

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

September 21, 2006

MINUTES

- Voting Directors Present: Mr. Lewis Smoak, Vice-Chair
Senator Michael L. Fair
Representative Shirley Hinson
Mr. Lee Cory
Ms. Lisa Van Riper
Ms. Linda O'Quinn
Ms. Judith Aughtry
Ms. Doris Santanello
Rev. Reece Yandle
Mr. Henry Parr, Jr.
Ms. Kristin Hook
Ms. Katherine Davis
Ms. Marileen Chapman
Ms. Robin McCants (designee for Supt. Inez Tenenbaum)
- Voting Directors Absent: Senator John W. Matthews (not excused)
Representative Bessie Moody-Lawrence (excused)
Ms. Sabine Lang (excused)
Dr. Thaddeus Bell (excused)
- Non-Voting Directors Present: Ms. Cindy Sweigart (designee for C. Earl Hunter, Director
S.C. DHEC)
Mr. Bobby Bowers, Director, S.C. Budget & Control Board,
Office of Research and Statistics
Ms. Jennifer Buster, (designee for Mr. Stan Butkus, Director
S.C. DDSN)
Ms. Melissa Craft (designee for Mr. John J. Connery,
Director, S.C. DMH)
Mr. T.J. Wallace (designee for Ms. Patti Butcher, Director
S.C. State Library)
Ms. Susan Jones (designee for Ms. Elizabeth Mabry, Director,
S.C. DOT)
Mr. Tim Ervolina, President/CEO, United Way Association
of S.C.
Ms. Nancy Freeman, Regulatory Advisory Committee
- Non-Voting Directors Absent: Ms. Kim Aydlette, Director, S.C. DSS
Mr. Robert Kerr, Director, S.C. DHHS
Mr. Lee Catoe, Director, S.C. DAODAS
Mr. Jim Griffith, Transportation Assn. of S.C.
Dr. Barry Russell, President, S.C. Technical College System
Dr. Paul Krohne, Director, S.C. School Board Association
Dr. Conrad Festa, Director, S.C. Comm. on Higher Ed.
Mr. David Potter, S.C. Education Oversight Committee

Others Present:

Mr. Spencer Scott, Ex. Dir., Florence/Marion County First Steps Partnership
Mr. David White, Ex. Dir., Greenville County First Steps Partnership
Ms. Mary Lynn Diggs, S.C. DSS
Ms. Mary Payson, S.C. Budget & Control Board, Office of Research and Statistics
Ms. Cerissa Fulmer, S.C. Budget & Control Board, Office of Research and Statistics
Ms. Susan DeVenny, Director, S.C. First Steps
Mr. Dan Wuori, S.C. First Steps
Mr. Rodney Jenkins, S.C. First Steps
Mr. Leon Love, S.C. First Steps
Mr. Russell Brown, S.C. First Steps
Mr. Jason Gilbert, S.C. First Steps
Ms. Joyce Johnson, S.C. First Steps
Ms. Debbie Roberts, S.C. First Steps
Ms. Gladys Carter, S.C. First Steps
Ms. Tamala Toney, S.C. First Steps
Ms. Barbara Black, S.C. First Steps
Ms. Betsy Coleman, S.C. First Steps
Ms. Betty Gardiner, S.C. First Steps

Call to Order

Mr. Lewis Smoak, Vice-Chair, welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order. He thanked the committees for their hard work and attendance.

Approval of Minutes

Upon a motion by Mr. Lewis Smoak and a second to the motion, the minutes of the August 17, 2006 meeting were approved as written.

Strategic Planning and Administration Committee

Mr. Lee Cory, Chair, reported that the committee had met at 10:00 a.m., joined by the Evaluation Committee, other board members, partner agency representatives and others to discuss the recent High/Scope Evaluation.

Mr. Cory, reported that the staff had prepared an organization chart, along with a list of First Steps employees and their job descriptions. He advised the committee that after some minor changes this information would be made available on the website and to county partnerships.

Mr. Cory informed the board that the committee had reviewed the original First Steps bylaws (1999) and asked board members to read them thoroughly and direct any suggested revisions to the Strategic Planning and Administration Committee or First Steps Senior Staff members. Mr. Cory reminded board members that any changes should meet legislative goals.

Mr. Cory reported that Beaufort County First Steps Partnership, Board of Directors, have sent in a formal request to amend their local partnership By-Laws. He reported that by statute any changes to the By-Laws must be approved by the First Steps State Board. Mr.

Cory informed the board that the committee recommends approval of Beaufort County First Steps Partnership request to revise Article VI(c) (3) Terms, Resignations, Removals and Vacancies to read: Directors who miss more than 2 consecutive meetings without excuse, or 3 or more meetings in any twelve month period, shall be removed. The motion was unanimously approved.

Program/Grants Committee

Mr. Doris Santanello, Chair, reported that the committee held a conference call on September 15, 2006, to discuss Greenville County's request for a new strategy. The committee recommended for approval Greenville County's request to use \$20,000 of Pending E.I.A. appropriated funds to provide a scholarship initiative for 40 foster children in Greenville County. The board approved Greenville County's request.

Ms. Santanello also reported that during a conference call on August 14, 2006, the committee had discussed the waiver of the administrative cap for counties who exceed the 8% cap at year-end and that the committee had recommended approval of the waiver. After a lengthy discussion it was decided that counties be strongly encouraged to comply with the 8% administrative cap and that the Program/Grants committee amend the language regarding the 8% administrative cost and bring back to the board at a later date.

Ms. Santanello reported that the State Office approved the re-allocation of funds for Berkeley, Clarendon, and Marion Counties and the allocation of funds for Anderson, Bamberg, Cherokee, Clarendon, Edgefield, Lexington, Marion, McCormick, Richland and Sumter Counties. Ms. Santanello recognized the Aiken and Orangeburg County Partnerships, both of which received 2006-07 grants from the Children's Trust Fund of South Carolina in the amount of \$30,000/yr, renewable for 3 years, which are awarded for projects that help prevent child abuse and neglect.

Mr. Smoak congratulated Aiken and Orangeburg counties on their awards and thanked the Children's Trust Fund.

Evaluation & Accountability Committee

Ms. Lisa Van Riper, Chair, distributed the High/Scope Action Plan as Recommended by the Evaluation and Accountability Committee. She reported that the Evaluation Committee had gone over the High/Scope Action Plan in detail during a pair of meetings since the Board's August meeting.

Ms. Van Riper reported that the Committee had met on September 6th and 11th, to understand historical background on the agency's evaluation efforts and reports and review the recommended actions. She explained that First Steps has moved from start-up to outcomes measurement and that the High/Scope Evaluation Report confirmed First Steps was finding and providing service to the most at-risk children. Another major finding, which the evaluation committee plans to spend a great deal of time on, is to improve the agency's data collection policies and practices. She invited everyone to join the Evaluation Committee on Oct. 2, 2006 and Oct. 16, 2006 for additional meetings and

reported that, at present, the resources necessary to implement the recommendations have already been budgeted.

Ms. Van Riper reported that the committee looked at 4 major questions. 1. What findings can we use to redirect programming, if appropriate? 2. Are there findings in this report that we can use to improve or enhance current programming? 3. Are there findings that we can use to enhance work with our partners? 4. What changes in data collection and management must be made to ensure outcome evaluation for the future?

Ms. Van Riper noted that staff are aware and already working to address the issues raised by the evaluators and reminded the Board that this was something noted in the report by the evaluators themselves.

Ms. Van Riper made a motion that the recommendations be adopted so that the Evaluation Committee can proceed with its work. Mr. Smoak asked if there were any discussion. Mr. Cory stated that this is a broad spectrum of work and asked who would oversee the ongoing work in these areas? Ms. Van Riper answered that the Evaluation Committee would be looking at this as the committee moves forward with the recommendations, and that some recommendations would likely be referred to other committees.

Mr. Smoak commended the Evaluation Committee for their dedication and hard work in taking on the High/Scope Recommendations and called for a vote.

The recommendations were adopted unanimously.

Governor's Summit Ad Hoc Committee

Ms. Lisa Van Riper, Chair informed the board that the Governor's Office received a grant to conduct an early childhood summit in South Carolina and that the board has formed an Ad-Hoc Committee to plan the summit. She reported that there are various partners participating, DHEC, the Governor's office and others involved in the state's ECCS grant. The Governor's office designated First Steps to be the convener. Since the grant was received from the NGA it has been decided to use the Report of the NGA Task Force on School Readiness and work with to prepare a SC Report Card. Ms. Van Riper informed the Board that the committee will continue to meet on this and that the committee would meet again following the adjournment of today's meeting.

Director's Report

Ms. DeVenny thanked everyone for their attendance and directed the board's attention to several items of information included in their board packets. Ms. DeVenny reviewed the South Carolina First Steps Board of Trustees Standing Committee Rosters and urged board members not presently serving on a committee to select a committee of interest.

Ms. DeVenny reviewed the 2007-2009 South Carolina First Steps Roadmap to Readiness to include a three-year plan requested by the Governor's Office; an updated Early Childhood Quality Standards Task Force Fall 2006 (Proviso 1.80); and an updated First Steps Private 4K Expansion.

Ms. DeVenny acknowledged Mr. Tim Ervolina, Pres/CEO United Way Association of South Carolina who serves as an advisory member to the First Steps Board of Trustees. Ms. DeVenny has asked Mr. Ervolina to serve as co-chair of the Early Childhood Quality Standards Task Force, which came out of a legislative proviso (1.80).

Ms. DeVenny reported that the First Steps State Office made a presentation to the Governor's Cabinet last week on the First Steps 4K Expansion Proviso 1.75: The South Carolina Child Development Education Pilot Program and recognized Mr. Wuori for a pilot update.

Mr. Wuori directed the board's attention to a map included in their board packets showing First Steps Private 4K Expansion Applicants. Mr. Wuori reported that 101 applications have been received with 22 approved providers in 12 counties with more providers to be announced soon. Mr. Wuori recognized Ms. Tamala Toney and Ms. Barbara Black, First Steps Regional 4K Coordinators who have been working tirelessly to get this program up and running. He also recognized Dr. Anita McLeod and Ms. Kelly Boniecki, First Steps Regional 4K Coordinators who could not attend due to 4K site visits.

Mr. Wuori invited Ms. Robin McCants to provide an update from the State Department of Education

Ms. Robin McCants, Director, SDE Office of Early Childhood, reported on the public 4K Expansion Pilot Program. Ms. McCants reported that the SC Department of Education is currently serving 3,093 children in 28 school districts. She reported that the 8 priority trial districts are currently serving 813 children.

Mr. Smoak asked Mr. Wuori to explain to the board how the 4K Expansion Pilot Program works. Mr. Wuori informed the board that the First Steps Private 4K Expansion Pilot Program is based on parental choice. The parents of eligible students may choose to enroll their children in either a participating public school or in a private setting approved by SC First Steps.

Operations and Accountability

Mr. Rodney Jenkins, Chief Financial Officer, recognized Mr. Russell Brown, Mr. Jason Gilbert and Ms. Joyce Johnson, members of the fiscal department and thanked them for their hard work and dedication in keeping SC First Steps State Office and Partnerships within budget. Mr. Jenkins directed the board's attention to the Year End Financial Statement, June 30, 2006 and reported that the State Office had enough monies to stay within over-all budget for the year. He reported a carry forward of \$269,065 from FY 04-05 and advised this was a result of the High/Scope contract. Mr. Jenkins reported that \$6,611 negative balance represents the purchase of computers during the year and it had been approved that the budget may have to be adjusted to handle any changes in cost that could be handled in the over-all budget. Mr. Jenkins reported that SC First Steps had a \$550,560 carry-forward from FY 05-06, which is made up of various line items such as State Funds, E.I.A. Funds, Lottery and Private Funds and those dollars are all inclusive.

Mr. Cory advised that the administrative cost for the SC First Steps State Office is \$81,000 under budget for the year and applauds everyone for his or her efforts.

Mr. Jenkins then directed the board's attention to the Budget Summary and Monthly Financial Statement FY 06-07, which is the current months report. Mr. Jenkins advised the board that the administrative/program line item is within the year-to-date budget. Mr. Jenkins reported that funds had been distributed to county partnerships in the amount of \$4,457,897. Mr. Jenkins advised the board that he had added two line items from supplemental funds, which are SC Child Development Education Pilot Program and First Steps Centers of Excellence and reported that all funds have been obligated to-date. Mr. Jenkins reported that First Steps is spending state funds at this time to cover supplemental funds, as the supplementary funds have not yet been made available from the State Budget and Control Board. Funds are expected to be allocated in January. Mr. Jenkins reported that expenditure funds spent on these two line items would be replaced when State Funds are made available to First Steps. Mr. Smoak asked if First Steps was getting \$3M lottery funds, which it received in FY 06 and Mr. Jenkins reported that First Steps did not get lottery as recurring funds. He reported that First Steps received \$2M in recurring E.I.A. funds this year.

Ms. DeVenny informed the board that the October 19, 2006 Board of Trustees meeting would be held as a board retreat and Dr. Anne Udall, Executive Director, American Leadership Forum, Charlotte, N.C., would be facilitating Development/Collaboration for S.C. Children.

Ms. DeVenny informed the board there would be a December board meeting in order to consider recommendations for the Governor's Summit in January.

Adjournment

Mr. Smoak thanked everyone for their participation and attendance. There being no further 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 Smoak, Vice Chair
South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness
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