

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

**March 17, 2011, 2pm**

*South Carolina State Library  
Columbia, S.C.*

**MINUTES**

- Voting Directors Present: Mr. Lewis Smoak, Vice-Chair  
Ms. Lisa Van Riper, Secretary  
Ms. Judith Aughtry  
Dr. Floyd Creech  
Ms. Julia-Ellen Davis  
Mr. Walter Fleming, Jr.  
Ms. Julie Hussey  
Ms. Linda O'Quinn  
Mr. Henry Parr Jr.  
Dr. Francis Rushton  
Rev. Reece Yandle
- Voting Directors Absent: Governor Nikki Haley  
Sen. John Matthews  
Sen. Mike Fair, excused  
Rep. Rita Allison, excused  
Rep. Jimmy Neal, excused  
Supt. Mick Zais  
Ms. Marileen Chapman, excused  
Ms. Katherine Davis, excused  
Ms. Evelyn Patterson, excused  
Ms. Nicky Wallace, excused
- Non-Voting Directors Present: Ms. Jennifer Buster (designee for Ms. Beverly Buscemi, SC DDSN)  
Dr. David Goble, Director, SC State Library  
Ms. Louise Johnson (designee, for Mr. John McGill, SC DMH)  
Ms. Susan Jones (designee, SC DOT)  
Mr. Tony Keck, Director, SC DHHS  
Ms. Mary Payson (designee for Mr. Bobby Bowers, SC B&CB/ORS)  
Ms. Maria Swygert (designee for Mr. Darrell Staat, SC Tech Colleges)  
Ms. Susie Williams-Manning (designee for Mr. Lee Catoe, Director, DAODAS)
- Non- Voting Directors Absent: Ms. Leigh Bolick (designee for Ms. Lillian Koller, Director, and SC DSS)  
Mr. Jim Griffith, Director, Transportation Assn. of SC  
Dr. Nancy Freeman, Regulatory Advisory Committee  
Mr. Tim Ervolina, President/CEO, United Way of SC  
Ms. Lane Goodwin (designee for Dr. Garrison Walters, SC Commission on Higher Education)  
Ms. Louise Johnson (designee, for Mr. John McGill, SC DMH)

Ms. Brenda Martin (designee for Mr. C. Earl Hunter, SC DHEC)

**Others Present:**

Ms. Mary Lynne Diggs, S.C. Head Start Collaboration Office  
Mr. Tommy Noland  
Ms. Angela Pruitt, Abbeville County First Steps  
Ms. Patti Wilkes, Fairfield County First Steps  
Mr. Rick Noble, Richland County First Steps  
Ms. Deb Padgett, Saluda County First Steps  
Ms. Carletta Isreal, Williamsburg County First Steps  
Mr. Jim Riddle, Lexington County First Steps  
Ms. Nancy Osborne, Berkeley County First Steps  
Ms. Ethel Faust, Barnwell County First Steps  
Ms. Dorothy Priester, Cherokee County First Steps  
Mr. Derek Lewis, Greenville County First Steps  
Ms. Darnell McPherson, Darlington County First Steps  
Ms. Carol Daly, Georgetown County First Steps  
Ms. Karen Odom, Chesterfield County First Steps  
Ms. Patricia Hall, Allendale County First Steps  
Ms. Pauletta Plowden, Bamberg County First Steps  
Mr. Michael Gaskin, Greenwood County First Steps (by phone)  
Mr. Alexis Pipkins, Lee County First Steps  
Ms. Susan DeVenny, SC First Steps  
Dr. Dan Wuori, SC First Steps  
Ms. Debbie Robertson, SC First Steps  
Ms. Betty Gardiner, SC First Steps  
Ms. Tamala Toney, SC First Steps  
Ms. Betsy Marshall, SC First Steps  
Ms. Kim Aydlette, SC First Steps  
Mr. Russell Brown, SC First Steps  
Ms. Barbara Black, SC First Steps  
Ms. Joyce Johnson, SC First Steps  
Ms. Beverly Mills, SC First Steps  
Ms. Samantha Ingram, SC First Steps

**Call to Order**

Mr. Lewis Smoak called the meeting to order on behalf of the Chair and thanked Mr. David Goble for hosting the meeting at the South Carolina State Library. Mr. Smoak welcomed new trustees to the group.

**Approval of Minutes**

Rev. Reece Yandle made a motion to approve the minutes from the previous meeting, held February 17, 2011, followed by a second by Mr. Walt Fleming. The motion was approved unanimously.

**Program and Grants Committee**

Dr. Floyd Creech presented the FY12 Partnership Standards draft to the full board for review and approval. After discussing changes to the standards, the FY12 Partnership Standards were approved unanimously as recommended by the committee.

Dr. Creech stated that the committee determined the need to further refine the board-approved interventions list for FY12. Dr. Creech said the refined list would be brought before the board later in the year.

### **Finance and Administration Committee**

Ms. Judith Aughtry reviewed the finance report and the proposed FY12 County Partnership allocations with the board. Mr. Smoak reminded the board of the First Steps statute requiring the County Partnerships to match at least 15% of their state appropriation with local contributions. Ms. Aughtry applauded the partnerships for leveraging funds to sustain their programs during these difficult times. Ms. Aughtry said the FY10 sequester from the County Partnerships would be included in each county's budget for FY12. With no further discussion, the County Partnership FY12 draft allocations were approved by the board unanimously.

The board discussed the status of the 8% administrative cap for the County Partnerships, reviewing historical data provided by staff. Ms. Aughtry stated that the partnerships have consistently lowered their administrative costs over the years. Ms. Smoak said the board must continue to oversee that the County Partnerships are keeping their administrative costs as low as possible. After discussion, the board approved a waiver on those counties who exceeded the 8% administrative cap in 2010. The board directed staff to work with those projected to be over the 8% during FY11, requiring formal requests for waiver by those who anticipated exceeding the cap.

Ms. Aughtry then introduced Abbeville County First Steps Executive Director, Ms. Angela Pruitt, and Greenwood County First Steps Executive Director, Mr. Michael Gaskin. Mr. Pruitt and Mr. Gaskin presented their increased collaboration strategy, which involves combining both offices and sharing staff. Both Executive Directors agreed that by sharing services, more children could be served in each county. Mr. Gaskin stated that he was able to redirect 19% funds to expanded services via the expanded collaboration with Abbeville County. Mr. Smoak congratulated Ms. Pruitt and Mr. Gaskin on behalf of the full board.

### **Strategic Planning and Evaluation Committee**

There was no report from the committee.

### **Director's Report**

Ms. Susan DeVenny introduced Mr. Tony Keck, Director, SC Department of Health and Human Services.

Ms. DeVenny noted that legislative hearings for the state budget were well underway, and that the current projections in the process were holding First Steps funds at FY11 levels. Ms. DeVenny noted that one budget proviso affecting the agency related to BabyNet, related to the consolidation of funds through the lead agency, and the transfer of front-line BabyNet employees (formerly of DHEC) to First Steps.

Ms. DeVenny said CDEPP was serving more children than in prior years, despite reduced funding. She noted the CDEPP classrooms provide wrap-around care for 30% of the current clients and transportation for 20% of the clients.

Mr. Smoak called on Mr. Rick Noble (Richland County First Steps) to speak briefly about his recent Op-Ed in *The State* paper, related to reduced retention rates.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned.