

**MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF  
SOUTH CAROLINA FIRST STEPS TO SCHOOL READINESS  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
A SOUTH CAROLINA NONPROFIT CORPORATION**

**August 21, 2008**

**MINUTES**

- Voting Directors Present: Mr. Lewis Smoak, Vice-Chair  
Ms. Judith Aughtry  
Dr. Floyd Creech  
Ms. Nicky Wallace  
Rev. Reece Yandle  
Ms. Linda O'Quinn  
Dr. Francis Rushton  
Senator Michael Fair  
Representative Jimmy Neal  
Melody McLaughlin (Designee for Supt. Jim Rex)  
Mr. Henry Parr, Jr.
- Voting Directors Absent: Governor Mark Sanford  
Senator John Matthews  
Dr. Thaddeus Bell  
Ms. Katherine Davis  
Ms. Marileen Chapman  
Ms. Julia-Ellen Davis  
Ms. Sabine Lang  
Ms. Kristin Hook  
Ms. Lisa Van Riper
- Non-Voting Directors Present: Dr. David Goble, Director, SC State Library  
Ms. Cindy Sweigart (designee for Mr. C. Earl Hunter,  
Director, SC DHEC)
- Non- Voting Directors Absent: Ms. Angela Flowers (designee, for Ms. John McGill, SC DMH)  
Ms. Emma Forkner, Director, SC DHHS  
Mr. Lee Catoe, Director, DAODAS  
Mr. Jim Griffith, Director, Transportation Assn. of SC  
Dr. Paul Krohne, President, SC School Board Association  
Mr. David Potter, SC Education Oversight Committee  
Mr. Tim Ervolina, President/CEO, United Way of SC  
Dr. Nancy Freeman, Regulatory Advisory Committee  
Mr. Bobby Bowers, Director, SC B&CB/ORS  
Ms. Stephanie Frazier (designee for Mr. Barry Russell,  
President, SC Tech College System)  
Ms. Lane Jeselnik (designee for Dr. Garrison Walters, SC  
Commission on Higher Education)  
Ms. Susan Jones (designee, SC DOT)

## Others Present:

Ms. Jennifer Buster (designee for Mr. Stan Butkus, SC DDSN)  
 Ms. Kathleen Hayes, Director, SC DSS  
 Ms. Susan DeVenny, SC First Steps  
 Mr. Dan Wuori, SC First Steps  
 Mr. Rodney Jenkins, SC First Steps  
 Ms. Kim Aydlette, SC First Steps  
 Ms. Lisa Michals, SC First Steps  
 Ms. Marcia Nash, Aiken County First Steps  
 Mr. James Holt, Aiken County First Steps Board  
 Ms. Candi Lalonde, Edgefield County First Steps  
 Ms. Pat Caldwell, Newberry County First Steps  
 Ms. Deborah Padgett, Saluda County First Steps  
 Mr. Michael Gaskins, Greenwood County First Steps  
 Ms. Angela Pruitt, Abbeville County First Steps  
 Ms. Centuria Watson, Chester County First Steps  
 Ms. Dorothy Priester, Cherokee County First Steps  
 Ms. Ruth Detrick, McCormick County First Steps  
 Ms. Ashlei Stevens, Gov. Mark Sanford's Office  
 Ms. Cheryll Williams, Freedman Center  
 Ms. Sandra Blocker, Aiken County First Steps  
 Ms. Terri Whetstone  
 Ms. Karen Pringle  
 Ms. Denise Buckle  
 Ms. Shelby Saunders  
 Ms. Lisa Garner  
 Ms. Geneva Jackson

**Call to Order**

Mr. Lewis Smoak called the meeting to order at the Freedman Center in Graniteville, SC.

**Approval of Minutes**

Upon a motion and a second, the minutes of the June 25, 2008 meeting were approved as written, with a correction offered by Mr. Henry Parr regarding his attendance.

A description of Freedman Center was presented by Cheryll Williams, detailing how First Steps partners with the center.

**Strategic Planning and Evaluation Committee Report**

Henry Parr presented the Strategic Planning and Evaluation Committee Report, reminding the Board that his program-review subcommittee plans to have a series of meetings to evaluate First Steps funding by strategy, and to involve other agencies in a review of their own investments.

**Finance and Administration Committee Report**

Ms. Judith Aughtry advised the board that First Steps will have to cut its budget by 3 percent per the Budget and Control Board decision of August 12. She called on Ms. Kim Aydlette to review the committee's recommendation options with the full board.

Ms. Aydlette explained that the state office would be working to minimize the impact to counties - cutting its operating budget by freezing planned hiring decisions, reducing contracts and travel, and pursuing other potential cost savings. Ms. Aydlette stated that OFS was recommending the

use of state private funds of to offset a portion of the partnership cuts, noting however that these are one-time funds.

Ms. Aydlette then presented the board members with three options:

- Option 1: Flat 2 percent cut to all County Partnerships.
- Option 2: 2 percent cut to all County Partnerships exempting the 13 counties that receive minimum funding.
- Option 3: Recoup \$300,000 of accrued interest from state-level funds that was initially put into the County partnerships' funds by formula this fiscal year. Instead of spreading \$17.5 million to all County Partnerships, as the board budgeted, it would instead spread \$17.2 million using the same formula that was initially used for FY09 allocations.

Ms. Aydlette reminded the board that 13 counties receive the minimum \$195,000 funding and they would be affected by Option 1.

Mr. Lewis Smoak said that the executive and finance committees recommended cutting the state office, asking counties to all take a 2 percent cut, and using one-time private funds to offset the cut at the partnership level

Ms. Kim Aydlette clarified that all options involve the state office making a cut and using some portion of private money toward the required agency-wide 3 percent (\$600,000) cut.

Mr. Lewis Smoak said that the board also wants to look at cutting its spending.

Mr. Henry Parr moved that the board approve Option One

Mr. Rodney Jenkins noted for the board that the \$300,000 interest subsidy budgeted into the partnership allocations for FY09 did not impact the counties that receive \$195,000 as they are already subsidized beyond what the formula would have allocated to them. Mr. Floyd Creech stated that it might be fair for everyone to take a cut because there is probably going to be an additional cut next year and this will help them start planning for money that will not be there.

Ms. Judith Aughtry expressed the need for board members to consider the impact to small counties. Mr. Henry Parr pointed out that the board has been encouraging these partnerships to consolidate for years.

Dr. Francis Rushton suggested a 3 percent across the board cut and suggested the county partnerships to talk to their local legislators to explain the detrimental effect of their action.

Ms. Kim Aydlette clarified that the Budget and Control Board issues this mid-year cuts, not the legislature.

Mr. Lewis Smoak called attention to Mr. Henry Parr's motion on the floor to accept Option One. Sen. Mike Fair proposed a substitute motion to adopt Option 2, which keeps counties receiving \$195,000 protected.

After some discussion, Mr. Smoak called for board members to express their support for either Option One, Option Two or Option Three.

In favor of Option 1: Mr. Floyd Creech and Mr. Henry Parr

In favor of Option 2: Ms. Nicky Wallace and Ms. Linda O'Quinn

Option 3: Rep. Jimmy Neal, the Rev. Reece Yandle, Ms. Judith Aughtry and Sen. Mike Fair.

As such, Option Three was adopted.

Ms. Susan DeVenny thanked the Board for its deliberation, noting that members of the Executive Director Leadership Council expressed their hope to hold the smaller counties harmless if possible. Ms. DeVenny said that the staff would be available to the counties and their partners to explain what has happened once these cuts are communicated to the counties.

#### **Program and Grants Committee Report**

There was no report by the Program and Grants Committee.

#### **Director's Report**

Ms. Susan DeVenny introduced Ashlei Stevens, the new Education Advisor to Governor Mark Sanford, who joined the Board in Aiken today.

Ms. Susan DeVenny also said the Duke Endowment Board will make its decisions next week and this board will weigh in on those recommendations during a specially called meeting in September.

Ms. Susan DeVenny reminded Trustees that the upcoming Vision 2013 Regional Summits are the key component to the strategic plan and they have a sample packet that was sent to delegates to the summits. Ms. DeVenny stated that each county will have 6 to 14 delegates.

Ms. Susan DeVenny said that Ms. Lisa Van Riper is reconsidering the need for the Trustees to have a two-day retreat in light of the budget cuts.

A presentation was made by Marcia Nash. Ms. Nash said budget cuts were not on her mind, only helping families. Ms. Nash's presentation was called "The Big Difference."

Mr. Michael Gaskin and Ms. Angela Pruitt made a joint presentation about their County Partnerships' collaboration to do training together, which led to joint board trainings and socials. Ms. Gaskin and Ms. Pruitt said their County Partnerships now have a joint fatherhood initiative.

Ms. Deborah Padgett talked about how the region collaborates in training. Ms. Padgett stated how her Saluda County First Steps partners with Lexington County First Steps since the LCFS office is 3 miles from the Saluda County line and they share office space. Ms. Padgett said that the COE initiative is incredibly effective and meeting dire needs in her county.

Ms. Ruth Detrick said that the partnership serves 300 of the 400 kids who are under 5 years old and McCormick County First Steps offers the only child care in the county.

Ms. Pat Caldwell talked about a collaboration with Newberry County School District's Family Literacy Program, which includes Hispanic translators.

Ms. Candi Lalonde from Edgefield said that when an Even Start grant recently ran out, Edgefield County received an Early Reading First Grant of \$3.9 million between ECFS, the school district

and Head Start.

Ms. Marcia Nash then thanked her staff and board.

Mr. Lewis Smoak asked if there was any other business.

Being none, the meeting adjourned.