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**Haywood County Schools Expands Pre-Kindergarten
School District to Pilot Private Pay Pre-Kindergarten Slots
Haywood County, North Carolina – February 9, 2015**

In an effort to prepare more students for Kindergarten and the rigors of education in the 21st Century, Haywood County Schools is taking creative steps to expand Pre-Kindergarten services. This expansion includes the piloting of up to 24 private pay slots.

During the current 2014-15 school year the school district has 4 Pre-Kindergarten classrooms. The classrooms have 15 to 16 students who are funded through Title I and NC Pre-K revenues. Some classrooms also have 1 to 3 developmentally disabled students who are funded through Development Day funds. Currently there are 72 Pre-K students (64 Title I/NC Pre-K and 8 Developmental Day).

“After several discussions with regional officials and a visit to Polk County Schools, we are planning to expand our Pre-Kindergarten opportunities to include additional Title I and NC Pre-K slots as well as private pay slots. Private pay has worked well in Polk County Schools and seems to be a contributing factor in their academic success,” said Bill Nolte, associate superintendent.

The Pre-K classrooms will be expanded from 4 to 6 for the 2015-16 school year. The new classroom locations will be determined by the end of February. The classrooms will likely be in the Pisgah High School feeder district since currently there is only 1 of 4 classrooms in that district. All of the elementary schools in that district have expressed interest in starting a Pre-K classroom. District officials are currently reviewing the licensure needs at each school and will meet with the principal at each school to make final location decisions. The expansion plan contains no new local money.

The 6 Pre-K classrooms will have a maximum size of 16 without Developmental Day students and a maximum size of 18 with Developmental Day students. The classes will include up to 12 Title I/NC Pre-K students, 4 private pay students and 3 Developmental Day students (not to exceed the overall maximum sizes of 16 and 18).

The qualification requirements and placement criteria will not change for Title I/NC Pre-K students and Development Day students. Private pay students do not have to qualify and will be placed based upon a random selection process or some other unbiased

process. The school district will screen the private pay applicants so the students can be immediately served at their level.

The monthly fee for private pay students will be \$550 per month. “This covers the cost of the services and is slightly more than the typical cost of daycare for four year-olds in Haywood County,” said Anne Garrett, superintendent. “We wanted to make sure this new service did not compete financially with our community childcare providers.”

“The Pre-K classes are ‘school’ classes rather than only ‘childcare’. The classes operate on a 10 month, 170 student day schedule. As a district-wide school program, the program focuses on academic knowledge and skills. Pre-Kindergarten attendance requirements apply to all students. Parents seeking flexible childcare should seek other services available in the community. There are a number of good community childcare program options and almost all of them are available at a slightly lower cost,” said Bill Nolte, associate superintendent.

“Complete information for the 2015-16 application process will be available by the end of March. We anticipate the application process will begin on or near March 30th. We are working on a set of most likely questions and answers (Q&A). The first Q&A draft should be available by mid-February,” said Ron Moss, elementary supervisor.

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