

THE PRE·K PRIORITY

Quality Early Education For
Every Forsyth County Child

**Building the Foundation for the
Future of Forsyth County**
April 2019

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Preface

Education has long been the door to opportunity and the pathway to prosperity in America. “The American Century” was made possible by the establishment of the universal public high school, which began around 1910. At that time only 9% of Americans had a high school diploma; by 1940, the number had increased to 50%. Other innovations have followed. In 1981, North Carolina became the first state to require kindergarten to be offered to all children. Winston-Salem can claim honors as the site of the nation’s first public arts conservatory with the opening of the University of North Carolina School of the Arts in 1963. And high school students today are earning college credits before graduation through advance placement and dual enrollment.

Despite these innovations, achieving the American Dream has become a remote possibility for too many, especially for younger generations. An “opportunity gap” has opened up, as documented by Harvard political scientist Robert Putnam in his book, *Our Kids: The American Dream in Crisis*. Putnam found that:

...over the last 30-40 years, there is a growing gap for the opportunities and resources between those kids coming from affluent and well-educated homes, and ... those kids coming from poor, less-educated homes. The point of my work is to say, “Here’s the reality.” Now, how do we go about changing our current reality to move us back more towards the reality of the American Dream?

The opportunity gap is widest in Forsyth County. A 2017 study by two Harvard economists found Forsyth County to be among the worst counties in the United States for helping poor children move up the income ladder. We rank 5th worst out of 2,873 counties nationwide. Only four American Indian reservations are below us.

Fortunately, there are proven ways to close the opportunity gap, most notably during the earliest years of life. Brain science has confirmed what most parents already know, namely, that the first five years of life are a time of tremendous physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development. These are the years when brain architecture is being built, with more than 1 million new neural connections formed every second. But just as seeds must be planted in fertile soil in order to grow, a child’s environment and life experiences shape and change the architecture of the developing brain, laying the foundation for all the development and behavior that follows, including how healthy and successful the child will be as an adult.

A recent Duke University study of more than one million North Carolina public school children found significant benefits from the state-funded Smart Start and More at Four (now NC Pre-K) programs. These early childhood programs:

...continued to have positive effects on the population of targeted students...as they progressed through middle school. Higher levels of program funding improved students’ math and reading scores, decreased the likelihood that they would be placed in special education, and reduced the probability of repeating a grade. The More at Four program effects varied significantly across subgroups within the population, with larger positive impacts on children from less well-educated, more economically disadvantaged, and African American families.

Other studies have documented how the gains made by children enrolled in high-quality early education programs translate into improved outcomes as adults in terms of post-secondary educational attainment, increased income, home ownership, improved health status, and less contact with the criminal justice system.

The findings and recommendations in this report provide a blueprint for building a Pre-K system that will benefit children, families, and our community for generations to come. The time has come for Forsyth County to take this step on behalf of its youngest children – our future workers, parents, citizens, and leaders. If not now, when?

The Pre-K Priority Quality List

- Well-implemented, comprehensive early learning standards that include social and emotional aspects within an evidence-based and state-approved curriculum that address the whole child
 - ✓ Differences in language, ability, and culture are respected and supported with appropriate practices to help children thrive
- Lead Teachers have a bachelor degree and specialized training in a Pre-K area. Assistant Teachers hold an associate degree or Child Development Associate Credential™ (CDA).
 - ✓ All teachers receive in-service training and professional development (minimum 15 hours per year) and have ongoing coaching and mentoring
 - ✓ All credentialed and licensed teachers are compensated within an equitable system regardless of the program location
- Ongoing Assessments and Evaluations Conducted for Children, Teachers, Program, and Program Setting
 - ✓ Children receive screening, referral and support services for vision, hearing, dental, and physical and mental health
 - ✓ Established systems hold individual classrooms accountable and monitor to ensure quality standards are being met
 - ✓ Ongoing monitoring of sites to confirm adherence to program standards
- Classroom Setting and Overall Environment
 - ✓ Sites have a 4- or 5-Star Quality Rating based on NC State Licensing Standards
 - ✓ Maximum class size is 20 or fewer
 - ✓ Staff to child ratio is 1:10 or less
 - ✓ Minimum of 6.5-hour day of instruction for children
 - ✓ Children are provided at least one nutritious meal per day
- Parent and family engagement are incorporated in meaningful ways to support child growth and family vitality, while respecting and honoring cultural aspects and learning differences

Executive Summary

All children in Forsyth County deserve the opportunity to succeed in school and life. High-quality Pre-K programs help children enter kindergarten ready to achieve socially, emotionally, and academically. Extensive scientific research and economic analysis over the past forty years have shown high-quality Pre-K programs to be wise investments that close educational achievement gaps and improve health and well-being well into adulthood.

The first five years of life are critical for the construction of the physical architecture of the developing brain. Because brains are built in stages, with more complex structures built on simpler structures, it's crucial to get the early years right. Think of building a house: before framing the walls, a foundation has to be poured. Before wiring the house, walls and floors need to be built. Our brains are also built in sequence, and early childhood is about laying a solid foundation to serve as a base for later development. But children can't build strong brains by themselves—they need positive, nurturing relationships with trusted caregivers to support their development. High-quality Pre-K programs provide an enriching environment that stimulates brain development, promotes learning, and fosters the social-emotional stability that is a prerequisite for success in school and later life.^(1; 2)

Near-term outcomes of high-quality Pre-K programs include higher rates of kindergarten readiness, lower rates of grade retention, improved proficiency in math and reading, and less likelihood of needing special education services.^{(3) (4) (5)} Long-term benefits are equally positive, including higher levels of post-secondary education, higher rates of employment and homeownership, and better health.^{(2) (6) (7)}

Importantly, these benefits have been shown to be most significant for low-income and at-risk children, although children from families at all income levels benefit from attending high-quality Pre-K programs.^{(6) (8)}

Forsyth County is poised to provide affordable, high-quality options for all families who would choose to enroll their four-year-old children in a high-quality Pre-K program. To produce a range of options responsive to the needs and preferences of families, our current Pre-K system will require improvements in quality, added capacity, the alignment of program models, and the establishment of a central administrative structure to ensure uniform practices. The time is right. Discussions of Pre-K expansion are taking place among elected officials, within the business community, and in the general public. The value of investments in early childhood development has been championed by the Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust's Great Expectations initiative and highlighted by corporate support for Pre-K expansion through Project Impact.

This report documents the benefits of high-quality Pre-K programs, delineates the components of an affordable, high-quality system, and offers recommendations for the steps that will need to be taken to make such programs available to all four-year-old children in Forsyth County. The report is the product of four and a half years of intensive work by the members of The Pre-K Priority. This alliance of nearly

sixty individuals representing early childhood education (ECE) organizations, public agencies, philanthropic partners, and parents has diligently identified and thoroughly examined the essential elements and best practices associated with high-quality Pre-K programs and Pre-K system expansion. Drawn together by the common vision of a community in which all children have the opportunity to attend a high-quality Pre-K program, the expertise and experience of the members of The Pre-K Priority have been channeled into six work groups and guided and reviewed by a fifteen-member steering committee to produce the findings and recommendations presented in this report.

This report builds on the standards and practices of existing quality programs funded by the North Carolina Pre-K Program (NC Pre-K Program) and delivered by, the Winston-Salem Forsyth County Schools (WS/FCS), Family Services Head Start program, and private community childcare providers. Each of these evidence-based and extensively evaluated programs incorporate curricula and practices that address the whole child (physically, socially, emotionally, and cognitively) while recognizing and involving the family as a child's first and most important teacher. Building on the fundamental components of these successful programs and the guiding principles of the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) and National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), this report contains recommendations and additional features requisite for a high-quality Pre-K system that will produce the greatest return on investment, i.e., intensive family engagement, equitable teacher compensation practices, and outstanding workforce training and development programs.

* * * * *

The Pre-K Priority has meticulously established the foundation upon which an expanded Pre-K system can be built in Forsyth County. It stands on the outstanding legacy of innovation and investment in early childhood education that has characterized North Carolina's longstanding national leadership in the field.

But for as much as has been accomplished over the past four and a half years, much more remains to be done. The accomplishment of the recommendations presented here – and in greater detail in the body of this report – will require a major extension of the efforts of the sixty or so ECE professionals that have contributed to this work, spreading out to include leaders from every sector of the community, parents, and members of the general public.

We have been paying for some time now for not making sufficient investments aimed at realizing the potential of all our children. The impact on the productivity and livability of our community is immense. There are many short-term benefits from expanding high-quality Pre-K programs that are measurable. However, the ultimate reckoning will take place over the next ten, twenty, and more years from now when the decisions made today about expanding Pre-K opportunities come to fruition.

Introduction

In June 2014 a group of ten leaders in the early learning field came together with a vision: that all four-year-olds in Forsyth County would have the opportunity to enroll in an affordable, high-quality Pre-K program. Since then, more than sixty professionals associated with the early childhood education (ECE) field have explored how to improve the quality and expand the capacity of center-based settings for all four-year-olds in Forsyth County. Backed by a growing body of evidence demonstrating the manifold benefits of high-quality Pre-K programs, The Pre-K Priority group recognized that increasing opportunities for more four-year-olds to attend such programs could not only reduce the achievement gap in our public schools, but also begin to address economic mobility issues within our county and prepare our youth to succeed in the future workforce.

A founding group of local ECE professionals formed a steering committee in June 2014 to examine options for improving the quality and expanding the availability of quality Pre-K programs. The committee convened a forum of 35 ECE professionals in March 2015 to define and explore the requirements for developing a quality Pre-K system in Forsyth County. As a result of the forum, three work groups were created to address the critical areas of quality, funding, and advocacy related to Pre-K expansion. During the summer and fall of 2015, these work groups met to establish high-quality standards, study local funding options, and identify the benefits of the system for children, families, and the community. Their work was incorporated into the September 2016 “Universal Pre-K Initiative Position Paper” that articulated key findings from local and national research, provided data related to capacity and the costs of expansion in Forsyth County, and formulated strategies aimed at garnering community support and the political will needed to achieve large-scale expansion by 2020.

In the spring of 2016, a group of Forsyth County business leaders led by Reynolds American launched Project Impact, a \$45 million, six-year initiative aimed at supporting the Winston-Salem Forsyth County Schools’ goal of improving proficiency in reading and math by third grade, narrow achievement gaps, and increase graduation rates. Project Impact included funding to increase the number of Pre-K classrooms in the school district. Six classrooms were opened during the 2016-17 school year at the highest-needs elementary schools, and another eight classrooms were added in 2017-18. The Forsyth County Board of County Commissioners recognized by official resolution on June 13, 2016 the goal to transition to local public funding for these Pre-K classrooms after six years when Project Impact concludes in 2022.⁽⁹⁾

Building on the interest and events supporting Pre-K expansion, the Pre-K Priority Steering Committee created a formal charter in April 2017. Earlier work groups were reconstituted and new ones formed to expand and deepen the contents of the Position Paper with the goal of creating a detailed plan for implementing a quality Pre-K system capable of serving up to 3,600 four-year-olds annually. The following work groups were convened:

Administration and Operations – Determine how to most efficiently and effectively manage, administer, and oversee the operations of a community-wide system of Pre-K programs.

Funding - Calculate the cost and determine the means of providing the funds required to implement a community wide Pre-K system in Forsyth County.

Parent Involvement/Public Education - Educate the general public and parents about the benefits of community-wide Pre-K to generate support for local public funding of the system.

Public Policy/Civic Leadership - Secure support for the establishment of a community-wide Pre-K System among civic leaders and elected officials.

Quality - Establish the standards and identify the essential components of high-quality Pre-K programs.

Workforce Compensation – Develop a wage and salary system that establishes equitable compensation practices across the various providers of Pre-K programs in the system.

Workforce Education/Training – Ensure the availability of a sufficient supply of qualified teachers and staff.

During 2017, more than sixty individuals served on the steering committee and/or one or more of the seven work groups. Participants included representatives from Family Services, Imprints Cares, Work Family Resource Center, Smart Start of Forsyth County, the NC Pre-K Program Committee, Winston-Salem Forsyth County Schools (administrators and teachers), private community child care centers, the Winston-Salem Chamber of Commerce, The Winston-Salem Foundation, the Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust, the Forsyth County Department of Social Services, the North Carolina Justice Center, Salem College, Forsyth Technical Community College, Winston-Salem State University, The Centers for Exceptional Children, and an Action Learning Team from Leadership Winston-Salem.

Through a grant provided by the Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust a Project Coordinator was hired in July 2017 to provide coordination and support for the initiative.

The findings and recommendations of the work groups detailed in this report are supported by research, academic disciplines, and field experience, combined with a keen awareness of the features of the ECE system at the local, state, and national levels. The report addresses the areas of program quality, teacher compensation, workforce development and training, system funding, and parent and public engagement. The Pre-K Priority suggests a multi-year timeline in which to incrementally expand and increase the quality of the Pre-K system, many factors will dictate the actual timetable. The report discusses program models, identifies funding mechanisms, and considers the overall design and structure of an expanded Pre-K system that offers high-quality programming. Various options for administering and managing the system are also explored. Communities across the country have developed various administrative structures for managing their Pre-K system, including utilizing the local school district, contracting with an existing community organization, creating a new nonprofit organization, and lodging responsibility in a department of city or county government. The choice of how best to administer a community-wide Pre-K system in Forsyth County will be the product of a deliberative, democratic process conducted by our elected officials.

As a coalition, The Pre-K Priority does not anticipate presenting specific proposals for Pre-K expansion to state and/or local elected officials. The Pre-K Priority's purpose is to advocate for the expansion of high-quality Pre-K programs in Forsyth County and not to serve as the entity that would administer the Pre-K system. That role will be performed by an existing or new organization that has the capacity to implement, manage, and govern the myriad aspects of an expanded Pre-K system. At the same time, The Pre-K Priority establishes the standards that would need to be subscribed to by organizations providing Pre-K programs in a comprehensive system.

The Pre-K Priority is committed to the establishment of a system that makes high-quality Pre-K programs available and affordable for all Forsyth County families with four-year-old children. Toward that end, The Pre-K Priority invited input from a cross-section of the community by launching a series of listening sessions in the summer of 2018 that will continue into early 2019. The sessions invite and engage people from various geographic, socioeconomic, demographic, and sectoral groups to hear their thoughts, beliefs, and questions related to Pre-K and determine the readiness of Forsyth County residents to support the creation of a high-quality, affordable, accessible system. Aligned with the information generated from the listening sessions, a feasibility study will be conducted in 2019 to detail the current landscape of four-year-old care throughout the community, identifying current options and the choices and preferences of parents. The study will also explore the interest of current providers in increasing capacity and/or improving quality to meet required standards; detail the lack of access in various neighborhoods ("childcare deserts"); determine the additional number of student slots needed to meet the anticipated demand; and assess the number and availability of qualified teachers required to expand the system.

With essential aspects of feasibility determined, a formal campaign is anticipated in the fall of 2019 to include public education, parent involvement, and community engagement activities in support The Pre-K Priority. The participation of a diverse set of stakeholders will also be critical to inform the design of the system and mobilize public support for Pre-K expansion. Elected officials and civic leaders from various sectors of the community will be enlisted to support expansion efforts and advise the Steering Committee in developing strategies and implementing activities to increase the availability of quality Pre-K programs.

In addition to fostering broad community support and securing the commitment of public officials, successful efforts to expand early childhood education have also enlisted respected public figures to actively champion the cause. The Pre-K Priority will actively recruit these champions to serve on a Community Advisory Council. They will help heighten awareness of the importance of investing in our children's future and the future vitality of the community.

Current Pre-K Landscape

Securing affordable, high-quality childcare has become a necessity for the contemporary American family. Nationally, about two-thirds of mothers and 93% of fathers with three-year-old or four-year-old children participate in the labor force.⁽¹⁰⁾ When circumstances permit, some families that have a parent or other family member at home to care for a child will opt not to enroll their child in a Pre-K program; however, many families do want their children to have a Pre-K experience on account of the contributions to the child's social and emotional development during the critical year before entering kindergarten. Studies have shown that as many as 90% of households would enroll their children in early childhood settings outside the home if they could afford the high cost.

1. High Cost of Child Care to both Families and Providers

- In NC, the average annual cost to families of full-day (6.5 hours), center-based care for four-year-olds is \$7,920 compared to the average annual cost of tuition and fees at a public college of \$7,385.⁽¹¹⁾
- A national study found that for the middle income quintile earning between \$38,521 and \$62,434 annually, Pre-K was the second highest expense in their budget with housing being the first.⁽¹²⁾ With a median income of \$46,283 in Forsyth County, child care is one of the largest monthly expenses for middle-income families in our community.⁽¹³⁾
- The cost to fully fund a NC Pre-K Program slot for one child annually is \$9,126. On average, the state covers 61% of that cost, leaving program administrators to make up the difference of \$3,560 by utilizing a patchwork of federal and local funds.⁽¹⁴⁾

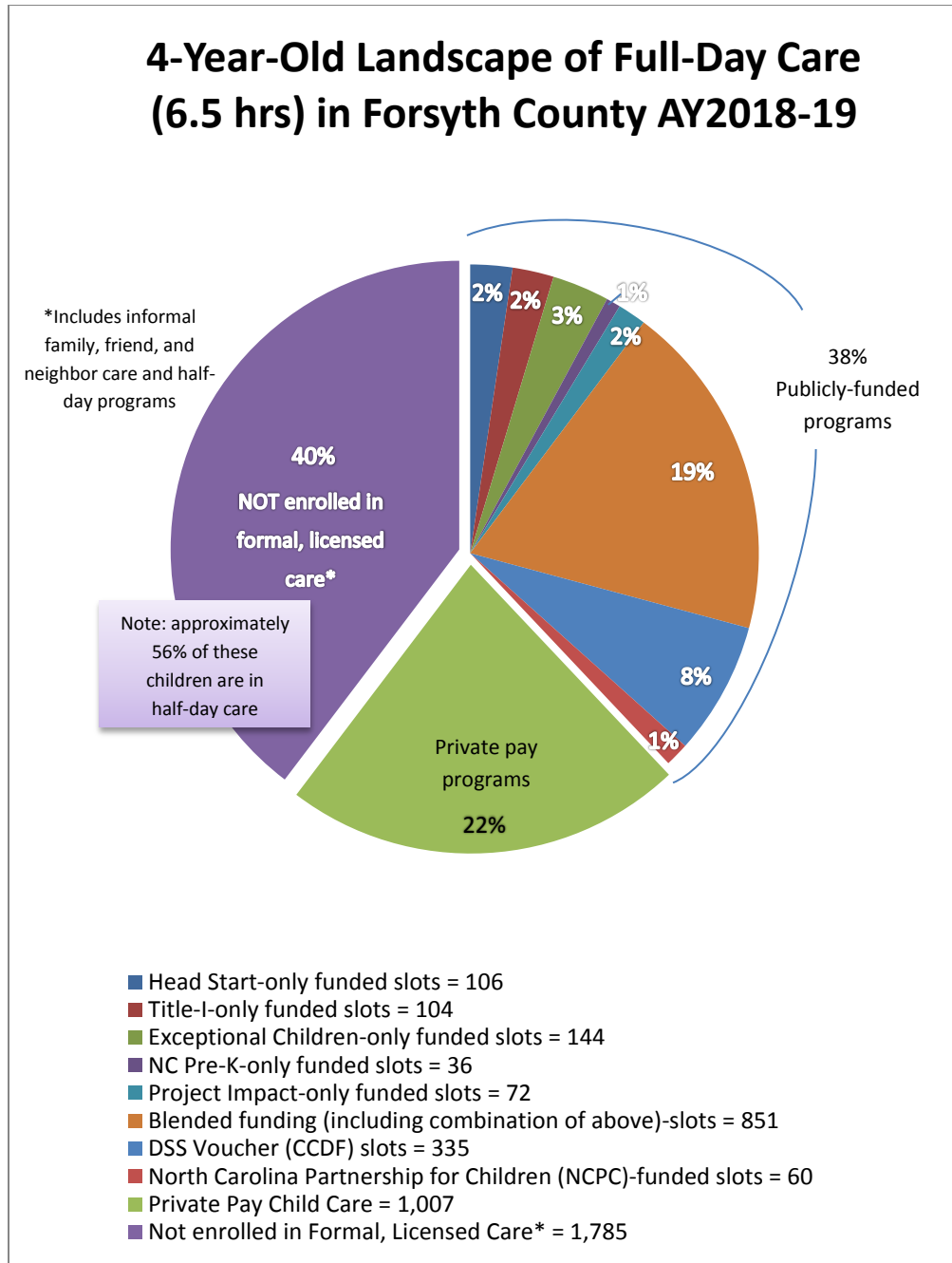
2. Children Currently Not in Full-Day Pre-K (6.5 hours)

- Around 40% (1,785) of four-year-old children are not enrolled in a licensed, full-day Pre-K setting in Forsyth County.⁽¹⁵⁾ While there are myriad reasons families choose not to enroll a child in Pre-K, a significant number of families do not qualify for publicly-funded programs and cannot afford to pay the cost of tuition for a private, community-based preschool.
- Approximately 60% (2,700) of four-year-old children in Forsyth County are eligible for enrollment in a publicly-funded Pre-K program. Currently, a little over 60% of those eligible attend a publicly-funded program. The remaining 40% are not enrolled in a publicly-funded program due a variety of factors including: limited number of publicly-funded facilities and slots; absence of facilities in their area and related transportation issues; and a lack of awareness of their eligibility for public funding.

3. Limited Supply of Pre-K Programs

- Forsyth County currently offers a mixed-provider system of public and private child care options that serve approximately 2,715 four-year-old children in licensed care, including private pay and publicly-funded programs.⁽¹⁵⁾ Figure 1 provides a snapshot of Forsyth County's cohort of 4,500 four-year-olds in relation to their care arrangements.

Figure 1



Sources: NC DCDEE, Forsyth County Department of Social Services, Smart Start of Forsyth County, Family Services, WS/FCS

While the pie chart in Figure 1 captures the various options of care, Appendix B contains a table detailing the landscape of full-day care (6.5 hours) options and enrollment numbers of four-year-olds in Forsyth County. To clarify the terminology used in describing various types of care, Appendix D provides definitions of the programs and corresponding state regulations. The following details are in reference to the information contained in Figure 1 and Appendix B.

- On average, Forsyth County has a system that includes 161 licensed child care homes and centers offering full-day care (6.5 hours) to approximately 1,611 four-year-olds. There are 32 public elementary schools with approximately 65 Pre-K classrooms serving a total of 917 children comprised of various populations. Additionally, Head Start operates classrooms across several sites that serve about 187 children.
- Among the public school classrooms, approximately half operate Pre-K classrooms based on an extension issued from DCDEE in lieu of a license; extensions are given when infrastructure-related issues create barriers for a school site to earn a star-rated license, but are located in areas where the program is needed.
- Of the licensed child care homes and centers serving four-year-olds, 63% are rated as a 4- or 5-star site and serve approximately 59% of the children attending a licensed child care home or center. It should be noted that a 4- or 5-star rating primarily ensures that the provider meets state standards for facility health and safety and the use of an approved curriculum. In addition, a 4- or -5-star rating requires that lead teachers have or be in the process of earning the North Carolina Early Childhood Credential (NCECC), however the star rating does not require teachers to have a Bachelor's (four-year) or even an Associate's (two-year) Degree.
- Approximately 316 four-year-old children attend a religious-sponsored program that holds a GS-110 exemption status excusing them from various standards outside of basic sanitation. (GS-110 provider details: Administrator must be 21-years of age and literate; care givers must be at least 18 years of age and literate; no orientation or in-service training is required; a written schedule, activity plans, and developmentally appropriate activities are not required)
- According to available data, approximately 1,785 four-year-old children are not enrolled in a licensed-affiliated program but receive care via family members, friends, neighbors, or a nanny/babysitter. Reports also indicate that around 1,000 of these four-year-olds are enrolled in formal, half-day programs provided by religious and community-based organizations. It is difficult to estimate how many of these families would choose to enroll their children in a high-quality, affordable, full-day Pre-K program were that option available to them.
- It is important to note that while all current 4- and 5- star programs have established a foundation for quality programming, none (including the NC Pre-K Program, Head Start, and public school sites) meet the full complement of high-quality standards set forth in this report. Areas in which the greatest disparities exist across the various providers in our mixed-provider system include:

- Teacher Qualifications
- Teacher Compensation
- Parent and Family Engagement Resources

4. Building on the foundation of our existing system

An expanded Pre-K system will require a significant increase in the capacity of local organizations that currently provide quality programs as well as those organizations that aspire to bring their programs into compliance with higher quality standards. While a majority of programs in our system comprise a sound model for establishing standards of quality as 4- or 5-star centers or meeting public-funding mandates, additional steps are required to meet the high-quality mark.

Equally important is compelling anecdotal and survey evidence confirming that parents appreciate having a choice among various types of programs. Forsyth County can build on the solid foundation of established Pre-K programs in both the public school system and the community, including private child care centers and Family Services' Head Start program. This mixed system of public and private providers provides families options for service locations, schedules, and programming that help meet their varied needs and preferences. Table 1 provides additional details of current publicly-funded programs in regards to eligibility guidelines, funding sources, the blended funding strategies employed locally, and enrollment numbers. Appendix C illustrates the segments of the various funding streams that comprise the blended funding categories.

(Scroll to next page for Table 1)

Table 1
Publicly-Funded Pre-K Programs in Forsyth County 2018-19 (AY)

Program	Management & Administration	Funding Source	Eligibility	# of children served
Title I program	WS/FC Schools	Federal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multiple, educationally related, objective criteria established by the local education agency. Income of the family is allowable for prioritizing when Title I funds are insufficient to serve all eligible preschool children. 	104
Exceptional Children	WS/FC Schools	Federal & State	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multiple criteria established by North Carolina's Policies Governing Services for Children with Disabilities 	144
Project Impact	WS/FC Schools	Corporations, Foundations, & Individuals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High needs schools (economically-disadvantaged students) 	72
Head Start	Family Services	Federal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children under the age of five from families with incomes below poverty guidelines, families experiencing homelessness, families receiving public assistance such as TANF or SSI, and those in foster care. 	106
NC Pre-K program	Smart Start of Forsyth County (SSFC)	State	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Four-year-olds from families earning <75% of state median income (and some other factors considered) 	36
Blended Settings (consisting of the above funding sources)				
Project Impact + EC	WS/FCS	Local, Federal & State	Blend of eligibility requirements	126
Project Impact + NC Pre-K	WS/FCS & SSFC	Local & State	Blend of eligibility requirements	87
NC Pre-K + Head Start	SSFC & Family Services	State & Federal	Blend of eligibility requirements	272
NC Pre-K + Title I	SSFC & WS/FCS	State & Federal	Blend of eligibility requirements	312
Head Start + Title I	Family Services & WS/FCS	Federal	Blend of eligibility requirements	54
Other Funding				
Child Care Vouchers via Child Care Development Fund (CCDF)	Department of Social Services	State & Federal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both situational and financial criteria Families at or below 200% of Federal Poverty Guidelines 	335
North Carolina Partnership for Children (NCPC) Family Child Care scholarships	SSFC	State	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents generally must be working a minimum of 25 hours per week, or be a full-time student Family income requirements are set by the state each year 	60
TOTAL				1,708

Sources: NC DCDEE, Forsyth County Department of Social Services, Smart Start of Forsyth County, Family Services, WS/FCS

- **Winston-Salem Forsyth County Schools (WS/FCS)**

The WS/FCS system currently offers quality Pre-K opportunities to approximately 1,000 children utilizing a mix of funding sources including Title I, Exceptional Children (special education for children with disabilities), local Project Impact support, and partnerships with Head Start and the NC Pre-K Program. The ongoing collaboration of the WS/FCS's Office of Early Learning with local ECE community partners has generated expansion of Pre-K opportunities in school facilities over the past several years by incorporating and maximizing these multiple funding sources. Additionally, the 2016 school bond approval increased county funding by \$3,832,473 for Pre-K classroom construction at three elementary school sites beginning in 2018 with completion scheduled for 2020.

- **Head Start**

Family Services has operated the Head Start program in Forsyth County since 1966. The program provides early childhood education programs to 499 three-year-old and four-year-old children. The program serves children at 16 sites; four of these are Head Start's own facilities, others are in the WS/FCS and at private community childcare providers where Head Start federal funds are blended with Title I and NC Pre-K Program funds, respectively, to cover the full cost of programming. The five classrooms at the Child Development Center and Laboratory School on the campus of Winston-Salem State University are NAEYC-accredited.

The Head Start program is unique due to its parent, family, and community engagement component, and the use of family advocates to assist parents in identifying and achieving their own goals through referral to community resources. On-site behavioral health services are also provided to parents and children.

- **North Carolina Pre-K Program (NC Pre-K Program)**

Smart Start of Forsyth County, Inc. (SSFC) has administered the legislatively-mandated NC Pre-K Program, formerly known as More at Four, in Forsyth County since 2001. The NC Pre-K Program provides higher quality, classroom-based educational experiences to enhance school readiness for an estimated 700 eligible four-year-old children at multiple sites. Smart Start contracts for services with Family Services, the WS/FCS, and local, independent, private child care facilities. The Forsyth County NC Pre-K Program Committee sets overall policy and develops, implements, and supports the annually-revised Forsyth County NC Pre-K Program PLAN which establishes rates for the distribution of funds, child enrollment, site selection, and monitoring. The committee includes individuals representing the organizations that provide classrooms and receive funding for the program. The NC Pre-K Program Committee also provides oversight on issues relevant to the overall ECE system, including the selection and expansion of capacity, teacher compensation, and kindergarten transition.

The NC Pre-K Program is known for making effective use of state funding in conjunction with other public funds (e.g., Head Start, Title I, Project Impact) to cover the full cost of programming and support Pre-K expansion across various sites.

- **Smart Start of Forsyth County & North Carolina Partnership for Children (NCPC) Scholarships**

The North Carolina Partnership for Children, Inc. (NCPC) is the statewide nonprofit organization that provides oversight and technical assistance for local Smart Start organizations. Although NCPC provides technical assistance and support to Smart Start organizations across the state, each county has the responsibility to determine the needs of its community and to fund services in its geographic area. SSFC funds Family Child Care Scholarships along with other early education and child wellness programs. Families qualifying for scholarship money receive state funds to help purchase child care. Parents generally must work or be full-time students for a minimum of 25 hours per week. SSFC models its eligibility requirements on those used for the Forsyth County Department of Social Services federal childcare subsidy program. For families receiving scholarships, SSFC offer free parent engagement opportunities and one-on-one consultations. These elements of the program ensure informed consumer choice in securing quality child care and opportunities for improved parenting and life skills. Child care facilities receiving SSFC scholarship funds must hold a 4- or 5-star rating, thus providing additional incentive to providers to achieve and maintain established standards of excellence.

- **Philanthropic and Corporate Initiatives**

More recently, private philanthropic and corporate interests recognized the importance of a robust ECE system and responded to the need. Reynolds American Incorporated took the lead to form a coalition of corporate and individual donors in the ambitious Project Impact. The six-year initiative provides funds to the WS/FCS system from Pre-K through third grade to address critical student achievement gaps and improve third-grade reading and math proficiency scores. With a goal to raise \$45 million over six years, over \$25 million has been committed as of June 30, 2018. A portion of that commitment has expanded Pre-K programs within the school system and increased staff development and instructional supports for teachers. Project Impact funds are blended with NC Pre-K Program, Title I, and EC funding to maximize additional Pre-K programming across public school sites. With a focus on the highest need schools and children in the district, Project Impact has added 14 pre-kindergarten classes in 12 schools, serving an additional 222 children in combination with other public funding at its two-year mark (2017-2018).

- **Independent and Franchise Centers**

Forsyth County has a combination of providers that operate independently and do not rely on public funding; they include family residences, private schools, religiously affiliated institutions, franchises, independent businesses, community service agencies, and employee-sponsored organizations. While a majority of these settings operate with tuition-based private payments

from parents, many also have space allocated for children that qualify for public funds managed by the Department of Social Services (DSS) in the form of Child Care Subsidy benefits (vouchers) or “children who are disabled under SSA [Social Security Administration] rules and whose families have little income or resources.”⁽¹⁶⁾ There are also a number of independent centers that partner with Head Start and SSFC to host Pre-K classrooms that follow the respective program guidelines.

- **Kate B. Reynolds (KBR) Charitable Trust’s Great Expectations**

While not a provider of child care programs, the Great Expectations initiative of KBR is investing between \$30 and \$40 million over 10 to 15 years to ensure that children in Forsyth County reach developmentally-appropriate milestones in the first five years, enter kindergarten ready to learn, and leave set for success in school and life. Great Expectations, in conjunction with MDC, its activating agency, has supported, coordinated, and partnered with key stakeholders, including parents and families and child care providers, organizations, and systems to achieve mutual goals. The Trust has specifically supported The Pre-K Priority by providing funds for a full-time project coordinator. It has also provided training for ECE practitioners and parents through Abriendo Puertas “Opening Doors” (Building a Better Future Through Parent Leadership) via the Forsyth Family Voices Learning Network. The program emphasizes the popular education approach to empower and support parents as the experts in their child’s development.

KBR’s commitment to create opportunities for more children to choose a high-quality Pre-K experience has been further reinforced through recent support to enact a formal public education and engagement campaign beginning in 2019. This campaign will reach communities across Forsyth County to increase their understanding, message the importance and benefits of Pre-K, and engage citizen-led advocacy for increasing opportunities for more children.

Principles of a High-Quality, Expanded Pre-K System in Forsyth County

A commitment to high-quality standards is required to positively impact the children, families, and educators that participate in an expanded Pre-K system and maximize return on investment. The following principles serve as a guide to the fulfillment of that commitment.

1. Pre-K programs will meet the highest standards of quality.

A uniform set of standards governing Pre-K providers will ensure that all children experience a high-quality program. This report provides Forsyth County parents, educators, and public officials with set of standards to assure that all children receive an equivalent, equitable, and high-quality Pre-K experience.

2. The expanded Pre-K system will be built incrementally to ensure the implementation of a uniform, comprehensive system and to give consideration to providers of younger children so that resources for critical early care are not reduced.

An expanded Pre-K system will grow incrementally over several years, with new capacity added as funding is made available. As capacity is added the principle of maintaining a uniform, comprehensive system will ensure that comparable levels of quality are present regardless of the Pre-K provider.

3. A mixed system of public and private providers will be maintained to respond to the varied needs and preferences of families.

Publicly-funding Pre-K programs in Forsyth County draw upon various sources of funding that support a mixed system of providers, including the public schools, privately-run child development centers, and Family Services' Head Start program. These diverse settings are responsive to the varied needs and preferences of the families and children they serve. Pre-K expansion will maintain this mixed system to provide families with options that correspond to their needs and circumstances. Furthermore, a mixed system of providers is needed to meet the demand for the additional facilities required to expand the Pre-K system.

4. Compensation practices will be implemented to attract qualified staff and ensure uniform quality across the system.

Compensation practices must be established to ensure that Pre-K educators receive comparable salaries and benefits regardless of their place of employment. National and local research shows that equitable compensation practices result in higher quality instruction, greater employment stability across the system, and enhanced retention rates for professionals in the ECE field.

5. Pre-K programs will involve families in their child's learning experience and provide opportunities to increase family well-being.

What happens at home ultimately has a greater impact on a child's development than what occurs in the classroom. For this reason, high-quality Pre-K programs will include effective methods of family

engagement and participation leading to stronger partnerships, trust, and growth for children and their caregivers. Bridging the relationship between home, school, and the community with the assistance of a family support specialist will help empower families and ensure parents are heard. Drawing on the evidence-based model of Head Start's two-generation approach to strengthening families, Pre-K programs that provide referrals and resources enable parents to achieve goals that improve personal and family well-being.

6. High-quality programs will help accomplish successful transitions into Pre-K and from Pre-K to Kindergarten.

How children enter a Pre-K program and how they transition from Pre-K to Kindergarten affects the benefits gained from Pre-K and how those developmental gains will be maintained throughout the early elementary years. A growing body of evidence underscores the importance of successful and intentional transition practices during both these phases. In fact, the NC legislature has enacted a NC Pre-K to Kindergarten Transition Project that is being piloted in 10 counties during 2018-19 and expected for full implementation by 2025.

Why High-Quality Pre-K Matters

Research-based Benefits and Effectiveness

Numerous studies and research findings have documented the benefits of high-quality Pre-K programs for children from all demographic groups. Investing in the social, emotional, and cognitive development of four-year-olds by providing the enriching and nurturing environment of a high-quality Pre-K program generates a range of benefits for children, families, and the community.

★ Closes the Gap on Student Achievement

- A study of children who were enrolled in the state-funded NC Pre-K Program found higher achievement and standardized test scores in both reading and math for students through fifth grade, fewer children requiring special education placement, and less retention of students in grades 3, 4 and 5.⁽³⁾
- Evidence shows that children that had attended various high-quality Pre-K programs are more ready for school than children who did not attend a Pre-K program. Improvements in academic areas such as literacy and numeracy are common and contribute to children succeeding in school.⁽⁴⁾

★ Improves Outcomes for Children in School & Later in Life

- By diminishing or preventing achievement gaps earlier in life, children perform better through their post-secondary school years and graduate from high school at higher rates with an increased likelihood of attending college and securing gainful employment.^{(5) (2)}
- Pre-K is benefits all children but has a greater impact on economically-disadvantaged children and children of color. In addition, dual language learners make gains in the program at a greater rate than other students.^{(6) (8)}

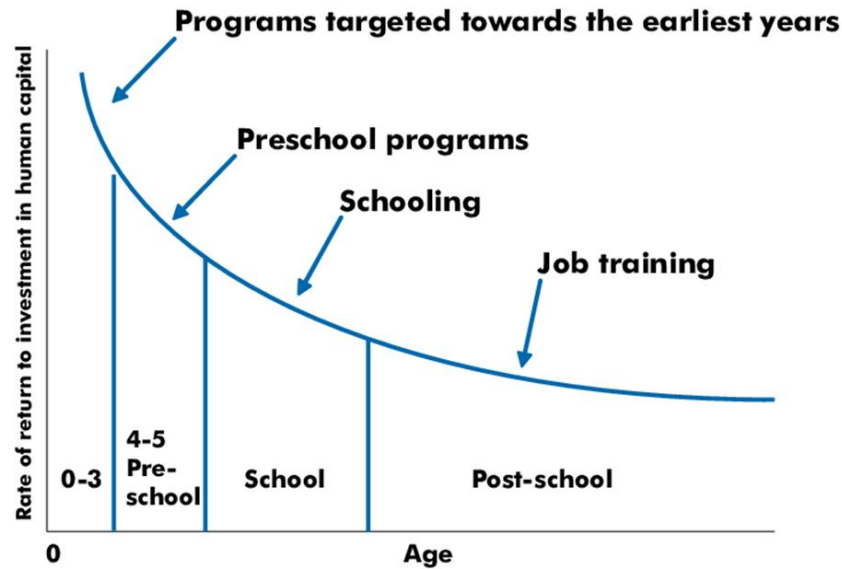
★ Produces a Positive Return on Investment

- Participation in the NC Pre-K Program has been shown to reduce special education placements by 32%, saving significant school system and tax payers dollars for each student who does not require special education services.^{(4) (7)}
- Nobel Prize winning economist James Heckman estimates that for every \$1 spent on high-quality preschool for 3- and 4-year-olds, communities save \$7 in long-term costs for things like educational remediation, social supports, and criminal justice.⁽⁷⁾
- A longitudinal study of the economic benefits of high-quality birth-to-five programs found the programs can deliver a 13% per year return on investment for disadvantaged children through improved outcomes in health, social behaviors, and employment along with decreased use of welfare services.⁽⁷⁾

Figure 2

Returns to a Unit Dollar Invested

[Return to a unit dollar invested at different ages from the perspective of the beginning of life, assuming one dollar initially invested at each age]



Source: Heckman, 2008, The Case for Investing in Disadvantaged Young Children ⁽⁸⁾

★ Benefits to Local Economy

- High-quality Pre-K sets children on a course leading to the development of a skilled and educated workforce. Economic studies show that a substantial number of students remain in the area of their birth once they graduate high school and enter adulthood. Pre-K provides a solid foundation that enables future adults to acquire employable skills that benefit local employers and economies. ⁽¹⁷⁾
- When parents have safe, reliable, and affordable childcare options turnover and absenteeism are reduced and employee productivity increases. ⁽¹⁸⁾
- Early care and education programs have a ripple effect within the economy in terms of full-time jobs and employed workers who make purchases in our county. ⁽¹⁸⁾

★ Benefits to Both Families & Community

- Most working parents struggle with the high cost of quality child care, even keeping some parents out of the workforce. Publicly-funded Pre-K programs can reduce the financial burden for working families. Overall, Pre-K programs contribute to gains in family income while providing parents with peace of mind regarding their children's care during the work day.

- Pre-K programs provide resources and support for parents early in their child’s development and offer screenings to identify potential developmental and health issues.
- Children participating in Pre-K programs have higher high school graduation rates, better health, and higher lifetime earnings, thereby contributing to a healthier and more prosperous community.

Understanding the Critical Reviews of Pre-K

While the research-based benefits of Pre-K are abundant, it is important to address two primary reports often cited in regard to the fade out effect of Pre-K gains.

The 2010/2012 Head Start reports conducted by the Office of Research and Evaluation of the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) detail the impact on a cohort of children compared to a control group not enrolled in the program. These reports found little to no lasting benefits at first through third grade, specifically related to achievement scores.⁽¹⁹⁾ However, subsequent reviews have noted that design standards, data collection, and measurement variables were inconsistent across the large-scale study.⁽²⁰⁾ Notably, a thorough reanalysis of the data by nine researchers featured in the open access journal published by American Educational Research Association, points to large degree of impact variation across the study that included geographic location, features, and characteristics related to the children enrolled in the Head Start study, and counterfactual conditions of those children in the control group.⁽²¹⁾ Importantly, researchers at the Center for Poverty Research at UC Davis note that “test scores may not reflect the main benefits of Head Start participation...” and “...studies suggest that the program yields long-term improvements that include social, cognitive and physical well-being”.⁽²¹⁾

The second report highlighting fade-out effect is the recent 2016 Vanderbilt University study following a sample of students attending Tennessee’s voluntary Pre-K program. In short, the study concluded that while children did show better immediate outcomes related to achievement after the Pre-K year and increased readiness to enter Kindergarten, by third grade these children were not performing above students who had not attended Pre-K.⁽²²⁾ In this case, not only is the lacking programmatic quality of Tennessee’s voluntary Pre-K system cited by various study evaluators as related to the short-term fade out effects, but also the flawed randomized trial method.^{(23) (17) (4)} Indeed, the Vanderbilt study principles acknowledge in their discussion notes the lack of evaluation guidelines related to Pre-K quality standards, stating, “we do not yet have a basis for improving state-funded pre-k programs that is grounded in empirical evidence relating program characteristics to child outcomes.”⁽²²⁾ As a consequence of the Vanderbilt report, Tennessee’s Department of Education has prioritized increasing quality aspects of their program.⁽²⁴⁾

Overall, researchers caution against applying a single method of evaluation or one study’s outcomes across varied Pre-K programs; this further emphasizes the important differences to be considered between targeted and universal systems as well as state-scaled and district/local programs.⁽⁴⁾ As

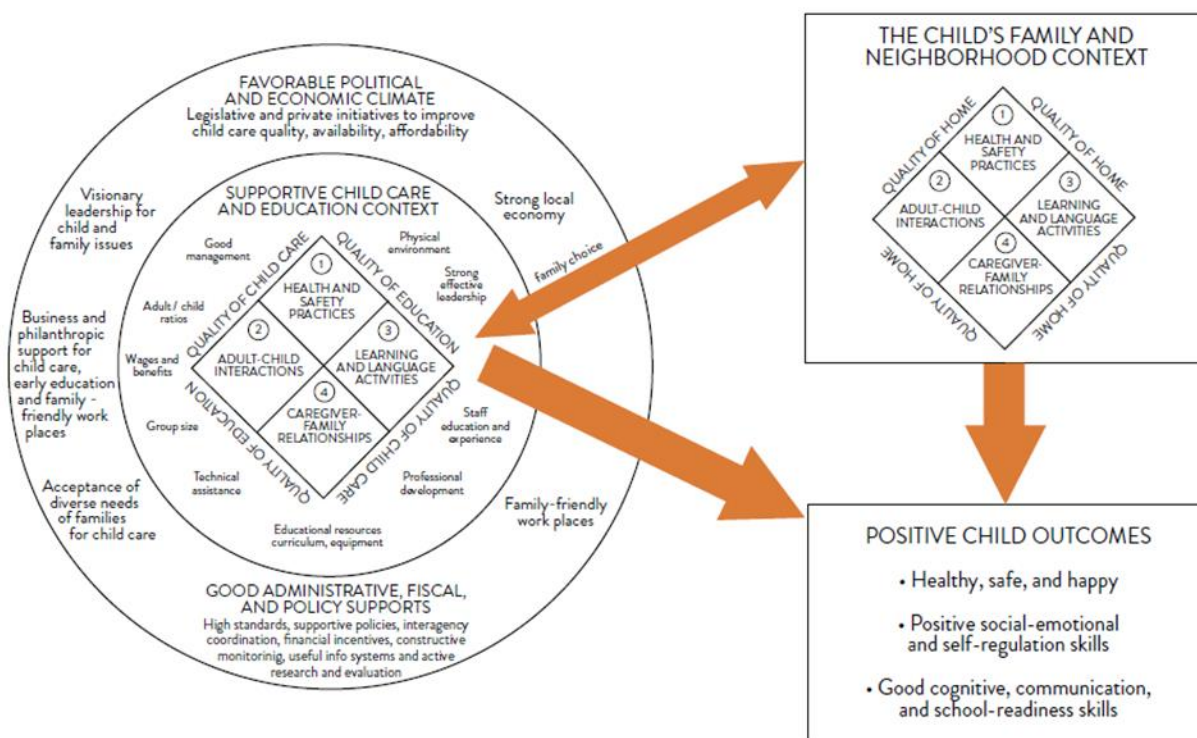
importantly, the evidence bears out that regardless of scale, high-quality Pre-K programming is necessary for sustained benefits. In fact, Duke University's comprehensive study of Pre-K's positive effects published by a collaborative of early educator professionals, found that children enrolled in the NC Pre-K Program performed better throughout elementary school, received fewer special education placements at third grade, and had less grade retentions. ⁽⁴⁾ Moreover, the most recent results of the ongoing study evaluation (tracking children through the middle school years) found improved math and reading scores and a reduction in the number of special education placements through eighth grade. ⁽²⁵⁾ The Four Diamond Model presented in the Duke Study and displayed below in Figure 3 illustrates how high-quality care in early childhood programs influences a wide network of relationships. The four primary elements associated with the research-based benefits of high-quality care include

- Health and Safety Practices,
- Adult-Child Interactions,
- Learning and Language Activities, and
- Caregiver-Family Relationships. ⁽⁴⁾

The concentric circles surrounding the diamond depict how these elements impact relationships beyond those formed in the classroom, including the child's family and neighborhood, as well as the community at large.

Figure 3

The Four Diamond Model for Improving the Quality of Early Education and Child Care



Components of a High-Quality Pre-K System in Forsyth County

I. Quality

“Quality is Job One!” That declaration provides the foundation for a comprehensive Pre-K system. In contrast, low quality Pre-K programs have been found to be detrimental to a child’s development.⁽²⁶⁾ Forsyth County’s publicly-funded Pre-K programs already subscribe to the high standards established by the NC Pre-K program and Head Start regulations. The Pre-K Priority takes quality standards a step further by a) requiring equitable compensation for Pre-K educators across all classroom settings, b) bolstering parent involvement and family support, and c) providing continuous training, mentoring, and coaching for teachers.

A high-quality program is the essential ingredient for improving a four-year-old’s school readiness and future learning and earning potential. The term *high-quality* involves numerous components of the Pre-K setting that are interrelated and necessary to provide an environment where children can grow, play, and learn while developing positive social-emotional skills. While publicly funded Pre-K programs already subscribe to higher quality standards, there remains room for improvement. In addition to the challenges of meeting higher standards, an expanded system will involve a broader diversity of providers as well as families with varying socio-economic resources. In order to expand high-quality Pre-K across a diverse landscape, particular attention must be given to areas that research has shown to produce positive outcomes.

Maintaining & Improving High Standards While Expanding Pre-K Availability

As stated by North Carolina’s Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE), “Children’s experiences before they enter school matter – research shows that children who experience high-quality care and education, and who enter school well prepared, are more successful in school and later in their lives.”⁽²⁷⁾

The state of North Carolina (NC) has historically been a leader in establishing standards for early childhood education (ECE) programs. In 1971, NC passed a law addressing health and safety standards of child care facilities by establishing the first licensing system. In 1981, NC became the first state in the country to require that kindergarten be offered to all students. In 1993, NC’s Smart Start program was launched to provide children under age six with access to high-quality and affordable child care, health care, and family support services. In 2001, More at Four – now known as the North Carolina Pre-K Program (NC Pre-K) – was established to provide a high-quality educational program for at-risk children in the year before kindergarten entry. To date, North Carolina is one of only four states with a public Pre-K program that meets all 10 quality benchmarks of the National Institute of Early Education Research (NIEER).^{(28) (29)}

The state's commitment to high-quality Pre-K programs has produced results. A 2016 study by Duke University's Center for Child and Family Policy analyzed one million NC public school students born between 1988 and 2000 and found that children who had been in NC's Smart Start child care program and/or More at Four had higher test scores, less grade retention, and fewer special education placements through fifth grade.⁽³⁾

Based on the positive outcomes of the NC Pre-K Program and others with proven records of efficacy such as Head Start, specific programmatic features, experiences, and environments have been identified as essential to promote benefits to children and their parents, including:

- A highly skilled workforce. Ensure that lead Pre-K teachers have requisite degrees and certification in early childhood education and access to ongoing professional development to secure the specialized knowledge required to educate young children.
- Research-based, developmentally appropriate standards, curricula, and assessments in all Pre-K settings.
- Screenings and programs that address children's health and development.
- Opportunities for parents to be involved in their child's education.
- Connections to resources that enable parents to increase their own well-being.
- A comprehensive and coordinated plan for transitioning children into Pre-K and from Pre-K into kindergarten.

The Pre-K Priority Quality Table found in Appendix E outlines the quality standards recommended for an expanded system in comparison to the existing NC Pre-K Program's state standards and criteria. The NC Pre-K Program presents a solid benchmark to which specific enhancements can be added that are critical for an expanded Pre-K system to provide the greatest return on investment. The table includes existing standards, recommended enhancements, and the cost considerations and/or estimates associated with the recommendations. The crucial and necessary components of a high-quality Pre-K program are further detailed in this section of the report, followed by recommendations pertinent to Pre-K expansion in Forsyth County.

Quality Components

1. Well-Qualified Teachers

Research clearly shows that quality teaching matters to student learning. In fact, teacher quality has been consistently identified as the most important school-based factor in student achievement and teacher effects on student learning have been found to be cumulative and long-lasting.^{(30) (31) (32) (33) (34) (35)} Furthermore, well-prepared teachers have the necessary knowledge and skills to provide engaging interactions and learning environments to support each and every child's growth, development, and learning.⁽³⁶⁾

The requirements to become a licensed and credentialed ECE/BK teacher in NC are outlined in Appendices M and N. The various routes to licensure present opportunities for individuals entering with differing levels of experience and education and are illustrated in Appendix O as outlined by the NC Division of Child Development Early Education (DCDEE). Specifics related to the importance of quality teacher preparation are contained in the *Workforce Development* section of this report.

2. Curriculum, Screening, and Assessments

Important to the success of young children in preschool settings is the type of curriculum, screening, and assessments that are provided. Considerable research supports the use of developmentally appropriate curriculum, screenings, and assessments to achieve successful outcomes for children.

Curriculum

In preschool settings, curriculum can be defined as “everything that students learn. It can be implicit or explicit, planned for or spontaneous, [and] play is truly the most important part of a curriculum”.⁽³⁷⁾ The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) describes this curriculum as an “organized framework” that delineates the following:

- The content that children are to learn;
- The process through which children achieve the identified curricular goals;
- What teachers do to help children achieve these goals; and
- The context in which teaching and learning occur.⁽³⁸⁾

The NAEYC also defines various indicators of an effective and appropriate curriculum for young children:

- Children are active and engaged;
- Goals are clear and shared by all;
- Curriculum is evidence-based;
- Valued content is learned through investigation and focused, intentional teaching;
- Curriculum builds on prior learning and experiences;
- Curriculum is comprehensive;
- Professional standards validate the curriculum’s subject-matter content; and
- The curriculum is likely to benefit children.⁽³⁸⁾

Based on the established knowledge noted above, the NC Department of Public Instruction (DPI) and NC DCDEE outline approved curricula for use within preschool programs across the state. (See Appendix F for the NC-approved curricula list.) Accordingly, all local sites implementing a high-quality Pre-K program utilize a foundational, state-approved curriculum along with other supplemental tools as needed. Currently the 5th Edition of *The Creative Curriculum*® for Preschool is the curriculum of choice for the majority of counties administering NC Pre-K, including Forsyth County.

Screening and Formative Assessment

***Developmental Screening-** is designed to identify problems or delays during normal childhood development. When properly applied, screening tests for developmental or behavioral problems in preschool children allow for further evaluation and improved outcomes due to early implementation of treatment.

****Formative Assessment-** is an ongoing process used by teachers and students during instruction that allows observation, recording, and documentation of what children do and how they do it. This provides feedback to adjust ongoing teaching and learning to help students improve their achievement, understand intended instructional outcomes, and determine steps for continued growth.

Effective, ethical, appropriate, and reliable screenings and assessments are fundamental to a high-quality preschool experience. According to NAEYC's statement on assessment:

To assess young children's strengths, progress, and needs, [educators should] use assessment methods that are developmentally appropriate, culturally and linguistically responsive, tied to children's daily activities, supported by professional development, inclusive of families and connected to specific, beneficial purposes.⁽³⁸⁾

The NAEYC guidelines also reinforce that strong supports should be implemented to meet the needs of a diverse population of young children and families such as those residing in Forsyth County. The state of NC shares these views and has developed criteria and indicators for developmental screening* and formative assessments** that support the appropriate use of these tools. (See Appendix G for the NC-approved screening and formative assessments list.) For this reason, all local preschool sites participating in an expanded, high-quality Pre-K program in Forsyth County will utilize state-approved screening and formative assessment instruments for their intended purposes. Teaching Strategies (TS) Gold is presently used for ongoing assessments and is strategically paired with The Creative Curriculum® for Preschool to offer a congruent approach.

Additionally, NC DCDEE provides a guide associated with the developmental continuum and best practices addressing children from birth through age five along with their families. The North Carolina Foundations for Early Learning and Development document details what children should be able to know and do at the different stages along the continuum. Teachers in all programs receiving a 4- or 5-star rating must be trained in these practices to implement curriculum and the formative assessment system. The document includes "goals, developmental indicators, and strategies in five developmental domains:

- Approaches to Play and Learning;
- Emotional and Social Development;
- Health and Physical Development;
- Language Development and Communication; and
- Cognitive Development⁽²⁷⁾

3. Family and Community Engagement

Meaningful family engagement in children's early learning supports school readiness and their academic and social emotional success. High-quality Pre-K programs:

- Build bridges between home and school through developing trusting relationships with families;
- Support and sustain family partnerships and meaningful engagement;
- Provide for authentic two-way communication and shared decision-making;
- Provide services for families with dual language learners in their home languages;
- Use an evidence-based Family Engagement Curriculum; and
- Provide a Family Support Specialist to support overall family well-being.

Additional information regarding this component outlined in Section 5 of this report on *Parent & Family Engagement*.

4. Transitions Into and Out of Pre-K

The transitions into and out of Pre-K are significant milestones for young children and their families.⁽³⁹⁾ In order to provide smooth and effective transitions, Pre-K programs must develop a comprehensive and coordinated transition plan in collaboration with all stakeholders in the community. Collaborations of this sort build strong and positive relationships among children, families, and teachers leading to beneficial opportunities for all children.^{(39) (40)}

High-quality Pre-K programs provide a variety of transition supports and resources. To be successful, organized transition teams at each program site with personnel assigned to coordination responsibilities are vitally important. Transition teams develop activities and plans for implementation that are meaningful for their specific situation and community. In addition, effective transition practices actively involve staff, families, and related communities to create seamless experiences for children. These transition practices include but are not limited to:

- home visits by teachers and support staff;
- "open houses" at the program site(s);
- opportunities for children and families to visit in classrooms;
- an elementary school representative on the transition team (from pre-k to Kindergarten) to emphasize the continuum of learning⁽⁴⁰⁾;
- information about health screenings and resources;
- resources for families whose home language is one other than English;
- WS/FCS Ready Freddy™ materials and services; and
- access to community resources and services.

Further emphasizing a priority on transition practices, recent NC legislation requires HHS to implement a state-wide standardized Pre-K transition plan from Pre-K to Kindergarten. A pilot program has been put

in place beginning with 10 counties in 2018-19, increasing to 30 counties in 2020-21, and all 100 counties by 2025.⁽⁴¹⁾

5. Measuring Program and Process Quality Characteristics

To ensure that Pre-K programs are implemented and functioning within a consistent quality framework across all sites, evaluations must be based on established and uniform methods that measure all quality characteristics.

NC Star Rated License System & Quality Rating and Improvement System

NC Star Rated License System is North Carolina's licensing system for child care centers and family homes. A one star rating meets the minimum licensing standards. Points are earned based on programming standards and teacher education. The system is part of the national Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) for child care licensing.

Recognizing that young children's wellbeing and success are an integral part of any prosperous community, in September 1999 NC was one of the first states in the nation to implement the star rated license system to promote optimal learning environments in early education programs. Ten years later, in September 2009, DCDEE convened a group of key stakeholders from across the state who agreed that NC was ready to move toward a stronger Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS). The NC Star Rated License System was the result and is the official structure used to license child care centers and family child care homes. Managed by DCDEE within NC's Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the system is part of the national QRIS that provides structure for ensuring child care sites meet minimal standards and have guidelines for quality improvement. As stated by the QRIS National Learning Network: "A QRIS is not just about ratings or a stand-alone program to improve quality. It is a unique tool for system reform that has the potential to reach programs that serve a wide range of children." (42) The current QRIS in North Carolina includes the following five elements:

1. Engagement and outreach
2. Monitoring and accountability
3. On-going financial assistance
4. Quality standards for programs and practitioners
5. Supportive infrastructure to meet standards⁽⁴³⁾

A center's rating is based on a 1- to 5-star level with points earned in the primary areas of program standards and staff education as outlined above, with compliance history also taken into account. An additional quality point can be obtained if providers meet criteria beyond the standard requirements. The NC Star Rated License System serves as a guide to help families select an early education setting, acknowledge high-quality providers, and outline areas where providers can improve their practices.⁽⁴⁴⁾ Pre-K programs using state and federal funding (NC Pre-K and Head Start respectively) are required by law to operate at a 4- or 5-star level.

In keeping with the higher quality characteristics of current publicly funded programs, any setting implementing Pre-K ideals in an expanded Forsyth County system is required to earn a 4- or 5-star rating based on the NC Star Rated License System.⁽⁴⁵⁾

Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised

The Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R) is an assessment instrument for early childhood program quality. It is a thorough revision of the ECERS, designed to assess group programs for preschool-kindergarten-aged children, from 2 through 5 years of age. The total scale consists of 43 items.

The Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R) describes program and process quality consisting of various interactions in preschool and kindergarten classrooms. The interactions include those

...between staff and children, staff, parents, and other adults, among the children themselves, and the interactions children have with the many materials and activities in the environment, as well as those features, such as space, schedule and materials that support these interactions.⁽⁴⁶⁾

Process quality is assessed primarily through observation and has been found to be more predictive of child outcomes than structural indicators such as staff to child ratio, group size, cost of care, and even type of care, for example child care center or family child care home.⁽⁴⁷⁾ The seven subscales of the ECERS-R correlate and affect the points earned in the NC Star Rated License System.⁽⁴³⁾ The Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute (which developed the ECERS assessment instrument) cites three basic needs that a quality program should provide to “permit children to experience a high-quality of life while helping them develop their abilities:

- Protection of their health and safety
- Building positive relationships
- Opportunities for stimulation and learning from experience”.⁽⁴⁶⁾

These components of quality care should be present “in the program’s environment, curriculum, schedule, supervision and interaction” in concrete ways that are visibly discernable.⁽⁴⁶⁾ In addition, attention to maintaining the optimum Pre-K class size will benefit and support children’s growth and development. Having fewer students in a classroom with more staff to support learning is shown to facilitate high-quality interactions between teachers and children.⁽⁴⁸⁾

Quality Recommendations

The following recommendations relate to specific quality programming considerations for expanding Pre-K resources in our community, and are also outlined in The Pre-K Priority table in Appendix E.

- ◆ ***Recommendation 1: Require standardized teacher credentials and qualifications for Pre-K programs and provide ongoing professional development support to teachers***

- Lead Teachers have a bachelor degree and specialized training in a Pre-K area. Ideally teachers will hold a Birth-through-Kindergarten (BK) Licensure or equivalent. See Appendix M and N for details and requirements to earn BK Licensure and credentials in NC.
- Assistant Teacher holds a Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential™ or equivalent Associate of Arts (AA) degree in early childhood education. See Appendix M for details and requirements to earn a CDA and AA.
- Provide ongoing mentoring and coaching support for all teachers.
- Provide ongoing professional development opportunities relevant to high-quality experiences for young children including but not limited to the following topics:
 - Developmentally and Culturally Appropriate Practice;
 - Social and emotional development;
 - Guiding children’s behavior;
 - Differentiated instruction;
 - Effective strategies for supporting dual language learners;
 - Effective strategies for supporting children with special needs;
 - Appropriate formative and summative assessment;
 - Effective teacher-child interactions;
 - Effective family engagement strategies.

◆ ***Recommendation 2: Require standardized credentials for Pre-K Administrators and/or Directors and provide ongoing professional development***

- Ensure Administrators and Directors have a NC Principal License or NC Administrative Credential Level I, II, or III (Level III BS/BA in early childhood or in childhood development). See Appendix N for details and requirements to earn licensure and credentialing;
- Ensure Administrators and Directors have or pursue early childhood knowledge and experience, preferably having a degree in ECE;
- Provide ongoing leadership and management training for Administrators and Directors;
- Establish a mentor and coaching program for Administrators and Directors.

◆ ***Recommendation 3: Provide a common, ongoing training program for all Pre-K educators***

Develop a comprehensive training plan with input from local ECE practitioners that provides opportunities for expanded learning and understanding of a variety of ongoing and emerging ECE-related topics.

Although specific training requirements differ within various programs (Head Start, NC Pre-K, etc.), a common program for all Pre-K educators promotes relationship building and mentoring opportunities.

Training topics to be addressed include:

- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)
- health and safety;
- First Aid and CPR;
- developmentally appropriate practice based on NAEYC’s position statement;
- Classroom Management;

- Updates related to Social Emotional Development; Touchpoints; and Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS).

◆ ***Recommendation 4: Partner with local universities and colleges to strengthen quality expectations across the ECE landscape in Forsyth County***

- Develop mentoring and coaching programs, similar to teacher-mentor arrangements, co-ops, student teaching, etc.
- Engage in continuous improvement processes to enhance the ECE curriculum preparation program and the relationships among the higher education system and local communities. See Appendix Q for a list of current opportunities that promote higher learning in the ECE/BK field. Additional details related to current partnerships are also included in the *Workforce Education & Training* section.
- Establish a working group to include Winston-Salem State University, Salem College, UNC-Greensboro, NC A&T State University, and Forsyth Technical Community College to discuss BK education programming and licensing requirements to ensure consistent expectations within local Pre-K systems. See Appendix M for NC Teacher licensure requirements.

◆ ***Recommendation 5: Select and implement a set of common sense and evidence-based family engagement practices and provide the involvement of family support specialists to all Pre-K settings.***
Additional details related to the role and responsibilities and services of the family support specialist are provided in the *Parent & Family Advocates* section of this report.

◆ ***Recommendation 6: Provide structured support for the transitions that occur for children and their families upon entering Pre-K and during the progression to Kindergarten***

- Capitalize on the success of the Ready Freddy™ Initiative (Appendix H) by implementing the program and related tools within each high-quality Pre-K program offered in the county.
- Create specific transition teams within the expanded Pre-K system that operate by consistent and accountable practices across the different mixed system of providers.

II. Teacher Compensation

Studies cite low wages as the primary reason teachers are leaving the early childhood education (ECE) field and why new ones are reluctant to enter.⁽⁴⁹⁾ At the same time, providing equitable compensation for Pre-K teachers across the various settings in which they work is a challenge found across the nation. Teacher salaries are the largest expense of a preschool program and the most significant variable related to expansion plans for a high-quality Pre-K system. By and large, the disparities in salary are most pronounced in private childcare centers due to the structure and challenges of the early care system which are further described in this section. The development and implementation of a base salary table and supplemental salary schedule begins to address the current wage disparities among lead Pre-K teachers working in different settings. However, caution is advised in implementing solutions to the wage disparity problem to avoid unintended consequences; those concerns are also addressed in the following section.

Compensation Parity

In the education field, the term *compensation parity* primarily includes an employee's starting salary, salary schedule, aspects of benefits, and paid time for planning.⁽⁵⁰⁾ In Forsyth County, the goal is to create wage parity via a comparable salary scale and salary supplement to be paid at private child care centers and in the public schools for lead teachers (with equivalent levels of education and experience). For clarity and comparison purposes, the NC Teacher Salary Scale that is utilized by the Winston-Salem Forsyth County School system (WS/FCS) is outlined in Appendix I; this scale also includes the monthly supplement provided to teachers with a Bachelor and/or Master level degree.

Funding Challenges for Compensation Parity

To address the challenge of implementing compensation parity, it is important to understand the reasons and issues contributing to inequitable wages across Pre-K settings. According to the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) and the Center for the Study of Child Care Employment (CSCCE), pay parity is a complicated issue because "early education and care is a complex patchwork of public and private programs funded primarily by families and government".⁽⁵¹⁾ For instance, public school Pre-K sites often leverage federal funding through Title I programs to supplement their state and local allotments. Furthermore, Pre-K teachers employed in the public school system are paid according to the State Salary Scale, offered government-funded health and retirement benefits, along with eligibility for an additional local district salary supplement. Though the NC Pre-K Program manual outlines that all site administrators are encouraged to offer competitive salaries and benefits aligning with the NC Department of Public Instruction (DPI) Teacher Salary, it is challenging for providers that do not have the same funding structure as the state.⁽²⁸⁾ While private, nonprofit, and for profit child care sites may have access to philanthropic funds or local in-kind support, they do not have the ability to leverage federal and state-related funding in the same way as the public school system.

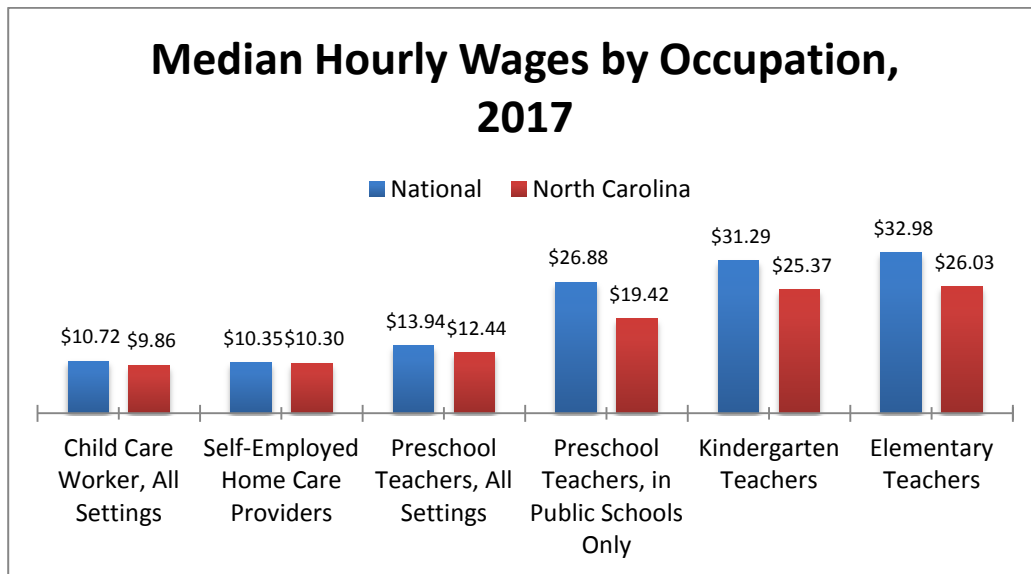
Another parity consideration involves the difference in the continuum of care between public schools and private settings. Whereas a majority of private early child care sites provide services for infants, toddlers, and children up to four years of age, the public school setting's youngest students are typically four-year-olds. The cost of care for infants and toddlers in licensed settings well exceeds those of four-year-old Pre-K children primarily due to state regulations outlining caregiver-to-child ratios and group size limits. It stands to reason that because infants and younger children require more staff oversight, their cost of care is higher. However contrary to reason, the public funding reimbursements do not fully cover the cost of care the program provider incurs for the younger age classrooms. Consequently, according to a study of the economics of ECE, many private centers offset the cost-of-care gap by opting to provide more publicly funded Pre-K slots rather than serve infants and toddlers.⁽⁵²⁾ Although this practice allows more four-year-olds a Pre-K opportunity, it artificially subsidizes the true cost of infant and toddler classrooms and ultimately serves fewer young children that need early care opportunities.

National and State Median Wages and Benefits for Early Educators

While research supports the significance of high-quality care for our youngest children, there is still much work to be done to impact the overall system of preparing, supporting, and rewarding early educators in the United States. According to the Early Childhood Workforce Index, "Low wages and inconsistent expectations pose risks to the well-being and effectiveness of early educators and undermine our nation's ability to ensure equitable and high-quality services for all young children".⁽⁵⁰⁾ Variability in pay is also cited as a reason for the high rate of teacher turnover in the field.⁽⁵³⁾ Providing further evidence of the importance of compensation, the research supports that higher-quality care is provided by ECE professionals that are well compensated.⁽⁵⁴⁾ A snapshot from the 2018 Early Childhood Workforce Index report combined with data from the Department of Labor, in Figure 4 illustrates the compensation disparity across the ECE field based on wages earned by occupation, both nationally and within NC.^{(55) (56) (50)}

(Scroll to next page for Figure 4)

Figure 4
**Comparison of Median Wages by Occupation in Early Childhood Care & Education
 National and North Carolina**



Sources: Early Childhood Index 2018 Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, University of California, Berkley, & Occupational Employment Statistics Survey 2017, Bureau of Labor Statistics, US Department of Labor

The data clearly highlight the salary disparities among early educators, especially when they are not employed by a public school system. In fact, when teachers and assistant teachers with plans to leave the field were asked what would incentivize them to remain, 74% and 76% respectively cited better pay, with better benefits as a high secondary motivator.⁽⁵⁷⁾

To further understand the impact of this issue, 39% of lead teachers and 39% of assistant teachers in NC's early education field have needed at least one type of public assistance (e.g., TANF, Medicaid, SNAP/food stamps, etc.) in the past three years due to the low wages earned in their positions.⁽⁵⁸⁾ Annually, this public assistance totals a \$37,400,000 cost to the state based on the findings of the Early Childhood Workforce Index.⁽⁵⁰⁾

Whereas health insurance is a standard benefit for public school employees, 51% of licensed child care centers in NC do not provide any financial support for health insurance to their staff. Of those who do, only 19% pay the full cost of health insurance while 30% provide partial assistance.⁽⁵⁸⁾ When teachers are unable to work due to illness, 72% of centers provide some number of paid sick leave per year, while 28% offer no paid leave time.⁽⁵⁸⁾

With regard to professional development benefits, a statewide survey found that 78% of licensed child care centers provide some monetary aid for education or training, 67% give paid preparation or planning time, and 60% offer paid time off for training.⁽⁵⁷⁾

Birth through Kindergarten (BK) Salary Base Scale & Supplement Program

To address the wage disparity of Pre-K teachers found within Forsyth County, a proposed uniform salary schedule with a base rate of pay for qualifying teachers provides a set of standards to promote greater salary parity and competitive wage practices in all high-quality Pre-K sites.

Base Salary

The proposed BK Salary Base Scale and Supplement Program outlined in Appendix J is modeled on the salary schedule framework used by the NC DPI for public school system employees reflected in Appendix I. While the framework is similar, the qualifications associated with the BK Salary Base Scale are aligned with a Pre-K teacher's licensure/education and years of experience as verified by the state's Early Education Support, Licensure and Professional Development unit (EESLPD). It is important to note on the proposed BK salary scale, the annual base salary that providers are required to pay falls within \$4,000 of the WS/FCS system's scale (based on corresponding teacher qualifications of years of experience and educational attainment).

Salary Supplement

The proposed BK Salary Base Scale and Supplement Program also provides guidelines for a separate, additional supplement to qualifying teachers who do not earn commensurate wages to the NC DPI Salary Schedule (e.g., the public school system salary schedule). The supplement bolsters the pay of credentialed teachers to further lessen the wage disparity found between various organizations. Because current state laws requiring child care centers to pay at a higher rate are limited, it is recommended that a third party administrator be engaged to disburse the supplement directly to teachers to ensure that all high-quality Pre-K organizations compensate at the same base salary regardless of the reimbursement rate for the classroom. Furthermore, a third-party administrator model allows streamlining of implementation as well as central oversight and accountability for allocating payments, record-keeping accuracy, and guideline adherence.

Once the proposed BK Base Salary Scale and Supplement model is implemented, a thorough review and evaluation is recommended every three years to assess not only the positive impact, but to also examine potential drawbacks or unintended consequences. While the proposed model may prove challenging for some providers to meet, it ultimately will reduce turnover and increase the number of credentialed BK teachers in our county.⁽⁵¹⁾ In addition, the supplemental pay program is not intended to deter providers from increasing teacher compensation out of their own budgets over time. In fact, the goal is to lessen utilization of the supplemental payments over time as Pre-K providers are better able to pay at an equitable rate aligned with the school system. While the proposed BK base pay scale and supplement cannot address the entire set of complex issues affecting salary parity, it is a step toward improving equitable compensation for all early childhood educators.

Teacher Compensation Recommendations

◆ ***Recommendation 1: Further develop and implement the proposed BK Salary Base Scale and Supplement Program (Appendix J).***

- Implement a base salary scale table within the expanded Pre-K system that will set compensation standards according to teacher education level and years of experience and more closely align with the current WS/FCS Salary Schedule.
- Implement a BK Salary Supplement to be distributed directly to qualified teachers to offset the difference in their salary as compared to the WS/FCS system salary schedule (according to the teacher's education level and years of experience).

◆ ***Recommendation 2: Engage current directors in plans to expand the Pre-K system and implement the proposed BK Salary Base Scale and Supplement program.***

The insight and support of current experts operating in the field is critical to ensure success in implementing a revised salary scale and supplement program in an expanded Pre-K system.

- Connect with center directors and teachers to benefit their familiarity with the current challenges of the system. Draw on their expertise regarding Pre-K especially as it relates to their present programming and infrastructure.
- Offer center directors training opportunities for the construction of budgets to support the proposed BK Salary Base Scale and Supplement program.

◆ ***Recommendation 3: Incorporate the BK Base Salary Scale and Supplement program into the recommendations of the Workforce Education and Training report to increase the teacher pipeline.***

To increase the number of well-qualified teachers for expanded Pre-K, addressing compensation is a necessity; the two are inextricably linked according to both the research data and practical knowledge. (54) It follows that supporting competitive compensation practices is essential to increase the number of teachers holding a bachelor's degree in all Pre-K classroom settings.

III. Workforce Education & Training

There are numerous challenging aspects related to providing and retaining qualified teachers and staff for Pre-K classroom settings. Recruiting high school and college students into the early childhood education (ECE) field has become increasingly difficult due to historically low wages and the increasing qualifications required for the positions. According to the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER), these ongoing challenges are not unique to Forsyth County but experienced by communities across the country.⁽⁵³⁾ Indeed, the following national workforce studies highlighted by the NC Early Education Coalition emphasize the growing need to address workforce growth:

- Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth through Eight, Institute of Medicine and National Research Council
https://www.nap.edu/resource/19401/BirthtoEight_brief.pdf
- Worthy Work, STILL Unlivable Wages: The Early Childhood Workforce 25 Years after the National Child Care Staffing Study, Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, 2015
<http://cscce.berkeley.edu/files/2014/ReportFINAL.pdf>
- High-Quality Early Learning Settings Depends on a High-Quality Workforce – Low Compensation Undermines Quality, U.S. Department of Education, June 2016
<https://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/earlylearning/files/ece-low-compensation-undermines-quality-report-2016.pdf>
- Early Childhood Workforce Index, Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, 2016
<http://cscce.berkeley.edu/files/2016/Early-Childhood-Workforce-Index-2016.pdf>

The following section specifically outlines aspects of local challenges related to the shortage of qualified Pre-K teachers along with recommendations to address and improve the situation. Without question, our local workforce and career pathways must be enhanced to recruit, motivate, and sustain the ECE professionals required for a successful, high-quality Pre-K system.

Current Challenges and Opportunities

1. Fragmented Pathways to ECE Careers

Though a number of beneficial ECE learning opportunities are available in high schools and higher educational tracks, many students are insufficiently equipped to identify how to connect opportunities institution-to-institution. Without assistance to navigate a broad system, individuals too often find that the guidelines and coursework they have completed do not align with subsequent job requirements. This disconnect contributes not only to a decreasing number of individuals entering the ECE field, but also fewer fully prepared educators ready to put their skills into practice.

- **High School: Career Technical Education (CTE) pathways**

Programs in the public school CTE pathways are developed and offered to students in response to the needs of the economy. As such, public schools partner with local organizations and community leaders through advisory groups that provide support in planning, implementing, and evaluating the program. According to national public school guidelines, the CTE's early childhood education (ECE) courses are offered through the Family and Consumer Sciences department within the *Human Services Pathway*. The course curriculum is competency-based and provides instructional skills and field experience to support students who are interested in early childhood education careers (i.e., working with children from birth through third grade). Students' career aspirations range from entering the workforce upon graduation, to enrolling in community college, to attending a four-year university.

As a point of comparison, high school students that are interested in Kindergarten-12th grade (K-12) teaching careers are not necessarily streamlined into particular CTE coursework unless their interest is in the early elementary grades. The marked difference in ECE and K-12 career preparation at the high school level in some ways serves to perpetuate the contrasting pedagogical approaches that are also found between the two fields in higher educational tracks.

- **Institutions of Higher Learning: Community Colleges & Four-Year University programs**

The broad offering of certifications and degrees available at institutions of higher learning provide many professional choices for teaching careers. However in the case of ECE/Birth-Kindergarten (BK), the programming inconsistencies found institution-to-institution often complicate a student's ability to transition or bridge teaching career opportunities. For example, ECE/BK programs are inconsistently located among a mix of departments depending on the institution. These departments range from Human Development to Health and Human Services to Family Studies to Education. Conversely, K-12 education programs are consistently located in Schools of Education regardless of the institution. To this point, the National Center of Early Childhood Development, Teaching and Learning (NCECDTL) reports that ECE programs often lack cohesion and uniformity both state to state and also between institutions; whereas, elementary education degrees enjoy greater similarities and consistency regardless of institution or location.⁽⁵⁹⁾

It should also be noted that when ECE and K-12 programs are located in separate departments within an institution, the differences in pedagogical approach between the two are further contrasted. However, in reality the research confirms that educators benefit from understanding the connectivity and expectations of the two fields. Given these points, the NCECDTL highlights the challenge of aligning the training and preservice development of students due to the inconsistent placement of ECE programs among institutions.⁽⁵⁹⁾

On a positive note, an articulation agreement has been developed by representatives from the NC Community College System (NCCCS) and the 16 constituent organizations of the University of North Carolina system to support the seamless transfer of ECE credits between two- and four-year institutions. The General Assembly passed Bill 449 taking effect in the 2018-19 academic year, allowing community college credits in an ECE program to count toward a baccalaureate degree for the purposes of earning licensure in early education. Appendix L contains a full listing of NC institutions of higher learning and the departments that offer ECE/BK degrees and certificates.

- **Online programs**

With demand growing for less expensive and more accessible higher-learning options, the proliferation of online ECE certification and degree programs have resulted in fractured coursework standards and less rigorous requirements of graduates. Indeed, the NC Institute for Child Development Professionals (NCICDP) warns that degree program accreditation systems offered in other states, online programs, or in other countries may not be regionally accredited and therefore not transfer toward NC college credit to complete a certificate or degree.⁽⁶⁰⁾ For this reason, the NCICDP specifically encourages students to “read the fine print carefully and review the list of regionally accredited postsecondary institutions and programs before enrolling”.⁽⁶⁰⁾

- **State Level Oversight:**

Fulfilling the professional requirements of a Pre-K teacher is different from a K-12 teacher as it relates to state-level governance. In the world of Pre-K, practitioners, administrators and site locations follow guidelines, policies, and licensing that are overseen within a layer of multiple departments at two separate, state-level branches of government.

- **Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)**

HHS includes two offices with authority over NC Pre-K Program standards and fiscal aspects:

- Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE)
This department is responsible for licensing all child care centers in the state.
 - Early Educator Support, Licensure and Professional Development (EESLPD)
This department administers teacher supports, licensure renewal, and required professional development.

- **Department of Public Instruction (DPI)**

DPI is tasked with implementing the “public school laws and the State Board of Education’s policies and procedures governing pre-kindergarten through 12th grade public education”.

⁽⁶¹⁾ Within DPI, the Office of Early Learning focuses on Pre-K through third grade to promote success in the early education field.

2. Inadequate Number of Highly Qualified Teachers

The inconsistencies found in course requirements, rigor, and experiential learning opportunities among the academic programs offering ECE decreases the number of qualified individuals entering a field that is already challenged to meet demand. In fact, NC's Community Colleges report a 22% decline in enrollment of early education programs since 2008.⁽⁴⁹⁾ The lack of standardization among the "content, setting, duration, and supervision" for classroom experience at both two- and four-year programs is also well documented at the national level.⁽⁵⁹⁾ With fewer well-trained ECE professionals available to fill vacant positions, Pre-K teachers at private settings are often incentivized to relocate to public school Pre-K positions that pay higher wages based on the state-mandated salary scale. Consequently, this familiar course of events causes a shortage of teachers in private care sites and also leads to inconsistent care patterns for children.

Though research emphasizes the association between well-educated teachers and high-quality programs, the current number of early education professionals in NC with an ECE-specific bachelor or associate degree is low: 41% of center directors and 36% of teachers.⁽⁵⁷⁾ While publicly-funded programs such as Head Start and NC Pre-K require ECE-specific degrees, teachers in other programs are not incentivized to pursue educational attainment based on the low wages they will continue to earn even after obtaining a degree.⁽⁶²⁾ It is equally important to acknowledge the barriers many individuals experience when pursuing higher education in ECE; obstacles that are largely due to low income or language differences. In fact, an assessment by the US Department of Education (ED) and HHS highlighted the importance of *career pathways* to "meet the skill, employment, and advancement needs of low-income, low-skilled adults who are in or entering this field".⁽⁶³⁾ This emphasis on ECE career pathways reinforces that more flexible and diverse training opportunities will not only help increase the professional workforce needed to expand Pre-K, but also provide meaningful employment for more citizens.

3. Outdated Public Perception of ECE and Decline of the Emerging Workforce

A 2016 ED report commissioned for the Office of Early Learning found that low wages create a deterrent to professionalizing the ECE sector.⁽⁶³⁾ As an example, high school students considering advanced schooling in the ECE field are frequently dissuaded by family members and/or mentors who associate the career path with low wages regardless of educational attainment, training, or experience. This scenario essentially reroutes potential professionals to other areas of study and thereby decreases the number of individuals entering college-related ECE tracks.

The outdated and inaccurate perception of ECE and its educators as low-skilled or babysitters unfortunately persists in the general public. To underscore this challenge, a recent federal Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge report confirms the ECE profession continues to be largely undervalued by the general public in comparison to other jobs related to young children.⁽⁶⁴⁾ In contrast, the NAEYC points out that because our society values child care and has high expectations regarding the ethical responsibilities of caregivers, people generally believe in resources and policy to ensure appropriate

funding of a high-quality system.⁽³⁸⁾ However, this conflict illustrates the challenge of prioritizing early childhood education with funding to match what we believe is important for all children in our communities.

An approach of viewing early childhood education as part of the *caring economy* casts those delivering these services in a new light. The caring economy is a system where an individual's well-being is valued above the current consumption model of wealth and prosperity.⁽⁶⁵⁾ Economists Singer and Snower agree that traditional economics utilizing the free market concept works well for some aspects of our system, but "not those associated with public goods and the commons".⁽⁶⁵⁾ A report from The Georgetown Center on Poverty and Inequality, entitled *Building the Caring Economy*, emphasizes that workforce investments in the infrastructure of the caring sector not only create better environments across the life span, specifically for young children, older adults, and those with disabilities, but also generate more jobs across these fields.⁽⁶⁶⁾

4. Lack of sustainable long-term opportunities and supports in the ECE field

Retention becomes an ongoing challenge once individuals have entered the ECE field. Although a majority of those who pursue ECE careers feel called to the work, sheer dedication does not substitute the need to earn a living wage and experience growth opportunities. For this reason, many people leave the field to pursue other employment due to inadequate supports and incentives for professional growth.⁽⁵⁷⁾ Adding to this challenge is the current scarcity of qualified teachers needed to secure an adequate substitute teacher pool. When substitutes are not available, full-time teachers are unable to participate in meaningful professional development opportunities that require time outside of the classroom. Indeed, research confirms that to retain qualified and experienced ECE professionals in the field, it is vital to offer resources that not only provide continuing education options, but also support and affirm the educator's worth.⁽⁵³⁾

Workforce Education & Training Recommendations

◆ *Recommendation 1: Outline clear career pathways and existing pipelines for the emerging Early Childhood Education workforce.*

Providing a roadmap and vision of career possibilities helps young students begin planning and aspiring to enter the ECE field. The early connection of students to learning options in middle and high school leads to the likelihood of continuing ECE coursework at higher institutions of learning. Clearly outlining these pathways also strengthens the existing links and partnerships in our ECE system. HHS reinforces the importance of this connectivity in their policy statement by issuing recommendations for "developing and implementing career pathways to support the professional learning, practice, and compensation of early childhood educators and program directors".⁽⁶⁷⁾

Suggested Action Steps:

- *Create a career ladder website to communicate all levels, pathways, partnerships, and prerequisites related to advancement in the ECE field.*

While the state's HHS website outlines requirements for ECE teacher and administrator credentials (see Appendix M and N), a central place to access all ECE-related career aspects streamlines the process for individuals, especially those new to the field and less familiar with the requirements. A helpful example of the career lattice concept is the Texas Early Childhood Professional Development System (TECPDS) developed by the Texas Early Learning Council. The Texas system includes a workforce registry, career advancement opportunities, and details related to various trainings. See Appendix P for the website landing page.

- *In collaboration with WS/FCS' Career Technical Education program, support ECE learning pathways and career track options (career ladder) at early stages of middle and high school.*
- *Assign a career advocate-mentor to each individual high school student exploring ECE to help bridge their next steps into a community college or four-year institution.*
Utilize the proposed career ladder website described above to recruit and assign advocate-mentors to students interested in ECE. Ensure a sufficient number of career days are available for the advocate-mentor to partner with higher learning institutions and their faculty to introduce students to those programs.
- *Capitalize on the expertise and network of current WS/FCS Career Development Coordinators (CDC) located at the high school level to support students' interest in ECE.*
CDCs will help ensure students are well-equipped with knowledge regarding the ECE career ladder, the documentation required for licensure, and potential scholarship opportunities.

◆ ***Recommendation 2: Create consistent, high-quality guidelines for teacher training.***

Establishing clear and consistent guidelines among all NC-accredited schools (that offer ECE and BK programs) will ensure that standards, qualifications, and training are well-communicated for students entering higher education and graduates moving into the field regardless of where their work setting. In addition, incorporating the advice of early childhood educators with field expertise into the high-quality guidelines provides more accurate requirements of training and experiential learning.

Suggested Action Steps:

- *Create a unambiguous licensure checklist that all local ECE and BK programs use to communicate the high-quality requirements needed to enter the workforce well-prepared.*
Include this list in a highly visible location on the proposed career ladder website.

Note: While the HHS website currently outlines Teacher and Administrator credentialing requirements (see Appendix M and N), a central location to view this information in relation to other workforce-related topics reflects a method similar to the Texas career lattice mentioned in Recommendation 1.

- *Ensure that all ECE coursework is led by instructors with a strong command of ECE knowledge, skills, and experience.*

NCCCS requires that ECE courses be taught by instructors with Master degree or higher in education or teaching with 18 graduate hours in ECE, Child Development, or Special Education. Degrees and hours must be from a college accredited by the Department of Education.

◆ ***Recommendation 3: Strengthen tangible incentives for ECE teachers and administrative staff.***

Incentives are often critical to motivate individuals to continue and complete the full licensure path. Purposeful benefits linked to higher education such as tuition funding assistance along with bonuses for program completion and retention can further promote teachers to complete the licensure requirements. Appendix Q and R outline the existing incentive programs and opportunities for pursuing higher education both within Forsyth County and the state of NC. While these programs provide a solid foundation of options, the substantive advantages of gaining higher education are primarily seen in the form of higher wages. To this point, the attainment of additional credentials should also be reflected in higher wages.

Suggested Action Steps:

- *Incentive-based tuition assistance programs: Evaluate the number of employees utilizing assistance programs currently in place and determine if the program is truly viable.*
Encourage current teaching and administrative staff to identify the reasons a program may be under utilized and suggest ideas to make programs more accessible and sustainable.
- *Retention Bonus: Review current incentive programs and determine how widely they are used; consider how a retention bonus might lessen turnover within programs.*
Charlotte-Mecklenburg County is considering a Teacher Retention Grant Pilot that would incentivize Pre-K teachers to continue in their positions year-to-year (public school teachers are not eligible for the bonus) similar to a bonus program that New York City's *Pre-K for All* program has implemented.⁽⁶⁷⁾
- *Dual Language Incentive Bonus: Recruit teachers that hold a Teaching English as a Second Language certification to teach in the Pre-K classrooms that have higher enrollment of Spanish-speaking children.*
With a large and growing Latino population in Forsyth County, placing bilingual teachers in Pre-K classrooms not only strengthens the ability to reach children, but also creates improved communication with parents and builds trusts with the Latino community.

Charlotte-Mecklenburg is also considering this incentive based on the practice implemented in the Seattle Preschool Program.⁽⁶⁷⁾

◆ ***Recommendation 4: Provide a living wage at parity with public school teachers.***

The issue of compensation is inextricably connected to increasing interest and participation in the ECE workforce. Details and recommendations are further outlined in the *Teacher Compensation* section of this report including a proposed BK Salary Base Scale and Supplement Program.

◆ ***Recommendation 5: Reshape public perception of ECE through a public education campaign.***

Draw on the growing popularity and bipartisan support of Pre-K and Kindergarten Readiness programs to emphasize the importance of educator training and its consequential impact on children's well-being.

Suggested Action Steps:

- *Place positive messages in local media outlets related to ECE educators and highlight their influence on child development.*
- *Change the message about ECE at the grassroots level during the formative years of middle and high school when youth are considering career opportunities.*
With the support of teachers, parents, and mentors, young students will be able to better envision ECE's promising potential and act on their aspirations at early stages of career decision-making.

◆ ***Recommendation 6: Establish and strengthen partnerships and collaboration among local educational institutions.***

Purposeful partnerships between WS/FCS' CTE department and local institutions of higher learning are needed for high school students to build their skill set and fully realize ECE possibilities. Current and new partnerships provide well-defined pathways for students to progress to subsequent learning levels. Additionally, these partnerships illustrate the importance and value placed on ECE teaching and training while emphasizing the prospects for employment in the field.

Suggested Action Steps:

- *Maximize the connections that CTE educators and career advocate-mentors (outlined in Recommendation 1.) have with local educational institutions.*
Educators and advocates working in the field typically have a network of local contacts that can benefit a young student exploring next career steps. Capitalizing on these personal connections helps students make meaningful and beneficial contacts among higher education tracks and with current ECE providers.

- *Grow the established partnerships among local institutions (see Appendix Q) with a Memorandum of Agreement that outlines intentional coordination measures.*

Streamline the ECE information that students receive and provide navigation of the ECE system to complete their career goals. A commitment or Memorandum of Agreement can help serve this purpose for WS/FCS, Forsyth Technical CC, and the local universities and colleges offering ECE coursework.

- *Capitalize on the benefits of the Early Education Articulation Agreement the General Assembly approved in Senate Bill 449 (March 29, 2017).*

This agreement allows students at NC technical and community colleges to automatically bridge acquired ECE credits to a four-year institution that offers a BK degree(s). A report from UNCG Human Development and Family Studies highlights that articulation agreements not only benefit ECE students but are “cost-effective for a state’s higher education system”.

⁽⁶⁸⁾ Appendix L lists all NC Colleges, Universities, and (centrally located) Community Colleges offering approved ECE degrees and licensure programs.

◆ ***Recommendation 7: Decrease barriers for individuals pursuing ECE professional credentials.***

Promote education and training programs that include flexibility and support of dual language learners and individuals with low-income. Oftentimes professionals in the current workforce are eager to pursue higher education, but they experience obstacles to enrollment and/or challenges to maintain their coursework. Targeted support services such as career counseling, academic tutoring, and case management (related to personal concerns) can increase the prospect of acquiring additional credentials.

Suggested Action Step:

- *Explore federal funding opportunities within the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) to help offset the cost of offering targeted support services.*

The targeted support services that are eligible for this funding include 1) academic advising and tutoring, 2) career counseling and job placement, and 3) case management and mentoring related to personal support needed to maintain work and family.

◆ ***Recommendation 8: Implement meaningful professional development and teacher supports.***

In order to retain ECE professionals in the field, educators and administrators need dedicated supports and meaningful development opportunities on a continuing basis. The recommendations outlined in the *Quality* section of this report provide guidance for implementing best practices based on the NIEER standards.

IV. Parent and Family Engagement

According to National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) and the National Association for Young Children (NAEYC), a high-quality Pre-K program intentionally incorporates and values the role of parent/family involvement. While the term parent engagement is broad and can include various aspects of a Pre-K program, the evidence-based practice of employing family advocates that has been nationally implemented in the Head Start program can serve as a model. Further, the Southern Regional Educational Board (SREB) strongly encourages pursuing two-generational approaches, such as those emphasizing family engagement, that have been successful in both rural and urban environments.⁽⁶⁸⁾ NAEYC emphasizes that establishing reciprocal relationships with families is vital to creating sustainable, genuine, and productive engagement and involvement.⁽³⁸⁾ To that end, it is important to incorporate an approach that reduces power dynamics between parents and teachers regarding educational information.⁽³⁸⁾

Studies continue to show that early childhood experiences, both positive and negative are linked to outcomes that effect individuals into adulthood. In the case of adverse childhood experiences (ACES), the American Academy of Pediatrics specifically cites how physical and mental health outcomes in adults are connected to early trauma.⁽⁶⁹⁾ Therefore, creating opportunities to support families during the early years of their children's development can fundamentally impact both the parent and child. A study by Pennsylvania State University in conjunction with The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, found that to effectively bolster engagement practice with families, especially those struggling with low socioeconomic issues, programs that are "intensive and strategic" and "longer and more involved" are required to create sustainable change and improved outcomes for families.⁽⁷⁰⁾ With this in mind, incorporating a Family Support Specialist position that services multiple classrooms, helps meet the essential high-quality Pre-K standard of family engagement.

The Family Support Specialist facilitates the building of relationships between parents, children, teachers, and staff to facilitate the carryover of classroom learning into the home. This position enhances communication with care givers, provides classroom support, and coordinates and facilitates parent activities and workshops. As mentioned earlier in this report, empowerment of parents and families through popular education practices is an essential component in this work. Employing these methods of engagement will allow the Family Support Specialist to foster authentic relationships and honor the contributions of parents and caregivers toward their child's well-being.

More specifically, the Family Support Specialist combines the role of educator (supporting teachers and parents by bringing classroom learning into the home) and advocate (by connecting parents and family members to community resources that can assist in improving family health and well-being). Duties and responsibilities of the Family Support Specialist include:

- Assisting families in establishing goals for family members (including parents and other children) and developing a plan to accomplish the goals

- Connecting families to community resources/agencies that can help them accomplish their goals
- Ensuring that families have a medical home
- Scheduling developmental and sensory screenings (hearing and vision)
- Conducting monthly home visits and twice monthly classroom visitation and observation.
- Conducts monthly home visits, twice monthly classroom visitation and observation.

The Family Support Specialist position requires a bachelor's degree in early childhood education, social work, psychology, or a related field (along with additional hours in ECE if not an ECE major).

V. Pre-K Expansion Budget & Funding

Calculating the cost and determining the means of financing a high-quality Pre-K system begins with an account of current funding streams and proceeds with a consideration of potential new revenue sources. Although Forsyth County has well-established Pre-K programs, there is no uniform, universal system for funding Pre-K programs. As in other North Carolina counties, the administrators of Forsyth County's Head Start, Smart Start, NC Pre-K and Title I funds collaborate to blend and braid these funding streams in order to maximize the number of children served. The means by which additional funding from new sources will be integrated with existing funding will require careful analysis and centralized administration.

1. Current Funding Sources for Pre-K in Forsyth County

Pre-K programs in Forsyth County are primarily funded by federal and state dollars and tuition paid by individual families, the latter commonly known as "private pay."

- **Private Pay (Tuition)**

Families with household incomes that exceed the publicly-funded eligibility criteria and elect to enroll their children in a licensed Pre-K setting typically pay a monthly tuition set by the provider.

- **Public Funding**

Public funding for Pre-K classrooms in Forsyth County consists largely of federal and state funding (detailed in Table 1) and includes the following:

Federal funding

- Child Care Subsidy vouchers – via the Child Care & Development Fund (CCDF) and part of the Child Care and Development Block Grant
- Head Start
- Title I (school district)
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Special Education Preschool Grant

State funding

- NC Pre-K Program (also utilizes federal dollars)
- North Carolina Partnership for Children (NCPC) Family Child Care Scholarships

Public funding may be based on a per child (per slot) reimbursement rate established by the funding source, as is the case for the NC Pre-K Program, Child Care Subsidy vouchers, and school district EC funding. Other programs – such as Head Start and public school classrooms supported with Title I monies – are program-funded, i.e., a specific amount is allocated to cover the costs of a classroom or a set number of slots.

Per slot reimbursement rates rarely cover the actual cost of service. Consequently, a layered or blended approach is often used that combines two or more public funding streams to cover the full cost of care, in some instances accompanied by a parent fee. In Forsyth County five organizations – the Forsyth County Department of Social Services, Family Services, Smart Start of Forsyth County, NC Pre-K Program Committee, and WS/FCS – manage their respective public funding streams in accordance with their associated eligibility requirements. This intermeshed system creates complexities and challenges for parents and administrators alike.

- **Corporate/Private Funding**

In the spring of 2016, Reynolds American Incorporated assembled a group of corporate and private donors to provide additional operating funds to the WS/FCS system, targeting Pre-K to third grade education. This six-year initiative, called Project Impact, includes plans to expand pre-kindergarten class capacity and has added to 239 new Pre-K slots to date. While Project Impact has increased the number of public school-based Pre-K classrooms, it has also added another level of complexity in the blending and braiding of public funds. Project Impact is set to expire in 2022, with the expectation that local public dollars will be used to continue to fund the added Pre-K classrooms. The founding partners comprised of BB&T, Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center, Novant Health, Reynolds American Foundation, and The Winston-Salem Foundation have been joined by other corporate lead donors and individuals to secure \$25 million of the \$45 million goal.

Table 2
Public Funding Streams for Forsyth County Pre-K

Publicly-Funded Program	Funding Source	Administrator	Year	Annual Budget
Head Start	Federal	Family Services	FY2019	\$3,382,816
DSS Vouchers - Child Care Development Funds (CCDF)	Federal, Child Care and Development Block Grant	NC DCDEE oversight, administered locally by DSS	FY2018/19	\$3,587,760
NC Pre-K Program	State, blend of budget appropriations and lottery dollars; more recently federal TANF and CCDBG monies	Smart Start of Forsyth County	FY2019	\$3,718,397
Title I	Federal	WS/FCS	AY2018/19	\$1,581,008
Special Education Preschool Grants	Federal, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA-Part B)	WS/FCS	AY2018/19	\$281,788
Project Impact	Local, Corporate businesses, Philanthropic organizations, and individuals	WS/FCS	AY2018/19	\$2,066,000
TOTAL				\$14,617,769

Sources: Forsyth County Department of Social Services, Smart Start of Forsyth County, Family Services, WS/FCS

As previously stated, a mixture of funding sources (as described above) is challenging to administer due to the varied eligibility requirements that apply within and across multiple settings. At both the state and local levels, fragmented funding streams have challenged early educators, policymakers, and program administrators. The Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) has encouraged the various state agencies responsible for children's programs to cooperate, particularly in accessing, leveraging, and appropriating funds from state, federal, and private sources in order to achieve positive outcomes. ⁽⁶⁸⁾ Moreover, NIEER finds the complicated models like those in Forsyth County typically provide funding based on what is available in annual government budgets, resulting in funding levels that lawmakers decide upon annually than rather based on the needs of a changing population. ⁽⁴⁸⁾

2. Potential Sources of Additional Funding for Pre-K Expansion

- **Increased State-Level Funding**

In an effort to explore increased state-level funding, members of The Pre-K Priority Steering Committee have joined with representatives from other North Carolina counties (Guilford, Buncombe, Durham, Watauga, and Transylvania) that are working to expand Pre-K in their respective localities. The group is convened by the North Carolina Early Education Foundation and the North Carolina Justice Center. Discussions are ongoing focused on securing legislative support for expanding Pre-K by increasing funding for the NC Pre-K Program and/or passing enabling legislation to allow for local funding initiatives.

- **Local Funding**

Among the options for funding Pre-K expansion at the local level are utilizing funds from a ¼ cent increase in the local sales tax rate, including Pre-K funding as a line item in the County budget, and raising property taxes.

In regard to the ¼ cent local sales tax option (General Statutes 105, Article 46); the Forsyth County Commissioners placed this referendum on the November 2018 ballot in order to raise funds to pay the debt on the construction of the new courthouse. The commissioners also indicated that a portion of the remaining revenue would be directed to education-related needs, primarily discussed in the form of increasing WSFCS teachers' supplement pay. It should be noted that while the County can communicate to the public how revenue from the tax will be used, statute does not allow the ballot to provide this information. Further, the County is not mandated to disburse the revenue in any particular way regardless of the messaging. Though the November 2018 referendum failed to pass, it will no doubt be revisited in the future.

- **Sliding Scale**

A graduated payment or sliding scale fee as determined by a family's earned income would reduce the monthly tuition cost for some middle-income families while still providing a level of revenue to help operate programs. Families falling within a set percentage of federal poverty guidelines would

continue to receive public funding while families above that level would pay an affordable parent fee. This model has been implemented in various programs across the country; examples of two sliding scales are provided in Appendix T.

Table 3
Options for Local Funding Support

Local Funding Source	Voter Approval Needed	Revenue Limits	Considerations
Sales Tax Counties have the option to increase the sales tax by one-quarter of a penny (Article 46), provided the public approves the sales tax option by referendum.	Yes	Local sales tax is limited to \$0.25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► Will this tax generate enough revenue? ► Is this the best approach if low- and middle-income taxpayers represent a greater share of those affected by the sales tax? ► The sales tax referendum placed on the November 2018 ballot was defeated; although the ballot cannot indicate how the funds will be used, the Commissioners messaged that construction of the new courthouse is the primary project to be funded by the revenue with some remaining funds directed to education. ► Will The Pre-K Priority advocate placing a sales tax referendum on the 2020 ballot as a source of significant funding for Pre-K expansion?
Municipal or County Budget Item	No	Annual renewal during budget cycle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► Requires the process of a county budget review each year to maintain the investment. ► Funding could fluctuate depending on competing needs of the county.
Property Tax	No		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► Is real estate wealth in our community sufficient to support the needed funding? ► Would the public support a property tax increase to expand Pre-K?
Special Tax District	No		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► Do we qualify? Who initiates, determines the boundaries and rate, and imposes the tax? ► Requires General Assembly approval of statute change.
Private Funding (Philanthropic and Corporate Donors or Partners)	No		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► How will Project Impact further contribute to Pre-K expansion once it ends in 2022 (6-year initiative)? ► Which major employers may have charitable giving programs that could be leveraged? ► Are there individual donors and donor-advised funds through a community foundation that are interested in early childhood? ► Given considerations of sustainability and adequacy, private funding alone is unlikely to support a significant system change effort in early childhood. However, the role of private funding as a source of matching dollars and leadership in local efforts can be critical in demonstrating need and support for initiatives to local elected leaders. ► Can private funding be targeted at specific project activities, e.g., staff professional development, project evaluation.
Parent Fees and Sliding Scale	No		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► A graduated payment or sliding scale model would reduce the monthly tuition cost for some middle-income families while still providing a level of revenue to help operate programs. ► Families falling within certain federal poverty guidelines would continue to receive public funding while some would pay a minimal parent fee.

3. Incremental Implementation and Funding

An affordable, accessible high-quality Pre-K system in Forsyth County would be expected to enroll 80% of the community's four-year-old children, which translates to approximately 3,600 of the 4,500 four-year-olds in Forsyth County in any given year. The 80% enrollment projection is based on the experience of other communities that have adopted voluntary "universal" Pre-K systems.

A primary objective is to ensure that the 2,700 children currently eligible for publicly-funded Pre-K programs have the opportunity to be enrolled. In addition, the expanded system is expected to enroll approximately 60% of children from middle to higher income families, made affordable through the use of a sliding scale for tuition payments.

The full implementation of an expanded Pre-K system in Forsyth County that meets high-quality standards will occur incrementally over a four to five-year period and require additional public funding at the local and state levels. Increased Pre-K capacity is likely to occur in a series of phases based on funding enhancements specifically related to capacity, i.e., a sufficient number of facilities and qualified teachers. Importantly, the current mixed system of Pre-K classrooms in the public schools, private childcare centers, and Head Start would be maintained to provide a sufficient number of facilities as well as to allow for parent choice.

Recent years have seen modest increases in state and federal funding for existing early childhood development programs, particularly the NC Pre-K Program. Early childhood development is one of the few issues to enjoy bipartisan support among voters and elected officials. National and state polls consistently indicate that significant majorities of voters from both political parties and independents approve of increasing public financial support for early childhood programs.^{(71) (72)} In recent years, elected NC officials have supported the expansion of various early childhood development programs. In 2017, the NC legislature increased funding for the NC Pre-K Program that added 3,000 slots statewide in 2017-18 and 2,000 more in 2018-19. In 2018, the legislature approved additional funding for the NC Pre-K Program sufficient to eliminate the existing waiting list by 2021-22. At the federal level, Head Start has continued to be fully funded and receives annual COLA (cost of living adjustment) increases. \$1.1 billion has been allocated nationwide since 2015 to expand the Early Head Start program. At the local level, the Nurse Family Partnership program, after being funded initially by the Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust, is now fully funded by the Board of County Commissioners and is operated by the Forsyth County Department of Public Health.

Significant expansion of Pre-K at the local level depends on successfully marshalling public support for Pre-K and urging elected officials to allocate sufficient funding. Recruiting champions for Pre-K expansion from business, education, faith, and other sectors will be instrumental in mobilizing the public and political will to make substantial investments to increase Pre-K capacity and high-quality standards. To that end, The Pre-K Priority Public Education and Engagement Project that will commence in 2019 and continue through the 2020 election, is designed to involve and motivate these audiences to support Pre-K expansion.

4. Expansion and/or Quality Improvement?

Reference has been made throughout this report to expanding Pre-K capacity. However, established classrooms and programs operating in our county will require additional resources to meet high-quality standards. Strategies for establishing more high-quality Pre-K classrooms will include both increasing capacity (by adding new providers/classrooms) and bringing existing licensed facilities into accordance with high-quality standards.

A Brookings Institute report, “Do we already have universal preschool?” found that:

Sixty-nine percent (69%) of the nation’s children who entered kindergarten in the 2010-2011 school year regularly attended a (center-based) preschool program in the preceding year...Rates of attendance vary considerably by the socio-economic status of parents...rang(ing) from 50% for the lowest quintile of socio-economic status to 83% for the highest quintile. ⁽⁷³⁾

This finding comports with the level of Pre-K enrollment in Forsyth County in 2018 during which approximately 60% of four-year-old children were enrolled in licensed, full-day Pre-K programs. Over half of the remaining 40% of children participated in a half-day program. (See Figure 1) This data raises critical questions about the means and cost of establishing a “universal” Pre-K system in Forsyth County (in which 80% of four-year-olds are enrolled), and the steps that need to be taken to reach that goal.

- Can a high-quality, affordable Pre-K system available to all four-year-olds in Forsyth County be established primarily by improving the quality of existing providers?
- What portion of the existing cohort of licensed, private-pay Pre-K providers would be interested in improving their programs to reach high-quality standards? What would be the cost of such a “quality improvement” program?
- Are current providers of publicly-funded programs committed to improving the quality of their programs to reach high-quality standards? What would be the cost of such a “quality improvement” program?
- In addition to bringing the quality of existing classrooms up to standards, how many “new” classrooms would be needed?
- What are the credentials of teachers across all of the licensed Pre-K classrooms? How many teachers would be interested in furthering their education to gain the credentials needed to teach in a high-quality system? To what extent would public funds be available to support teachers seeking to improve their credentials?

These questions will be addressed through a feasibility study that will gather information from childcare providers from all segments of the Pre-K market. The study, which is being conducted by Forsyth Futures, will take place throughout calendar year 2019 with the support of a grant from the Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust. The study findings will provide a basis for making informed, targeted investments in expanding Pre-K capacity.

5. Feasibility Considerations

Enrollment data in Figure 1 and Table 1 represent a point-in-time count taken in August/September 2018. These numbers are representative of the four-year-old cohort receiving Pre-K. The feasibility study will provide a more robust and detailed assessment to further refine the systemic issues that will need to be addressed to successfully expand the system.

The feasibility study will assess both the supply side (childcare providers/teachers) and demand side (families/children) of Pre-K expansion in Forsyth County. Data will be collected and analyzed to assess the demand for Pre-K programs in Forsyth County and the availability of facilities and qualified staff relevant to the establishment of a universal Pre-K system. It will also provide further insight to qualitative aspects of existing Pre-K providers' ability to meet higher quality standards, and how that impacts expansion possibilities (i.e., adding new facilities).

The Pre-K feasibility study will be conducted in two phases. The first phase of approximately six months will begin in January 2019 and will entail mining existing data sets and conducting key informant interviews and qualitative focus groups. While many key findings will be available for release after the first phase, some findings may not be generalizable to the whole community. The second phase will consist primarily of community surveying, but also include limited interviews and focus groups to affirm that the phase one findings are generalizable to all of Forsyth County. The second phase is estimated to take six months, concluding in December 2019.

6. Calculating the Cost of an Expanded Pre-K System

The cost sheet detail on the following page outlines the projected cost of a high-quality Pre-K classroom and the cost per slot based on the following assumptions:

- Average class size of 17 children per class;
- One teacher and one teacher assistant per classroom;
- A 10-month school year; and
- 6.5 hours of operation per day.

The estimated cost also includes non-personnel classroom costs, family engagement staff, training and technical assistance, and the administration and evaluation of the system.

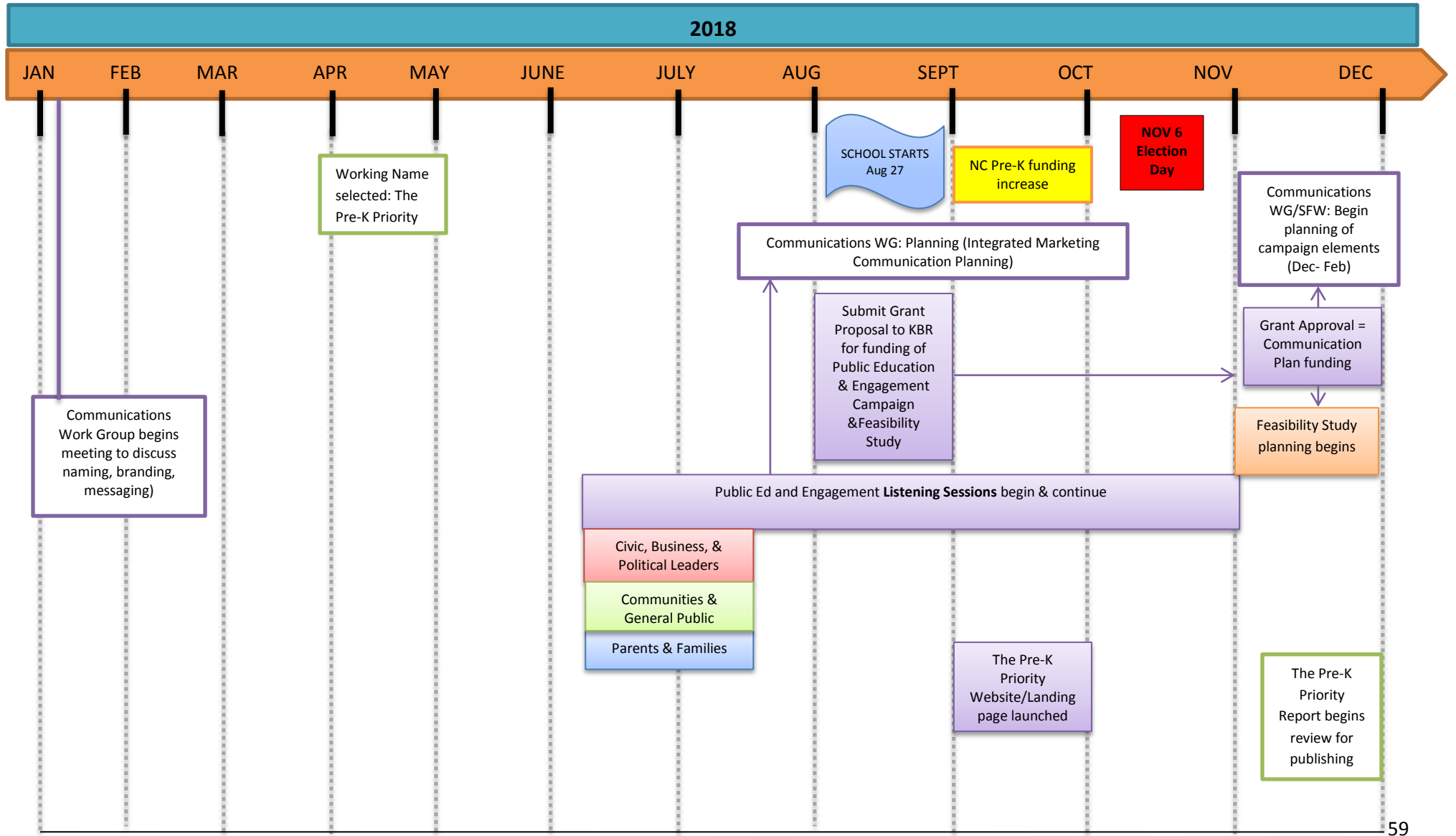
It is important to note that while the NCDEE study cites the actual, average cost of \$9,200 annually per slot to deliver the current quality programs of NC Pre-K and Head Start, the estimated cost in this worksheet is higher due to the addition of the following quality components:

- increased family support and engagement,
- more equitable teacher compensation, and
- professional development enhancements for teachers. ⁽¹⁴⁾

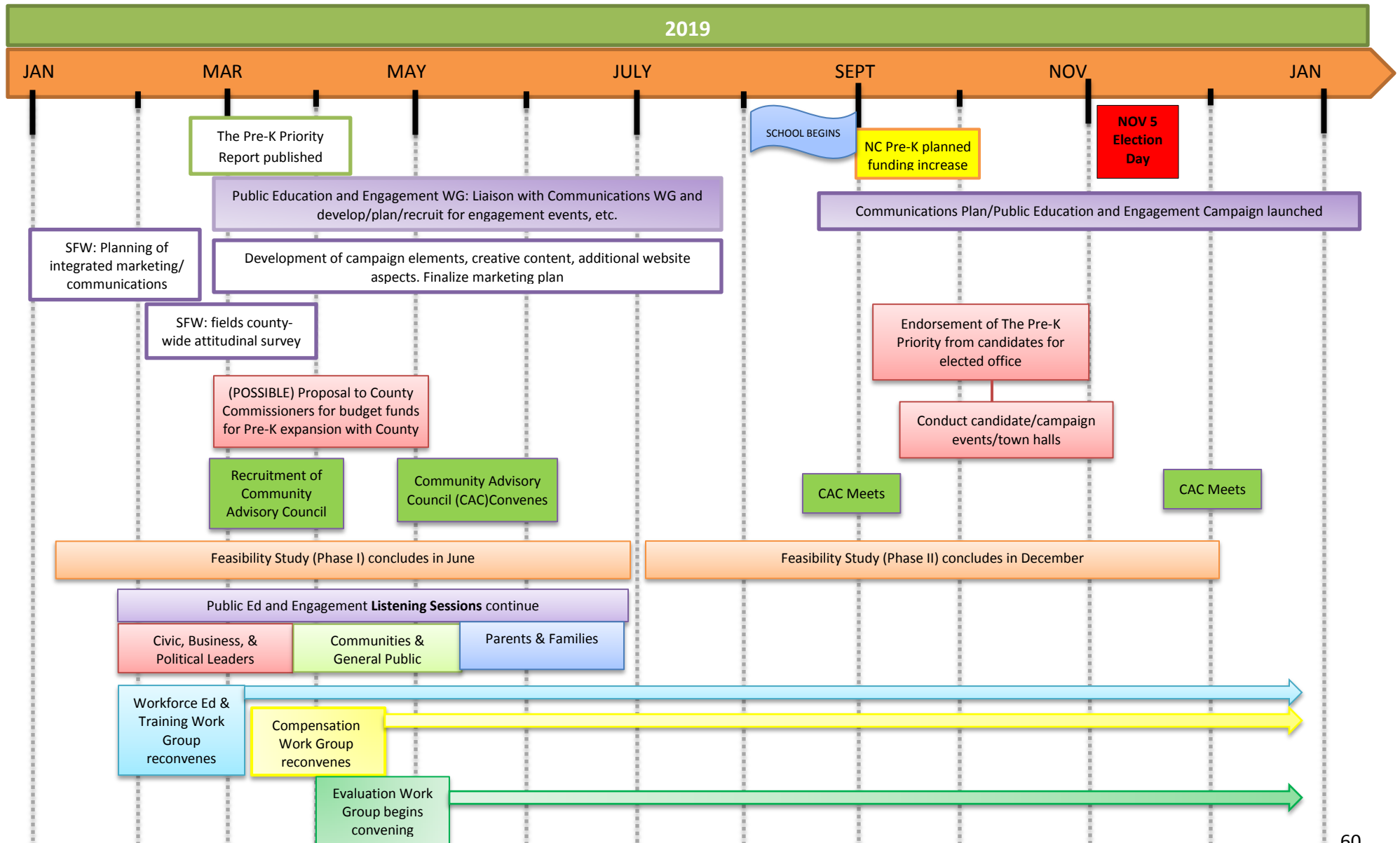
The Pre-K Priority: Cost Sheet

EXPENSE CATEGORY	Detail	Per Month	Per Year
CLASSROOM COST <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program Duration: 10 months • Teacher: 8-hour day • Child/Student: 6.5-hour day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Salaries <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead Teacher (reflects salary parity) • Assistant Teacher • TA Specialist (One for every 2.5 classrooms) • Substitute pool ▫ Benefits ▫ Curricula and classroom materials ▫ Assessment tools ▫ Food ▫ Operational Expenses (Utilities, Rent, Maintenance) ▫ Administration Overhead/Indirect Costs (Personnel to manage program delivery: HR, Accounting, Leadership, & Janitorial staff) 	\$ 14,700	\$ 147,000
FAMILY ENGAGEMENT	▫ Family Support Specialist (One for every 2 classrooms)	\$ 2,500	\$ 25,000
TRAINING & TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Ongoing Professional Development ▫ Incentives for Educational Attainment, Retention, and Bilingual Skills 	\$ 800	\$ 8,000
EVALUATION & ADMINISTRATION OF EXPANDED PROGRAM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Administration for fiduciary responsibilities/disbursement ▫ Evaluation of program ▫ Enrollment ▫ Quality Monitoring (In total, approximately 12% of classroom cost) 	\$ 2,000	\$ 20,000
TOTAL COST of a Pre-K CLASSROOM Assuming a 10-month school year		\$ 20,000	\$ 200,000
COST PER SLOT (CHILD) Assuming an average of 17 children per classroom		\$1,176	\$ 11,765

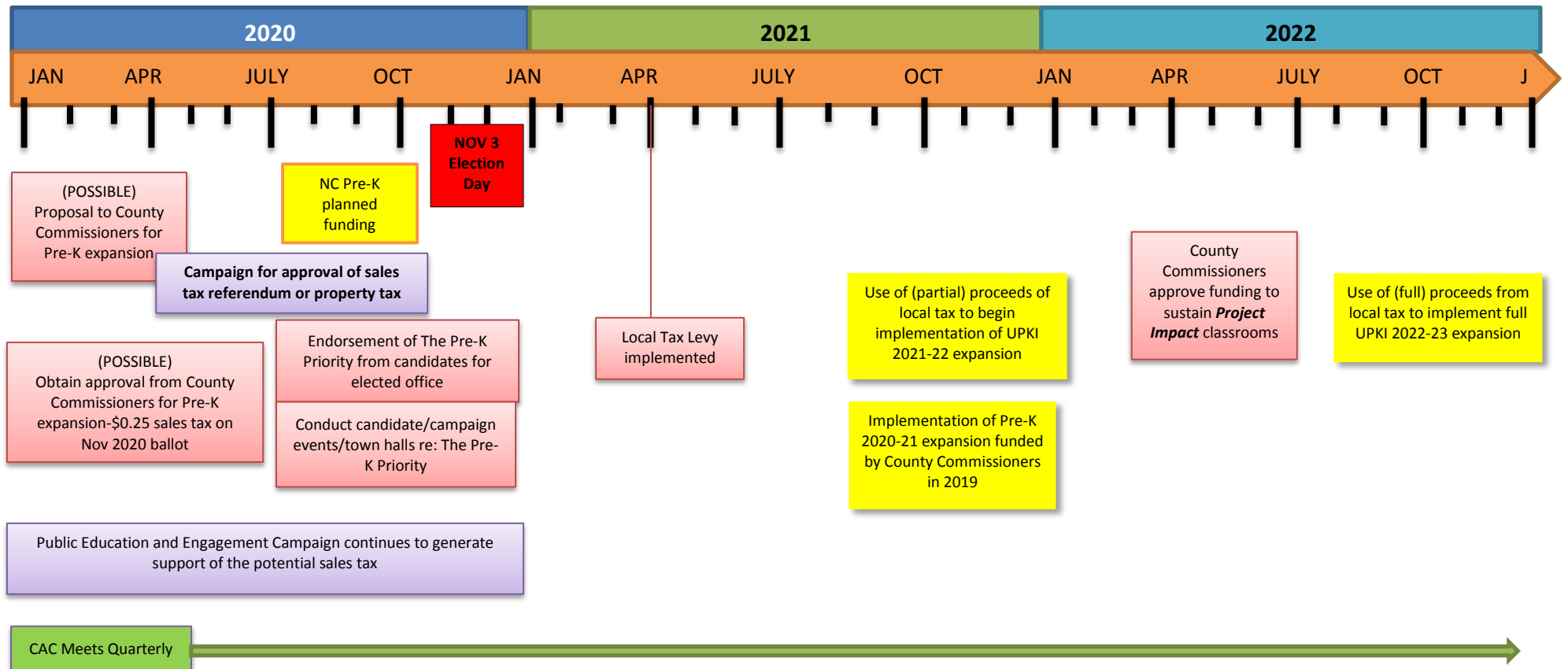
The Pre-K Priority Expansion Timeline (toward full implementation by 2022)



The Pre-K Priority Expansion Timeline (toward full implementation by 2022)



The Pre-K Priority Expansion Timeline (toward full implementation by 2022)



Next Steps

Civic Leadership

The dream of providing all four-year-olds with the opportunity to attend a high-quality Pre-K program will not be realized without broad support from across the community.

A formation of a Community Advisory Council will provide guidance in the continuing development of the Pre-K system in Forsyth County and make recommendations regarding the quality, funding, implementation, management, administration, and evaluation of an expanded Pre-K system in Forsyth County. The Council will be comprised of representatives from the broad range of organizations and individuals involved in developing, funding, providing, and/or benefiting from an expanded system of high-quality Pre-K programs in Forsyth County, including elected officials and leaders from business, government, faith-based organizations, philanthropy, education, healthcare, and community-based organizations along with parents and interested citizens.

Work Groups

Pre-K Priority Work Groups will continue to meet to extend and refine the recommendations they have provided for this report. Existing Work Groups on Communications, Workforce Education/Training, Compensation, and Administration will be reestablished to inform and guide the ongoing development of The Pre-K Priority. A Work Group dealing with Project Evaluation will also be established.

1. Public Education and Engagement Work Group

Building support at the grassroots level is a prerequisite for providing all Forsyth County's four-year-olds with opportunities to attend high-quality Pre-K programs. Public awareness needs to be raised and community input solicited in order to continue to refine plans for Pre-K expansion and develop the level of community support needed to encourage civic leaders to take action on Pre-K expansion.

Staff from The Pre-K Priority conducted a series of listening sessions sponsored by various community, faith, and business groups during the fall of 2018. From listening sessions we have learned that there is support for the idea of expanding quality Pre-K programs; however, there is a low level of awareness in the general population. Even among those with some knowledge of Pre-K there are many questions about how a "universal" system would be implemented. Participants at several sessions encouraged The Pre-K Priority to become "a movement" that engages people from across the community.

Fortunately, The Pre-K Priority will have the wherewithal to foster such a movement. At the end of November 2018 Family Services was awarded a grant from the Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust/Great Expectations to develop and implement a full-scale, professionally produced and managed public education and engagement campaign for The Pre-K Priority. Family Services will partner with SFW Marketing to create and carry out this campaign. The campaign will be developed and executed in four phases as outlined below.

Public Education and Engagement Campaign Timetable

Phase 1 – Conduct Situational Analysis (January – March 2019)

- Learn from the success of campaigns in other communities
- Observe Pre-K classrooms in session
- Attend listening sessions with various community stakeholders
- Survey a cross-section of Forsyth County residents to measure awareness and attitudes toward expanding Pre-K; utilize as a benchmark to measure subsequent changes in awareness/attitudes

Phase 2 – Develop the Integrated Marketing Communications Plan (April – May 2019)

- To communicate the benefits of Pre-K for children, families, schools, employers, and the community
- Identify objectives, target audiences, messages, strategies, vehicles, events, and partnerships
- Establish The Pre-K Priority as a “go-to” source of expertise and education about Pre-K
- To stimulate discussion of Pre-K expansion across all sectors of the community and public involvement in advocacy activities

Phase 3 – Creation and Production of Campaign Elements (May – August 2019)

- Finalize campaign name, logo, tagline, and overall campaign concepts
- Website design, development, updating, and maintenance
- Development/Production of Campaign Materials: Print ads, outdoor advertising, radio, video, photography, E-newsletter template, collateral materials (brochure, rack card, posters)

Phase 4 – Activation (August 2019 – December 2020)

- Paid Media Options – TV, cable, radio, Pandora/Spotify; print media; digital billboards, bus ads; social media
- Local Media PR Plan – develop story angles, media releases, ongoing media relations
- Social Media content development and posting
- Events/Sponsorships
- Measure campaign progress (research study) against benchmarks

The execution of the Activation Phase is contingent on the results of the attitudinal survey (See Phase 1) and the feasibility study to be conducted during the first half of 2019 (See description of “System Implementation and Administration Work Group” on page 66.)

Public Engagement Campaign

The goal of the public education campaign is to enlist members of the general public to become actively engaged in efforts to expand quality Pre-K programs, i.e., to create a movement. Incorporating public voice will further shape and determine policy, funding, and priorities related to the recommendations in this report and implementation. Knowledge gained from the attitudinal survey and the feasibility study will be combined with information collected from two prior engagement activities: the Parent Chat focus group findings (further detailed in Appendix T) and discoveries made in the Family, Friend, and Neighbor

Care Survey commissioned by the Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust through the Great Expectations initiative.

Public engagement activities will take many forms, supported by the creation of an informative and interactive website for The Pre-K Priority. Activities will include:

- responding to requests for information
- conducting listening sessions, town meetings
- organizing “letter writing” campaigns (citizens contacting elected officials)
- forming and managing a speakers bureau
- identifying positions, recruiting, and supporting community volunteers
- supporting Pre-K Priority Work Groups involved with Communications and Parent Involvement

The Public Education and Engagement Work Group will provide guidance during each phase of the campaign through review, analysis, and comment on the results of the attitudinal survey, the development of the integrated marketing plan, the content of The Pre-K Priority website, the creation of campaign materials, and the implementation of the media plan. The Work Group will also draw upon the findings of the feasibility study in its review and analysis of the marketing plan. The Work Group will also establish a sub-group to address parent involvement in the campaign and in contributing to the refinement of plans for expanding quality Pre-K programs.

Parent Involvement

A sub-group of the Public Education and Engagement Work Group will address the importance of parent involvement in advocating for the expansion of high-quality Pre-K opportunities. The will build on the work of the 2017 Parent Advocacy Work Group that ultimately held a Parent Chat to initially explore perceptions, concerns, and priorities of parents’ related to early education. The Parent Chat results are highlighted in Appendix U.

Research attests to the importance of family and parent support for local expansion of Pre-K from both a policy and utilization stance. An authentic parent component confirms the existence of need and creates a powerful constituency to influence local policymakers. To be truly representative of Forsyth County, parents and other caregivers from diverse backgrounds and communities will be recruited. In conjunction with the broader Public Engagement and Education Campaign, the Parent Involvement sub-group will develop recruit and train parents to become effective advocates for expanded, high-quality Pre-K. The sub-group will also learn what parents need and want in a high-quality Pre-K program and share those findings with relevant Work Groups. Steps will include:

- Collaborate with partner organizations to recruit parents and community members involved/interested in early learning who will actively participate in planning and advocating for Pre-K expansion.

- Reach out to established parent groups in schools and neighborhoods (e.g., Parent Academy of Neighbors for Better Neighborhoods, WS/FCS Parent Power, local PTA groups) to involve them in advocacy for Pre-K expansion.
- Host and/or help facilitate formal and informal events in various settings for parents to learn more about The Pre-K Priority and 1) discover how they can advocate for Pre-K expansion and 2) to ensure their perspective and preferences are reflected in the planning process.
- Facilitate partnerships between parents, community members, providers of Pre-K programs, and key decision-makers in local city and county government to amplify parent advocacy and support for The Pre-K Priority.

2. Compensation Work Group

The Compensation Work Group will build on the work described in an earlier section of this report to address the disparities in compensation practices for Pre-K professionals that exist across the various organizations that provide Pre-K programs, i.e., the WS/FCS, Head Start, and private childcare centers. The Work Group will take steps to further refine and establish a process for implementing the proposed base salary scale and supplemental scale for qualified Pre-K teachers. Work to be done includes:

- Engaging representatives from organizations across the mixed system of providers to understand current funding structures, budgetary practices, and the associated challenges of implementing the base salary scale.
- Proposing a framework/structure for implementing a base salary scale.
- Determining the most appropriate administrative home for processing and distributing supplemental payments to teachers.

3. Workforce Training Work Group

The recommendations outlined in the Workforce Training section of this report include specific and actionable steps to increase awareness, interest, and the growth of the pipeline of highly qualified Pre-K educators for Forsyth County. This Work Group will reconvene to determine which recommendations can be implemented in the near term while developing longer-range plans for those recommendations that entail major changes in how Pre-K educators are recruited, trained, and supported.

Among the recommendations to be enacted:

- Outline clear career pathways and existing pipelines for the emerging Early Childhood Education (ECE) workforce through the creation of a career ladder website to communicate all levels, pathways, partnerships, and prerequisites related to advancement in the ECE field. Include a straightforward licensure checklist that outlines high-quality teacher standards.
- Partner with the WS/FCS, to enact the recommendations related to early pathways to ECE careers opportunities that align with local higher institutions of learning and the incorporation of advocate-mentors for high school students pursuing BK knowledge.
- Determine and report the current use of existing incentive-based programs that promote higher education attainment. Based on the utilization rate, determine and advise an updated listing of

purposeful benefits and tangible incentive programs that decrease barriers for individuals pursuing ECE professional credentials; include flexibility and support of dual language learners and individuals with low-income.

- Create a Memorandum of Agreement that outlines intentional coordination activities to strengthen the current partnerships and collaboration among local higher educational institutions and the local universities and colleges.
- Implement meaningful professional development and dedicated, ongoing teacher supports to incentivize ECE professionals to remain in the field.

4. System Implementation and Administration Work Group

Funds for conducting a feasibility study of factors relevant to establishing a “universal” Pre-K system in Forsyth County were included in the Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust grant for the public education and engagement campaign. The feasibility study will examine the current and potential availability of suitable facilities for Pre-K classrooms. The study will also assess the availability of qualified Pre-K Teachers. These two factors combine to establish the parameters and the timeframe within which the current system will to expand. The study will also assess the extent and nature of parent demand for Pre-K programs, examining the expectations, preferences, and concerns that parents have in relation to the options available in a mixed system of Pre-K providers. The results of the feasibility study will be available by July 2019.

The System Implementation and Administration Work Group will make use of the findings of the feasibility study to develop options for how an expanded Pre-K system enrolling up to 3,600 four-year-olds can best be implemented, managed, and administered. The Work Group will consider the current system for enrolling children in publicly-funded Pre-K programs and models that other communities have created to manage expanded Pre-K systems. The Work Group will:

- Propose modes of expansion, drawing on the findings of the feasibility study, that take into account:
 - the availability of facilities; the need to increase the number of facilities/providers and/or add capacity within the facilities of current publicly-funded Pre-K providers
 - interest on the part of private childcare providers in meeting quality standards that would allow them to participate in the system
 - the availability of qualified Pre-K teachers
 - the availability of funding
- Explore and assess models for administering and managing an expanded Pre-K system, including the current system for administering publicly-funded Pre-K programs in Forsyth County and the methods of administration established by expanded Pre-K programs in other communities. Expanded Pre-K programs in peer cities with a population, demographics, and socio-economic factors similar to Forsyth County will be of particular interest.

Models of Program Administration

Denver, Colorado

The Denver Preschool Program (DPP) is an independent, nonprofit entity that administers the Denver Preschool Program. DPP supports all families and incorporates a sliding scale model with tuition support based on eligibility. About 80% of DPP funding is directed to tuition credits for families and preschool providers to enhance their quality standards. Other funding is used for community outreach, annual evaluation of system operations as well as children's progress and outcomes throughout their educational careers. DPP's administrative costs are limited to 7% of sales tax revenue and a Board of Directors provides oversight to the nonprofit. The DPP system consists of 250 partner preschools that include public, private community and faith-based organizations that are licensed. More information can be found at this link <https://dpp.org/about-us/faqs>.

Boston, Massachusetts

The Boston Public Schools Department of Early Childhood oversees the Pre-K classrooms, called K1, offered in the city of Boston. Because of positive results, there has been high demand for enrollment but limited space and funding. With the help of a Preschool Expansion Grant (PEG), the program expanded to Boston K1DS, a pilot based on the K1 model and providing opportunities to 14 private, community based classrooms with a focus on serving children in low-income neighborhoods and dual-language learners. More information can be found at this link <https://www.barrfoundation.org/partners/boston-public-schools-and-boston-k1ds>.

Cincinnati, Ohio

The Cincinnati Preschool Promise is managed independently and offers high-quality Pre-K to three- and four-year-old children through either a community-based preschool or the public school system Pre-K classroom. A five-year tax levy provides funding to expand the number of quality classrooms in the system as well as provide tuition credits for families that need the most assistance. The nonprofit is overseen by a Board of Managers made up of preschool parents, educators, preschool providers, business leaders, and community members. More information can be found at this link <http://www.cincy-promise.org/about/>.

Cleveland, Ohio

The Cleveland Early Childhood Compact is a public-private leadership body that oversees The PRE4CLE program (Pre-K for Cleveland) and is co-chaired by the Cleveland Metropolitan School District CEO and the George Gund Foundation's Senior Program Officer for Human Services. Classrooms are located in a mix of private and community-based sites and the public school system. The implementation agencies of the PRE4CLE system were the Educational Service Center of Cuyahoga and Starting Point (the local child care and early education resource referring agency). More information can be found at this link <https://pre4cle.org/about/>.

Oklahoma

The state of Oklahoma (OK) offers a voluntary public school pre-kindergarten program to all four-year-olds in either half-day or full-day programs. While the public school system administers and oversees the Pre-K program, the classroom locations vary depending on the area within the state. In addition to public school Pre-K classrooms, community collaborating organizations can also participate to provide classrooms; these include assisted living centers, corporate facilities, Educare facilities serving families with low-income, OK childcare services licensed centers and homes, OK Head Start collaboratives, university lab schools, and YMCAs. More information can be found at this link

<https://www.glenpoolps.org/elementary/PreK%20Guide%20for%20Oklahoma%20Families.pdf>

5. Program Evaluation (of the Expanded System) Work Group

Ensuring a new Pre-K system is properly serving the four-year-olds of Forsyth County with a high-quality experience is another task to be addressed in a fully realized and scaled model. The current practices utilized for data collection and application methods in the WS/FCS Pre-K classrooms can be leveraged along with evidence-based practices identified and used in other Pre-K systems across the country. Key to this area will be measuring the effectiveness and progress with ongoing and longitudinal methods and formulating clear indicators for each objective and result. Accordingly, a thorough program evaluation plan will also: identify who will carry out the evaluation; indicate how and when to conduct monitoring and evaluation activities; and state which methods will be used for these purposes. Research shows that four interconnected characteristics of implementation determine the effectiveness of scaled programs: “depth of implementation including pedagogical principles; sustainability over many years; spread of norms, beliefs, and principles; and ownership by teachers and administrators”.⁽⁷⁴⁾ To be sure, the need for research and longitudinal data collection will require new aspects of evaluation beyond our current capabilities.

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- 102.

Appendix A

Steering Committee Members (2014-2019)

Claudia Barrett, Executive Director, Imprints Cares

Kelly Bendheim, Coordinator for Early Learning, Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools

Matt Britt, Chair, Smart Start of Forsyth County; Co-Chair, NC Pre-K Program Committee

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Bob Feikema, President & CEO, Family Services (Convener)

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Appendix B

4-Year-Old Full-Day Care (6.5 hours) Sites in Forsyth County, 2018-19 AY					
Licensed and Extension-Licensed Care				*4- & 5-Star Rated*	
Category	Total Number of Sites	Total Pre-K Age Enrollment/Slot	Publicly-Funded Slots (NC Pre-K, Head Start, or DSS Voucher)	Sites Rated 4- or 5-Star	Pre-K Age Enrollment/ Slots
Child Care Homes	81	72		53 (65%)	52 (72%)
Child Care Centers	80	1539		48 (60%)	891 (58%)
<i>Sub-total</i>	<i>161</i>	<i>1,611</i>	<i>604 (37%)</i>	<i>101 (63%)</i>	<i>943 (59%)</i>
Category	Total Number of Classrooms	Total Pre-K Age Enrollment/Slot	Publicly-Funded Slots (Head Start, NC Pre-K)	Classrooms Rated at 4- or 5-Stars	Pre-K Age Enrollment/ Slots
Head Start Centers					
Mineral Springs Elementary – Modular Unit (HS only)		18			
Kernersville Elementary – 1 classroom (HS+NCPK)		18			
Sarah Y. Austin – 6 classrooms (5 HS, 1 HS+NCPK)		106			
Winston-Salem State Univ. 3 classrooms (HS+NCPK)		45			
<i>Sub-total</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>187</i>	<i>187</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>187</i>
Category	Total Number of Classrooms	Total Pre-K Age Enrollment/Slot	Publicly-Funded Slots (NC Pre-K, Head Start, Title I, EC, Project Impact)	Classrooms Rated at 4- or 5-Stars	Pre-K Age Enrollment/ Slots
Public Schools Licensed by DCDEE -by classroom-	<i>33</i>	<i>451 (capacity 462)</i>	<i>451</i>	<i>33</i>	<i>451</i>
Bolton (EC+PI)		14			
Caleb's Creek (NCPK)		18			
Cash (EC)		3 (capacity 15)			
The Children's Center (EC)		6 (capacity 12)			
The Children's Center (EC)		5 (capacity 12)			
Special Children's School (EC)		46 (capacity 56)			

Diggs Latham (NCPK+TitleI)		18			
Diggs Latham (NCPK+TitleI)		18			
Easton (NCPK+TitleI)		15			
Easton (NCPK+TitleI)		15			
Easton (NCPK+TitleI)		15			
Forest Park (NCPK+TitleI)		15			
Forest Park (NCPK+TitleI)		15			
Forest Park (NCPK+TitleI)		15			
Gibson (NCPK+TitleI)		18			
Ibraham (NCPK+TitleI)		18			
Ibraham (NCPK+PI)		18			
Kimberley Park (EC)		4 (capacity 15)			
Kimberly Park (NCPK+TitleI)		15			
Kimberly Park (NCPK+TitleI)		15			
Sedge Garden (EC)		13 (capacity 18)			
Kimmel Farm (NCPK+TitleI)		18			
Marvin Ward (EC)		9 (capacity 15)			
Middle Fork (NCPK+TitleI)		15			
Smith Farm (NCPK+TitleI)		18			
Smith Farm (NCPK+PI)		18			
Speas (NCPK+TitleI)		18			
Speas (NCPK+TitleI)		18			
Walkertown (NCPK+TitleI)		18			
Centers	Total Number of Classrooms	Total Pre-K Age Enrollment/Slot	Publicly-Funded Slots <i>(NC Pre-K, Head Start, Title I, EC, Project Impact)</i>	Classrooms Rated at 4- or 5-Stars	Pre-K Age Enrollment/ Slots
Public Schools with DCDEE Extension license -by classroom-	36	466 (capacity 549)	466		
Ashley (PI)		18			
Bolton (EC+PI)		14			
Clemmons (EC)		12 (capacity 18)			
Cook (Title I)		18			
Cook (PI)		18			
Easton (NCPK+PI)		15			

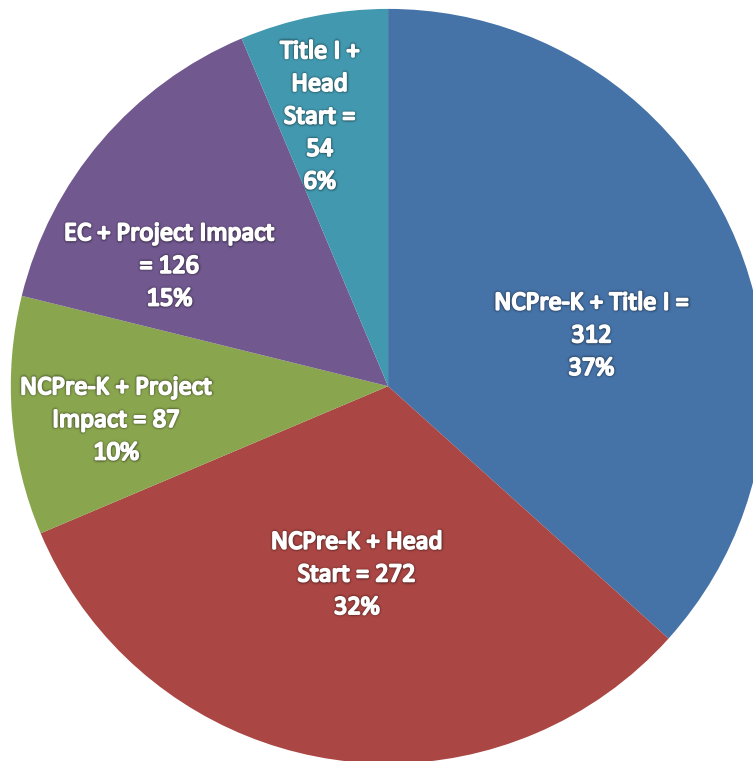
Gibson (NCPK+PI)		18			
Gibson (NCPL+PI)		18			
Griffith (Title I+HS)		18			
Hall-Woodward (Title I)		18			
Hall-Woodward (PI)		18			
Kimberly Park (NCPK+TitleI)		15			
Konnoak (Title I)		18			
Middle Fork (PI+EC)		14			
Middle Fork (PI+EC)		14			
Middle Fork (EC 3&4 yr-old combo)		4 (capacity 7)			
North Hills (Title I+HS)		18			
Old Town (EC)		2 (capacity 18)			
Old Town (EC+PI)		14			
Old Town (EC+PI)		14			
Old Town (Title I)		18			
Old Town (Title I+HS)		18			
Petree (Title I)		18			
Petree (EC)		2 (capacity 10)			
Petree (EC)		4 (capacity 10)			
Petree (EC)		4 (capacity 10)			
Petree (EC)		4 (capacity 10)			
Piney Grove (EC)		4 (capacity 15)			
Rural Hall (EC+PI)		14			
South Fork (EC)		7 (capacity 18)			

South Fork (Title I)		14			
Southwest (EC)		10 (capacity 18)			
Union Cross (EC+PI)		14			
Union Cross (EC+PI)		14			
Union Cross (PI)		18			
Union Cross (EC 3 & 4-yr-old combo)		5 (capacity 7)			
TOTAL		2,715	1,708		
Sources: NC Department of Health and Human Services DCDEE September 2018, WS/FCS Enrollment 2018-19AY, SSFC 2018-19 AY, Head Start 2018-19AY					

Appendix C

Publicly-Funded, Blended Pre-K Slots in Forsyth County AY 2018-2019

Publicly-Funded Blended Slots = 851



Appendix D

Definitions and Terminology Related to Child Care Facilities

Excerpt from N.C. Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE)

[Chapter 110 of the North Carolina General Statutes Child Care Facilities, NC GENERAL STATUTES 06/16, Article 7]

The DCDEE regulates programs and oversees licensing for a provider that is caring for more than two children who aren't related and if they provide care for more than four hours a day. The following are some commonly used terms used throughout the report.

- Child care facility – Includes child care centers, family child care homes, and any other child care arrangement not excluded by G.S. 110-86(2), that provides child care, regardless of the time of day, wherever operated, and whether or not operated for profit.
- Family child care home - A child care arrangement located in a residence where, at any one time, more than two children, but less than nine children, receive child care.
- Child care center - A child care arrangement where, at any one time, there are three or more preschool-age children or nine or more school-age children receiving child care. This also includes a center located in a residence, where the program is in a residence and the licensed capacity is six through twelve children, or up to fifteen school-age children.
- Religious sponsored child care facility - Includes any child care facility or summer day camp operated by a church, synagogue or school of religious charter. Some facilities are licensed using the star system while others choose to apply for a religious exemption.
- Religious sponsored child care facility with exemption license – The facility must file a report indicating that it meets the minimum standards for facilities as provided in the applicable provisions of G.S. 110-91 as required by the DCDEE to show conformity with minimum standards.
- Lead Teacher - An individual who is responsible for planning and implementing the daily program of activities for a group of children in a child care facility. A lead teacher is counted in staff/child ratio, has unsupervised contact with children, and is monetarily compensated by the facility.
- Assistant Teacher - An individual who assists the Lead Teacher in planning and implementing the daily program of activities for a group of children in a child care facility. A teacher is counted in staff/child ratio, has unsupervised contact with children, and is monetarily compensated by the facility.

Appendix E The Pre-K Priority Quality Table

Comparison of existing state/local Pre-K Program Quality Standards & Criteria with Proposed High-quality Ideals and Financial Impact

High-Quality Ideals	Existing NC Pre-K Program Standards	Meets High Quality Ideals	New and/or Additional Proposed Standards to Meet High-Quality Ideals	Financial Impact/Implications of High-Quality Ideals
Quality Rating & Improvement System (QRIS) standard utilized				
1. Center/provider has North Carolina Star-Rated License of 4- or 5-stars	1. The 4- or 5-star rating is the basic requirement for a NC Pre-K Program classroom and Head Start programs	1. Yes		1. Minimal proposed financial impact: for centers operating at a 4- or 5-star rating Medium to high financial impact: for providers with limited space and infrastructure challenges
Teacher Credentials & Specialized Training *				
1. Teachers with Bachelor degree, preferably a B-K Licensure 2. Teachers with specialized B-K education and training 3. At least 15 hours/year of in-service professional development and training 4. Ongoing coaching and personal mentorships for lead and assistant teachers 5. Provide multiple pathways for teacher licensure	1. All teachers hold, or are working toward a NC B-K Continuing License or a B-K or Preschool Add-on License <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead Teacher holds a Bachelor or Master degree Along with B-K Licensure or equivalent • Assistant Teacher has CDA or equivalent (AA in ECE, BK) 2. Lead teachers have specialized Pre-K training 3. Teachers receive at least 15 hours/year of in-service professional development and training annually 4. Nothing specific 5. While there are multiple pathways, streamlining of the tracks and availability are needed	1. Yes 2. Yes 3. Yes 4. No 5. Some what	4. Ongoing coaching and personal mentorships for lead and assistant teachers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individualized development and professional plan for lead teachers and teacher assistants* • Coaching and personal mentorships for lead and assistant teachers • Stakeholders convene to develop a comprehensive, collaborative training plan for all Pre-K educators (private & public sites) 5. Streamlined paths for pathways to teacher licensure	1. 2. & 3. Minimal proposed financial impact: for Teaching Credential requirements existing NC Pre-K and Head Start standards 4. Significant financial impact: individualized development & coaching/mentoring and personal development plans → \$400 annually / Lead Teacher → \$400 annually / Assistant Teacher → Minimal financial impact: collaborative training plan 5. Moderate financial impact to streamline/support multiple pathways for teacher licensure
Teacher Compensation				
Teacher Compensation 1. Consistent and equitable compensation: salary scale system among all Pre-K providers at parity with WS/FCS 2. Provide competitive salary and benefits to attract and retain high-quality teachers	1. Teachers employed by public school NC Pre-K Programs receive salaries based on the NC Public School Teacher Salary Schedule and receive health and retirement benefits offered by the NC State government 2. Teachers employed by nonpublic school NC Pre-K Programs and hold proper credentials are eligible for (Site Administrators are encouraged to offer) competitive salaries/commensurate benefits as those of public school	1. No 2. No	1. Pay parity at all settings with WS/FCS Pre-K teachers; implement supplemental salary schedule 2. Supplements and incentives for higher education attainment (TEACH scholarships, retention grants, etc.) 3. Bilingual Certified Teacher Incentive	Significant proposed financial impact: 1. For non-WS/FCS programs to institute the Proposed Base Salary Scale for all Pre-K Teachers and the coordinating Supplement Scale 2. \$500 annually/teacher, Higher Ed incentive 3. \$200 annually/teacher, Bilingual incentive

High-Quality Ideals	Existing NC Pre-K Program Standards	Meets High Quality Ideals	New and/or Additional Proposed Standards to Meet High-Quality Ideals	Financial Impact/Implications of High-Quality Ideals
School Setting & Classroom Environment *				
1. Full day 2. Maximum class size of 20 students or less 3. Ratio of teacher to student is 1:10 or less 4. At least one meal provided daily 5. Support comprehensive needs and diverse learning of children	1. Minimum of 6.5-hour instructional day for a 10-month or 36-week school calendar year 2. Maximum class size of 18 children 3. Maximum staff-to-child ratio of 1: 9 ◊ Inclusive classroom settings for children with disabilities may require lower ratio 4. Breakfast or morning snack and lunch provided meeting USDA Child Care Programs requirements	1. Yes 2. Yes 3. Yes 4. Yes 5. Yes at school sites	5. Support comprehensive needs and diverse learning of children <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children with special needs are provided appropriate support (based on Head Start and the public school system guides) • Dual language learners are supported in both languages with appropriate learning materials and teaching staff who use the children's home language 	1 - 4. Minimal proposed financial impact: for school and classroom settings meeting NC Pre-K Program standards 5. Significant financial impact: for proposed comprehensive services for diverse needs of special needs children → support of children with special needs in keeping with Head Start/public school system guidelines → support of dual language learners
Assessments & Screening *				
1. Health assessment and referrals for vision, hearing, dental, and health 2. Developmental screenings 3. Formative assessments	1. Health assessment includes physical exam, immunizations, vision, hearing, and dental screenings 2. Developmental screening with an approved instrument within 90 days of attendance 3. Staff conducts ongoing formative assessments of child's growth and skill development (all domains) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching Strategies GOLD assessment tool • DIAL (Developmental Indicators for Assessment of Learning) 	1. Yes 2. Yes 3. Yes	3. Implement Teaching Strategies GOLD and DIAL at all Pre-K sites (used currently in all NC Pre-K Program, Head Start, and school sites)	1. Moderate impact: for sites that are not WS/FCS, NC Pre-K Program, or Head Start 3. Moderate financial impact: for new sites → \$16/slot annual license of TS Gold → \$60/slot or \$800/classroom is the approximate one-time cost of DIAL Kit
Curricula & Associated Tools *				
1. Comprehensive, research-based, and developmentally appropriate standards 2. Curricula and assessments address the whole child 3. Support for implementation	1. & 2. All preschool sites are to consistently utilize a foundational state-approved curriculum (The Creative Curriculum® Preschool Program) along with other (approved) supplemental curricula as needed. 3. Not specified	1. Yes 2. Yes 3. No	3. Support for implementation of curricula and associated tools (training, updates, etc.)	1. Moderate financial impact: support of new curricula implementation for new sites offering high-quality Pre-K → \$600-800 annually per setting

High-Quality Ideals	Existing NC Pre-K Program Standards	Meets High Quality Ideals	New and/or Additional Proposed Standards to Meet High-Quality Ideals	Financial Impact/Implications of High-Quality Ideals
Evaluation & Monitoring of program & site *				
1. Continuous quality improvement 2. Implement evidence-based Evaluation ECERS-R (The Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised) 3. Site visits conducted to ensure ongoing adherence to program standards	1. Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) measuring the interactions of teachers with children 2. ECERS-R assessment is a regularly rated licensed assessment every 3 years. Classrooms must score 5.0 min 3. The DCDEE, local Contract Administrators, and Site Administrators are required to monitor for program/policy and fiscal/contract compliance annually	1. Yes 2. Yes 3. Yes	3. Other specific monitoring for an expanded Forsyth County system to be determined	1. Significant proposed financial impact: CLASS implementation for providers not currently using the tool 2. Significant proposed financial impact: ECERS-R implementation if provider is not currently compliant 3. Unknown financial impact for additional monitoring/evaluation for Forsyth County
Family & Community Engagement/ Involvement				
1. Meaningful engagement practices with families, parents and the community 2. Establish support and sustain family partnerships	1. & 2. Include all of the following NC Pre-K Program standards: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program teachers make home visits • Formal and informal parent/teacher conferences • Classroom visits/options for parents/families to participate in classroom activities • Parent education • Family involvement in decision-making about their child and the program • Opportunities to engage families outside of class 	1. Yes 2. Yes	1. Use an evidence-based Family Engagement Curriculum (Touchpoints) 2. To grow family partnerships: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a Family Advocate/Educator to all Pre-K classrooms (1: 54 slots) • Provide services for families with dual language learners in their home language(s) • Honor cultural differences 	1. Significant proposed financial impact: Touchpoints program & training → \$150 per participant 2. Significant financial impact: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family Support Specialist → \$50,000 annually/ 45 slots • Moderate financial impact: Interpreter for families as needed
Transitions Into & Out of Pre-K				
1. Comprehensive and coordinated transition plan in collaboration with all stakeholders in the community 2. Provide resources for families whose first language is one other than English	1. None specifically required through the NC Pre-K Program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many of the Pre-K programs in the WS/FCS have utilized the WS/FCS Ready Freddy™ materials and Pathway to K services 2. Nothing specific	1. Some what 2. No	1. Comprehensive/coordinated transition plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capitalize on WS/FCS Ready Freddy™ • Organize transition teams at each program • Home visits by teachers/family advocates • Open houses during the school day • Information about health screenings and access to community resources and services 2. Arrange translator for ESL families	1. Comprehensive/coordinated transition plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimal financial impact: implement Ready Freddy™ materials already established → \$500 per new classroom (for curriculum/ program) • Moderate financial impact: organize transition teams at each program site 2. Moderate financial impact to implement resources for families whose first language is one other than English

High-Quality Ideals	Existing NC Pre-K Program Standards	Meets High Qualit y Ideals	New and/or Additional Proposed Standards to Meet High-Quality Ideals	Financial Impact/Implications of High-Quality Ideals
Administrators/Directors Training & Support				
1. Provide ongoing, effective leadership training for Administrators/Directors 2. Implement sound business and management policies and practices	1. Licensed Administrators in non-public and public schools participate in professional development consistent with the NC State Board of Education policy. In non-public school settings, administrators working toward Pre-K qualifications participate in a minimum of six documented semester hours per year. 2. NC Pre-K Program Fiscal Monitoring Worksheet is to be completed by the local Contractor (designed to provide a checklist for compliance annually for fiscal requirements)	1. Some what 2. Some what	1. Ensure Administrators/ Directors have or pursue EC knowledge and experience, preferably a B-K or ECE degree. Ensure Administrators/ Directors have NC Principal License or NC Administrative Credential Level I, II or III (Level III BS/BA in EC or in childhood development) 1.&2. Establish a mentor /coaching program in conjunction with the business community	1. Moderate financial impact for Administrators/ Directors that do not currently hold the specified degree and/or credentials 2. Minimum to moderate proposed financial Impact: implement a mentor/coaching program in conjunction with the business community

*Included in the 10 benchmarks for high-quality Pre-K standards set by the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER)

Appendix F

NC Child Care Commission-Approved Early Childhood Four-Year-Old Curricula 2017

- ✓ Balanced Learning, Primrose Schools® Franchising Company, 2016
- ✓ Big Day for Pre-K, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2015
- ✓ Connect4Learning, Kaplan Early Learning Company, 2016
- ✓ Curiosity Corner, 2nd Edition, Success for All Foundation, 2014
- ✓ Frog Street Pre-K, Frog Street Press, Inc., 2013
- ✓ Galileo Pre-K Online, Assessment Technology, Inc., 2016
- ✓ High Reach Learning Pre-K, Communicorp, Inc., 2010
- ✓ High/Scope Preschool Curriculum, High/Scope Press, 2002-2016
- ✓ Life Essentials: Ready, Set, Go, Essential Brands, Inc., 2015
- ✓ Mother Goose Time Preschool Curriculum, Experience Early Learning™, Published annually
- ✓ Passports, Communicorp, Inc., 2010
- ✓ Starfall, Starfall Education Foundation, 2013.
- ✓ The Creative Curriculum® for Preschool, 6th Edition, Teaching Strategies, Inc., 2016
- ✓ The Investigator Club Prekindergarten Learning System, NC Edition, Robert Leslie Publishing, 2017
- ✓ The World at Their Fingertips, Bright Horizons Family Solutions, 2011-2016
- ✓ Tools of the Mind, 7th Edition, Metropolitan State College of Denver, 2012
- ✓ Young Achievers, The Children's Courtyard, 2016

The following list of curricula may still be used by providers currently using the curriculum to meet rule requirements.

- Assessment, Evaluation, & Programming Systems: Curriculum for Three to Six Years, Paul Brookes Publishing Co., Inc., 2002
- Beyond Centers and Circle Time® Curriculum Pre-K Theme Series, Kaplan Early Learning Company, 2007
- The Creative Curriculum® for Preschool, 4th Edition, Teaching Strategies, Inc., 2002
- The Creative Curriculum® for Preschool, 5th Edition, Teaching Strategies, Inc., 2010
- The Creative Curriculum® System for Preschool, Teaching Strategies, Inc., 2010
- The Empowered Child™, Childtime, 2nd Edition 2007
- Explorations with Young Children: A Curriculum Guide from the Bank Street College of Education, Gryphon House, 1992
- Fireflies, Funshine Express, Published monthly
- F.L.EX® Learning Program, Goddard Systems, Inc., 2012
- High Reach Learning, High Reach Learning, Inc., 2009
- High/Scope Preschool Curriculum, High/Scope Press, 2002
- HighScope Preschool Curriculum, HighScope Press, 2012
- Investigator Club Prekindergarten Learning System, NC Edition, Robert Leslie Publishing, 2007-2012
- Journey on the Learning Care System®, LaPetite Academy®, 2011-2012
- Kids R Kids, Kids 'R' Kids International, Inc., 2012
- Learn Every Day: The Preschool Curriculum, Kaplan Early Learning Company, 2012
- Links to Learning, Nobel Learning Preschool Curriculum, 2006
- Links to Literacy, Kaplan Early Learning Company, 2005
- Little Treasures, The Macmillan/McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc., 2011
- Opening the World of Learning™ (OWL), Pearson Early Learning, 2005
- Passports, HighReach Learning, Inc., 2007
- Primrose, Primrose Schools, 2012
- Read It Once Again, Read It Once Again, 2003-Present
- Scholastic Big Day for Pre-K, Scholastic, Inc., 2009
- Tools of the Mind, 6th Edition, Metropolitan State College of Denver, 2009-2011
- Tutor Time LifeSmart™, 2005

Source: DCDEE, NC Pre-K Program Requirements & Guidance, 2017

Appendix G
NC Child Care Commission Approved Early Childhood Four-Year-Old Formative Assessments 2017

- ✓ Balanced Assessment, Primrose Schools® Franchising Company, 2016
- ✓ Big Day for Pre-K, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2015
- ✓ COR Advantage, HighScope Press, 2014
- ✓ Galileo Pre-K Online, Assessment Technology, Inc., 2012-2017
- ✓ GOLD™, Teaching Strategies, Inc., 2010-2017
- ✓ Mother Goose Time Formative Assessment, Experience Early Learning™
- ✓ Preschool Child Observation Record (COR), 2d Edition, HighScope Press, 2003
- ✓ The Creative Curriculum® Developmental Continuum for Ages 3-5, Teaching Strategies, Inc., 2001
- ✓ The Investigator Club Prekindergarten Assessment and Intervention System, NC Edition, Robert Leslie Publishing, 2012-2017
- ✓ The World at Their Fingertips Formative Assessment/Portfolio System, Bright Horizons Family Solutions, 2012
- ✓ Work Sampling System Preschool - 4, 4th Edition, Pearson, 2001
- ✓ Work Sampling System, 5th Edition, NCS Pearson, Inc., 2013
- ✓ Young Achievers, The Children's Courtyard, 2016

Source: DCDEE, NC Pre-K Program Requirements & Guidance, 2017

Appendix H

Ready Freddy™ Initiative



The transition to Kindergarten is a big milestone for young children and their families. For children, it means meeting new teachers and friends, adapting to a different and often larger hustling and bustling environment, and adjusting to new rules and expectations. For families, the transition can bring about a variety of emotions.

In Forsyth County, an evolving community-wide transition program called Ready Freddy™ is an important link to transition resources as well as building knowledge and excitement about starting school. In an effort to support children's transitions, The Forsyth Promise, in collaboration with the WS/FCS system and other early learning partners adopted this particular approach originally developed by the University of Pittsburgh's Office of Child Development. The Ready Freddy™ initiative is designed to increase on-time school registration and consistent attendance, help families become more engaged with early learning programs, and enhance children's transition to Kindergarten. It is unique in that the initiative brings together all of the necessary elements and participants for a quality transition. As the Ready Freddy™ initiative is currently focused on the transition into Kindergarten, expanding the best practices it utilizes in a universal Pre-K system will be a must.

Appendix I
**North Carolina Teacher Salary Scale and Forsyth County Supplements for
Winston-Salem Forsyth County Public School System**
(revised July 2018)

	BA/BS Degree	BA/BS Degree	BA/BS Degree	Master Degree	Master Degree	Master Degree
Years' Experience	Monthly Salary	Annual 10-Month Salary	Current Local Monthly Supplement	Monthly Salary	Annual 10-Month Salary	Current Local Monthly Supplement
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
0	3,500	35,000	260	3,850	38,500	290
1	3,600	36,000	267	3,960	39,600	290
2	3,630	36,300	274	3,993	39,930	297
3	3,730	37,300	281	4,103	41,030	305
4	3,730	37,300	289	4,103	41,030	311
5	3,830	38,300	296	4,213	42,130	318
6	3,830	38,300	303	4,213	42,130	326
7	3,930	39,300	311	4,323	43,230	334
8	3,930	39,300	318	4,323	43,230	342
9	4,055	40,550	326	4,461	44,610	350
10	4,055	40,550	334	4,461	44,610	359
11	4,205	42,050	348	4,626	46,260	367
12	4,205	42,050	356	4,626	46,260	383
13	4,355	43,550	364	4,791	47,910	392
14	4,355	43,550	374	4,791	47,910	400
15	4,555	45,550	384	5,011	50,110	411
16	4,630	46,300	396	5,093	50,930	422
17	4,730	47,300	407	5,203	52,030	436
18	4,730	47,300	416	5,203	52,030	448
19	4,830	48,300	426	5,313	53,130	458
20	4,830	48,300	437	5,313	53,130	469
21	4,930	49,300	452	5,423	54,230	481
22	4,930	49,300	463	5,423	56,230	497
23	5,000	50,000	475	5,500	55,000	509
24	5,000	50,000	486	5,500	55,000	523
25+	5,130	51,300	499	5,643	56,430	535

Source: Winston-Salem Forsyth County Schools, 2018

Appendix J
Proposed Base Salary Scale & Supplement Pay for BK-Licensed Teachers

Years of Experience	Bachelor Degree			Master Degree			
Bachelor or Master Degree & NC teacher certification (or out-of-state equivalent)	TARGET Annual Salary (10-month) based on WS/FCS Salary	PROPOSED Base Annual Salary Required (10-month) 90% of WS/FCS	PROPOSED Annual Salary Supplement (10-month)	TARGET Annual Salary (10-month) based on WS/FCS Salary	PROPOSED Base Annual Salary Required (10-month) 90% of WS/FCS	PROPOSED Annual Salary Supplement (10-month)	Annual Benefits
		\$	\$		\$	\$	\$
0	35,000	31,500	3,500	38,500	34,650	3,850	6,510
1	36,000	32,400	3,600	39,600	35,640	3,960	6,630
2	36,300	32,670	3,540	40,700	36,630	4,070	6,750
3	37,300	33,570	3,730	41,800	37,620	4,180	6,870
4	37,300	33,570	3,730	42,900	38,610	4,290	6,990
5	38,300	34,470	3,830	44,000	39,600	4,400	7,110
6	38,300	34,470	3,830	45,100	40,590	4,510	7,230
7	39,300	35,370	3,930	46,200	41,580	4,620	7,350
8	39,300	35,370	3,930	47,300	42,570	4,730	7,470
9	40,550	36,495	4,055	48,400	43,560	4,840	7,590
10	40,550	36,495	4,055	49,500	44,550	4,950	7,710
11	42,050	37,845	4,205	50,600	45,540	5,060	7,830
12	42,050	37,845	4,205	51,700	46,530	5,170	7,950
13	43,550	39,195	4,355	52,800	47,520	5,280	8,070
14	43,550	39,195	4,355	53,900	48,510	5,390	8,190
15	45,550	39,195	4,555	55,000	49,500	5,500	8,310
16	46,300	41,670	4,630	55,000	49,500	5,500	8,310
17	47,300	42,570	4,730	55,000	49,500	5,500	8,310

18		47,300	42,570	4,730		55,000	49,500	5,500		8,310
19		48,300	43,470	4,830		55,000	49,500	5,500		8,310
20		48,300	43,470	4,830		55,000	49,500	5,500		8,310
21		49,300	44,370	4,930		55,000	49,500	5,500		8,310
22		49,300	44,370	4,930		55,000	49,500	5,500		8,310
23		50,000	45,000	5,000		55,000	49,500	5,500		8,310
24		50,000	45,000	5,000		55,000	49,500	5,500		8,310
25+		51,300	46,170	5,130		57,200	51,480	5,720		8,550

Note: Annual benefits are set at 21% of the starting base salary with a 12% increase with every \$1,000 increase in base salary

Appendix K

North Carolina Lead Teacher Average Salaries in NC Pre-K Program Settings & Forsyth County Benefits by Setting

Average Lead Teacher Salary	Education	Health Insurance	Life Insurance	Short Term Disability	Long term Disability	Retirement	Paid Time Off
North Carolina Public Schools							
\$43,565	Bachelor degree in ECE or B-K Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State coverage if employed at least 30 hrs/wk Employer contribution: \$5,869 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$50,000 group term if employed at least 30 hrs/wk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State coverage if employed at least 30 hrs/wk, after one year of service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State coverage if employed at least 30 hrs/wk, after five years of service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State coverage if employed at least 30 hrs/wk Employer contribution: 10.78% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One day of sick leave per month of service. Graduated earning of annual leave based on years of service
North Carolina Head Start Programs							
\$32,986	B-K license, Bachelor degree in ECE, or B-K Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employed full time, at least 30 hrs/wk Employer Contribution: \$4,798 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Basic Life and AD&D insurance in the amount of two times annual base salary up to \$250,000 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 60% of weekly income Max \$500/week at 26 weeks of benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 60% of monthly income, Max \$5,000/month 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 403B plan: the agency matches employee contributions up to a maximum of \$4,000 annually 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15 days to start 20 days after three years of service 25 days after 4 four more years 30 days after four more years
Private Child Care Centers in North Carolina							
\$25,375	B-K license, Bachelor degree in ECE or B-K Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 22% of surveyed centers pay a portion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 44% of surveyed centers pay all or a portion 	None reported	None reported	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 44% of surveyed centers reported contributions by employer to a retirement plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% of the surveyed centers offered PTO

Sources: Salaries: NC Department of Health & Human Services^{42a} (2017), Benefits by Setting in Forsyth County: NC Department of Public Instruction, Family Services, & Forsyth County NC Pre-K Program Provider Survey (2017)

Appendix L

North Carolina Institutions of Higher Learning with ECE/BK Education & Licensure Programs

NC Public and Private Colleges and Universities

(Source: Early Educator Support, Licensure and Professional Development)

<i>Appalachian State University*</i>	<i>Barton College*</i>
<i>Campbell University*</i>	<i>Catawba Collage*</i>
<i>East Carolina University</i>	<i>Elizabeth City State University*</i>
<i>Elon University*</i>	<i>Fayetteville State University*</i>
<i>Greensboro College*</i>	<i>Meredith College*</i>
<i>NC A&T State University</i>	<i>NC Central University</i>
<i>Salem College</i>	<i>Shaw University*</i>
<i>UNC Chapel Hill*</i>	<i>UNC Charlotte*</i>
<i>UNC Greensboro</i>	<i>UNC Pembroke*</i>
<i>UNC Wilmington*</i>	<i>University of Mount Olive*</i>
<i>Western Carolina University*</i>	<i>Winston-Salem State University*</i>

**denotes that ECE coursework is located within the Department/School of Education*

North Carolina Community Colleges in the Piedmont Area

(Note that all 58 NC Community Colleges offer Early Childhood Education programs)

<i>Caldwell Community College and Technical Institute</i>	<i>Catawba Valley Community College</i>
<i>Central Piedmont Community College</i>	<i>Davidson County Community College</i>
<i>Forsyth Technical Community College</i>	<i>Guilford Technical Community College</i>
<i>Rowan-Cabarrus Community College</i>	<i>Mitchell Community College</i>
<i>Surry Community College</i>	<i>Wilkes Community College</i>

Note: According to T.E.A.C.H. North Carolina's community college directory (CCSA, 2017), all 58 community colleges offer an AAS in early childhood education and the required coursework that leads to the NC Early Childhood Credential. In addition, individual colleges may offer the Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential, coursework leading to diplomas, certificates, credentials, and courses in a specific content area like special education, child care administration, and school age and infant-toddler care.

Appendix M

North Carolina Teacher Certification for Early Educators

Lead Teacher: all lead teachers shall hold a BK License or one of the indicated versions thereof

- **Birth-through-Kindergarten (BK) License**

Each institution of higher education (4-year colleges/universities) offers an inclusive, interdisciplinary course of study leading to the NC BK teacher license. Individuals completing the requirements for this license will be prepared to enter the profession of teaching infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and kindergartners in public schools, child care programs, developmental day centers, and early intervention programs. Teachers also acquire skills to assist the families of young children.

- **NC BK Standard Professional 1 (SP1) or Preschool Add-On license**

For entry-level teachers, new teachers with two or less years of teaching experience that have completed a state-approved teacher program or earned a license from another state. Valid for three years.

- **NC BK Standard Professional II (SP2) or Preschool Add-On (PreK/K) license**

For teachers with three or more years of experience, either in-state or out-of-state. Valid for five years.

- **NC Lateral Entry (LE) Provisional BK license**

For teachers who hold a bachelor's degree, but do not yet meet all requirements for a professional license. The teacher must complete six semester hours per year at minimum and earn BK licensure within three years.

- **NC Provisional BK or Preschool Add-On**

Issued to NC K-6 licensed or other NC license Teacher with the requirement that coursework for SP1 or SP2 license is satisfied at the rate of six semester hours per year (completed prior to each new school year). Praxis II test(s) may also be required.

Assistant Teacher: all assistant teachers shall have one or more of the following credentials

- **Associate Degree in BK**

Or associate degree in child development, early childhood education, or an early childhood education related field.

- **Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential™**

The North Carolina Community College System offers curriculum course credits that specifically pertain to preschool settings. Additionally applicants must have 480 hours experience working with children within the last five years, be at least 18 years old, have a high school diploma or GED, complete an abbreviated Professional Resource File, and earn a Pediatric First Aid certificate. Individuals meeting these requirements and successfully completing the CDA assessment process are prepared to meet the specific needs of children and work with parents and other adults to nurture children's physical, social, emotional, and intellectual growth in a child development framework.

North Carolina Teacher Certification Requirements for NC Pre-K Settings

1. **A bachelor's degree or higher**

A minimum of a bachelor's degree in early childhood, child development, or a related field, such as: Human Development and Family Studies, Elementary Education, or Psychology

2. **Successful completion of an approved, accredited educator preparation program**

The NC Birth-through-Kindergarten (BK) degree and license prepares educators to work with young children, from birth through age 5 years, with and without disabilities, including those at-risk, and their families. Licensure is required for teachers in public preschool and kindergarten classrooms.

3. **Student teaching experience**

The pre-service process requires coursework and a student teaching/internship to qualify for a NC Educator's Standard Professional I license issued by the NC State Board of Education.

4. **Successful completion of the North Carolina Praxis testing requirements and/or National Board Certification**

5. **Fingerprinting and background check**

6. **Professional Development** – Teachers must participate in professional development in order to continuously build additional knowledge and skills. A minimum of 7.5 credits must be earned each period to be eligible for recertification.

Appendix N

NORTH CAROLINA EARLY CHILDHOOD AND ADMINISTRATION CREDENTIALS

To improve the quality of child care in North Carolina, the Division of Child Development created two credentials:

For Lead Teachers - North Carolina Early Childhood Credential (NCECC)

All child care center lead teachers must have earned this credential or its equivalent.

- Available at all 58 local community colleges and universities with ECE programs
- Composed of one early childhood curriculum credit course - EDU 119 Intro to Early Childhood Education and four semester credit hours
- Course content includes:
 - ✓ Becoming an Early Childhood Professional
 - ✓ Understanding the Young Child - Growth and Development
 - ✓ Understanding the Young Child - Individuality, Family and Culture
 - ✓ Developmentally Appropriate Practices
 - ✓ Positive Guidance
 - ✓ Health and Safety

For Administrators - North Carolina Early Childhood Administration Credential (NCECAC)

All child care center administrators must have earned this credential or its equivalent.

- Available at all 58 local community colleges and universities with ECE programs
- Three required components must be successfully completed to receive this credential:
 - 1) child care administration coursework, 2) additional early childhood/child development coursework, and 3) a portfolio
- Child Care Administration course content includes:
 - ✓ Child Care Administration I (EDU 261, three semester credit hours) – basic knowledge and skills needed to administer a child care program, including: Program Framework, Rules and Regulations, Personnel, and Financial Management
 - ✓ Child Care Administration II (EDU 262, three semester credit hours) – a comprehensive and advanced content on administration of a child care program, including: Resources for Centers and Families, Early Childhood Curriculum, Program Assessment, and Advocacy and Leadership

Level I is the minimum level required by law for all child care administrators. Levels II and III are voluntary.

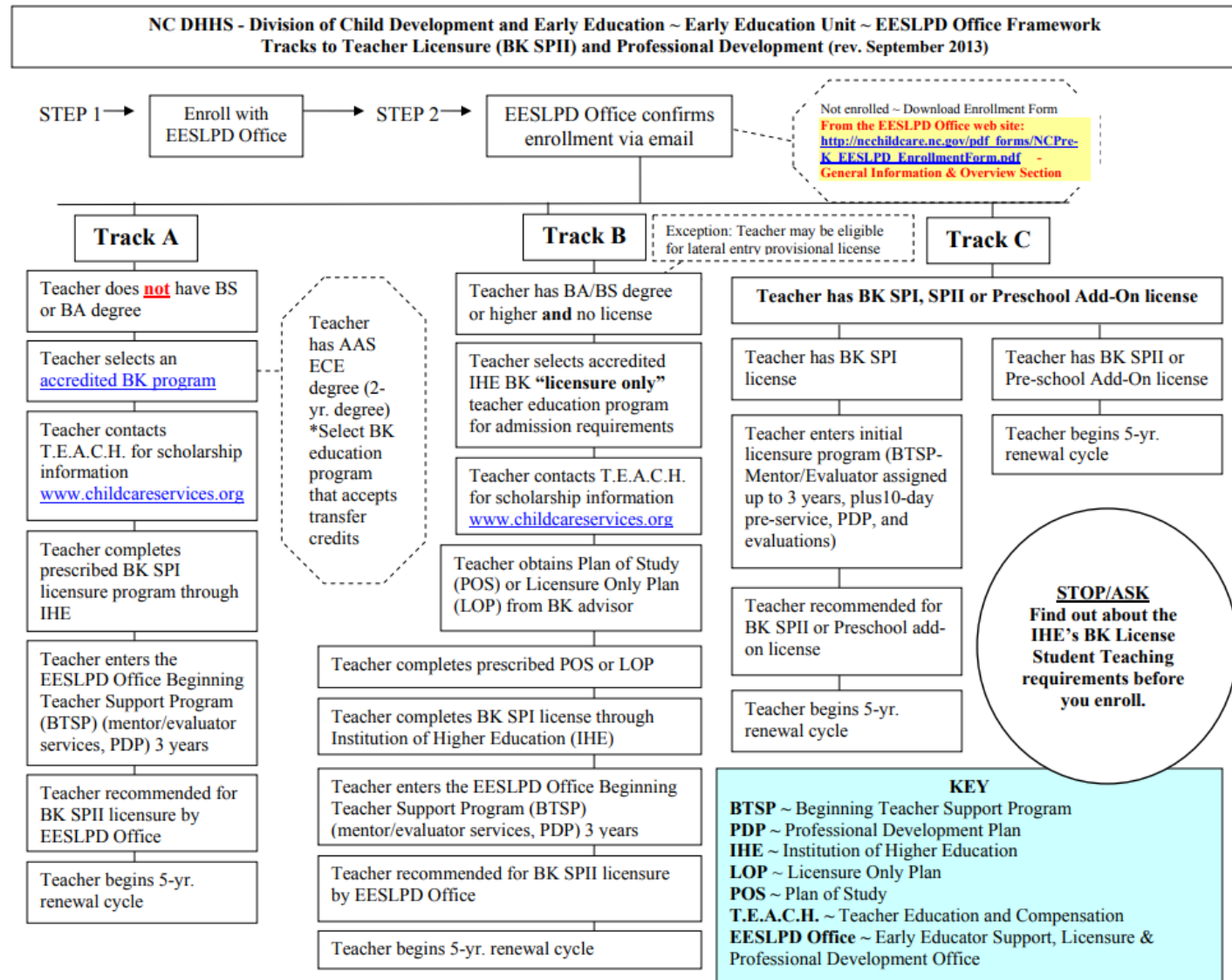
Required coursework** and demonstrated competency by level:

- Level I - EDU 261 & 262, Child Care Administration I and II + seven semester credit hours of early childhood education coursework + level I portfolio
- Level II - EDU 261 & 262, Child Care Administration I and II + AAS degree in Early Childhood Education/Child Development + level II portfolio
- Level III - EDU 261 & 262, Child Care Administration I and II + BS degree in Early Childhood Education/Child Development + level III portfolio

**** Equivalency Options:** Each required component of the administration credential has one or more equivalency options. These are outlined on the equivalency form that child care administrators of licensed facilities must submit to the NC Division of Child Development. Meeting any or all of the three components through the equivalency options will result in an administration equivalency instead of the credential. The North Carolina Child Care Administration Credential and the Equivalency qualification (Levels I, II and III) have equal weight in North Carolina's tiered Star Rated License System.

Source: Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Child Development and Early Education


Appendix O



Appendix P

Texas Early Childhood Professional Development System (TECPDS)

[Landing Page of Website: <https://tecps.org/>]



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The **Texas Early Childhood Professional Development System (TECPDS)** is designed to help meet the professional development needs of those working in the Early Childhood field. To learn more about the TECPDS, visit our [About Us](#) page.

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Appendix Q

Local Incentive-Based Opportunities for Teachers to attain Higher Education

Agency/ Organization	Name of Incentive	Brief Description/ Requirements	Amount provided per person/per year	Average Number of People Taking the Incentive	Cost of Participation	Administrative Costs
Smart Start of Forsyth County	Early Educator and Child Care Provider Scholarship Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maintain 2.75 cumulative GPA ▪ Work or consult in Early Childhood setting in Forsyth County at least 20 hrs/week with children ages birth to Pre-K ▪ Agree to work in ECE in Forsyth County for at least one year after scholarship period 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The lesser of 75% of tuition or \$1,000 is max available ▪ \$300 max amount available for books and course materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 235 applicants 133 students awarded (2015/2016) ▪ 83 individuals awarded (2017/2018) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ \$173,000 in 2015/16 ▪ \$91,045 in 2017/18 <p>Funding derived from NCPC fund and/or private grant funds</p>	Approximately \$42,000
	Professional Development Bonus for Academic Achievement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Grade of "B" or higher and in good standing with DCDEE 	<p><u>Coursework toward degree:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 6 semester hours= up to \$250 ▪ 9 semester hours=up to \$500 ▪ 12 semester hours=up to \$1,000 <p><u>Degree Attainment:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ECE AS: up to \$1,500 one-time bonus completion ▪ ECE BA: up to \$3,000 one-time bonus completion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 33 people awarded (FY2017) ▪ 30 people awarded (FY2018) 	<p>FY2017 \$24,500 FY2018 \$36,000</p> <p>Funding from Technical Assistance Services grants</p>	
Child Care Network (For Profit Child Care Center Franchise)	Tuition Assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tuition and book assistance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 6 payments granted per year, \$500/course max 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 9 employees received assistance (2015-2017) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ \$24,000/year TOTAL for an average year (figured at \$3,000 allowed per person) 	
Head Start (via Family Services)	Tuition Assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Employee must commit to staying with Family Services for three years ▪ Employee must apply for financial aid and other resources before taking advantage of the 10% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 10% of an employee's tuition and books paid per semester 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 1 employee 		

Appendix R
Local Professional Development Opportunities in ECE
(includes coaching, mentoring, and other trainings)

Agency/ Organization	Name of Support Program	Brief Description	Costs Associated?	Average Number of Centers Using this Service
Smart Start of Forsyth County (SSFC)	Technical Assistance Services (TAS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional development, classroom and center resources, support, consultation, technical and financial assistance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No cost to centers receiving services SSFC's cost varies upon staffing, final fulfillment of grant stipulations, & available fund sources FY2018: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒\$614,000 utilized from the NCPK Technical Assistance Services monies ⇒\$69,000 from NCPK funds ⇒\$8,000 from KBR SSFC also funds \$236,650 to CCRC for professional development and technical assistance to family child care homes 	
	Itinerant instructors partnership with Forsyth Tech CC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10 courses/semester on-site at local child development and learning centers, develop individualized educational plans to increase teacher progress toward higher degrees/credentialing 	Smart Start funds Forsyth Tech CC \$104,732 to carry out this activity	
Child Care Resource Center (CCRC)	Infant/Toddler Quality Enhancement Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supports 2 Infant/Toddler (I/T) Specialists to provide support to child care programs and help improve quality of I/T care across Region 10. Specialists can conduct workshops focusing on I/T care, including ITS-SIDS, ITERS-R, Language Development, Social Emotional Milestones 	\$73,300 annual funding for Forsyth County from NC DCDEE- Child Care Development Block Grant	18 centers on average for Forsyth County
	Behavior Specialists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Help prevent, identify, and address challenging behaviors in children Work with programs to create solution strategies within the classroom setting and with a child's family to help diminish challenging behaviors in children ages 2-5 	\$37,150 annual funding for Forsyth County from NC DCDEE- Child Care Development Block Grant	6 programs/centers using these services in Forsyth County
Family Services	Forsyth County School Readiness Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coaches in the classroom one day/week throughout school year to help implement strategy and curriculum. Assist teachers with stress-management ideas and help implement social-emotional strategies in the classroom. Help develop personalized behavior plans and partner with the teacher and the parent to ensure that all skills are in place before a child enters Kindergarten. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$333,615 for four years, KBR-grant funded (2015-19) \$540,000 for three years, Capital Campaign funding (2019-22) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Currently: 28 Three- & Four-yr-old classrooms/ 254 teachers Capital campaign funding to serve 36 Three- and Four-year-old classrooms/72 teachers over three years (2019-22)
	Training and Technical Assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing support of teachers and administrators embedded in the Head Start guidelines; assistance includes training for assessments, screening, social-emotional approaches, coaching, and workshops related to best practices and emerging approaches. 	\$44,650 annually funded through Federal Head Start	All Head Start classrooms/ teachers are included

Appendix S
Current Opportunities Promoting Higher Learning in ECE/BK

Institution	Name of Support Program	Brief Description	Cost Associated (to student or institution)	Average Number of People Utilizing the Opportunity
NC Community Colleges and University of NC Constituent Institutions	Senate Bill 449 Early Education Articulation Agreement (3/29/17)	State board of community colleges and board of governors of the University of NC will develop and implement a system-wide articulation agreement for the transfer of early ed credits from 2-year to 4-year institutions. By April 15, 2018 a report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee will be given. The agreement should apply beginning with the 2018-2019 academic year.		
Forsyth Technical Community College	Early Childhood LAB School	The lab school is a part of the Early Childhood Department at Forsyth Tech whose purpose is to provide a facility in which students observe, practice and learn to be teachers of preschool children		
	Model Early Childhood Classroom/Lab	The Mock ECE Lab at the Mazie Woodruff Center, Forsyth Tech is equipped as a licensed child care classroom to promote student interaction and instructor demonstration of correct and appropriate practices using child-centered materials and equipment. This lab provides hands-on learning experiences to bridge gaps between theory and practice		
	Modular Learning for Adults learners	Assistance for adult students returning to school to complete coursework in targeted challenge areas		
University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG)	BK Initial Licensure Program	Person with undergraduate degree in early ed who needs BK license can complete courses in 3 semesters and earn credits toward half of Master's degree / online classes Full tuition paid plus a stipend to cover other costs	US Office of Special Education grant assistance	
	Master of Education-Advanced BK Teaching License	Teachers with BK license take 2-year program of online courses		
Winston-Salem State University (WSSU)	Highly Ranked Online Birth-Kindergarten Education (BKE) program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WSSU's Birth through Kindergarten Education (BKE) program has been ranked as one of the top 25 online early childhood education programs in the nation by Bestschools.org in 2017 (One of two North Carolina universities to make the list) The BKE program offers three concentrations: Teacher Licensure, Business Optional, and Early Intervention and Preschool. 		
	Early Learning Center (Head Start affiliate)	State of the art Early Childhood Development Center serves as a preschool and a learning laboratory for faculty and students associated with the BKE program		

University of North Carolina at Wilmington (UNCW)	The Watson School of Education	UNCW collaborative effort with five community colleges in southeastern North Carolina	none	
Western region of North Carolina	The Appalachian Learning Alliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnership between Appalachian State University (ASU) and ten regional community colleges in western North Carolina designed to meet identified baccalaureate and graduate degree needs by providing degree-completion programs on community college campuses. Eligible students graduate with a four-year teaching degree from ASU's Reich College of Education by completing the first two years of coursework at regional community colleges then transferring into an Elementary Education, Middle Grades Education or Special Education program for coursework at one of ten North Carolina community colleges. The SECU Appalachian Partnership administers the teacher program in Caldwell, Burke, Catawba, Wilkes and Mitchell counties, with scholarship funding to assist college students in their junior and senior years of coursework study, internship, and student teaching. 	none	
Winston-Salem Forsyth County Schools	Career Technical Education (CTE)	<p>CTE programs partner with community leaders and organizations through advisory groups to provide support in planning, implementing and evaluating programs. The curriculum is competency based and provides instruction in the skills and knowledge needed for students to achieve success. Forsyth Tech CC (ECE) instructors are incorporated into teaching the ECE courses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION I <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2-credit class prepares students to work with children from birth to age eight. Emphasis on enhancing the development of young children while providing early education and care. Students spend 40% of instructional time off campus at a hands-on internship experience. EARLY CHILDHOOD ED II- HONORS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2-credit class is for seniors who have completed Early Childhood Education I to allow further work with children birth to 12 years of age in child care, preschool, and/or elementary school programs. Students spend 60% of instructional time off campus at a hands-on internship Post Graduation Credentials Earned: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Within 2 years post-graduation, students are eligible to apply for an Early Childhood Credential provided they receive a final grade of B or higher in EC1 (EDU111) and EC2 (EDU112) and their EOC VOCAT score is 90 or better both years. The above qualifications also earn a class credit for EDU 119 at a community college. 	none	<u>ECE1</u> 2014/15- 60 students* 2015/16- 28 students 2016/17- 25 students 2017/18- 35 students 2018/19- 35 students <u>ECE2</u> 2014/15- 24 students* 2015/16- 19 students 2016/17- 21 students 2017/18- 11 students 2018/19- 19 students <u>Credential Earned</u> 2014/15- 14 students* 2015/16- 8 students 2016/17- 11 students 2017/18- 7 students 2018/19- TBD *2 Instructors available
	Career Development Coordinators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Career Development Coordinators placed at each high school help guide and assist students with their next steps past high school into post-secondary opportunities and link educational opportunities to career awareness <p>Provide: Career interest inventories / Learning styles assessments / Job shadowing / Career preparation / Job Fair information / Field trips to various colleges & business / Resources for post-secondary information / Mentor/Mentee opportunities / CFNC assistance and college information</p>	none	

Sources: College Foundation of North Carolina, Winston-Salem Forsyth County

Pre-K 4 SA (San Antonio, Texas) Tuition Program

Appendix U

Parent Chat Key Takeaway Messages

The work of recruiting parents and families began in 2017 in conjunction with the public engagement work group. Preliminary plans were developed to recruit and train parents and families to support Pre-K expansion with equity as a principle guidepost. A parent chat event was held at the partner organization of Smart Start of Forsyth County in September 2017 and utilized the world café model for small group discussion. The conversation was crafted to collect first-hand data regarding the needs and thoughts of parents currently involved in Forsyth County's early education system and those whose elementary age children had recently experienced a Pre-K setting. The key focus shaping discussion prompts was to understand parent expectations related to high-quality Pre-K.

Key takeaways from the 2017 Parent Chat were:

1. Parents are looking for increased access to teachers, as well as knowledge of what is being taught in the classroom so they may continue that learning at home.
2. Parents want improved communication with teaching staff and a more open and flexible environment to communicate.
3. Parents desire quality centers and a curriculum that provides flexibility for interest-based learning.
4. Cost should not affect quality, and parents who pay little to no amount for Pre-K out of pocket should not feel left out or be forced to accept a lower quality-of-care standard.
5. The definition of *quality* in early childhood education and the star rated system for licensing centers needs more consistency across the board.
6. Key aspects of a successful Pre-K marketing campaign need to emphasize inclusivity and include a diverse population of parents and children in the county. To bring maximum visibility and involvement to the initiative, well-known and established events/forums are more likely to engage parents and families.

THE PRE·K PRIORITY

Quality Early Education For
Every Forsyth County Child

The Pre-K Priority is a coalition of community organizations convened by Family Services.

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