Dr. Nakia Hardy, Beth Messersmith, Deric Boston, Darnella Warthen, Dr. Kimberly Sowell, Michael Page

Non-voting Members: Dr. Kristi Snuggs, Dr. Linda Chappel, Tosh Adams, Cate Elander, Jena Fuchs, Brittany Gregory, Jameka Wells, Monnie Griggs, Joy Turner, Katie Thayer, Tammorah Mathis, Susannah Savage, Grace Brown, Kendra Brown, Marilyn Agostini

WHAT	NOTES
Welcome and Introductions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome and Introductions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ YouTube livestream ○ Attendance reviewed and meeting quorum verified ○ Reviewed virtual meeting protocol
Meeting Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve meeting notes from November 17, 2022 • Review and confirm reimbursement rates • Review budget request for 2023-2024 • Review and confirm minimum salary requirements • Share enrollment demographics • Set process for member nominations • Share program updates
Action Taken	<p>Governance unanimously approved the meeting notes from November 17, 2022 (Motioned by Sharon, Seconded by Joy, all in favor)</p>
Review reimbursement rates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Earlier this school year, Governance voted to increase the reimbursement rate by 4% and for the current school term (in response to the pandemic) to reimburse based on allocation. Since then, North Carolina has addressed some compensation issues and has increased the reimbursement for NC Pre-K. Our pledge is to bring in as many public dollars as possible to pay for our public preschool and spend Durham County’s funds last. Our hope is for NC Pre-K to one day

have a more robust reimbursement system, creating the option to use less local dollars towards programming for 4 year olds and having the option to redirect some of those local dollars to other early childhood needs. For this year, due to the increase in NC Pre-K reimbursement and because we braid our Durham PreK seats with NC Pre-K, we will be paying a smaller portion of the monthly child-level reimbursement than we were previously.

- The group reviewed a comparison overall PreK Rate chart showing that the DPK Rate is not that much higher than the average private tuition rate for 5-Star Rated care for 4 year olds in Durham County. DPK has higher standards than the 5-Star standards in the NC Rated License system.
- Back in May, we raised the reimbursement rates by 4%. Since we last presented this data to Governance in May 2022, the subsidy rate has increased by 7%, the NC Pre-K rate has increased by 17%, and the average private tuition has increased by 4%. Due to the increase in resources from NC Pre-K, we now have money in the budget to consider further raising the DPK reimbursement rate in response to inflation. The average private tuition in Durham for a 4-year-old in a 5-Star licensed facility is \$1201 and the range is \$866 - \$1720. The child care subsidy reimbursement rate is \$1156 for Durham and the NC Pre-K rate is now \$1100 (with a local investment from Smart Start funds). The current Durham PreK reimbursement rate for BK licensed classrooms is \$1300.
- Although Durham PreK covers only a 6.5 hour day, it has higher standards than traditional 5-star child care such as higher teacher pay requirements, paid planning time and additional professional development. When Governance agreed to the 4% increase in May to get our reimbursement rate up to \$1300, there was concern and discussion that it was not high enough. Based upon this prior discussion and based on the average private tuition rate approaching the current Durham PreK reimbursement rate, a review of the rate was placed on the agenda.
- If we were to raise the Durham PreK rate to \$1350 that would be an 8% increase over the rate we had in May 2022. A 6% increase would be \$1325. We could choose to raise rates now or next year, or not to increase them.

Discussion:

- Darnella shared with the group how financially difficult things still are for providers, particularly with increased wages that are necessary to attract qualified staff.
- Brittany shared that the new NC Pre-K reimbursement rate kicks in this month and is retroactive to July 1, 2022. She also clarified that they are still paying on attendance, not allocation, and that they are still trying to fill open seats.
- Joy Spencer asked if increasing reimbursement will increase access to families and Dr. Iruka explained that it supports quality across the board and these two things are mutually related.
- Dr. Chappel pointed to the impact of the pandemic, worker shortage, and inflation as increasing challenges in the field. We want sites to be able to pay for highly qualified staff and in order to do so, we need to offer competitive wages,

	<p>which can be supported by a higher reimbursement rate. She again reiterated that the average reimbursement rate is approaching the Durham PreK rate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Sowell said she is happy to take this back to county commissioners if more financial support is needed. Dr. Snuggs said we anticipate these NC Pre-K funds to be recurring in the legislative budget. • If we do not raise the rate now, we would have enough funding to create new seats next year but if providers are not interested in taking on seats because the reimbursement rate is not enough, then that will not help us. • Joy Spencer asked about funds for transportation and Dr. Chappel acknowledged transportation as a barrier for families. However, explained that we are not prepared to address this complex issue right now as we don't have enough funds in the budget or a plan in place to address this need. • Xavier asked if we will have time to revisit this matter in time to reflect the actual budget and Dr. Chappel reiterated that we would need to revisit this at the May 2023 meeting to determine the reimbursement rate for next school year. • Darnella emphasized the need for continued dialogue and communication. She also shared her thoughts that the DPK requirements are very cumbersome and said to add additional seats when we haven't filled all of our current seats may not be a good idea. She also shared her experience with offering transportation and how incredibly expensive and difficult it is to provide this service for families. • Darnella made a motion to increase the Durham PreK reimbursement rate by 4% to \$1350 per child per month for the remainder of the school year and to revisit the rate for next school year. Sharon seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by voting members.
Action Taken	<p>Governance unanimously approved increasing the Durham PreK reimbursement rate by 4% to \$1350 per child per month for the remainder of the current school year. (Motioned by Darnella Warthen, Seconded by Sharon Hirsch, all in favor)</p>
DPK Finances and Funding Request	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our budget is divided up into two categories- instructional services and management (online application portal, managing payments, subcontracts with partners, etc.). Dr. Chappel explained that CCSA provides written reports and discussion to Durham County each month. We do not draw down county funding out of the instructional services budget until we confirm and reimburse for children that were served. • The current FY23 budget is \$5,579,717. Of this budget, \$4,245,991 is instructional payments for children's seats and \$1,333,726 is management funds to pay for quality improvement, enrollment, professional development, family engagement, outreach, data and universal application expenses. • Our budgeting process launched with the county and what we have initially requested from the county is a 4% increase. This review of the budget is very preliminary but we will take a deeper dive into the budget at our March meeting.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Future funding increases will support the priorities previously set by Governance: to additional seats for 4 year olds, the Durham PreK Equity Plan (specifically building capacity for wrap care), and improvements to the universal application portal.
<p>DPK Teacher Credentials, Demographics, and Salary Requirements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently have 39 lead teachers and 37 assistants. Teachers for DPK have to have their BK license or be actively working towards one. Currently, 9 teachers do not have a license but are working towards one, 8 have emerging licenses, and a little more than half have their full BK license. • While the majority of our teachers are fully licensed, you can see that the number of years of experience that they have trend a little bit lower. About a third have less than 5 years of experience, and only about 20% have 15 or more years of experience. • \$37,000 is the minimum required annual salary for a non-licensed teacher. That's based on 0 years of experience on the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) scale. For teachers who do have a license, they must be paid according to the years of experience listed on their license on the DPS scale, which is higher. • There are 39 teachers for 604 seats (1 teacher for every 15 seats) • The teacher support payment is an additional monthly payment that goes to providers for lead teachers who have their BK license to support their salary and help offset the cost of hiring highly qualified teachers. Presently, 56% of teachers are eligible for the teacher support payment. The state increased the teacher salary scale this year which has contributed to an increase in our support payment rate. • The average projected monthly support payment amount, per teacher, is \$1,026. Projected spending for SY23 is \$225,704. • The salary range (based on 27 teachers) is \$37,000 to \$67,955. The median salary is \$49,070. • Reviewed race and ethnicity of current DPK teachers and those who speak languages other than English. 80% African American, 5% identify as Hispanic/LatinX, 12% speak a language other than English. • The current required minimum for teacher assistants is \$15/hour. Pay monitoring for all DPK positions is conducted several times per year. Presently, the median pay for DPK teacher assistants is \$17.18/hour, above our required minimum and just below Durham's living wage of \$17.60/hour. <p>Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharon asked if Durham Public Schools (DPS) has a commitment to pay the living wage. Dr. Hardy stated that they are in budget development right now and the first iteration of the Superintendent's budget recommendation will be coming at the January board meeting. • Dr. Sowell stated that one priority for their board is for DPS and county employees to be paid a living wage and believes that should be extended to Durham PreK.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Snuggs asked for clarification regarding qualifications for assistants. Monnie explained that NC Pre-K requires a CDA credential and Durham PreK requires at least an Associate’s degree. If they don’t have that yet, they have to be working towards it. We verify they are in school and help connect with them with T.E.A.C.H. for higher education scholarships. • Cate asked for clarification about pay parity with DPS. Lead teachers with a BK license have DPS salary scale pay parity. Our current required pay for assistants at \$15/hour is higher than the DPS requirement. 60% of current DPK teacher assistants are paid \$17/hour or more. Dr. Chappel explained if we’re going to make a change, we do not think it’s’ reasonable to ask providers to implement any new salary requirements for the current school year and the changes would take effect next year. • Darnella shared how difficult hiring has been even with pay increases. • Cathy Collie-Robinson asked about benefits for DPK staff. Dr. Chappel said we would present data on benefits to Governance at our March meeting and clarified that we do not require specific benefits, rather encourage a positive compensation package. • June Shillito shared that at Yates Baptist CDC, they have gone to a base of \$17 to \$22 and it seems to be making a slight difference but not a substantial one. She echoed Darnella’s concerns regarding the difficulties with the hiring process and said they can’t compete with the benefits package DPS offers. June believes there is a larger issue of people not entering the field and a lack of societal support for educators in early education. • Dr. Snuggs reiterated that it is very unlikely private providers will be able to offer competitive benefits packages and supports higher salaries. She agrees with June that many younger/new staff they’re trying to recruit are more concerned with pay over benefits. • Jameka commented that most NC Pre-K sites offer some kind of paid leave and holidays for lead teachers but those perks are often not extended to instructional assistants. • Dr. Sowell moved to increase the minimum pay for teacher assistants to \$17.60 in the 2024 school year, Michelle Lynn seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved. • Darnella asked if we can make an amendment regarding the rate increase to support the increased salary requirement, it was recommended to revisit at May meeting.
Action Taken	<p>Governance unanimously approved increasing the required minimum from \$15.00/hour to \$17.60/hour for Durham PreK teacher assistants for the 2023 – 2024 school year. (Motioned by Dr. Sowell, Seconded by Michelle Lyn, all in favor)</p>

DPK Enrollment and Demographics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demographic information presented does not include Head Start or DPS Title I or EC seats • DPK has a universal access goal but we prioritize families with greatest needs. 68% of DPK children are at over below 200% Federal Poverty Level • Presently, 30% of enrolled Durham PreK children identify as Hispanic/LatinX <p>Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jameka asked if there are any desired outcomes relating to demographics. Dr. Chappel mentioned we want to ensure we are reaching all eligible families from all backgrounds across Durham through robust outreach efforts. Our priority is to ensure diverse enrollment. Jameka requested that for FPL, the next report identify Durham PreK enhanced seats separately. Jameka will connect with CCSA staff offline to discuss further.
Community Convening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will hold a community meeting to report out on program progress toward universal access, which for Durham is to serve 75% of the 4-year old census by 2023. • Save the date for June 24th, 2023 for this event.
Governance Committee Membership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We need to nominate and elect a new vice-chair in March as current vice-chair, Leigh Bordley, is stepping down • We also need to recruit 2-4 new members for SY2024. We are looking for practicing early educators, parents, business or faith leaders, or early childhood researchers • Nomination forms will be emailed to voting members • Dr. Iruka will also be transitioning off as the chair in the near future so that is also something to keep in mind for future planning
Staff introductions- Durham’s Partnership of Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monnie introduced one of our Durham PreK collaborative agencies, Durham’s Partnership for Children. • Brittany Gregory – Director of Programs • Jameka Wells – NC Pre-K Manager • Susannah Savage- NC Pre-K Teacher Quality Specialist • Grace Brown- Outreach Coordinator • Kendra Brown- Family Educator • Marilyn Agostini- NC Pre-K Coordinator
City Health Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Durham was awarded a Gold Medal for High Quality Accessible Pre-K! • CityHealth’s city assessment combined innovative legal analysis with the input of national experts to determine the “gold standard” for each policy. CityHealth identified which elements are necessary for the best quality policy (gold), a good quality policy (silver), and a passable quality policy (bronze). Gold meets 8 out of 10 quality benchmarks for a Pre-K program • Gold requires that over 30% of children are enrolled in Pre-K programs

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-K access was the only gold medal that Durham received
*Program Update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Applications for the 2023 – 2024 school term open February 6th! • Online PreK Q&A sessions will be held during day and evening hours as a new strategy to support families with their applications • The PreK Career Expo is scheduled for May 20th
Summary and Adjournments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No objections to adjournment, meeting concluded at 11:31am • Reminder to review the Future Meeting Dates 9:30am – 11:30am <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ March 16, 2023, May 18, 2023

**** Agenda items with handouts***