

## Durham PreK *Special* Governance Committee Meeting NOTES

June 12, 2025 (9:30am-10:30am)

### In Attendance, listed in random order:

**Voting Members:** Cathy Collie-Robinson, Wykeshia Glass, Brittany Gregory, Brenda Carter, Jason Rutherford, June Shillito, Beth Messersmith, Michelle Lyn, Miranda Marshall, Kate Goodwin, Joy Spencer, Dr. Aleksandra Holod

**Non-voting Members:** Dr. Linda Chappel, Joy Turner, Tammorah Mathis, Monnie Griggs, Dr. Kristi Snuggs, Kate Irish

**Guests:** Karen Thompson, Tabitha Williamson, Tosh Adams, Adrienne Stephens, Nita McAdoo, Rachel Osborne, Marilyn Agostini, Maggie West, , Jameka Wells, Cate Laster

WHAT	NOTES
<b>Welcome and Introductions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Welcome and Introductions<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ A recording of the meeting can be found on our <a href="#">DPK YouTube channel</a></li><li>○ Cathy Collie-Robinson and Dr. Linda Chappel welcomed Governance Members</li><li>○ Introductions in chat</li><li>○ Attendance reviewed and meeting quorum verified</li></ul></li></ul>
<b>Meeting Objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review and Approve meeting notes from May 15, 2025</li><li>• Discuss 2025-2026 Budget and Spending Priorities<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Review Teachers Compensation Support Payments</li><li>○ Review Final Seat Reimbursement Rates</li></ul></li><li>• Receive NC PreK update from Durham's Partnership for Children</li><li>• View Celebrations</li></ul>
<b>*Action Item</b>	<p><b>Approved Governance Committee meeting notes from May 2025</b> Motioned by Jason Rutherford, seconded by Brittany Gregory, all members were in favor.</p>
<b>• Discuss 2025 – 2026 Budget and Spending Priorities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The current FY2024 - 2025 budget will be the same for next year, FY 2025 – 2026- \$7,373,029 , There will be some other dollars to support the preschool arena from one time fund sources.</li><li>• Staff used the priorities set by Governance and applied them to the budget allocations.</li><li>• Durham County recognized that it was a problem for DPK to receive a flat budget and that we need extra funding. They worked with staff to provide additional one-time dollars to allow for the increased teachers' support payment.</li></ul>

- We recognize that one time funding represents some problems; however, we see this as a positive because the allocation represents support for the program. These are restricted funds, but we have been able to meet the restrictions given to us from Durham County.
- We planned the budget around the increased teacher support payments as well as WRAP care and some other costs.
- At the May meeting you decided that if funding was limited, DPK would prioritize implementing the new framework for teacher compensation payments.
- In May we agreed to delay the increase of reimbursement rates per child.
- We have had an experience payment plan from the beginning of DPK. It was designed to allow sites to hire seasoned teachers without regard to their sites' budget. Experience payments are customized to the teachers' credentials, and the site gets paid a monthly payment to address and support the required salary in Durham PreK (which is the same pay scale as Durham Public Schools).
- We struggled over time because the teacher experience payment was only tied to certified teachers. If the teacher was not certified or was working on the BK license then sites didn't get paid for that.
- In March Governance passed the new base payment for teacher compensation. The monthly base payment will create a teacher support payment for the lead teachers and the instructional assistants
- We want to support the assistants' pay because we have a requirement that the assistants are paid at the Durham County Living wage. That living wage is substantially higher than the average pay for assistants in a private PreK site
- We are committed to the new teacher support payment and an increase to the experience payments already in place. These are the priorities that Governance agreed to and we have worked out the budget based on this information.
- We will not be able to implement the higher per child reimbursement rate that was approved March 2025.
- We recommended that DPK have a 4% increase in the per child reimbursement; however, we will not have an increase because we prioritized maintaining the number of seats. We will look at the per child reimbursement as a priority for next year.
- With the additional funding coming from teachers' base pay model and the increase in the experience payment--this will help relieve some of the financial burden on sites.
- For the next school year, we will remain at \$1456 a month per child.
- When you calculate in the preservice payment that each site gets and the per-child reimbursement payment sites get on average \$1674 per child.
- Next year we will not be able to avoid cutting seats if we do not get extra funding because we will need to increase the per-child reimbursement rates.
- We were able to preserve all the items listed on the slide show except for the per-child reimbursement increase.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Our actual budget will remain the same, we will get a one-time grant. We will have no cuts to locally funded seats allocations. We will implement the base salary support payments. We will increase the teacher support payments that are already in place. We will preserve WRAP care for students financially eligible, and we will preserve the bonus for instructional staff</li> <li>Bonuses will now be a line item for the budget. Amounts will not be committed to until we move through the school year and see what our budget looks like.</li> <li>Brittany are there any impacts from the perspective of the site and the perspective of the parents.</li> <li>Linda, with this budget we will continue to offer the same family support that we have been providing, and we are hopeful that it will have little impact on the families.</li> <li>For our providers inflation is powerful and everything costs so much more. Based on the slide provided we can see that the DPK per child reimbursement is only 12% above the <i>median tuition rate</i> in private childcare sites. We know this is less competitive than the private rates in Durham County and that is not ideal. The rate does not consider the pre-service payment, or the teacher support payment.</li> <li>Brittany, this was more for context to understand what the program itself is up against and how to continue those relationships with both the county and city and how to help advocate for DPK from a workforce an economic lens as well. We have a lot to continue to advocate for in the coming year.</li> <li>Beth I would like to echo what Brittany said but also, I think it's wonderful that folks were able to rally around the DPK budget and make a difference in what we can do next year. The state budget planning process is not over, and we had originally heard that no additional funding would go to childcare. However, the house budget has a \$60 million appropriation in the first year and an \$80 million dollar appropriation in the second year. Senate has \$80 million in both years. This is helpful but falls short of the budget asked for by childcare advocates. This is not guaranteed to pass in the state budget plan but is part of what will be voted on.</li> <li>Let me acknowledge that a flat budget is a blessing as a lot of other programs in Durham County were cut due to budgets.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Receive NC PreK update from Durham's Partnership for Children</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jamika Wells- Annually in March the Division of Child Development and Early Education, which holds the state budget for the NC PreK-Program, assesses the filled and unfilled seats for all of the county across the state to determine under utilized seats and see if they would get better use somewhere else.</li> <li>After 6 years of looking at data, DCDEE reduced the seats for Durham by 53. For the 2024-2025 school year we had 625 seats and going into the 2025-2026 school year we will have 572 seats</li> <li>The school readiness committee has voted on- and continues to vote on- a policy for seat allocation determination using things like site selection, rubric scores, and program compliance</li> <li>All programs were reviewed, and seats were reduced across the different program options that participate in NC PreK. This includes Durham Public Schools, Head Start and community based childcare.</li> </ul>

- It is very important to speak up about the need for funding for PreK sites and to advocate and to recruit parents to sign up for public preschool.
- Kate Irish, DCDEE contacted us about rightsizing, and we have been thinking about that because in Durham we do not think it is the right size to reduce seats by 53 spots.
- As Jamika said, we are prioritizing getting our slots filled. We have learned that having unfilled seats impacts on the budget for the following years. We do understand that things happen with families.
- Linda, we are aware that this has been a blow across the state. We also know that the late announcement of these cuts has made it more difficult to manage for the opening of school in August.
- Cathy, has DCDEE given any information about why this has happened? Is it a financial issue? I'm just curious what information has been shared with Durham's Partnership for Children?
- Kate, they told us they wanted to make sure that the counties that had a history with empty seats- that they reallocated the slots- so that they were all being used. DCDEE was concerned statewide that the overall budget would be cut if slots were not being utilized.
- Kristi, I have talked to several partnerships that have waiting lists and still had seats cut so I was just wondering if you had heard anything different.
- Jamika we are in that place. We have families on the wait list that we were unable to get placed for a variety of different reasons
- Beth, we are hearing increasingly that a lot of state agencies are getting increased scrutiny with the cost cutting initiatives. I wonder how the anxiety of this has affected the decision making
- Jamika, the legislature is looking at the state across the board and the programs across the board and if DCDEE on a state level continues to carry a large number of unfilled seats then eventually the legislature is going to think the same thing.
- Cathy, I think it is critical for this group to be aware of enrollment and know what strategies are in place to make sure that all the seats are as full as possible
- Linda, I think it will be important for us to push for accountability from DCDEE for sharing the final allocation numbers statewide. This will allow us to follow what they did and assure ourselves that it was a case where a seat that was taken away was allocated to someone else and there were no hidden cuts that were not acknowledged. We can all benefit from a more transparent approach. We need to be aware and vigilant about what's going on.
- Brittany, what other locally funded preschool programs around the state are saying in the context of the budget constraints important. Strength in numbers is what's going to help.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Durham PreK Celebrations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maggie, this week starts our first Early Educator Academy in collaboration with Durham Tech and El Centro. It's going well-- we have 20 students in this first cohort and 140 applications for this new program.</li> <li>• Structured as a bilingual hybrid program the class they are taking at Durham Tech Edu 3119 which will lead to early childhood credentials. These are people that are not yet in the early childhood field but are looking to start the journey to childcare teachers</li> <li>• We did receive a Doing Good Grant from Duke to fund this program.</li> <li>• We found additional funds so that we could serve additional applicants</li> <li>• We are raising money on our website to help fund this program in the coming years.</li> <li>• We really appreciate the partnership with Durham Tech.</li> <li>• Having this type of support for future teachers can be very transformative for the teachers.</li> <li>• Class started on Monday, and the participants have already come to two meetings.</li> <li>• This model is very different than the other options around NC for Early Education Academies</li> <li>• Tammorah Mathis, we had our first graduate from the Durham Early Childhood Educator Apprenticeship program, Carla Muhammad, walk across the stage at the May 2025 commencement ceremony for Durham Tech to receive her associates degree</li> <li>• On May 29<sup>th</sup> the rising students at A New Beginning walked across the stage in a very well put together ceremony</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Summary and Adjournments</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In school year 2025 – 2026, we will meet the third Thursday of every month.</li> <li>• A virtual meeting will be held July 17<sup>th</sup> <i>if needed</i> from 9:30-10:30 We will notify you by June 30<sup>th</sup> if the meeting is needed or not. Please hold for advocacy meeting.</li> <li>• The first meeting for our 2025-2026 school year will be held in person on September 18<sup>th</sup> at the Jim and Carolyn Hunt Early Childhood Resource Center, 1201 S Briggs Ave.</li> </ul> <p>Meeting adjourned at 10:30am . Dr. Aleksandra Holod motioned to adjourn and Jason Rutherford seconded the motion. All approved</p>

*\* Agenda items with handouts*