



Board of Trustees Meeting
December 6, 2023 2:00PM
SC First Steps
636 Rosewood Drive Columbia, SC 29201
Minutes

Trustees Present (14):

Jacque Curtin
Mary Lynne Diggs
John Hayes
Sen. Greg Hembree
Constance Holloway
Robert Kerr
Michael Leach
Dave Morley, Chairman
Janie Neeley

Roger Pryor
Mary Anne Scott
Dr. Edward Simmer
Wes Wooten
Sue Williams

Trustees Absent (9)

Rep. Terry Alexander
Dr. Robert Bank
Rep. Shannon Erickson
Matthew Ferguson
Jessica Mackey
Sen. Gerald Malloy
Jack McBride
Dr. Amy Williams
Dr. Brenda Williams

Attendees (69)

Georgia Mjartan
Avian Jones
Aleigha Butler
Amanda Bailey
Amy Engle
Brandie Maness
Bresheca Funches
Carletta Isreal
Chastine Dickey-Jackson
Cheryl Scales
Cindy Ellis
Cindy Galloway
Donna Mason
Dwana Doctor
Felicia Battle
Felicia Davis
Gina Beebe
Grace Avin
Jabari Clyburn
Jennifer Williams
Jessica Moore
Jon Artz
Julie Greer
Kathy Fitzgerald
Kathy Miller
Kelly Cochran

Kenya Johnson
Kristen Martocchio
Kristin Zeaser-Sydow
Laura Baker
Leah Crosby
Lee Patterson
Lexi Jones
Linnie Miller
Lis Guimaraes
Meredith Dickens
Parry Wright Little
Pauletta Plowden
Rebecca Clark
Roddrick Dugger
Ryan Shinn
Samantha Ingram
Sarah Crawford
SheKiah Reese
Silvia Landrum
Stacy Greenwalt
Tiffany Outlaw
Tyshica McConner
Beth Moore
Chelsea Richard
Kaitlyn Richards
Mark Barnes

Derek Cromwell
Martha Strickland
Meghan Dyson
Kristine Jenkins
Kerry Cordan
Kenna Hoover
Kim Trudell
Joy Mazur
Dorian Young
Shayla Pettigrew
David Lisk
Dorothy Priester
Elizabeth Dudek
Shelley Canright
Myrelo King
Tomeiko Wright
Jovanna Lewis



The meeting began with a presentation of the recipients of 4K Expansion Grant awards, presented by Ms. Strickland. Mr. Morley called the meeting to order at 2:12 p.m. He requested a motion to adopt the agenda. Ms. Curtin provided the motion, seconded by Mr. Hayes, and the motion was unanimously approved.

Mr. Morley asked for a motion to approve the October 19, 2023 minutes. Dr. Simmer provided the motion, seconded by Ms. Neeley, and the motion was unanimously approved.

Mr. Morley shared that the Executive Committee did not meet due to how closely they were scheduled to the December meeting. He asked for a motion to approve the 2024 SC First Steps Board of Trustees and Early Childhood Advisory Council meeting dates. Ms. Curtin provided the motion, seconded by Ms. Scott, and the motion was unanimously approved.

A public official ethics training was provided to the board by Meghan Walker Dayson, Executive Director of the South Carolina State Ethics Commission.

Mr. Morley asked for a motion to approve the following consent agenda with the amendments. Sen. Hembree provided the motion. Dr. Simmer provided a second and the motion was unanimously approved.

Consent Agenda: Motions Recommended by Committees (Dave Morley)

- a. **Motion:** To approve the award of Resources for Early Acceleration and Development in Youth (READY) Carolina Collaborative for Early Childhood Innovation grants to ~~four (4)~~ three (3) Local Partnerships as selected by the SCFS State Office external review Committee, Lee County, Pickens County, ~~Richland County~~, and York County (Local Partnership Programs and Grants Committee recommends)

Dr. Richard reported on the Strategic Planning and Evaluation Committee where she provided updates on First Steps 4K ESSER funded pilots for teacher recruitment and retention stipends, and for language and literacy boost.

Mr. Wooten reported on the Local Partnership Programs and Grants Committee. He shared that out of ten counties that were invited to apply for the Carolina Collaborative for Early Childhood Innovation grant, four submitted applications, and three counties (Lee, Pickens, York) were awarded grants.

Mr. Barnes reported on the Finance and Administration Committee. The agency is in good financial condition with a budget that exceeds \$79 million. He shared that one SLED investigation is closed without any findings while the other investigation remains ongoing. He provided an update on the PEBA benefits process for the local partnerships. He also provided an update on the investigation regarding fraudulent ACH forms that were tied to a specific 4K provider in the amount of \$15,000 and the steps that have been put in place to protect the 4K accounts.

Sen. Hembree provided a legislative update.

Ms. Mjartan and Ms. Tomeiko Wright, Lancaster County First Steps Executive Director, recognized LaTonya Boyd, Chester County First Steps Executive Director, who passed away unexpectedly. Ms.



Mjartan welcomed local partnerships executive directors Tomeiko Wright and Jovanna Lewis, Calhoun County First Steps.

Mr. Morley acknowledged trustees who have left the board this year. The trustees were Nicole Wynkoop effective January 31, 2023, Jennifer McConnell effective February 21, 2023, Alexia Newman effective June 14, 2023, Tim Holt effective June 21, 2023, and Dr. Shelley Canright effective August 9, 2023.

Ms. Mjartan gave the Executive Director's report where she provided data on First Steps 4K Day 45, Countdown to Kindergarten, and fundraising progress. Director Mjartan shared information about MLK Week of Service. Ms. Mjartan gave an update on Act 81 Implementation and the First Steps Transfer Plan. She introduced new staff members, shared staffing changes, and the agency's current vacancies. Ms. Mjartan provided an overview of the 2022-2023 Annual Report. Ms. Mjartan, Mr. Leach, and Dr. Simmer announced a partnership between SC First Steps, DSS, and DHEC, to bridge the gap in funding to continue the Healthy Steps evidence-based program for an additional two years after federal grant funds end in 2024.

Mr. Morley asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Sue Williams provided the motion. Sen. Hembree seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:28 p.m. by Mr. Morley.