

## Thinking Big for Small People: Why Are NC County Leaders So Enthusiastic about Pre-K for Four Year Olds?

September 25, 2017 | UNC-Chapel Hill

DRAFT AGENDA

9:00-9:45

### Skills Mobility and Economic Growth: Why is Pre-K Considered a High-Return Workforce Quality Strategy?

Anita Brown-Graham – Director, nclIMPACT, UNC School of Government

*Highlighting the latest research and the insightful experiences of innovative local governments across the country seeking to use pre-K to win at economic competitiveness.*

Minnie Forte-Brown – President-Elect, North Carolina School Boards Association

Brenda Howerton – President, North Carolina Association of County Commissioners

*Sharing the perspectives of school board members and county commissioners as they tell the story behind Durham County's journey toward universal pre-K for all four-year olds. How did Durham develop the goal? Where is Durham in the journey? What is next?*

9:45-10:45

### Stepping Stones or Quicksand: Pre-K Hopes and Cautions for Local Policymakers

Ken Dodge – Pitzker Professor of Public Policy, Sanford School of Public Policy, Duke University

*Sorting out the complicated landscape of evaluations of pre-K. Let's get on the same page: What are the areas of agreement and disagreement regarding the effects of pre-K? What do we mean by "high quality" pre-K? What are the challenges to scaling up pre-K? What is the difference between universal and targeted programs?*

Ellen Peisner-Feinberg – Senior Research Scientist, Frank Porter Graham Institute, UNC-Chapel Hill



*Offering insights from the long-term study of the NC-Pre-K program. Do children in the program outperform their peers who do not attend NC Pre-K? In what developmental areas or skills are differences between these groups observed? Why do these areas matter to local policymakers?*

John Pruette – Executive Director, Office of Early Learning, North Carolina Public Schools

*Getting local policymakers ready for thoughtful expansion. Who is served by NC Pre-K? How many more children will be served in 2017-19? What are the most important characteristics of the NC Pre-K program? How are they consistent with high quality standards? In what types of facilities is the NC Pre-K program delivered across the state? How will you assess your capacity for expansion?*

**10:45-11:00**

**Break**

**11:00-12:15**

**Taking Stock: Establishing the Different Starting Places in the Room**

Lydian Altman – Director, Strategic Public Leadership Initiative, UNC School of Government

Donna Warner – Director, Local Elected Leaders Academy, UNC School of Government

*Supporting attendees in exploring: What is going on in your community with respect to pre-K? Are you ready for the expansion opportunity presented by the NC budget? Is there an appetite for even further expansion? How will your leadership make a difference on this policy question?*

**12:15-12:45**

**The Future of Pre-K in Your Community: Working Lunch**

*Positioning your community. Is it (1) already at work on expanding pre-K access beyond existing slots; (2) interested in expansion, but has not yet reached any consensus on strategy; or, (3) at the beginning stages of exploring pre-K expansion?*

**12:45-1:15**

**Toward a Business Model: Connecting to the Resources Inside and Beyond the Room**

Donnie Charleston – Economic Policy Manager, NC State Institute for Emerging Issues

Ed Dunlap – Executive Director, NC School Boards Association  
 Kevin Leonard – Executive Director, NC Association of County Commissioners  
 Tracy Zimmerman – Executive Director, NC Early Childhood Foundation

*Meeting and hearing about the resources available to you from the NC Early Childhood Foundation, NC State Institute for Emerging Issues, NC Association of County Commissioners, NC School Boards Association, and communities with interesting approaches to overcoming common pre-K expansion challenges. What do you do? How might you support my community?*

**1:15-2:15**

**Building Your County Model: Putting the Pieces Together**

Lydian Altman – Director, Strategic Public Leadership Initiative, UNC School of Government  
 Donna Warner – Director, Local Elected Leaders Academy, UNC School of Government

*Ensuring attendees go home with a clear sense of what it takes to put the pieces together by outlining: What sources of funding are available to expand pre-K? Who are your key partners in expanding pre-K? Are they already at the table? What assets will you need at the table? Which ones will you need to bring to the table, and how will you do this? What could stop your local/regional expansion of pre-K from going forward?*

**2:15-2:30**

**Break**

**2:30-3:15**

**Moving Ahead: What It Is Worth**

Lynne Vernon-Feagans – William C. Friday Distinguished Professor of Child Development and Family Studies, School of Education, UNC-Chapel Hill

*Giving attendees the pearls of wisdom. Why is the topic of pre-K so timely? How will your pre-K program fit with other coordinated, high quality programming in the greater grade 0-8 continuum? What kinds of return on investment should we expect from third grade reading proficiency? Which children will benefit most from pre-k?*

3:15-3:30

**Onward: Keeping Your Eyes on the Prize (As You See It)**

Anita Brown-Graham – Director, ncIMPACT, UNC School of Government

*Offering a check/cheat list on next steps and reviewing resources for support. Are you ready to Think Big for Small People? What else do you need for support?*

\*This agenda is subject to change\*