



Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

Thursday, June 19, 2025, 2:00PM, Virtual

Council Members Present (15): David Morley (Chairman), Tony Catone, Jacque Curtin, Mary Lynne Diggs, Sen. Jason Elliott, John Hayes, Sen. Greg Hembree, Roger Pryor, Mary Anne Scott, Dr. Ed Simmer, Dr. Amy Williams (Vice Chair), Sue Williams, Wes Wooten

Council Members Absent (9): Rep. Terry Alexander, Dr. Robert Bank, Shannon Erickson, Dr. Matthew Ferguson, Constance Holloway, Jesica Mackey, Jack McBride, Eunice Medina, Janie Neeley

Others Present (70): Ann Vandervliet, Alexis D. Pipkins, Amber Gillum, Amira Hulwe, Amy Breault, Betty Gardiner, Betty Washington, Candi Lalonde, Caroline Goins, Carrie Turner, Charshina McMillian, Chelsea Adamson, Cindy Galloway, Darnell Byrd McPherson, David Lisk, David O'Kelly, Derrek Cromwell, Dorothy Priester, Kristen Martocchio, Dwana Doctor, Elmiere Raven, Emily Prillaman, Emma Matzko, Felicia C. Patrick, Hannah Espeleta, Ivory Mitchell, Jade Wright, Jaiden Branch, Jenny May, Joy Mazur, Julia A. Nelson, Julia Nelson, Karen Oliver, Kate Roach, Kathy Jenkins, Kaylee Osbon, Kenna Hoover, Kerry Cordan, Kim Trudell, Kristine Jenkins, LaMyra Sanders-Dukes, Laura Baker, Lekecia Clemons, Linda Gabriel Doherty, Loreal Nelms-Howard, LaMyra Sanders, Melanie Barton, Melissa Johnson, Melissa Roper, Molly Tuck, Naya Hall, Paige Wall, Pauletta Plowden, Peyton Mosher, Rachal Hatton-Moore, Sally McClellan, Samantha Ingram, Santasha Highley, Sarah Eargle, Shante Burton, Shayla Pettigrew, Stacy Greenwalt, Sue Graham, Tanesha Sullivan, Tamatha Kohler, Tekethia Burrell, Tomeiko, Victoria Belin, Wanda Gonzalez, Winzai Amadi

The meeting was called to order with a quorum present at 2:04 p.m.

A motion was made accept meeting agenda by Mr. Catone, seconded by Mr. Wooten. All voted in favor.

Chairman Morley acknowledge that the Juneteenth holiday. He thanked Matthew Ferguson for his service to the board and Superintendent Ellen Weaver who will now represent the Department of Education.

A motion was made to adopt the consent agenda by Sen. Elliott, seconded by Dr. Simmer. All voted in favor.

Chairman Morley gave a brief update from the Executive Committee. A framework was laid for the annual review process for county executive directors' compensation. Mary Lynne Diggs asked that local boards be shown where executive director salaries are drawn on their budgets.

Mr. Pryor shared an update from the Local Partnership Programs and Grants Committee. He gave additional context for the Formula, READY, and Innovation grant awards and the new streamlined application process. Ann Vandervliet noted that there are additional Innovation funds to be distributed. Local Partnership Director Derek Cromwell shared information on new HIPPY

guideline revisions, and Mr. Pryor shared that steps were taken to avert a Conflict-of-Interest situation for the Saluda County First Steps.

Vice Chair Dr. Amy Williams gave an overview the proposed SC First Steps 2025-2030 Strategic Plan. Ms. Vandervliet provided some clarity regarding how Class would be implemented and measured in 4K centers. Dr. Williams called for a motion to approve the SC First Steps 2025-2030 Strategic Plan as submitted. A motion was made by Mr. Pryor, seconded by Mr. Hayes. All voted in favor.

Chief of Finance David O'Kelly shared a financial update for the agency reporting that as of May 31, the agency has spent 96 percent of its \$75 million budget to end the year in approximately the same cash position as last year. The General Assembly has increase FY 26-27 budget to \$80 million to support the implementation of proactive school readiness strategies. A new financial management system is being procured and put in place next week, the agency is preparing for an audit, and a copy of the agency's Fiscal 2024 Form 990 has been submitted.

Senator Hembree shared in the Legislative update that the budget has passed for FY25-26 with First Steps to receive more than \$5.7 million in new state funds.

Ms. Vandervliet gave updates on an increase in First Steps 4K providers and application approval numbers. She acknowledged the participation of 4K providers and early childhood agency partners in Class observation training indicating a healthy early childhood system. She shared that First Steps, the Department of Education, and Education Oversight Committee met to discuss implementing the General Assembly's proviso to share wait lists. In June, local partnership boards and executive directors travelled to Columbia to take part in a training to help in their processes. Ms. Vandervliet shared the counties receiving Innovation grants and how each would be using their funds. She named the organizations who have signed agreements to participate in the Palmetto Drive to Five slated to roll out in September. She introduced new staff and share organizational updates.

Dr. Williams made a motion to adjourn the meeting of the SC First Steps Board of Trustees, seconded by Ms. Weaver. All voted in favor.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:12 p.m.