

# 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

## 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 Expansion 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 Child Development 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**

**11:00-12:00**

**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? What are the primary challenges? Is there an appetite for even further expansion? How can your leadership make a difference?*

**12:00-12:45**

**Lunch**

**12:45-1:15**

**Good to Know: Connecting to Resources Inside and Beyond the Room**

Kevin Leonard – Executive Director, NC Association of County Commissioners

Ed Dunlap – Executive Director, NC School Boards Association

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



Tracy Zimmerman – Executive Director, NC Early Childhood Foundation

*Meeting and hearing about the resources available to you from the NC Association of County Commissioners, NC School Boards Association, NC State Institute for Emerging Issues, and NC Early Childhood Foundation. What do you do? How might you support my community?*

**1:15-1:45**

**Local Knowledge: Financing for Pre-K and Other Lessons Learned**

Tracy Zimmerman – Executive Director, NC Early Childhood Foundation

Lisa Finaldi – Community Engagement Leader, NC Early Childhood Foundation

Matt McKirahan – Researcher, UNC School of Government

*Overview of NCECF’s “Local Funding for Early Learning” toolkit and discussion of case studies describing how communities have expanded and financed their pre-K investments.*

**1:45-2:15**

**Putting It Together: Pre-K Expansion in Your Community**

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, nclMPACT, UNC School of Government

*Planning your next steps and reviewing resources to support you.  
Are you ready to Think Big for Small People? What else do you  
need from us?*

