

Craven County Schools

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Overview

- Located in eastern NC, Region 2
- Estimated 30,250 residents (2013)
- 14,000 students K-12 / 1,223 in K
- 15 Elementary schools / 61 K classes
- Three distinct sections of the county
- 2,000 students with one or both parents in military= 29%
- Low Wealth District with 55% Free and Reduced

What is working well with NC Pre-K in Craven County:

1. Community based delivery system of Pre-K services
 - Diverse sites – Public Schools = 43%, Private Centers= 29%, Head Start = 29%
 - Countywide registration days clearly publicized
 - Parent choice of location to meet family's needs
2. Community collaborations
 - Local Advisory Committee
 - Support from community agencies
 - recruiting, child find, registration, screenings
 - funding resources from Smart Start and local Head Start
3. Professional development and licensure support for teachers
 - Teachers, working in private centers and Head Start, are included in current and relevant professional development provided by the school district
 - Non-public school teachers are supported through our county's participation in the NC Pre-K teacher licensure program using the NCDPI Teacher Evaluation system

What are the challenges for NC Pre-K in Craven County:

1. Funding
 - Disparity in slot rates: Public School = \$473, Head Start = \$400, Private Centers = \$600-\$650
 - Wait list
 - Lack of stable, consistent funding each year
 - Not enough administrative funds for transportation needs
 - Inconsistent teacher pay across all sites
2. Lack of a system of professional support for contract administrators
 - Needs are professional development, networking, and additional staff consultants at the state level

Recommendations for short-term solutions:

1. Narrow the gap on slot rates
 - Make slot rates proportionate to poverty rate of local county
 - Leave to the discretion of the local advisory committee to set rates based on needs
2. Increase administrative funds, particularly in rural settings, to provide for transportation needs
 - The use of public school buses is permissible, but costs prohibit access to NC Pre-K
3. Provide for professional growth opportunities and greater support for contract administrators

Recommendations for long-term solutions:

1. Expand Pre-K Classes based on county poverty and lack of other resources for families
 - Provide funds for all students who qualify for NC Pre-K
2. Stabilize Teacher Pay Rates Across all Sites
 - Current situation causes a lack of teacher retention in Head Start and private centers