



**South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness  
Board of Trustees Meeting**

January 15, 2015, 2 pm, Room 252, Brown Building, Columbia, SC

**Minutes**

**Trustees present:**

Ken Wingate, Chairman  
Mellanie Jinnette (Designee, Superintendent Molly Spearman)  
Representative Rita Allison  
Senator Joel Lourie  
Lisa Van Riper  
Julie Hussey  
Judith Aughtry  
Julia-Ellen Davis  
Timothy Holt  
Evelyn Patterson  
Rick Noble  
Roger Pryor  
Sue Williams  
Reece Yandle  
Christian Soura  
Tracy Lamb (via phone)  
Walter Fleming (by phone)  
Beverly Buscemi (by phone)

**Trustees absent:**

Representative Jerry Govan  
Senator Mike Fair  
Mary Lynne Diggs (excused)  
Jennifer McConnell  
Alexia Newman (excused)  
Amber Gillum (excused)

**Others Present:**

Karama Bailey, DSS  
Rosemary Wilson, DHEC  
Roy Laney, Riley Pope and Laney  
Leslie Anderson, Leslie Anderson Consulting  
Jim Riddle, Lexington County First Steps  
Dave Wilson, McAlister Communications  
Susan DeVenny, SC First Steps

Dan Wuori, SC First Steps  
Mark Barnes, SC First Steps  
Debbie Robertson, SC First Steps  
Mary Anne Mathews, SC First Steps  
Russell Brown, SC First Steps  
Samantha Ingram, SC First Steps  
Ginger Ryall, SC First Steps  
Kathy Woods, Head Start  
Lisa Dial, Senator Fair's Office  
Sally Cauthen, Senate Education  
Pierce McNair, House Education and Public Works

**1. Call to Order**

Mr. Ken Wingate welcomed the board and called the meeting to order. Mr. Wingate declared a quorum present and noted that the meeting was being held in compliance with the SC Freedom of Information Act. He reminded trustees that each trustee is expected to declare conflicts of interest related to agenda items.

**2. Welcome/Introductions**

Mr. Wingate noted that due to agency director transitions, the board will welcome a number of new trustees at confirmation. He welcomed Christian Soura, interim director of DHHS, to the board. Mr. Wingate also welcomed Mark Barnes, new Chief Finance and Operations Officer. Mr. Wingate congratulated Representative Rita Allison on her appointment as Chair of the House Education and Public Works Committee.

**3. Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of the December 5, 2014 board meeting were approved as amended upon a motion from Ms. Judith Aughtry and a second by Mr. Reece Yandle. (Mr. Pete Liggett of DHHS was noted as having attended.)

**4. Chairman's Report**

Mr. Wingate reviewed his expectation that trustees serve on the standing committees of the Board to ensure full board engagement. He noted that committee assignments had been made in an effort to ensure geographic diversity and distribution of expertise. He noted that the work of the Board takes place primarily in committee, where full dialogue occurs. He reminded trustees of the importance of full participation, and encouraged communication among trustees between meetings.

Mr. Wingate introduced the concept of a "consent agenda" as an opportunity for the Board to conduct routine business in an effort to preserve Board meeting time for generative, policy dialogue. He noted that doing so would require a change in regular committee scheduling, and asked committees to meet well in advance of the

full Board meetings and asking that trustees consider the contents of a consent agenda in advance of each meeting. Ms. Hussey expressed her support. Mr. Noble noted the importance of dedicating time to read materials in advance. The standing committee chairs each expressed their support. Hearing no objections, the Chair directed the creation of a consent agenda for the March 2015 meeting.

Mr. Wingate called on Ms. DeVenny to update the board on the work of the First Steps Study Committee. Ms. DeVenny noted that the committee as created by Act 287 has met four times through the fall 2014, accepting approximately 11 hours of testimony. Ms. DeVenny noted that recommendations are expected in March and asked Representative Allison for any further Study Committee clarifications. Ms. Allison concurred with Ms. DeVenny.

Mr. Wingate called attention to the annual meeting schedule of the Board and introduced a motion by the Executive Committee that the December 3, 2015 meeting be designated as the Board's annual meeting pursuant to Act 287. The board adopted this motion unanimously. Mr. Wingate called on Ms. DeVenny to deliver the Director's Report.

#### **5. Director's Report**

Ms. DeVenny introduced Karama Bailey of DSS to provide an overview of the newly reauthorized Child Care and Development Block Grant. CCDBG is a federal funding grant to states designed to increase access and quality in child care. A copy of Ms. Bailey's remarks is attached.

Ms. DeVenny called on Mr. Pryor, who shared a presentation on his preschool program, Abner Montessori in Chapin. Mr. Pryor provided background on the Montessori model. Discussion ensued regarding the challenges facing private preschool providers as local school districts expand both publicly-funded and privately underwritten preschool programs in public settings.

Ms. DeVenny reminded the Board of South Carolina's continuing participation in a 10-state Kindergarten Entry Assessment consortium. She noted that a legislative briefing on readiness assessment hosted by Rep. Allison is scheduled for February 2015.

Ms. DeVenny noted that First Steps will be among 5 agencies reviewed by the House Legislative Oversight Committee during 2015. She noted that the SC Restructuring Act of 2014, requires that all SC agencies be reviewed every seven years by House and Senate Legislative Oversight Committees.

First Steps' attorney, Roy Laney, briefly recapped the board training slides he delivered in December and shared General Standards for Directors from the SC Non-Profit Act. He then provided a brief summary of changes to the state and local

bylaws. These changes are designed to bring these documents into alignment with Act 287, First Steps' 2014 Reauthorization. Mr. Laney noted language in the state bylaws related to appointments by members of the General Assembly, suggesting the Board adopt parallel language in the county bylaws permitting the appointing lawmakers to remove local board members as they deem necessary. Mr. Laney noted that First Steps is awaiting further guidance from the SC Attorney General related to the possible need to promulgate local bylaws.

Ms. DeVenny introduced Leslie Anderson, who led the Board through a training titled "Developing a High Performing Governance Culture." Ms. Anderson introduced 3 foundations of Non-Profit Boards: Duty of Care, Duty of Loyalty and Duty of Obedience and reviewed the meaning of each related to participation as a SC First Steps to School Readiness trustee.

Discussion ensued over the Duty of Loyalty. Mr. Wingate noted the challenge presented by Board membership as an agency director or lawmaker, charged with simultaneous duties to serve as a trustee of the First Steps Board. He noted that on this board there are no "super Trustees," reminding the Board that all trustees should be prepared to act as equals. Ms. Hussey noted her excitement over the Board's new configuration, which she described as having "all the right players" with the addition of agency directors. Ms. Aughtry noted that South Carolina's children are the responsibility of all trustees. Ms. Patterson agreed, noting that membership in simultaneous roles is a challenge, but that it is best to remain focused on the overall needs of the state's children as opposed to any single consistency.

Ms. Anderson stated the importance of the group coming to know one another. Ms. Van Riper noted that breaking down silos requires "horizontal thinking" across agencies and sectors.

Ms. Anderson reviewed basic board responsibilities, including setting organizational direction, ensuring the availability of resources and providing oversight. Ms. Anderson introduced the idea of group norms and "rules of engagement" designed to foster open dialogue and strong relationships. Ms. Anderson encouraged the group to consider the most important behaviors for the First Steps Board and staff to utilize, model and apply to foster generative work. In discussion, Trustees emphasized:

- Mutual respect
- Freedom to fully and freely express one's opinions
- Selflessness (lacking in self-interest... interest in the higher good)
- Open mindedness
- Preparation
- Fearlessness

- Preparedness not only to speak, but to listen
- To be representative
- Collaborative spirit, not a divisive one
- Agreeing to disagree
- Speaking with one voice, honoring Board decisions
- Spirit of problem solving

Mr. Wingate requested that the draft list be distributed to the Board and used as the basis of a formal set of “rules of engagement” for consideration at the March meeting. He suggested using the discussion of the new school readiness data as a case study for applying these rules.

## **6. Committee Reports**

### ***a. Finance and Administration Committee***

Mr. Wingate called on Ms. Aughtry to deliver the Finance and Administration Committee report. Ms. Aughtry asked Mr. Brown to review the monthly finance report.

Ms. Aughtry led a discussion of two committee recommendations related to partnership waiver requests of the 15% match and 8% administrative cap requirements. Twenty local partnerships requested a waiver of the 8% administrative cap requirement for FY14. These partnerships include: Abbeville, Aiken, Allendale, Bamberg, Calhoun, Chester, Chesterfield, Clarendon, Colleton, Dillon, Fairfield, Florence, Georgetown, Greenwood, Jasper, Kershaw, Lee, Marlboro, Union and Williamsburg First Steps Partnerships. After discussion of these waiver requests, the board unanimously approved the committee’s recommendation that waivers be granted.

Ms. Aughtry noted that one partnership, Marion County, requested a waiver of the 15% match requirement. The committee recommended approval of the county’s FY14 waiver, contingent on the local partnership developing a corrective action plan, receiving technical assistance from state level staff, and submitting quarterly match reports during FY15. Ms. Hussey raised the question of how many years the Board will be willing to support a waiver of this kind, given Marion’s history of waiver requests. Mr. Wingate requested that staff seek responses from the Marion County partnership as to how it intends to meet this requirement in FY15. After discussion, the board unanimously approved the committee recommendation.

Ms. Aughtry and Mr. Laney reviewed proposed changes to the state and local bylaws.

As regarding the state level bylaws, Mr. Noble proposed that the document be amended to require the Board to meet no less than four times annually. He also proposed amending the state bylaws to require that Executive Committee minutes be distributed to the Board “within two business days after any meeting at which action was taken.” The Board unanimously approved these amendments.

The Board voted unanimously to approve the state bylaws as amended.

Mr. Laney summarized an amended motion, which would adopt the local bylaws as presented, with the inclusion of language parallel to that in the state bylaws allowing appointed members to be removed by the appointer with or without cause. The Board unanimously approved this amended motion.

Mr. Noble proposed an amendment to local bylaws requiring that partnerships shall maintain at minimum, committees as required by the State Board. The amendment was adopted.

Mr. Noble proposed an amendment to local bylaws adding language to 6D requiring “the Secretary and all other officers except the Chair and Vice-Chair (who are addressed elsewhere)” be added to the list of officers adhering to term limits.

The Board unanimously adopted the local bylaws as amended.

Ms. Aughtry called on Mr. Barnes to provide an overview of the Governor’s Executive Budget proposal. Mr. Barnes reviewed the areas of priority as reflected in the Executive Budget recommendation for FY16.

***b. Program and Grants Committee***

Ms. Davis provided an informational update from the Program and Grants Committee. The committee has reviewed the status of conditional strategy approvals adopted in June 2014, finding that the majority of these strategies are now in compliance. No action is recommended at this time.

***c. Strategic Planning and Evaluation Committee***

Ms. Van Riper reported that Compass Evaluation has received feedback requested at the December Board meeting and is currently finalizing their report.

Upon a motion by Ms. Davis and a second Mr. Noble by the Board entered Executive Session.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.