

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

June 15, 2006

MINUTES

Voting Directors Present:

Mr. Lewis Smoak, Vice Chair
Senator Michael L. Fair
Representative Shirley Hinson
Mr. Lee Cory
Ms. Doris Ballard-Santanello
Rev. Reece Yandle
Ms. Lisa Van Riper
Ms. Sabine Lang
Ms. Katherine Davis
Mr. Walt Miller
Ms. Marileen Chapman
Mrs. Robin McCants (designee for Supt.
Inez Tenenbaum)

Voting Directors Absent:

Senator John W. Matthews (excused)
Representative Bessie Moody-Lawrence (excused)
Ms. Linda O'Quinn (excused)
Ms. Kristin Hook (excused)
Mr. Henry Parr, Jr. (excused)
Dr. Thaddeus Bell (excused)
Ms. Judith Aughtry (excused)

Non-Voting Directors Present:

Ms. Leigh Bolick (designee for Kim Aylette,
Director, S.C. DSS)
Ms. Angela Flowers (designee for John Connery,
Director, S.C. DMH)
Ms. Rosemary Wilson (designee for C. Earl Hunter
Director, S.C. DHEC)
Dr. Stan Butkus, Director, S.C. DDSN
Ms. Susan Jones (designee for Elizabeth Mabry,
S.C. DOT)
Mr. Bobby Bowers, S.C. Budget & Control Board,
Office Research & Statistics
Ms. Hope Rivers (designee for Dr. Barry Russell,
S.C. Technical College System)
Ms. Patti Butcher, Director, SC. State Library
Mr. Tim Ervolina, President/CEO, United Way
Association of S.C.
Mr. David Potter, S.C. Education Oversight Cmte.

Non-Voting Directors Absent:

Mr. Robert Kerr, Director, S.C. DHHS
Mr. Lee Catae, Director, DAODAS
Mr. Jim Griffith, Trans. Assn. of S.C.
Dr. Nancy Freeman, Regulatory Advisory Cmte.
Dr. Conrad Festa, Executive Director, S.C.

Commission on Higher Education
Dr. Paul Krohne, Director, S.C. School Board
Association

Others Present:

Ms. Charmeka Bosket, Education Advisor,
Governor Mark Sanford
Mr. Jim Konduros, PSARAS Foundation
Mr. Bob Hill, PSARAS Foundation
Ms. Susan DeVenny, Director, S.C. First Steps
Mr. Dan Wuori, Readiness Officer, S.C.
First Steps
Mr. Rodney Jenkins, Chief Financial Officer,
S.C. First Steps
Mr. Leon Love, Partners & Collaboration Officer,
S.C. First Steps
Ms. Pam Cutright, Kaplan Early Planning Co.
Mr. Larry J. Griffin, Dir. Of Assessment-PACT
Group, Kaplan Early Planning Co.
Mr. Pierce McNair, SC Department of Education
Ms. Mary Lynne Diggs, DHHS
Ms. Diana Tester, S.C. Office of Research & Statistics
Ms. Mary Payson, S.C. Office of Research &
Statistics
Ms. Cerissa Fulmer, S.C. Office of Research &
Statistics
Mr. Carol Daly, Executive Director, Georgetown
County First Steps
Dr. Pam Imm
Dr. Baron Holmes, S.C. Budget & Control Board
Mr. Rick Noble, Executive Director, Richland
County First Steps
Ms. Debra Session, S.C. First Steps
Mr. Russell Brown, S.C. First Steps
Ms. Tamala Toney, S.C. First Steps
Ms. Debbie Robertson, S.C. First Steps
Ms. Gladys Carter, S.C. First Steps
Mr. Jason Gilbert, S.C. First Steps
Ms. Joyce Johnson, S.C. First Steps
Ms. Meghan McGuire, S.C. First Steps

Call To Order

Mr. Lewis Smoak, Vice Chair, welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order.

Approval of Minutes

Upon a motion by Mr. Lee Cory and a second to the motion, the minutes of the March 16, 2006 meeting were approved as written.

Strategic Planning and Administration Committee

Prior to Mr. Cory's committee report he welcomed Mr. Jim Konduros, Executive Director, PSARAS Foundation, Inc. and reported that in 1999, as First Steps was being formed, the PSARAS Foundation pledged \$1 Million to First Steps to use as necessary for trainings and programs.

Mr. Konduros gave a brief overview of PSARAS Foundation, Inc.'s operations and relationship with First Steps.

Mr. Cory reported that the committee had reviewed the FY 07 Budget and recommended that the board accept a motion to approve the FY 07 Budget as it is written, subject to a review by the full board. He informed the board they would have five (5) days in which to review the budget, ask questions, and make suggestions and/or changes to the Budget as written. Motion was approved.

Mr. Cory reported that the General Assembly had appropriated to First Steps a one-time allocation of \$9,858,576. He explained that these funds are to be used to fund the South Carolina Child Development Education Pilot Program (4K) and Centers of Excellence in the eight trial districts with any remaining funds available, the pilot shall be expanded to the remaining plaintiff school districts listed in Judge Cooper's ruling.

Program/Grants Committee

Ms. Doris Santanello, Chair, presented the following items to the Board as information: The Committee approved the reallocation of State Private Pending Funds for Calhoun County and the State Office has approved the reallocation/allocation of funds for Allendale, Bamberg, Cherokee, Chesterfield, Darlington, Horry, Lancaster, Lexington and Richland Counties.

Ms. Santanello then directed the board's attention to two documents they had received for review prior to the Board Meeting.

- A chart titled FY 07 First Steps County Partnership Readiness Strategies that includes a brief description of all proposed school readiness strategies for FY 07 (July 1, 2006 to June 30, 2007).
- FY 07 Statewide County Partnership Budget information document that includes a breakout of funding by source, major school readiness strategies (Parenting/Family Transition) and a matrix of strategies by county.

Ms. Santanello then reported that each year April, May and June mark the annual County Renewal Process. She reported that after an extensive process of staff review, questioning, and clarification, the Office of South Carolina First Steps presented the FY 07 County Renewal Plans to the Program and Grants Committee on June 13, 2006. The committee is pleased to recommend the approval of all county renewal plans, with final approval of school district-based 4K strategies in all trial/plaintiff counties subject to staff recommendations relating to supplantation. She informed the board that staff will provide additional recommendations to the board as information becomes available.

In addition, the committee recommended approval of \$4,163 in private funding for Berkeley County First Steps to assist childcare providers with minor renovations to meet childcare licensing regulations and revisions of Aiken County First Steps County Plan to include the implementation of the Parents As Teachers Program instead of Parent Child Home. Motion to approve private funding for Berkeley County First Steps to assist childcare providers with minor renovations was approved.

Rev. Reese Yandle inquired as to who conducts or administers the Family Strengthening Programs for First Steps. Ms. DeVenny stated this depends on which partnership you are working with. In some cases it is a non-profit association and generally a category that describes literacy programs for families, some of the comprehensive services to families.

Representative Shirley Hinson inquired about the funding for Berkeley County First Steps minor renovations to meet childcare licensing regulations. Mr. Rodney Jenkins explained that First Steps Legislation does not allow counties to spend state appropriated funds to do renovations, but allows private dollars to be expended on renovations. Therefore, counties must receive the boards approval to obtain private dollars for renovations. Representative Hinson requested information on family day homes location and renovations.

After a brief discussion the motion to approve all county renewal plans and the motion to approve private funding for Berkeley County First Steps was approved.

Evaluation & Accountability Committee

Mr. Walt Miller, Chair, reported that the three-year evaluation of First Steps by High/Scope had been completed. He reported that the evaluation confirms First Steps is successful in targeting the poorest of the poor, that full-day four-year-old kindergarten reaps major dividends, First Steps is helping to improve child care quality and First Steps has outgrown its original measurement and client data system. Mr. Miller commended High/Scope for their work.

Mr. Miller asked the board to review the report prior to the August board meeting and return with any questions or comments regarding the High Scope Evaluation Report.

Director's Report

Ms. DeVenny reported that everyone serving young children in SC had had a thrilling legislative session and opportunity to work closely with lawmakers on the school equity lawsuit which places real emphasis on the needs of young children at risk. She reported that the next work expected from First Steps with specially appropriated funds, is to expand services to the most at-risk children in the trial/plaintiff districts with the extension of four-year-kindergarten and the expansion of the Centers of Excellence Model.

Mr. Dan Wuori reported that there were two provisos relating to S.C. First Steps. Proviso 1.75 - Child Development Education Pilot Program; and Proviso 116.1 - First Steps Centers of Excellence.

He reported, that in Proviso 1.75, the General Assembly appropriated a total of \$23, 500,000, to expand four-year-old kindergarten in both the trial and plaintiff school districts. Of that appropriation, the SC Department of Education had received approximately \$15,700,00 to be used initially in the eight trial school districts, and then on a prioritized basis, out to the remaining 28 plaintiff districts. First Steps received just

under \$8 million to be used in the eight trial and plaintiff districts in non-school district settings to include private for profit centers, private non-profit centers, Head Start Centers, faith-based centers and any potential pre-school provider who complies with the requirements of the proviso. Mr. Wuori informed the board that this pilot program would be a model in which the funding would follow the child rather than funding a classroom. In order for providers to be eligible they must meet all program criteria set forth in the proviso and comply with all reporting and assessment requirements. While participating in the program, Education Improvement Act funding from the four-year-old early childhood program as authorized pursuant to Section 59-139-70 of the 1976 Code may only be used to fund teacher salary supplements and fringe benefits as required by Section 59-20-20. During the implementation of the program, no funds appropriated by the General Assembly for this purpose shall be used to fund services to at-risk-four-year-old children residing outside the trial or plaintiff districts.

Mr. Wuori reported that Proviso 116.1 is a \$2,000,000 proviso to expand First Steps Centers of Excellence Child Development Centers through a two year pilot program serving at-risk children ages zero to four beginning in the trial districts and expanding to the plaintiff districts. Mr. Wuori asked Ms. Carol Daly, Executive Director, Georgetown County First Steps Partnership to update the board on Centers of Excellence.

Ms. Daly reported that during the past nine months, the Georgetown County First Steps Partnership had utilized funding from the Frances P. Bunnelle Foundation and matching state lottery funds to begin the process of transforming four existing pre-school programs sited in the diverse geographic areas of Georgetown County into Centers of Excellence. Areas of focus have included offering high-quality curricula and instruction to child care providers and their pupils; supporting incentives for personnel; enriching the facilities with proper instructional materials and equipment; providing parenting workshops and home visits; and recruiting participation by at-risk families, including Hispanics, through tuition assistance. She explained that the mission of Georgetown County First Steps is to ensure that all children have a successful start in school and continued educational success. Ms. Daly advised the board that the goal of the Centers of Excellence Program is to assist childcare facilities to improve the quality of their programs by encouraging exploration and discovery, fostering curiosity and creativity, building self-esteem and providing a challenging environment for learning, to ensure that the children they serve are able to enter school healthy and ready to learn.

Ms. Daly reported that First Steps chose two assessment instruments with which to gather data: the Early Learning Accomplishment Profile (E-LAP) and the Learning Accomplishment Profile, Third Edition (LAP-3). She asked Mr. Larry Griffin, National Assessment Specialist, Kaplan Early Learning, to brief the board on how the Centers of Excellence collects data to measure outcomes.

Mr. Griffin explained that the E-LAP measures the development of children; ages birth to 36 months and the LAP-3 measures the development of children, ages 36 months to 72 months. Both criterion-referenced, ongoing instruments designed to assess the

developmental progress of an individual child and groups of children. These evaluative measures facilitate the following objectives:

- Ongoing assessment of a child's developmental skill level at any time during a program year
- Planning a responsive classroom environment and curriculum
- Measuring child outcomes: the progress and accomplishments of all children
- Assessing of programmatic effectiveness and developing a strategic plan for improvement.

Mr. Griffin reported that both instruments have established validity and reliability and are widely used across the country to chart developmental progress of children.

Ms. Charmeka Bosket, Education Advisor, Governor Mark Sanford, thanked the board on behalf of Governor Mark Sanford for all the work First Steps is doing in early childhood education and childcare. Ms. Bosket reported that South Carolina has been working hard in early childhood development and early childhood services for some time. Ms. Bosket reported that in Governor Sanford's State-of-the-State address he highlighted that he wants South Carolina to be sure, as many children as possible be ready for success when they enter kindergarten. She stated that Governor Sanford wants South Carolina to be what the National Governor's Association calls a "ready state."

Ms. Bosket reported that First Steps had assisted the Governor in obtaining a grant from the National Governor's Association for purpose of holding a Governor's Early Childhood Summit, and charged the board, on behalf of the Governor, with overseeing the development of a set of "Ready State Recommendations" for submission to his office and the SC General Assembly in January 2007.

Operations and Accountability

Mr. Rodney Jenkins, Chief Financial Officer, directed the board's attention to the Budget Summary and Financial Statement FY-05-06, in their board packets. He reported that OFS administration/program expenditures are within budget. He advised that there are still funds to go out on EIA and lottery, which will decrease those balances. Mr. Jenkins reported that the Equipment line item might be adjusted. He stated that this has to do with purchasing computers and the installation of new T-1 lines at the state office. Mr. Jenkins advised good audit reports were coming in from independent auditors.

Ms. DeVenny requested the board review two documents in their board packets: 1) The Economic Impacts of the Child Care Industry in South Carolina; and 2) recent newspaper articles from across the state.

Adjournment

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned.

Lisa Van Riper, Secretary
South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness
Board of Trustees, a South Carolina Nonprofit
Corporation

Lewis T. Smoak, Vice-Chair
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