

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

March 26, 2009

S.C. State Library, Room 309, Columbia, SC

MINUTES

- Voting Directors Present: Mr. Lewis Smoak, Vice Chair
Rep. Jimmy Neal
Ms. Lisa Van Riper
Sen. Mike Fair
Mr. Henry Parr Jr.
Rev. Reece Yandle
Mr. Floyd Creech
Ms. Marileen Chapman
Ms. Kristin Hook
Ms. Sabine Lang
Ms. Nicky Wallace
Ms. Julia-Ellen Davis
Ms. Judith Aughtry
- Voting Directors Absent: Superintendent Jim Rex
Governor Mark Sanford
Senator John Matthews
Ms. Linda O'Quinn
Ms. Katherine Davis
Dr. Francis Rushton
Rep. Rita Allison
- Non-Voting Directors Present: Dr. David Goble, Director, SC State Library,
Ms. Susan Jones (designee, SC DOT)
Ms. Jennifer Buster (designee for Mr. Stan Butkus, SC DDSN)
Ms. Rosemary Wilson (designee for Mr. C. Earl Hunter, Director, SC DHEC)
Ms. Lane Jeselnik (designee for Dr. Garrison Walters, SC Commission on Higher Education)
- Non- Voting Directors Absent: Ms. Angela Flowers (designee, for Ms. John McGill, SC DMH)
Ms. Kathleen Hayes, Director, SC DSS)
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
Dr. Nancy Freeman, Regulatory Advisory Committee
Mr. Bobby Bowers, Director, SC B&CB/ORS
Mr. Tim Ervolina, President/CEO, United Way of SC, excused
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)

Others Present:

Ms. Susan DeVenny, SC First Steps
Mr. Dan Wuori, SC First Steps
Ms. Kim Aydlette, SC First Steps
Mr. Rodney Jenkins, SC First Steps
Ms. Debbie Robertson, SC First Steps
Ms. Betty Gardiner, SC First Steps
Ms. Betsy Marshall, SC First Steps
Ms. Rogers Hewitt, SC First Steps
Ms. Grace Stewart, SC First Steps
Ms. Mary Anne Matthews, SC First Steps
Ms. Barbara Black, SC First Steps
Mr. Russell Brown, SC First Steps
Ms. Tamala Toney, SC First Steps
Mr. Derek Lewis, Greenville County First Steps
Ms. James Ella Collins, Charleston County First Steps
Ms. Candi LaLonde, Edgefield County First Steps
Ms. Karen Martini Odom, Chesterfield County First Steps
Ms. Centuria Watson, Chester County First Steps
Ms. Nancy Osborne, Berkeley County First Steps
Ms. Beverly Mills, SC First Steps
Mr. Rick Noble, Richland County First Steps
Ms. Cheryl Caldwell, Fairfield County First Steps
Ms. Deb Padgett, Saluda County First Steps
Mr. Michael Sponhour, Lexington County First Steps
Mr. Jim Riddle, Lexington County First Steps
Ms. Sonia Gass, Orangeburg County First Steps
Ms. Paige Wall, Anderson County First Steps
Ms. Amy Breault, Horry County First Steps
Ms. Linda Parker, Union County First Steps
Ms. Lora Bryson, Lancaster County First Steps
Ms. Ruth Detrick, McCormick County First Steps
Ms. Patricia Hall, Allendale County First Steps
Ms. Dorothy Priester, Cherokee County First Steps
Ms. Sandy Morrison, Horry County First Steps
Ms. Cheryl Waller, SC DHEC
Ms. Patricia Caldwell, Newberry County First Steps
Ms. Gina Henderson, Lexington County First Steps
Ms. Ashlei Stevens, SC Governor's Office

Call to Order

Mr. Lewis Smoak called the meeting to order at 2:07 p.m. He thanked Mr. David Goble for the State Library's hosting of the meeting.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Mr. Floyd Creech to approve the minutes from the previous meeting, held February 19, 2009. Ms. Lisa Van Ripper seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Executive and Finance and Administration Committees

An Executive and Finance Joint Committee Meeting report was offered by Ms. Kristin Hook. They recommended the following to the full board as action items:

1. Grant Agreement with DSS
 - Grant One: DSS proposes to grant SC First Steps a total of \$2.2 million in federal TANF funds for the purpose of supporting the agency's role in the provision of TANF eligible services to South Carolina Families.
 - Grant Two: SC First Steps proposes to grant a total of \$2 million in state funds to SC DSS for the purpose of helping to meet the needs of poor children and strengthen families where abuse and/or neglect may be present or to prevent abuse and neglect of children.

Ms. Kim Aydlette discussed the federal match benefits of these grant agreements. Mr. Lewis Smoak said the agreement will allow DSS to draw down an extra \$2 million to \$3 million in federal funds. Mr. Lewis Smoak asked for a motion. Ms. Nicky Wallace moved for adoption of Grant One. The motion was unanimously approved. Ms. Nicky Wallace moved for approval of Grant Two. The motion was unanimously approved.

2. Utilize \$200,000 from Grant One (listed above) to eliminate any need for additional mid-year cuts to County Partnerships due to the March 18, 2009, mid-year cut of 2 percent by the Budget and Control Board. Ms. Nicky Wallace moved for approval of Action Item No. 2. Mr. Lewis Smoak said we think this is a good and innovative use of dollars. The motion was unanimously approved.

Three documents related to compliance with new IRS Good Governance Policies were presented by Ms. Kim Aydlette. Three proposed updates and revisions to board policies were presented:

- Records Retention/Destruction Policy
- Conflict of Interest Policy and Disclosure Form
- Code of Ethics and Whistleblower Policy

The Rev. Reece Yandle moved that the policies be adopted. The motion was unanimously approved.

Strategic Planning and Evaluation Committee

Ms. Lisa Van Riper offered a report from the Strategic Planning and Evaluation Committee, which met March 26, 2009. Ms. Van Riper stated that an external panel is being seated by law to oversee the external evaluation of First Steps. Ms. Van Riper also said that a streamlined scope for the evaluation was approved by the committee due to budget cuts, but the scope is still in compliance with the law.

Mr. Henry Parr offered a report of the Strategic Planning Subcommittee, which has been developing some preliminary recommendations through its committee and three work groups who are developing specific proposals for their review. Ms. Lisa Van Riper said the subcommittee is looking forward to wrapping up their work this year.

Program and Grants Committee

Dr. Floyd Creech offered a report from the Program and Grants Committee. Dr. Creech said the committee is proposing the FY10 Program Standards. Dr. Creech said this year, more than any other, included in-depth input from stakeholders, staff and partners.

Dr. Creech introduced several speakers to reflect on the First Steps standards FY07-09. Ms. Gina Henderson, Lexington County School District Two, noted the standards have enabled them to push their own programs to higher levels of quality, despite early resistance. Parent educators and school administrators are seeing the benefits of the First Steps program standards at the district and family level. Ms. Barbara Black, CDEPP 4K Coordinator, also discussed the standards review process and results. Ms.

Black said standards are key to assisting children, as they provide a clear path for teachers and directors who are dedicated to delivering quality programs to children.

Dr. Creech put the standards forth to be adopted by the full board. There were no questions. Mr. Lewis Smoak thanked Ms. Barbara Black and Ms. Gina Henderson for their hard work in the field and for their presentation. The FY10 standards were unanimously adopted.

Finance and Administration Committee

Ms. Judith Aughtry presented recommendations from the Finance and Administration Committee and Finance Ad Hoc committee that reviewed administrative and organizational challenges for the agency. Three recommendations emerged: the next steps are

- Use a portion of the agency's EIA allocation to subsidize the 13 smallest counties at \$158,000 annual allocation
- Set aside \$100,000 in EIA funding to be distributed to County Partnerships on the basis of performance during FY10
- Distribute the remainder of the EIA funding identified County Partnership use on a formula basis to the remaining 33 counties

Ms. Kristin Hook said that a plethora of input was sought and continues to be sought in conquering this funding challenge. Mr. Smoak called for a vote. The recommendations were unanimously approved by the board.

Director's Report

Ms. Susan DeVenny thanked the committee chairs and members for their hard work during FY09. Ms. DeVenny provided an update on the FY10 budget being considered by the S.C. General Assembly. Ms. DeVenny said the House approved a FY10 budget of \$16.4 million for First Steps and an additional \$2.4 million for CDEPP. Ms. DeVenny stated that the state legislation is still looking at how to use stimulus funds and called on Representative Jummy Neal for further briefing.

Rep. Neal said that there are many unanswered questions left in the budget session, and that legislators have faced an unprecedented challenge this year, and that next steps remain unclear.

Ms. DeVenny agreed and proceeded to review the cuts taken by the agency to-date in FY09. Ms. DeVenny also introduced a shared position statement on the nation's public-private early childhood initiatives. Ms. Marileen Chapman supported Ms. DeVenny's statement that First Steps is seeing a lot of challenges in the viability of child-care businesses due to economic challenges, particularly to families who have experienced job losses.

Ms. DeVenny and Mr. Smoak then offered special recognition to counties piloting the Nurse-Family Partnership initiative. Ms. Grace Stewart and Mr. Dan Wuori also came forward for the recognition of NFP Executive Directors. Those recognized included: Ms. Paige Wall of Anderson County First Steps; Mr. Jim Riddle of Lexington County First Steps; Mr. Rick Noble of Richland County First Steps; Ms. Carolyn Brooks of Spartanburg County First Steps (absent); Mr. Derek Lewis of Greenville County First Steps; Mr. Amy Breault of Horry County First Steps; Ms. James Ella Collins of Charleston County First Steps; Ms. Nancy Osborne of Berkeley County First Steps; and Ms. Vanessa Goodwin of Dorchester County First Steps (absent).

Ms. DeVenny recognized Rosemary Wilson from DHEC for her partnership in ECCS and other collaborative early childhood health projects.

Ms. DeVenny called on Mr. Rodney Jenkins to give a budget update. Mr. Jenkins said the audits for this year have begun at the state and county levels, and noted that a smooth process is expected.

In looking at the current year revenues and our expenditures, Mr. Rodney Jenkins said, it can be seen that First Steps is still in the black. Mr. Jenkins said it had been a struggle but First Steps had been able to manage through the hard work and stewardship of staff and trustees across the state.

Mr. Lewis Smoak thanked all state office and county staff members, on behalf of the state board, and all acknowledged the hard year. Ms. Susan DeVenny thanked Mr. David Goble, again, for hosting the trustees.

Ms. DeVenny reminded trustees that the April 23 meeting would be a “WEEK OF THE YOUNG CHILD” webinar, featuring information identified by county partnerships in their childrens’ budget summits, as well as a statewide risk factor analysis and the highlight of several innovative early childhood collaborations statewide that provide model responses to the budget challenge we face.

Ms DeVenny recognized the NC Smart Start Technical Assistance Center for its donation of 50 free conference slots for the upcoming national conference in Greensboro, and noted that again two slots had been made available for state board members. Ms. Susan DeVenny said this is an example of how budget cuts result in good things, and those free slots have allowed First Steps to organize professional development teams. Ms. DeVenny reminded the state board that, following the April 23 webinar, the next Board of Trustees meeting will be June 18, 2009.

Mr. Lewis Smoak asked if there was any other business or comments. Mr. Smoak also encouraged people to look for local money to add NFP in their county as they prepared plans for this and upcoming years. Mr. Smoak thanked everybody for coming.

A motion to adjourn was made by Rep. Jimmy Neal. The board gave unanimous approval.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:27 p.m.