



Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

Thursday, April 17, 2025, 2:00PM

SC ETV, 1041 George Rogers Blvd., Columbia, SC 29201

Trustees Present (15): Representative Terry Alexander, Dr. Robert Bank, Tony Catone, Jacque Curtin, Mary Lynne Diggs, Senator Jason Elliott, Dr. Matthew Ferguson, Senator Greg Hembree, Jack McBride, Eunice Medina, Chairman Dave Morley, Roger Pryor, Dr. Ed Simmer, Wes Wooten, Sue Williams

Trustees Absent (7): Rep. Shannon Erickson, John Hayes, Constance Holloway, Jesica Mackey, Janie Neeley, Mary Anne Scott, Dr. Amy Williams, Vice Chair

Others Present (69): Ann Vandervliet, Caroline Goins, Ivory Mitchell, Avian Jones, Heather Gooze, Mikayla Moore, Beth Moore, Tammy Graham, Kristen Motte, Derek Cromwell, Alisha Green, David O'Kelly, Chelsea Richard, Stacy Greenwalt, Janet Parenti, Kaitlyn Richards, Naya Hall, Shayla Pettigrew, Karen Oliver, Rachal Hatton-Moore, Alexis D. Pipkins Sr., Mark Barnes, Kenna Hoover, Pauletta Plowden, Martha Strickland, Amira Hulwe, Dorothy Priester, ARJ, Samantha Ingram, Laura Baker, Kristine Jenkins, Cindy Riley, Lisa C. Bess, Lexi Jones, Kate Roach, Jaiden Branch, Rosaland Kenner, LaMyra Sanders, John Browne, Beth Kienzlen, Cheryl Scales, Caleb Buford, Janice Kilburn, Anna Strickland, Beth Cherry, Tamatha Kohler, Kate Strickland, Kerry Cordan, Kradles2Krayons CDC, Kim Trudell, Annette Davis, David Lisk, Molly Tuck, Sarah Eargle, Margarita, Keely Wikstrom, Maria Earl, Kristen Martocchio, K Wilbur, Kathy Fitzgerald, Emma Matzko, Jennifer Williams, Cindy Galloway, Jenny May, Dana Yow, Betty Gardiner, Joy Mazur, Amber Gillum, Sally McClellan

The meeting was called to order with a quorum present at 2:06 p.m.

Chairman Morley requested a motion to amend the consent agenda by adding the following motion:

Motion: To direct SC First Steps agency director to meet and review expectations with Aiken County First Steps Board, resulting in written recommendation from First Steps agency director as recommended by the Finance and Administration Committee.

A motion was made amend the consent agenda by Jack McBride, seconded by Wes Wooten. All voted in favor. A motion was made to adopt the amended consent agenda by Mr. McBride, seconded by Roger Pryor. All voted in favor. Chairman Morley requested a motion to approve the February 20, 2025 minutes. Motion was made by Mr. Wooten, seconded by Mr. Pryor. All voted in favor.

Chairman Morley welcomed Senator Jason Elliott to the board and Elizabeth Kabalka as the new Richland County First Steps chief executive officer.

Committee Chair Wes Wooten shared Local Partnership Programs and Grants Committee updates on the implementation of the KITS online and case management system, Comprehensive Grant Application, and new learning management system.

Reporting for the Strategic Planning and Evaluation Committee, Dr. Chelsea Richard, Chief of Strategy and Research, shared that the focus of the 2026 Child Trends external program evaluation will be on child care technical assistance.

Reporting for the Finance and Administration Committee, Chief of Administration Mark Barnes reported that agency finances are track. A new financial management system is replacing the current system, and SC First Steps is preparing a single audit of its ESSER funding.

Government Liaison Kaitlyn Richards provided a legislative report. The House has passed its budget for next year, and Senate Finance Committee is sending its budget to the floor for a vote next week. Both budget items for First Steps are similar, but the House's version has \$750,000 less for nonrecurring Innovation Investments. Paid extended leave for state employees is being debated.

A special guest from the SC Education Oversight Committee, Dr. Jenny May, provided findings from the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment on four-year-old children participating in CERDEP pre-k. Results showed a dip in demonstrating readiness for all students.

Agency Director Ann Vandervliet shared in her report information on upcoming agency events, an update on First Steps 4K 2025-2026 school year enrollment, and a system-building proposal for a three-county pilot to provide a continuum of services to move the needle on kindergarten readiness.

Dr. Richard provided an overview of the last five years of First Steps as the agency looks to create its strategic plan for the next five years. She shared next steps on public comment and plan approval.

Ms. Williams made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Mr. McBride. The motion was unanimously approved. The meeting was adjourned at 3:20 p.m. by Chairman Morley.