

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

**January 18, 2007**

**MINUTES**

Voting Directors Present: Mr. Lewis Smoak, Vice-Chair  
Senator Michael Fair  
Representative Shirley Hinson  
Ms. Lisa Van Riper  
Supt. Jim Rex  
Dr. Francis Rushton  
Dr. Floyd Creech  
Ms. Linda O'Quinn  
Ms. Judith Aughtry  
Rev. Reece Yandle  
Ms. Kristin Hook

Voting Directors Absent: Senator John Matthews  
Representative Bessie Moody-Lawrence  
Mr. Lee Cory  
Mr. Henry Parr, Jr.  
Ms. Marileen Chapman  
Ms. Sabine Lang  
Dr. Thaddeus Bell  
Ms. Katherine Davis  
Ms. Doris Santanello

Non-Voting Directors Present: Ms. Charmeka Bosket, Representative to  
Governor Mark Sanford  
Ms. Linda S. Martin (designee, SC DSS)  
Mr. John McGill, Director, SC DMH  
Ms. Angela Flowers (designee, SC DMH)  
Ms. Cindy Sweigart (designee for Mr. Earl Hunter,  
Director, SC DHEC)  
Ms. Susan Jones (designee, SC DOT)  
Mr. Bobby Bowers, Director, SC B&CB/ORS  
Ms. Hope Rivers (designee for Mr. Barry Russell, President,  
SC Tech College System)  
Ms. Jane Connor (designee for Dr. Curtis Rogers, Interim  
Director, SC State Library)  
Dr. Nancy Freeman, Regulatory Advisory Committee  
Mr. Tim Ervolina, President/CEO, United Way of SC  
Ms. Lane Jeselneck (designee for Dr. Gail Morrison, SC  
Commission on Higher Education)  
Ms. Jennifer Buster (designee for Mr. Stan Butkus, SC  
DDSN)

Non- Voting Directors Absent: Mr. Robert Kerr, 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

Others:

- Mr. Charles Bradberry, SC Budget & Control Board/Office Of Research & Statistics
- Ms. Hope Lanier, Lobbyist, SC Child Care Association
- Mr. Zeke Stokes, SC SDE
- Ms. Mary Payson, SC Budget & Control Board/Office of Research & Statistics
- Ms. Cirissa Fulmer, SC Budget & Control Board/Office of Research & Statistics
- Mr. Baron Holmes, SC Budget & Control Board/Office of Research & Statistics
- Ms. Centuria Watson, Chester County FS Partnership
- Mr. Rick Noble, Richland County FS Partnership
- Mr. Randall Johnson, Marlboro County FS Partnership
- Rev. Alexis Pipkins, Jr., Lee County FS Partnership
- Ms. Susan DeVenny, 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. Debbie Robertson, SC First Steps
- Ms. Samantha Catoe, SC First Steps
- Ms. Joyce Johnson, SC First Steps
- Ms. Betty Gardiner, SC First Steps
- Ms. Nikki West, SC First Steps

### **Call to Order**

Mr. Lewis Smoak, Vice Chair, called the meeting to order and thanked everyone for their participation. He then welcomed Dr. Francis Rushton and Dr. Floyd Creech, new appointees to the board and encouraged their comments and/or suggestions.

### **Approval of Minutes**

Upon a motion by Senator Michael Fair and a second the minutes of the December 14, 2006, meeting were approved as written.

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

Ms. Linda O'Quinn asked Mr. Rodney Jenkins, Chief Financial Officer, to update the board regarding county partnership allocations for FY 08.

Mr. Rodney Jenkins presented a comparison of last year's demographics to the current demographics and explained that data collected in the demographics along with other variables determine annual county allocations. Mr. Jenkins reported that the formula is based on per capita income and population distribution variables which include population of young children-30%, children eligible for free/reduced lunch - 25%, average per capita income - 20%, SC Kids Count factors - 25%, as well as other variables which total 25% of the funding formula. Mr. Jenkins reported that available funding for FY 08 is \$17,200,000, 19 counties partnership lost funds due to demographic comparison and 13 counties received additional funds to meet the minimum allocation of \$195,000. Mr. Jenkins recommended that the board approve the

Proposed FY 08 budget allocations based on the funding formula described for county partnership.

Representative Shirley Hinson asked Mr. Jenkins to select a county and explain why that county lost or gained funds. Mr. Jenkins guided the board through one example of how the formula impacted Aiken county. There are formula factors that may cause a county to gain or lose dollars. The factors are number of children 0-5, children eligible for free or reduced lunch, average per capita income and kids count data. Mr. Jenkins discussed the actual numbers of each one of these factors as they directly impacted Aiken county.

A motion was made by Senator Fair and seconded, to approve the Proposed FY 08 county budget allocations as recommended by the Strategic Planning and Administration Committee. The motion was approved.

Mr. Smoak welcomed newly elected State Superintendent, Dr. Jim Rex, South Carolina Department of Education, and congratulated him on his position. Dr. Rex thanked Mr. Smoak for the welcome and commented that the State Department of Education is looking forward to a renewed and refreshed partnership with SC First Steps. He stated that he understands the success of public schools will depend, in part, on what happens with children in their early years and in the future hopes to make strides working together.

#### **Program/Grants Committee**

In the absence of the Chair, Ms. Judith Aughtry reported that the the committee held a conference call on Thursday, January 11, 2007 and determined that all counties had met the required 15% legislative match with 15 counties exceeding 50% match. She reported that 44 of 46 counties spent more than 90% of state appropriated funds with 97% of total budget allocation being spent. Ms. Aughtry reported that 19 counties had exceeded the 8% administrative limit, the highest being Orangeburg at 14.8% and the lowest was Pickens at 3.45%. She reported that 10 counties exceeded 10%. Of the 19 projected to exceed, 14 actually did. There were 5 counties not projected to exceed that did and 3 that were projected to exceed and did not. She reported that the overall statewide administrative cost is 6.7%.

Based on recommendations from the Program/Grants Committee, Ms. Aughtry recommended the board waive the FY 07 legislative 8% administrative limitation for counties who will exceed the 8% cap at year-end based on actual expenditures and asked board members to refer to Attachment 4, included in the board packet which reflects each county's projected percentages.

Representative Shirley Hinson suggested the 8% cap was placed in the legislation to assure counties remain within the 8% administrative cost and by waiving the cap annually you set a standard that could increase the

budget. Mr. Russell Brown assured Representative Hinson that the Office of First Steps finance division would closely monitor county partnerships administrative budgets and any county exceeding the 8% limitation would be required to submit a letter of explanation signed by its board chair. After some discussion the board decided to review this recommendation at the March board meeting.

Ms. Aughtry reported that in October, 2006, the committee approved Hampton County First Steps' reallocation of \$455 to purchase books, in November, 2006, the committee approved Lee County First Steps reallocation of \$1,890., and Newberry County First Steps reallocation of \$5,720., and in December, 2006, the committee approved Beaufort (\$32.00), Calhoun (\$1,221.) and Chester (\$2,984.) County First Steps' partnership reallocation request to purchase supplies and additional curriculum materials.

The committee recommended board approval of Marlboro County First Steps reallocation request of \$17,000., to partner with Marlboro School District to offer a Family Resource Center/Lending Library to families with children birth to six, and Laurens County First Steps reallocation request of \$23,086 to implement a new summer program. Mr. Randall Johnson, Executive Director, Marlboro County First Steps partnership explained that the Marlboro County First Steps Family Resource Center/Lending Library will provide parents the opportunity to check out materials that will enhance the learning skills of their young children.

Ms. DeVenny informed the board that the reason funds were available in both Marlboro and Laurens County First Steps partnerships was due to additional funds made available to the SC Department of Education by the General Assemble for public 4K Expansion in the trial/plaintiff school districts. Because both counties are in the trial/plaintiff school districts the partnership had to reallocate money originally planned for full and half-day 4K programs.

Ms. Aughtry reported that four counties had received grants totaling over \$78,000.

1. Aiken county partnership received \$44,742 for resources and referral services from Interfaith Community Services of South Carolina, Inc.
2. Calhoun county partnership received \$5,400 from Edward B. Timmons Jr.'s Charitable Trust to register 100 "at-risk" preschoolers in the Dolly Parton imagination Library for two years.
3. Georgetown county partnership received \$4,000 from Verizon to help reach the Hispanic population.
4. Orangeburg county partnership received \$24,735 (in-kind books) from Book First, an organization whose mission is to provide disadvantaged children with new books.

Based on committee recommendations, Mr. Smoak asked for a vote on Marlboro and Laurens counties reallocation request. The board voted to approve the request.

### **Evaluation & Accountability Committee**

Ms. Lisa Van Riper, Chair, reported the committee has reviewed first quarter data and are in the process of developing a matrix for each strategy funded by SC First Steps. The matrix will identify the client, desired client outcomes, how outcomes can be measured, what outcome data is currently available, what data needs to be collected, etc. Ms. Van Riper reported that the committee is working closely with the Program/Grants Committee to assure programs being reviewed will meet the guidelines set forth in the matrix in order to collect appropriate data. Ms. Van Riper reported the deadline for second quarter program data is January 31, 2007, and counties have been informed that if data is not received by the deadline, funds will be withheld until data is submitted.

Ms. Van Riper requested board approval for the committee's recommendation that SC First Steps state office will send Executive Director's and Board Chairs notification of programs that are delinquent with data submission and any other issues related to the Executive Director's responsibilities that the SC First Steps State Director deems appropriate. In addition Board Chairs should be notified that funding may be withheld from vendors until data issues are resolved. Representative Shirley Hinson made a motion to approve committee recommendations, motion unanimously approved.

In addition, Ms. Van Riper reported that the committee received updates on data planning for program evaluation, population evaluation and results based evaluation as well as a report on the National Governor's Association support of gubernatorial leadership grants.

### **Governor's Summit Ad Hoc Committee**

Ms. Van Riper, Chair, reported that SC First Steps convened the Governor's Summit on Early Childhood on Monday, January 8, 2007, as requested by the Governor's Office. The Summit was the result of one of two grants provided to South Carolina by the National Governor's Association (NGA), with emphasis on early childhood and South Carolina was the only state in the nation to have received both grants. Ms. Van Riper thanked Ms. Charmeka Bosket, SC Governor's Office, Ms. Cindy Sweigart, SC DHEC/ECCS, and members of the SC Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems grant partners for working together to produce South Carolina's "Ready State" Report Card. Everyone was urged to review the Report Card and the Preliminary Report of the South Carolina Task Force on Early Childhood Quality Standards, included in the board packets.

On behalf of the board and the children of South Carolina, Mr. Smoak thanked Ms. Van Riper and others for their commitment and hard-work on the Task Force.

Dr. Baron Holmes presented an in-depth overview of the “State of the Children in South Carolina”. His presentation addressed how many children are at-risk, who they are, why are they at risk, and what should be done to prevent their failures.

Senator Michael Fair initiated a discussion regarding if data collected to date suggests the focus should be on 0-3, as opposed to expanding opportunities for 4-year-olds statewide which seems to be the direction the General Assembly is looking towards.

### **Director’s Report**

Ms. Susan DeVenny, thanked Dr. Holmes and reported that the creation of SC First Steps was about 0-5 public/private partnerships and finding the most at-risk children. Ms. DeVenny thanked SC First Steps County Partnerships, the Office of Research and Statistics and staff for their hard work in producing the SC First Steps 2006 Annual report, included in the board packets. She also thanked Mr. Tim Ervolina, President/CEO, United Way Association of SC, and co-chair of the Quality Standards Task Force, for his commitment and dedication in helping to produce the Preliminary Report from the Quality Standards Task Force, also included in the board packets, and asked that everyone review the two documents.

She reported that the Task Force is in the process of convening a sub-committee to finish the work started by the Task Force and identify some additional quality benchmarks.

Ms. DeVenny reported that SC First Steps had their first Ways and Means hearing this week and had previously provided the Governor with a three year budget request as he recommended. In the Roadmap to Readiness, SC First Steps asked for significant advances in funding. Ms. DeVenny reported that SC First Steps asked for \$59,000,000, this year, which takes into account the approximately \$20 million of recurring fund and asked for an increase for the Centers of Excellence and 4K Expansion program, but not the exclusion of the 0-3 programming. She reported it has been a privilege to begin work with newly elected State Superintendent of Education, Dr. Jim Rex. Ms. DeVenny reported significant activity would be coming from the Evaluation & Accountability Committee in the future.

Ms. DeVenny reminded the board not miss the deadline of April 15, 2007, to complete and return the SC State Ethics Commission’s Statement of Economic Interest.

### **Operations and Accountability**

Mr. Rodney Jenkins, Chief Financial Officer, directed the board’s attention to the Budget Summary and Monthly Financial Statement FY 06-07, and reported that SC First Steps remains within budget. He reported that several items exceed the budgeted amounts and

explained that this was the result of supplemental funding allocated for Centers of Excellence and 4K Expansion having been received recently. He reported that the funds are in our accounts at this time and that the budget will be reconciled to correct this.

Mr. Jenkins reported that SC First Steps has expended carry-forward of lottery and EIA funds. Mr. Jenkins reported that SC First Steps would have a large portion of the 4K Expansion allocations remaining.

Due to the timeline and the decision to hold board meetings every other month, Mr. Smoak recommended that SC First Steps board delegate to the SC First Steps Early Childhood Education Program Committee, the authority to approve funding for the Centers of Excellence. He explained that applications for the Centers of Excellence are due in the state office on Monday, January 22, 2007, with funding to begin the first part of February, 2007. The board then voted to approve the authority for the Early Childhood Education Program Committee to approve funding for the Centers of Excellence as recommended.

### **Adjournment**

Mr. Smoak reminded the board of the next board meeting on March 15, 2007, at the Department of Mental Health. Since the board decided to hold meetings every other month, Mr. Smoak urged board members to make an extra effort to attend all board meetings and suggested that meetings could last longer or begin earlier due to having only 7 meetings per year. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.