

Summary Remarks, February 25, 2016

HHS Oversight Committee, Early Education and Family Support Program Subcommittee

Larry Vellani, CEO, Smart Start of Forsyth County, Inc.,

1. What's working well in re NC Pre-K Program in Forsyth County:
 - 1) *Attention to the **continuing professional development** of our teachers:*
 - 2) *Attention to the **transition of our children** from their prior settings to the NC Pre-K classroom, and from NC Pre-K into Kindergarten:*
 - 3) *Strong, **locally-grounded vision and commitment to meeting the needs of each child**—moving toward a local system of access for all families who want their child in a high quality, four-year old program:*
2. What's not working well in re Forsyth County NC Pre-K
 - 1) ***Not yet enough public investment or private incentive to expand high-quality, affordable pre-K opportunities for every child.***
 - 2) ***Discrepancy in pay among early educators**--whether in the private, independent sector, or in public schools—in comparison with other critical professionals.*
 - 3) ***Not enough work underway among the state-level leaders to construct a clear, simple, accountable vision** for priority, inter-organizational, and administrative use of the available funds, and the technology to support the use.*
- 3.a. Solutions, Short Term:
 - 1) *Charge administrators to **construct workable set of guidelines for braiding or layering** the Head Start, Title I, NC Pre-K, and perhaps some of the CCDF funds to serve the most children, and technology to support that work.*
 - 2) *Charge state administrators to **build out a workable set of guidelines for use by public and private child care providers and Kindergarten classrooms for smoothing children's transitions** from Pre-K to K, and from K into higher levels of elementary education.*
 - 3) ***Amend NCGS § 115C-242, "Use and operation of school buses"** in section (1) by changing the term "More at Four" to the "NC Pre-K program."*
- 3.b. Solutions, Long Term:
 - 1) ***Increase investments in early educator pay** and facilities.*
 - 2) ***Design tax-incentives**, and other revenue generating policies that will allow **for greater public and private investment** in early learning.*
 - 3) ***Provide and enforce clear, accountable requirements for transitions**, and technical assistance and guidance, including (cf. 3.a.(2) above):*
 - *Disseminating materials on best practices*
 - *Developing templates for transition forms and tools*
 - *Improving documentation requirements*