



## THE HILL SCHOOL OF WILMINGTON NAMES THREE BOARD MEMBERS; RECEIVES \$12,500 ESHELMAN FOUNDATION GRANT

WILMINGTON, N.C.—The Hill School of Wilmington has appointed three new members to its board of directors for the 2026-27 term: Stephanie Croom, Louise "Wesie" Sprunt and David Summerlin. The new board members bring strong community ties and a demonstrated commitment to educational access in southeastern North Carolina.

The organization has also received a \$12,500 grant from the Eshelman Foundation to fund need-based scholarships for students with learning differences.

### New Board Members

- **Stephanie Croom** is a registered nurse with 29 years of healthcare experience serving as Infection Prevention Specialist at Novant Health, where she promotes patient safety and quality care. She is currently pursuing her Nurse Practitioner degree to advance her clinical expertise. Croom is committed to community engagement through church meal ministries and volunteer work with Nourish NC. Her connection to Hill School began through her son's attendance; she joined the Board to support an institution that has enriched her family's life.
- **Louise "Wesie" Sprunt**, a North Carolina native and graduate of North Carolina State University, holds both bachelor's and master's degrees. An active community contributor, she joined the Hill School Board to support the organization's mission. "As a former parent, I value what the Hill School has done for our family and understand the importance of its existence here in Wilmington," she said. "I am thrilled to be a part of it."
- **David Summerlin** is a commercial broker at Sun Coast Partners, focused on land development deals in Brunswick County since 2023. He attended Louisburg College and Campbell University. Summerlin lives in southern Brunswick County with his family, where they are actively involved in their church and community. Summerlin's son attended the Hill School for 4 years.

### Eshelman Foundation Grant Strengthens Scholarship Access

The Eshelman Foundation has supported the Hill School for approximately a decade, providing grants that have expanded access to the Hill School's evidence-based learning programs for 18 students in the community.

"The support of partners like the Eshelman Foundation is crucial," said Susan Harrell, executive director. "Hill is currently at full enrollment with a waiting list for the 2026-27 school year, demonstrating how many families in our community need this type of specialized support. We are grateful to have foundation support to provide scholarships for students who could not otherwise attend the school."

The school measures progress annually on a nationally-normed achievement test. Year over year, 85-90% of Hill students typically make at least a year's growth in reading proficiency.

These gains extend beyond academics. As one parent observed, "Over the course of 3.5 months at HSW, our daughter has realized she can learn and progress as others. This new confidence, with a realistic understanding that she learns differently, has not only driven her forward in reading and math, but also in her everyday outlook about life and whatever comes her way."

The Hill School of Wilmington serves students with specific learning differences, including dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia and attention deficit disorder, from New Hanover and surrounding counties. The school's enrollment includes students from 10 public schools, 6 private or religious schools, and 29 homeschooled students. The Hill School is an affiliate of Hill Learning Center in Durham, N.C.

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**About the Hill School of Wilmington**

The Hill School empowers children with language-based learning differences through half-day targeted instruction in reading, written language, math and executive function. Students remain connected to their base schools while receiving specialized support. Since 2010, the school has maintained small class sizes of four students per teacher. Learn more at <https://www.hillschoolofwilmington.org>.

**About the Eshelman Foundation**

Founded in 2008, the Eshelman Foundation is a Wilmington-based private family foundation supporting children's healthcare and educational causes across the United States, with a focus on North Carolina. For more information, visit <https://www.eshelmanfoundation.org>.

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