



Meeting of the Board of Trustees

April 17, 2025 2:00PM

SC ETV

1041 George Rogers Blvd. Columbia, SC 29201

AGENDA

- I. **Roll Call** (Avian Jones)
- II. **Public Comment Period**
The public is invited to provide comments relevant to the SC Early Childhood Advisory Council and/or South Carolina First Steps during this period. Members of the public wishing to speak must sign up before the meeting. Comments should be limited to no more than three minutes per speaker.
- III. **Call to Order and Approve Agenda** (Dave Morley)
Motion: To adopt the agenda as submitted
Motion: To adopt February 20, 2025 minutes as submitted
Attachments: SC First Steps Board of Trustees February 20, 2025 Minutes
- IV. **Executive Committee** (Dave Morley)
Attachments: Executive Committee Minutes
- V. **Consent Agenda** (Dave Morley)
 - a. **Motion:** Select Child Care Quality Enhancement (FY21-22 through FY24-25) as the subject of the next local partnership prevalent program evaluation (due November 1, 2026) (Strategic Planning and Evaluation Committee recommends)
 - b. **Motion:** Approval of carpet replacement request (Finance and Administration Committee recommends)
 - c. **Motion:** Approval to recover the amount greater than 15% (63,057) of their unspent Formula Funding for FY2024 from Aiken County First Steps (Finance and Administration Committee recommends)
- VI. **Local Partnership Program and Grants Committee** (Wes Wooten)
Attachments: Local Partnership Program and Grants Committee Minutes
- VII. **Strategic Planning and Evaluation Committee** (Dr. Amy Williams)
Attachments: Strategic Planning and Evaluation Committee Minutes
- VIII. **Finance and Administration Committee** (Jesica Mackey)
Attachments: Finance and Administration Committee Meeting Minutes
- IX. **Legislative Committee** (Sen. Greg Hembree)
Attachments: Legislative Report
- X. **State Funded Full-Day 4K Annual Report 2023-24 & 2024-25** (Jenny May, Ph.D., Director of Qualitative Research and Stakeholder Engagement, SC Education Oversight Committee)



- XI. **Executive Director's Report** (Ann Vandervliet)
Attachments: Executive Director's Report
- XII. **Strategic Planning for 2025 - 2030**
- XIII. **Motion:** To adjourn the meeting of the SC First Steps Board of Trustees



Board of Trustees Meeting
February 20, 2025 2:00PM
SC First Steps
636 Rosewood Drive Columbia, SC 29201
Minutes

Trustees Present (12):

Tony Catone
Jacque Curtin
Mary Lynne Diggs
John Hayes
Sen. Greg Hembree
Jessica Mackey
Dave Morley, Chairman
Roger Pryor
Mary Anne Scott

Dr. Ed Simmer
Wes Wooten
Dr. Amy Williams, Vice Chair

Trustees Absent (9)

Rep. Terry Alexander
Dr. Robert Bank
Rep. Shannon Erickson
Dr. Matthew Ferguson
Constance Holloway
Jack McBride
Eunice Medina
Janie Neeley
Sue Williams

Attendees (74)

Ann Vandervliet
Mark Barnes
Avian Jones
Chelsea Richard
Derek Cromwell
Martha Strickland
Karen Oliver
Kaitlyn Richards
Beth Moore
Betty Gardiner
David O'Kelly
Amber Gillum
Molly Tuck
David Lisk
Tammy Graham
Van-Kim Lin
Amira Hulwe
Anna Gray
Annie Maertens
Brenda Faulk
Carrie Trivedi
Cindy Galloway
Charshina McMillian
Crystal Campbell
Dorothy Priester
Emma Matzko

Gene Brunson
Gina Beebe
Hannah Espeleta
Jade Wright
Jaiden Branch
Jessica Fluker
Jon Artz
Julie Londergan
Kathy Fitzgerald
Kathy Jenkins
Kristine Jenkins
Kate Roach
Kenna Hoover
Kerry Cordan
Kim Trudell
Kristen Martocchio
Kristi Richardson
LaKisha Bowman
LaMyra Sanders
Laura Baker
Leah Crosby
Lexi Jones
Linda Doherty
Lyle Jacks
Madison Farley
Naya Hall

Rachal Hatton-Moore
Rachel Johnson
Reginald Williams
Sally McClellan
Samantha Ingram
Sharon McCuen
Shayla Pettigrew
SheKiah Reese
Spence Scott
Stacy Greenwalt
Stephen Gilchrist
Stephen Hickey
Susan Jones
Tamatha Kohler
Taylor Kane Tate
Teneshia Slempla
Tricia Gordon
Tyshica McConner
Valencia Primas
Valerie Berry
Vaudrien Ray
Virginia Burrows



Chairman Morley called the meeting to order at 2:10 p.m.

Mr. Morley requested a motion to adopt the agenda. Mr. Pryor provided the motion, seconded by Mr. Wooten and the motion was unanimously approved.

Mr. Morley asked for a motion to approve the December 4, 2024 minutes. Mr. Wooten provided the motion, seconded by Mr. Pryor, and the motion was unanimously approved.

Mr. Morley reported on the Executive Committee where he discussed the compensation process for Local Partnership Executive Directors including the committee's recent actions on approving and denying salary and bonus requests. These actions were taken on behalf of the full board due to their time sensitivity.

Mr. Morley welcome Tony Catone to the board. Mr. Catone is the Acting Director at DSS.

Mr. Morley asked for a motion to approve the SC First Steps Board of Trustees and ECAC meeting calendar. Dr. Williams provided the motion, seconded by Mr. Wooten, and the motion was unanimously approved.

Ms. Mackey motioned to approve the consent agenda, seconded by Dr. Williams, and the motion was unanimously approved.

Mr. Wooten reported on the Local Partnership Programs and Grants Committee where he shared the committee were reviewing edits and updates to the Program and Operational Guidelines. He and Mr. Cromwell shared that some of the updates are as a result of new data from the recent evaluation of the local partnerships by Child Trends.

Dr. Williams reported on the Strategic Planning and Evaluation Committee and their review of the Child Trends evaluation of the local partnerships for FY2019-2023. Van-Kim Lin, Child Trends Senior Research Scientist, presented the results of the evaluation.

Ms. Mackey reported on the Finance and Administration Committee where they discussed the updated allocation model. Dr. Williams motioned to approve the formula allocation model for FY2025-26 that fully balances accounts over a three-year period. The motion was seconded by Mr. Wooten and unanimously approved. Ms. Mackey and Mr. Barnes briefly discussed the ongoing SLED investigation into a local partnership.

Ms. Richards provided a legislative report. There was discussion around the organization's budget request, the request for innovation funding, and child care tax credits. There was also a brief discussion about a proposed Head Start bill that directed First Steps produce a plan to make progress over 5 years to make Head Start and Early Head Start universal to all eligible families in South Carolina. First Steps was not involved in the creation of the proposed bill and reached out to the sponsors of the bill for more details.

Ms. Vandervliet provided the Executive Director's report, sharing information on Act 81 implementation, local partnerships, and 4K data. She also provided updates on resource development, 2025-2026 funding outlook, A Night to Celebrate Community fundraiser being held on May 1st, and agency staffing changes. Ms. Vandervliet discussed the goal and planning for the 2025 – 2030 Strategic Plan, inviting



the board to participate in a discussion with the Strategic Planning and Evaluation Committee on March 26th.

Ms. Mackey made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Pryor, and the motion was unanimously approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:46 p.m. by Mr. Morley.



Executive Committee Meeting Minutes
March 10, 2025

Members Present: David Morley, Dr. Amy Williams, and Wes Wooten

Members Absent: Jessica Mackey

Staff Present: Ann Vandervliet, Mark Barnes, Derek Cromwell, Avian Jones

Meeting was called to order at 8:35 a.m.

Rachel Fulmer made public comments to the committee.

Wes Wooten made the following motion to go into executive session to discuss local partnership personnel items which was seconded by Amy Williams and was passed.

Motion: To enter executive session for the purpose of personnel matters: Richland County First Steps executive director hiring and compensation.

With no action taken in session, the following motion was made by Amy Williams, seconded by Wes Wooten, and passed:

Motion to exit executive session.

There was discussion of the proposed actions included on the agenda, which resulted in the following motion from Amy Williams, seconded by Wes Wooten, and approved.

Motion to approve the proposed Richland County First Step executive director candidate and salary, as submitted by the local partnership board, and to take this action on behalf of the Board of Trustees of South Carolina First Steps due to the urgency of the matter.

Amy Williams made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Wes Wooten and passed.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:58 a.m.



Executive Committee Meeting Minutes
March 21, 2025

Members Present: David Morley, Jesica Mackey, Amy Williams and Wes Wooten

Staff Present: Ann Vandervliet

Meeting was called to order at 11 am.

David Morley asked for a motion to add the Executive Session to the agenda. Amy Williams made the following motion that was seconded by Wes Wooten. Motion passed.

Motion: To add Executive Session to the meeting agenda for a personnel matter.

Agency Director, Ann Vandervliet, gave updates and asked for feedback on the following items: budget requests to the SC General Assembly, 2025-203 strategic plan, and 2025 Early Childhood Summit.

Wes Wooten made the following motion to go into executive session to discuss a personnel item that was seconded by Amy Williams and was passed.

Motion: To enter executive session for the purpose of personnel matters: Agency Director initial review.

With no action taken in session, the following motion was made by Jesica Mackey, seconded by Amy Williams, and passed:

Motion to exit executive session.

Amy Williams made a motion to end the meeting which was seconded by Jesica Mackey. Motion passed. Meeting was adjourned at 12:10 PM.



Local Partnership Program and Grants Committee

Thursday March 20, 2025

1:00 pm – 3:00 pm

In person – Spartanburg

Minutes

Committee in attendance: Wes Wooten, Jack McBride, Roger Pryor, John Hayes

SC First Steps Staff: Derek Cromwell, Ann Vandervliet, Gina Beebe, Jon Artz, Kerry Cordan, LaMyra Dukes, Janice Kilburn, Jade Wright, Jessica Fluker, Tyshica Mc Conner, Kathy Fitzgerald, and Taylor Tate

Open/ Welcome: Wes Wooten opened meeting at 1:02

1. Local Partnership Updates- Derek and Team
 - Derek Cromwell gave quick explanation of today's agenda. Also informed the committee members that there would be no action items today.
 - Ann spoke on the vision and the direction local partnership are moving towards, particularly with the FY25 Grant Application.
2. Comprehensive Grant Application- Derek and Kerry
 - Kerry Cordon facilitated a walkthrough of the Comprehensive Grant Application
 - Derek and Ann explained the philosophy and vision of the new application process.
 - Kerry did a step by step walk through of the application.
 - Derek walked through the timeline of the application process from partnership submission to award.
3. Local Partnership Leadership Convening- Derek
 - "Collaborating to Lead- Creating Brighter Futures"
 - June 4th & 5th
4. Learning Management System- Jon Artz
 - The floor was turned over to Jon Artz who gave a walkthrough of the Learning Management system also known as LMS Jon show how this tool will help support and keep a continuum of training and learning for our partnerships and their boards. A suggestion was given to stay on top of the system, so it doesn't become overwhelming out of date and to keep the sessions to 15 – 20 min.
5. KITS Update
 - Derek Cromwell went over the KITS implementation timeline and when KITS will go live.
6. Board of Trustee Meeting Schedule change
 - The BOT has changed its schedule to 4 meetings per year. Derek explained the effects it has on the LP team timeline.



- It was determined that the state staff will discuss and come back to the committee with a recommendation.
7. Next Meeting discussion location and time.
- Tuesday, June 10th- virtual. Invites have been sent.
8. Meeting Adjourn – Wes Wooten
- Chairman Wes Wooten call to adjourn the meeting at 2:40 p.m.
Jack McBride Motion
Roger Pryor Second the motion
All voted yes



Strategic Planning and Evaluation Committee

MEETING MINUTES

The committee met on Wednesday, March 26, 2025 via Zoom. The meeting was called to order at 11:01 AM. Committee members present were Dr. Amy Williams and Dave Morley. Other board members present were Wes Wooten and Jack McBride. First Steps staff present were: Ann Vandervliet, Chelsea Richard, Betty Gardiner, and Kaitlyn Richards.

ACTION TAKEN: Select Child Care Quality Enhancement (FY21-22 through FY24-25) as the subject of the next local partnership prevalent program evaluation (due November 1, 2026)
First: Amy Williams; Second: Dave Morley; Motion passed unanimously

Most of the meeting was spent discussing the initial framing of the 2025-2030 agency strategic plan. Chelsea Richard, Chief of Staff, opened the discussion with a data-driven picture of the current state of South Carolina's young children and progress on First Steps' current five-year strategic plan. Then, Chelsea and Ann Vandervliet, Executive Director, introduced the initial framing of the 2025-2030 strategic plan, which includes:

OVERALL GOAL: At least 75% of SC's children entering kindergarten achieve "demonstrating readiness" on the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment

THREE CORE STRATEGIES

1. Ensure at least 75% children in 4K classrooms in private settings achieve "demonstrating readiness" on SC's kindergarten readiness assessment (currently KRA).
2. Increase capacity for the implementation of evidence-based, high intensity programs administered by First Steps local partnerships to increase number of children served by programs with highest impact over the longest period of time.
3. Increase partnerships with other agencies funded to support young children and families to create a more aligned continuum of support for vulnerable families.

Discussion was had related to potential tactics to put under each of the three core strategies. The meeting adjourned at 12:35 PM.



Minutes from Finance and Administration Committee Meeting

April 9, 2025

Members present: Jessica Mackey, Chairman, Jacque Curtin, CPA, David Morley:

Members not present: None

Nonmembers present: Mark Barnes, Director of Administration; Ann Vandervliet, Executive Director, David O'Kelly CFO; Robin Ebert, Local Partnership Finance Director

With all public notices being provided, and a quorum being present, the Zoom meeting was called to order by Jessica Mackey at 10:05 am.

Introductions and Welcome: Jessica Mackey welcomed everyone

Approval of Capital Improvement Item: Calhoun County First Steps

Required Action Item: Approval of Carpet Replacement Request

Mr. Barnes presented a request from Calhoun County First Steps for a capital expense to replace the carpet in their leased space. Mr. Barnes mentioned that per state statute, any capital items or permanent improvement items expended by the local First Steps Partnership must be approved by the First Steps Board of Trustees. The committee reviewed the request and the following motion was made by Dave Morley: **To approve Calhoun County First Steps request for capital expense to replace their carpet.** The motion was seconded by Jacque Curtin and approved.

Approval of Recovery of greater than 15% Cash Carryforward for FY 2024: Aiken County First Steps

Required Action Item: Approval to recover the amount greater than 15% (\$63,057) of their unspent Formula Funding for FY 2024 from Aiken County First Steps

Mr. Barnes gave an update on progress of the corrective action plan for Aiken County First Steps. Robin Ebert mentioned the meetings she has been attending between the state office staff and Aiken County First Steps. They mentioned that Aiken County First Steps has been in violation of the carry forward limit of 15% for more than 4 years. They also mentioned that the projection for FY 2025 looks like they will lapse back amounts in excess of 15% as well. There was general discussion as to why every other local partnership has been able to manage their expenses and services, but Aiken has not. During the discussion, the following motion was made by Dave Morley: **To recover \$63,057 in state formula funding from Aiken County First Steps due to violation of spending requirements.** The motion was seconded by Jacque Curtin and was passed.

After additional discussion, Dave Morley motioned: **To direct to SC First Steps agency director to meet and review expectations with Aiken County First Steps Board resulting in written recommendations from First Steps agency director.** The motion was seconded by Jacque Curtin and was passed.

State Office Staff Updates

Financial Report: Mr. Barnes reviewed the monthly financial reports. The agency is in good financial condition. This discussion also included the amount spent to date and he reviewed the donations to date for this year. After the report there was general discussion about how the reports might show more of a connection to the service provided during the period. Staff will review and come back with more information.

State Budget Update: SC First Steps received several items from the House approved budget and included two additional items, funds for the recruitment and retention of staff and \$1.25 million in one time funds for Innovation Grants. The Senate is working on theirs currently after a presentation by First Steps staff. (Late update, the Senate Finance Committee approved the House items and added an additional \$1.25 million in one-time funds for Innovation Grants.)

Local Partnership Update:

Blackbaud Issues: We continue to have significant concerns about the performance of the Blackbaud Financial Management System. The RFP that was in process was canceled as performance has not improved. The agency is now working to complete an emergency procurement to obtain a system that will provide for the needs of all of the local partnerships, Manley Garvin, and the state office.

SLED Investigation: As mentioned in the previous Committee Meeting, early last calendar year, during our routine monitoring, we became aware of some unusual expenses in credit card expenses in one of our Local Partnerships. Upon further investigation, we became very concerned about proper credit card use and notified SLED of our concerns. Based on that request, they started an investigation, which we expect to be completed soon, and any appropriate action may be taken by law enforcement.

ESSER Audits: The state office staff has been conducting an internal audit of 100% of ESSER expenses over the last year and ½ of the grant. This was due to the upcoming requirement of a single audit of SC First Steps which will start in the next few weeks. The ESSER funds were granted from the State Department of Education to SC First Steps and the Local Partnerships. These are highly restrictive funds and training, and guidance were provided to the local partnerships related to approved uses. During the audit we have identified a number of unallowable expenses for several of the Local Partnerships. We have notified those that have issues and will be recovering any funds necessary that are due to the agency.

4K Program Update: As of the beginning of the year, the program had enrolled a record number of participants for the new year with an increase of about 8% on day 135. We also have a record number of participating childcare centers.

With no further business to discuss for the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 10:58 am.



March 13, 2025

To: SC First Steps Finance and Administration Committee

Subject: Approval for carpet replacement for Calhoun County First Steps Office

Dear Members of the SC First Steps Finance and Administration Committee,

I am writing to request approval to replace the office carpet. The current carpet is over eight years old and has sustained significant wear and tear.

The deterioration of the carpet is not only impacting the overall aesthetic of the office but also presents potential safety hazards due to fraying and discoloration. Additionally, the age of the carpet may be contributing to poor indoor air quality due to the accumulation of allergens and dust.

Replacing the carpet would significantly enhance the office environment, create a more professional appearance for clients, and promote a healthier workspace for employees.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "JaVonna Lewis".

JaVonna Lewis
Executive Director

DIRECT CARPETS

56631

328 John C. Calhoun Drive • Orangeburg, South Carolina 29115

536-5260

NAME Calhoun County 1st step DATE: 2-27-25

ADDRESS _____ SALESMAN: _____
Contact Lavonna Lewis ZIP: 803-378-6236

HOME PHONE _____ BUS. PHONE Call - David - 803-596-1484

ROLL #	BIN #	DESCRIPTION	UNIT	TOTAL
		Engineered Flooring		
		Penta Com. Floor		
		UP LINK 26"		
		3/8" steel Blue		
		12 x 12 7/8 170 yds	14.99	2548.30
		2 Boxes Block Base 4 inch		240.00
		CPT Blue + Cool glue		300.00
		CPT 10 year wear rated not same as RAOCHINS		
		2 year LABOR WARRANTY		
		MUST BE PAID IN full BEFORE ORDERING		

CALL ANY TIME

- WE ARE NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR CUSTOMER'S MEASUREMENTS.
- NO CARPET HELD OVER 30 DAYS.
- NO REFUNDS ON LAYAWAYS.
- NO CARPET WITHOUT 25% DEPOSIT.
- LAYAWAYS MUST BE PAID ON A MONTHLY BASIS.
- WE CHARGE EXTRA FOR TERRAZZO, TAKE UP, STEPS, BATHROOMS, FLOOR PREPARATION, AND MOVING APPLIANCES, POOL TABLES, ETC.
- WE DO NOT CUT DOORS.
- NO REFUNDS ON SPECIAL ORDERS OR ANY ORDER AFTER 72 HOURS.

PAD	type	yds@
INSTALLATION		
CARPET	yds.	@\$
VINYL	yds.	@\$
STEPS		@\$
TAKE UP	yds.	@\$
POOL TABLES \$	PIANOS \$	

Direct Carpets does not undertake the shortening of doors, removal of moldings, adjustment of thresholds, moving or connection of appliances, or any other trade skill or craft not mentioned in this contract. I hereby acknowledge receipt of the copy of this contract and acknowledge that I have read and understand the terms of the above. In the event this account is placed in the hands of an attorney for collection, the undersigned agrees to pay all costs of collection including a reasonable attorney fee. **BILL MUST BE PAID WITHIN 30 DAYS OR ADD 5%.**

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS:	APPROXIMATE FIGURE HERE	TOTAL INSTALLATION	2990.00
		C/C Total Sale	3088.30
		P/U LWAY 7% Tax	216.18
		INST CHG Total	6294.48
		CASH CK Deposit	
		Balance	

6294.48

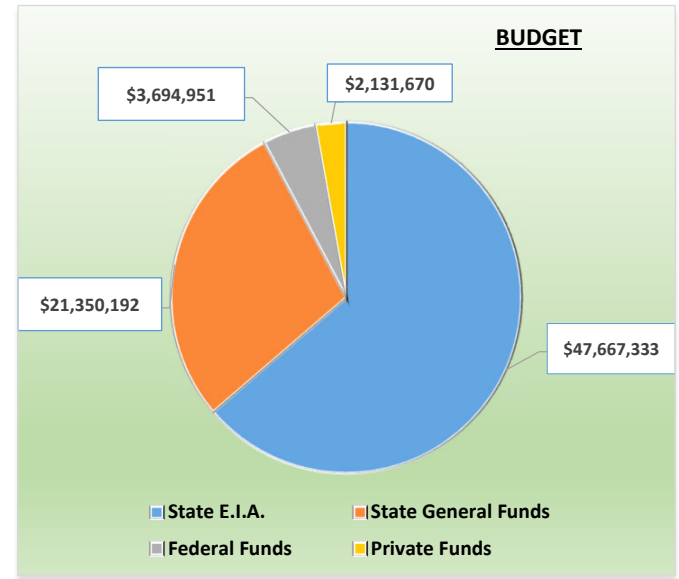
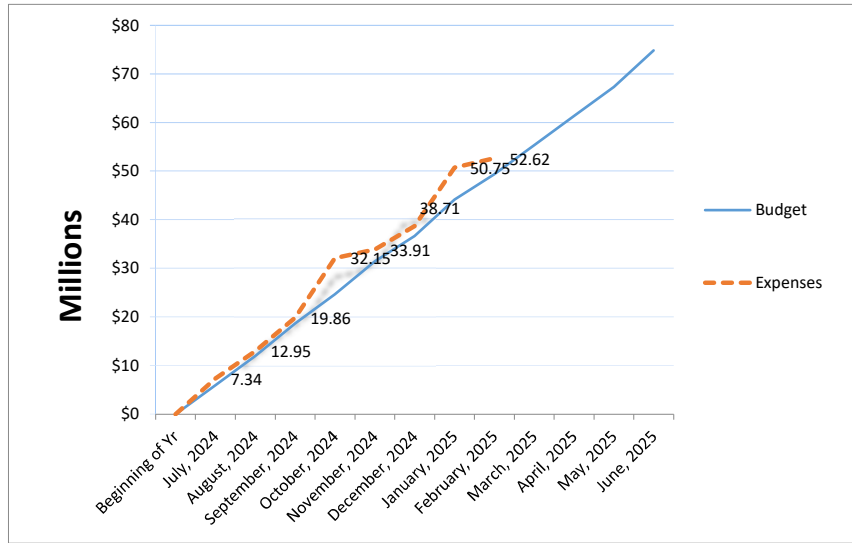
Accepted By _____



FY 2025

**As of
February 28, 2025**

Spending Rates	
Projected	67%
Actual	70%



PROGRAMS / OPERATIONS Description	STATE APPROPRIATIONS			FEDERAL GRANTS			PRIVATE FUNDS			GRAND TOTAL		
	Budget	Expended	Balance	Budget	Expended	Balance	Budget	Expended	Balance	Budget	Expended	Balance
LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS	25,064,629	19,335,276	5,729,352	1,207,416	1,077,004	\$ 130,411	629,435	530,954	98,481	26,901,479	20,943,235	\$ 5,958,244
PRIVATE 4-K	39,993,616	27,977,227	12,016,390	1,675,000	736,722	938,278	-	-	-	41,668,616	28,713,949	\$ 12,954,667
EARLY CHILDHOOD ADVISORY COUNCIL	1,010,109	329,094	681,015	812,535	339,089	473,446	1,190,293	219,726	970,567	3,012,936	887,909	\$ 2,125,027
ADMINISTRATION	2,972,059	1,848,620	1,123,439	-	-	-	289,055	223,740	65,315	3,261,114	2,072,360	\$ 1,188,754
GRAND TOTAL:	69,040,413	49,490,217	19,550,195	3,694,951	2,152,816	1,542,135	2,108,782	974,420	1,134,362	74,844,146	52,617,453	\$ 22,226,693

Notes:

1) Local Partnerships:

- Includes funds
- a. Distributed to Local Partnerships
- b. Cost of Audits, Accounting Svcs, Data Systems, Workmans Comp
- c. State Office Local Partnership support staff

Report has been updated to reflect new Chart of Accounts and separation from Department of Education

2) State Appropriations Include

- a. EIA Funds
- b. General Funds
- c. READY Funds
- d. Carry Forward Funds

3) Private Budgets Include

- a. Private Grants
- b. Projected Fundraising
- c. Carry Forward Funds

Federal Funds:	Total Fund Breakdown	
VISTA	62,560	47,690,220 State E.I.A.
AmeriCorps:	448,652	21,350,192 State General Funds
SLDS:	43,629	3,694,951 Federal Funds
PDG:	1,157,176	2,108,782 Private Funds
ESSER Funds	1,982,934	74,844,146
	3,694,951	

Donations

FY 2025

As of February 28, 2025



DATE RECEIVED	Amount	DONOR/PAYOR	FUNDS	PURPOSE / COMMENTS
Jul 1, 2024	25.00	Lyle Jacks	Unrestricted	Pickens County FS
Jul 1, 2024	25.00	Liz Rampy	Unrestricted	General Donation
Jul 3, 2024	10,000.00	Children's Trust of South Carolina	Restricted	2024 Summit Sponsorship
Jul 24, 2024	6,500.00	Giving Foundation (Sylvanmo)	Restricted	2025 Night to Celebrate
Jul 24, 2024	1,000.00	Department of Social Services	Restricted	2024 Summit Sponsorship
Jul 24, 2024	25.00	Joe Nation	Restricted	Lexington County FS
Aug 5, 2024	500.00	Kimberly Clark	Unrestricted	General Donation
Aug 7, 2024	350.00	Rick Nobel	Unrestricted	25th Anniversary General Donation
Aug 15, 2024	5,000.00	Department of Public Health	Restricted	2024 Summit Sponsorship
Sep 3, 2024	100.00	Randa Jacobs	Unrestricted	Greenville County FS
Sep 4, 2024	1,250.00	Sisters of Charity Foundation of SC	Unrestricted	General Donation
Sep 19, 2024	25.00	Joe Nation	Unrestricted	Lexington County FS
Sep 19, 2024	42.00	Pace Butler	Unrestricted	4K Program
Sep 19, 2024	15,000.00	Institute for Child Success	Restricted	2024 Summit Sponsorship
Sep 19, 2024	15,500.00	Enterprise Mobility	Unrestricted	General Donation
Sep 23, 2024	25.00	Joe Nation	Unrestricted	Lexington County FS
Sep 23, 2024	25.00	Betty Gardiner	Unrestricted	General Donation
Sep 23, 2024	50.00	Elizabeth Dudek	Unrestricted	General Donation
Oct 10, 2024	25.00	Joe Nation	Restricted	Lexington County FS
Oct 10, 2024	2,500.00	ABS Kids	Restricted	2024 Summit Sponsorship
Oct 22, 2024	250.00	Crystal Lapeyrolerie	Unrestricted	2024 Summit Sponsorship
Oct 28, 2024	25.00	Marian McCray	Unrestricted	General Donation
Oct 28, 2024	50.00	Judith Andrews	Unrestricted	General Donation
Nov 4, 2024	2,500.00	SC ETV	Restricted	2024 Summit Sponsorship
Nov 6, 2024	2,500.00	Lakeshore Learning	Restricted	2024 Summit Sponsorship
Nov 6, 2024	2,500.00	Lakeshore Learning	Restricted	2025 Night to Celebrate
Nov 15, 2024	25.00	Joe Nation	Restricted	Lexington County FS
Nov 15, 2024	10,000.00	David & Cheryl Morley	Unrestricted	Greatest Need
Nov 15, 2024	2,500.00	Kaplan Early Learning	Restricted	2024 Summit Sponsorship
Nov 15, 2024	2,000.00	Kaplan Early Learning	Restricted	4K Program
Nov 15, 2024	1,000.00	Kaplan Early Learning	Restricted	2025 Night to Celebrate
Nov 25, 2024	2,910.90	Charities Aid Foundation America	Restricted	General Donation
Dec 4, 2024	100.00	Mary Lynn Diggs	Unrestricted	General Donation
Dec 13, 2024	50.00	Jacquelyn & Lois Curtin	Unrestricted	General Donation
Dec 13, 2024	2,500.00	Bank of America	Unrestricted	General Donation
Dec 16, 2024	25.00	Joe Nation	Restricted	Lexington County FS
Dec 26, 2024	1,000.00	Hal Kaplan	Unrestricted	General Donation
Dec 30, 2024	5,000.00	Frances Kumar	Unrestricted	General Donation
Jan 9, 2025	25.00	Joe Nation	Restricted	Lexington County FS
Jan 9, 2025	1,000.00	Hal Kaplan	Unrestricted	General Donation
Jan 9, 2025	2,500.00	Bank of America	Unrestricted	General Donation
Jan 9, 2025	8,000.00	Institute for Child Success	Restricted	2024 Summit Sponsorship
Feb 10, 2025	1,000.00	Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough LLP	Restricted	2025 Night to Celebrate
n/a	50.00	Jacquelyn & Lois Curtin	Unrestricted	General Donation
n/a	2,910.90	Charities Aid Foundation America	Unrestricted	General Donation
n/a	100.00	Mary Lynn Diggs	Unrestricted	General Donation

Total

108,488.80



To: SC First Steps Board of Trustees

From: Senator Greg Hembree

Date: April 17, 2025

RE: **Legislative Committee Report**

FY 2025-26 State Budget Request

The House passed their first version of the FY 2025-26 state appropriations bill on March 12, 2025. The following items related to First Steps were included.

Passed by the House:

- Unfunded Personnel Cost Increases (EIA) \$192,108 recurring
- Recruitment and Retention Costs \$264,401 recurring
- Innovation Investments \$1,250,000 non-recurring
- Full Day 4K (CERDEP) \$2,777,120 recurring

Proviso Revision: 4K Updates, First Steps & SDE shall annually share waiting lists.

Proviso Deletion: SDE-First Steps Division

The full Senate Finance Committee met during the week of April 7th and approved the following recommendations related to First Steps:

- Unfunded Personnel Cost Increases (EIA) \$192,108 recurring
- Recruitment and Retention Costs \$264,401 recurring
- Innovation Investments \$2,500,000 non-recurring
- Full Day 4K (CERDEP) \$2,777,120 recurring

Proviso Revision: 4K Updates, First Steps & SDE shall annually share waiting lists.

Proviso Deletion: SDE-First Steps Division

Legislative Updates:

- **H.3645** (Expansion of Paid Parental Leave for State Employees)
 - Amends the definition of an eligible state employee to include anyone employed full-time by the State. Expands the amount of paid leave from 6 weeks to 12 weeks for birthing parents and from 2 weeks to 4 weeks for the non-birthing parent, adoptive parents, and foster parents.
 - Status: Received a favorable report from the House Ways & Means Committee on April 3, 2025.

- **S.11** (State Employee Eligibility for Paid Parental Leave)
 - Amends the definition of an eligible state employee to be “any person employed [by the State] who occupies a position eligible to earn annual leave”
 - Status: Passed the Senate on April 2, 2015. It has been introduced in the House and referred to the Ways & Means Committee



Date: April 17, 2025
 To: SC First Steps Board of Trustees
 From: Ann Vandervliet
 RE: **Executive Director’s Report**

1. First Steps 4K

Utilization through Mar. 24, 2025

Enrollment as of day 30 (Oct. 1, 2024)	Enrollment as of day 135 (Mar. 24, 2025)	Retention rate (% of students who remain enrolled as of Mar. 24, 2025)
3,710	3,767	90%

Estimated number of 4K slots (changes daily depending on type of slot utilized)	Enrollment as of Mar. 24, 2025	Estimated utilization rate
4,066	3,767	93%

Capacity to Serve and New Enrollment

- As of April 2025, 294 child care providers have capacity for 358 First Steps 4K classrooms or roughly 5,568 children.
- In 2024-2025, 54 new child care providers were recruited and onboarded to serve an additional 1,006 4K students.
- For 2025-2026, 24 new child care providers have been recruited to serve an additional 393 students. Recruiting and training continues.
- Enrollment is now open for 2025-2026. 2,309 applications received to date.

2. HR Updates

New Staff

- Janet Parenti, First Five Outreach Manager
- Kylie Cordell, Communications VISTA
- Emily Prillaman, Development VISTA

- Kaden Anderson, IT Intern

Vacancies

- 4K Coach Spartanburg
- 4K Eligibility Specialist
- Administrative Coordinator
- Data Coordinator
- Executive Assistant
- Facilities Manager
- First Five Coordinator
- First Five Technical Support Specialist
- Program Officer Midlands

Organizational Updates

- Chelsea Richard, Ph.D. – Chief of Strategy and Research (title update)
- Mark Barnes – Chief of Administration (title update)

3. Local Partnerships

- Elizabeth Kabalka, new Richland County First Steps Executive Director effective April 21st. Richland County First Steps has hired Elizabeth Kabalka to serve as their new Executive Director. Elizabeth has more than 20 years of experience in early childhood education, nonprofit leadership, and collaborative community work. She joins us from Smart Start of Mecklenburg in Charlotte NC, where she served as Programs Director—managing nearly \$13 million annually in investments for early childhood programs and leading initiatives to strengthen quality and impact evaluation.
- Local Partnership Leadership Training will take place June 4-5 in Columbia. The purpose of this event is to provide training for local partnership executive directors and board members. Topics include: community needs assessments, strategic planning, collaboration and board training. Close to 200 individuals will participate.

4. Resource Development

- *A Night to Celebrate Community* will take place on Thursday, May 1, from 6-10 at 701 Whaley. We hope you will join us! Link to purchase tickets: <https://www.scfirststeps.org/what-we-do/events/a-night-to-celebrate-community/>
- The fundraising goal for this event is \$120K gross and \$100K net. The purpose is to raise unrestricted funding for our local partnerships. We are currently at 60% of goal.

Sponsor Level	Amount	Number Needed	Total Needed	Number Pledged to Date	Total Pledged to Date
Presenting	\$20,000	1	\$20,000	1	\$20,000
Community	\$15,000	1	\$15,000	0	\$0
Educator	\$10,000	2	\$20,000	1	\$10,000
Partner	\$7,500	3	\$22,500	0	\$0
Family	\$5,000	4	\$20,000	2	\$10,000
Friend	\$2,500	5	\$12,500	7	\$17,500
Neighbor	\$1,000	10	\$10,000	14	\$14,000
Other Donations					\$250
			\$120,000		\$71,750

- **Thank you for Board support to date:** Contec (Jack McBride) as our Presenting Sponsor; Cheryl and Dave Morley; Sunshine House (Wes Wooten); and Jesica Mackey!
- **Other sponsors include:** 37 Gears, Amick Farms, Elizabeth and Ben Dudek, First Citizens Bank, Founders Federal Credit Union, Kaplan, Lakeshore, Lourie Life and Health, Paul Mitchell, Georgia and Dominik Mjartan, Molina, Nelson Mullins, Optus Bank, Parker Poe, Pollock Company, Simmons and Russ Purdy, Debbie and Mark Robertson, Betty and Lewis Smoak, Teaching Strategies, Tutelage School Solutions, and Vision Therapy Institute of SC.

5. Systems Building

- A proposal for \$2.25M (over 3 years) has been submitted to the Leon Levine Foundation to implement a three county *Ready for School* pilot. The purpose of the pilot is to increase the number of children, living at or below 185% of federal poverty line, who are able to achieve “demonstrated readiness” on the kindergarten readiness assessment. The proposal outlines a relationship based, continuum of services and supports for children beginning at birth and continuing through age five. A response is expected the week of June 9.