

## Durham PreK Governance Committee Meeting Notes

Virtual Meeting

November 19, 2020 (9:30am – 10:30am)

**In Attendance:**

**Voting Members:** Peggy Ball, Leigh Bordley, Xavier Cason, Drew Cummings (Designated by Wendell Davis,) Cathy Collie-Robinson, Dr. Nakia Hardy, Dr. Wykeshia Glass, Michelle Lynn, Karen McLeod, Beth Messersmith, Ben Rose, June Shillito, Darnella Warthen

**Non-voting Members:** Dr. Linda Chappel, Cate Elander, Danielle Johnson, Dr. Alex Livas-Dlott, Melinda Rodriguez

WHAT	NOTES
Welcome and Introductions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcome and Introductions</li> </ul>
NC Pre-K Smart Start Match Payment Update  Discussion item	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our Durham PreK program is our local effort to expand access and equity to public preschool. We built our program on a foundation to align with NC Pre-K and then to further enhance the requirements and standards for Pre-K.</li> <li>• In August, NCDCEE advised that in order to support the early childhood system all allocated NC Pre-K seats would be reimbursed every month, regardless of enrollment or attendance during the 2020-2021 school year.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Durham PreK Governance voted to follow this payment plan</li> </ul> </li> <li>• During this pandemic, the enrollment numbers have been hovering around 40-70%, depending upon seat type               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Our childcare programs are experiencing financial stress</li> </ul> </li> <li>• NC Pre-K in Durham pays an enhanced rate locally per child with Smart Start funds, called local match               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ This local match increases the reimbursement payment per child from \$620 to \$944 per month</li> </ul> </li> <li>• On October 22, 2020 the NC Partnership for Children (Smart Start state office) advised the following:                “For payments moving forward until we receive additional guidance, local programs should hold off on making payments for unfilled slots. If/when we determine these payments can be made without negatively impacting TANF/CCDF match compliance, providers currently in contact can be paid retroactively for these slots when we have additional guidance.”               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Freeze/stop payments for any vacant seats with Smart Start match dollars</li> <li>○ Providers were paid for vacant seats in October. As of Nov. 19, our local providers have not missed a payment.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• In Durham and in some other counties, Smart Start funds pay an enhanced rate for NC Pre-K</li> <li>• Durham PreK also pays an enhanced rate locally for sites meeting DPK standards per child with Durham County Funds (\$1250 per child per month)               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Durham PreK also pays the match payment for some NC Pre-K seats (increases the payment from \$620 to \$944 per child per month).</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

- Durham PreK blends the funding sources to pay \$1250 per child per month whenever possible in order to maximize the number of children served.
- **How does this impact providers? What is going on?**
  - We continue to hear it is a stressful time for providers
  - They are experiencing declining enrollment across the board
  - Many are hanging on by a thread because of decreased enrollment
- If the local Smart Start payments are not allowed for vacant seats, then the private child care programs may not be able to afford to continue to operate.
  - Average Funding Lost – \$4,728.83/month
  - Range \$0 – \$11,550/month
- NC Pre-K programs receiving local Smart Start match payments will not be paid for unfilled spaces until further notice from NCPC. They will receive payments from NC PreK for the base rate for unfilled spaces.
- Durham PreK sites receiving Durham County match payments for NC Pre-K will not receive match payments for unfilled spaces until NC Pre-K Smart Start match payments are restored.
- We will support the providers by advocating at the state level for a resolution
- **If some centers have filled all their seats and others have not, and if it is the latter that are at risk here, is there a possibility to solve the issue by helping them fill the seats? Is there an option to fill the vacant seats?**
  - We are committed to ongoing enrollment to fill seats
  - If you look across the state, Durham has one of the highest percentages of enrollment
  - Difficult to fill seats during the pandemic
- If the Smart Start payments are not restored, our local preschool initiative is at risk
- **Is there a sense of when this might get resolved?**
  - The providers have done a great job advocating to the state. There is a concern with the holidays approaching the decision might be delayed. We are hopeful that a decision will be made soon.
- **What's making seats difficult to fill?**
  - Uptick in COVID-19 numbers
  - Some families are requesting to be waitlisted until things get better
  - Some parents are strained right now with the virtual learning environment
- **Is virtual attendance counted the same as in-person (related to funding)?**
  - Yes, payments are made in full for both in-person and virtual instruction
  - Private providers have even more strain as they are doing both in-person and virtual in each classroom

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>What are your thoughts if this does not get resolved quickly? Would you advise that we go ahead and pay those 2 sites with the local Durham PreK money knowing it's an inequitable situation?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Last resort if we fully go through our waitlist and find parents are not willing to enroll their children</li> <li>○ Reach out to families with messaging to encourage enrollment. Reach out to wait-listed seats to push for enrollment.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DPK staff will keep Governance membership informed about the payment situation. We may require an emergency meeting prior to January if the payment freeze is not resolved.</li> </ul>
Review of Meeting Notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prior meeting notes were reviewed for approval. There were no questions or changes made.</li> </ul>
<b>Action Taken</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Governance committee members reviewed and approved meeting notes for October 15, 2020</b></li> </ul>
Durham PreK Program Update <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applicant Pool</li> <li>• Enrolled students</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enrollment Updates</li> <li>• Durham PreK Only/New – Number of allocated seats is 136. Number of students enrolled is 120</li> <li>• Durham PreK Enhanced – Number of allocated seats is 305. Number of students enrolled is 175</li> <li>• Our enrollment is at 67% and continues to improve.</li> </ul>
Durham PreK Mode of Instruction*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Durham Public Schools PreK Classrooms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Continues virtually</li> <li>○ Board of Education discussion re-opening options during upcoming meetings</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Private Childcare PreK Classrooms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Hybrid model continues (in-person and virtually)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Durham Head Start Classrooms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Continues virtually</li> <li>○ Planning to begin in-person instruction in January of 2021</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Summary and Adjournments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The next Governance meeting is on January 21, 2021 9:30am – 11:30am.</li> </ul>

**\* Agenda items with handouts**