

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

September 15, 2005

Voting Directors Present:

Senator Michael L. Fair  
Senator John W. Matthews, Jr.  
Representative Shirley R. Hinson  
Mr. Lee Cory  
Ms. Lisa Van Riper  
Mr. Henry Parr  
Mr. Walt Miller  
Ms. Inez Tenenbaum  
Ms. Linda O. Quinn  
Ms. Kristin Hook  
Ms. Judith Aughtry

Voting Directors Absent:

Governor Mark Sanford (excused)  
Mr. Lewis Smoak (excused)  
Ms. Claudia Cordray (excused)  
Ms. Sabine Lang (excused)  
Dr. Thaddeus Bell (excused)  
Ms. Doris Ballard (excused)  
Ms. Katherine Davis (unexcused)  
Ms. Marileen Chapman (unexcused)  
Representative Bessie Moody-Lawrence (unexcused)

Non-Voting Directors Present:

Ms. Kathy Newman (designee for  
Mr. Stan Butkus)  
Ms. Shirley Jeffcoat (designee for  
Ms. Elizabeth Mabry, DOT)  
Ms. Hope Rivers (designee for  
Dr. James Hudgins, SC Tech College System)  
Ms. Patti Butcher, SC State Library  
Dr. Nancy Freeman, Child Care Licensing Board  
Ms. Catherine Haselden, (designee for  
Ms. Kim Aydlette, DSS)

Non-Voting Director:

Mr. C. Earl Hunter, DHEC  
Mr. Robert Kerr, DHHS  
Mr. Lee Catoe, DAODAS  
Mr. Bobby Bowers, B & CB, ORS  
Mr. Jim Griffith, Transportation Assn. of S.C.  
Dr. Conrad Festa  
Dr. Paul Krohne, SC School Board Association  
Mr. Bob Staton, United Way of S.C.  
Mr. David Potter, SC Education Oversight Comm.

Others Present:

Ms. Susan DeVenny, Director, SC First Steps  
Mr. Dan Wuori, SC First Steps  
Mr. Rodney Jenkins, SC First Steps

Mr. Leon Love, SC First Steps  
Mr. Russell Brown, SC First Steps  
Ms. Tamala Toney, SC First Steps  
Ms. Dorothy Priester, SC First Steps  
Ms. Meghan McGuire, SC First Steps  
Mr. Jason Gilbert, SC First Steps  
Mr. Rick Noble, Richland County First Steps  
Mr. Jim Riddle, Lexington County First Steps  
Ms. Gina Henderson, Lexington County First Steps

### **Call to Order**

Mr. Lee Cory called the meeting to order and welcomed those in attendance. Mr. Cory asked for a quorum count and was advised that the board needed one more member to have a quorum and that Senator John Matthews was expected to attend.

### **Approval of Minutes**

In the absence of a quorum, the minutes could not be approved and would be reviewed once Senator Matthews was present.

Mr. Cory passed the gavel to Mr. Henry Parr to call on him to give the report from the Strategic Planning and Administration Committee.

### **Strategic Planning and Administration Committee**

Mr. Lee Cory, Chair, reported several items to the board as information only.

1. Local Partnership Board Analysis – Legislation mandates term 6-year limits for county partnership board members. Staff presented a state analysis and will report county partnership turnover statistics as available over the next year.
2. Board Attendance Policy – Excused Absence Policy – must not miss three consecutive board meetings without written excused absence notification.
3. RFM Insurance Recommendation of \$250,000 unless other board members have other suggestions.
4. Report from Ms. Diana Tester, Manager, South Carolina, Office of Research and Statistics, on data collection process and demographic data used in First Steps funding formula for county allocations.

Mr. Parr returned the gavel to Mr. Cory to continue the board meeting.

### **Operations and Accountability Report**

Mr. Rodney Jenkins informed the board that First Steps remains within budget and reviewed the Budget Summary and Financial Statement for FY 04-05. Mr. Jenkins directed the board's attention to the end of the year report (June 30, 2005) and advised that \$269,065 would be carried forward into this fiscal year FY 05-06. Mr. Jenkins reported that the board did not meet in July and August and he had included both months in the Budget Summary and Financial Statement for FY 05-06, which show current year allocation and appropriation. Mr. Jenkins reported that FY 05-06, recurring appropriation of \$18,183,519 and FY 05-06 EIA funds of \$2,000,000 (also recurring). He reported that

the lottery carry forward from FY 04-05 is \$1,978,690. Mr. Jenkins reported that allocations have been sent out to counties for the first quarter of FY 05-06.

Mr. Cory reminded the board that the state office operations budget was enclosed in their board packets under a memorandum from Susan DeVenny, dated August 16, 2005. He reported that since there was no board meeting in July, the Executive Committee had met and approved the budget. Mr. Cory asked board members to review the budget and if they have any questions or suggestions to please contact Rodney, Susan or himself.

Mr. Cory welcomed Senator Matthews to the board meeting and reported that there was now a quorum present. Having determined a quorum, Mr. Cory asked if there were any additions or corrections to the First Steps Board of Trustees minutes of June 16, 2005. Ms. Hope Rivers, designee for Dr. James Hudgins, Director, and South Carolina Technical College System advised the board of one correction to the minutes. There no further corrections or additions; the minutes were approved as written with one correction.

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

Ms. Judith Aughtry reported for the Program and Grants Committee that the committee had approved reallocation of funds greater than 15% for Colleton, Spartanburg and Jasper counties as information only.

Mr. Cory recognized Ms. Patti Butcher, Director, South Carolina State Library and welcomed her as a new member to the First Steps Board of Trustees. He reported that Dr. James Johnson, previous Director, South Carolina State Library, had retired in June.

#### **Evaluation and Accountability Committee Report**

Mr. Walt Miller, Chair, reported that the High/Scope Evaluation was proceeding and that High/Scope is in the final stages of data collection and preparing to begin their analysis. Mr. Miller reported that we should get some initial information from High/Scope very soon. Mr. Dan Wuori advised the board that the November Board meeting would be important as Dr. Marijata C. Daniel-Echols, Chair, Research Division and Dr. Kim Browning, Research Associate II, High/Scope Educational Research Foundation are planning to give initial findings of the 2006 evaluation report at the November Board meeting.

#### **Executive Committee Report**

Mr. Cory asked Mr. DeVenny to give the Executive Committee report. Ms. DeVenny reported that the committee had met twice since the June 16, Board of Trustees meeting, once on June 28<sup>th</sup> and again on July 21, 2005.

On June 28<sup>th</sup>, the committee passed a motion to authorize South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness staff to proceed with the appropriation funds to allow First Steps regions to award a single 4K expansion grant to each of the strategy's 7 identified regions, up to the amount of \$560,000.00 (\$80K maximum grant per award per region). Ms. DeVenny informed the board that these awards had gone out.

Ms. DeVenny reported that on July 21<sup>st</sup>, the committee passed a motion made by Mr. Lee Cory to approve the South Carolina State office budget for fiscal year FY05-06, in the amount of \$1,956,772, which includes contracts, evaluations, etc. Also passed on July 21, was approval of the projected FY 05-06 annual appropriation/Executive Budget Request for fiscal year FY06-07, in the amount of \$20,182,674. Ms. DeVenny reported that the final action taken on July 21, 2005, was approved to award \$40,000 lottery funds to Florence School District 4 to fund one-half of a 2005-2006 4K-expansion classroom under Lottery Strategy 4. The committee made this award contingent upon Florence School District 3 school leaders' agreement to approve a minimum of \$40,000.00 as match for expanded 4K services.

### **Director's Report**

Ms. DeVenny directed the board's attention to information included in their board packets entitled County Partnership Program Strategies and Budget. She reported that in June 2004 the South Carolina General Assembly gave First Steps a \$3M lottery set-aside challenge, which was met, largely due to the hard work of the county partnerships. Ms. DeVenny thanked the counties for all their hard work in making this possible. She encouraged board members to attend the October 20, 2005 Board of Trustees joint program committee meeting which would begin at 10:00 a.m., with a session to review the information in detail. Ms. DeVenny also encouraged board members to sign up to participate on one of the program committees.

Ms. DeVenny recognized Ms. Cindy Sweigart, School Social Work Consultant, Division of Women and Children's Services, South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control and reported that South Carolina had been awarded some planning monies from the federal level and ask Ms. Sweigart to provide an overview.

Ms. Sweigart reported that South Carolina was awarded \$100,000, by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau of the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, a 3-year grant. The Early Childhood Comprehensive System (ECCS) planning grant will allow First Steps to work in partnership with partners at DHEC and other stakeholders serving children 0-5, focusing intently on agency coordination and service delivery in five critical areas:

1. Access to medical homes
2. Mental health and social-emotional development
3. Early care and education/child care
4. Parent education
5. Family support

Ms. Sweigart thanked Dr. Baron Holmes for his help and assistance with researching and writing the grant.

Ms. DeVenny informed the board that there would be a "Child Care Walk About" in Greenville, SC, on Monday, September 19, 2005, hosted by Success by 6 and the

Greenville County First Steps Partnership. She reported that members would be visiting four local centers that have benefited from the combined assistance of Success by 6 and Greenville County First Steps. All Board members were encouraged to participate.

Ms. DeVenny reported that Ms. Debbie Robertson and Ms. Meghan McGuire would be presenting initial results from Countdown to Kindergarten 2005. Ms. DeVenny stated that a full report and analysis would be given to the board the first quarter of next year.

Mr. Debbie Robertson reported that staff is in the process of entering all data collected from children and families who participated in Countdown to Kindergarten 2005. She thanked Walt Miller and the Evaluation Committee for their review/input on the evaluation plan. Ms. Meghan McGuire was asked to provide an overview of the Countdown to Kindergarten public information strategy.

Ms. Meghan McGuire informed the board that each week (beginning June 1, 2005, for 10 consecutive weeks) staff released tips focused on school readiness were released to parents via media (print and TV). She gave a short video presentation of public service announcements for Countdown to Kindergarten, donated by WLTX-TV, Columbia, which ran 260 times during peak viewing hours. Further discussion continued regarding Countdown to Kindergarten with members of the board. County Executive Directors, Rick Noble (Richland County First Steps) and Jim Riddle (Lexington County First Steps) both gave testimonials regarding their local Countdown successes and, encouraged its continuation.

Mr. Cory reminded everyone that the next Board of Trustees meeting would be October 20, 2005, and would be preceded by very important joint program committee sessions, beginning at 10:00 a.m. Mr. Cory asked Ms. DeVenny to give an overview of the committee sessions for the board. Ms. DeVenny stated that the committees would be going over the 5 lines of business: Early Education, Child Care, Parenting and Family Strengthening, Health, Transitional Services, and reported that First Steps exist to fill gaps and strengthen and support partners in these 5 areas. Ms. DeVenny advised the board that from 10:00 – 12:00, on October 20, 2005, there would be a focused look at each of the 5 lines of business, showing the historical funding present in counties, other streams of revenue that are available through Federal and State, more detailed partner participation and opportunities. She encouraged all board members to attend if their schedules would permit.

Mr. Cory thanked Ms. DeVenny for the staff's and her work since the Blueprint for South Carolina's Children, to document First Steps by line of business, and examine gaps at the state level. He called the board into Executive Session to discuss a personnel matter. Upon their return, the board voted to give Ms. DeVenny a 4% salary increase consistent with state employees.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned.

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Secretary, South Carolina First Steps to School  
Readiness Board of Trustees, a South Carolina  
Non-profit Corporation

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Lewis Smoak, Vice Chairman  
South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness  
Board of Trustees, a South Carolina non-profit  
Corporation