

**South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness
Board of Trustees Meeting
December 7, 2017**

**Carolina Room, The Inn at USC, Columbia
3 p.m.**

MINUTES

Members Present (19):

Ken Wingate, Chair
Julie Hussey, Vice-Chair
Superintendent Molly Spearman
Senator Greg Hembree
Senator Gerald Malloy
Representative Rita Allison
Representative Jerry Govan
Amy Williams
Walter Fleming
Alexia Newman
Jennifer McConnell
Tim Holt
Rick Noble
Roger Pryor
David Wilson
Susan Alford
Mary Lynne Diggs
Josh Baker

Members Absent (4):

Judith Aughtry
Tracy Lamb
Evelyn Patterson
Sue Williams
Beverly Buscemi

Staff Present:

Georgia Mjartan
Julia-Ellen Davis
Dan Wuori
Rebecca Brown
Debbie Robertson
Ginger Ryall
Russell Brown
Samantha Ingram
Betty Gardiner
Kate Roach

Call to Order/Quorum Call

Mr. Wingate called the meeting to order at 3:16 pm and stated that a quorum was present.

Mr. Wingate introduced new board members, Mr. Josh Baker, Director, DHHS, and Mr. Pat Maley, Interim Director, DDSN (in absentia). He then introduced Ms. Georgia Mjartan, the newly-appointed Executive Director of SC First Steps.

Mr. Wingate made a motion to adopt the agenda, followed by a second by Ms. Hussey. The agenda was unanimously adopted.

Mr. Wingate called for a motion to approve the minutes of the October 20, 2018 meeting. Upon a motion by Mr. Holt and a second from Representative Allison the minutes were unanimously approved.

Mr. Wingate called the Board's attention to the Consent Agenda, which included ratification of the Executive Committee/Early Head Start Governance Council's approval of a "balance of funds request" for the Early Head Start program and a new strategy request for Dillon County from the Program and Grants Committee. Both actions were approved by committee. The consent agenda passed unanimously.

Mr. Wingate called trustees' attention to proposed board meeting dates for 2018. He noted that the scheduled October retreat will tentatively be held at his farm. Upon a motion by Mr. Baker and a second by Mr. Roger Pryor the 2018 board meeting dates were approved.

Mr. Wingate gave the Chairmen's Report, presented the 2017 Annual Report and noted that it was submitted to the Board, per state law, on December 1 2017. Mr. Wingate asked for board members and local partnerships to review the report and share with board members at the county level. Mr. Rick Noble noted that this report was the best annual report he has seen during his time with SC First Steps.

Mr. Wingate presented Ms. Julia-Ellen Davis with the 2017 Champion for Children award, for her time as a long-term board member and her service as First Steps' Interim Director. Ms. Davis gave a few remarks and thanked staff and partners.

Mr. Wingate then acknowledged the retirement of Ms. Marie Dunnam, Executive Director of Oconee County First Steps, and thanked her for her 17 years of service to the organization.

Mr. Wingate reminded the group of the following day's Chairmen's Summit on Early Childhood and shared event logistics. Mr. Wingate then acknowledged the work Ms. Mjartan has done since October 20th, even prior to her official start day December 4th, and noted her many meetings with people across the state.

Sen. Malloy presented on behalf of the Legislative Committee and stated that Senator Shane Martin would like to meet with Ms. Mjartan soon to discuss the Senate's reauthorization of SC First Steps. The goal is to remove the bill from the contested calendar and move to the uncontested calendar. Should that happen, the bill could move very quickly and could pass within 2 weeks. Sen. Hembree concurred that such a meeting would be important.

Mr. Walter Fleming deferred to Mr. Mark Barnes to give the report for the Finance and Administration Committee. Mr. Barnes presented the financial report. Mr. Noble asked about the financial statement of activities, specifically about the interest income and asked Mr. Barnes to explain where it comes from. Mr. Barnes said it came from EIA funds and the large amount of 4K carry forward. The interest will go back to the 4K program.

Mr. Noble asked about 19 cars recently purchased by the agency. Mr. Barnes stated that 14 of the vehicles are dedicated to Early Head Start program personnel and the remainders of these cars are being used within the 4K program. Mr. Barnes reported that the cars were assigned to staff whose primary functions involve daily travel and he discussed resulting cost savings to the agency.

The Program and Grants Committee did not have a report, its only action item having been approved as part of the day's consent agenda.

Ms. Alexia Newman gave the report for the Strategic Planning and Evaluation Committee and presented the external evaluation of the Parents as Teachers (PAT) program. Ms. Newman thanked Ms. Mary Anne Mathews and the evaluators for such a thorough report. The evaluators, Compass Evaluation and Research, Inc. then gave a presentation on the evaluation report.

Evaluator noted these findings.

- PAT programs are meeting if not exceeding requirements.
- Average enrollment is 21 months.
- Average two or more home visits per month.
- Percent of parents attending group meetings grew from 50% (2009-2010) to 63% (2015-2016)
- More than 80% of participants have two or more identified school readiness risk factors, meaning the program is successfully targeting the state's most at-risk families.
- The connection rate for referrals was greater than 93% in 2015-2016.

Short-Term Outcomes:

- Statistically significant gains in both the Adult-Child Interactive Reading Inventory (ACIRI) and Keys to Interactive Parenting Scale (KIPS)

Child Screenings and Referrals

- All children screened for delays or potential delays.
- Screenings lead to referrals

Long-Term Outcomes

- CIRCLE and retention data reveal no significant differences between (high-risk) PAT clients and their more advantaged peers, suggesting the program is successfully mitigating early achievement gaps and allowing participants to arrive at school on similar footing with their more advantaged peers.

Mr. Pryor gave the presentation for the Early Head Start Governance Council. Mr. Pryor stated the council was working on the expansion grant and addressing concerns in Dillon County. Mr. Pryor deferred to Ms. Mjartan for additional comments. Ms. Mjartan informed the Board that First Steps will be terminating its contract with Little Treasures (the Dillon County EHS Provider) and refocusing resources in other centers to best serve the community. Extensive efforts were made to mediate, however, federal authorities strongly recommended that SC First Steps move on and the feds agreed to help SC First Steps with the continuation of services to the clients.

Ms. Mjartan presented the Director's Report that was prepared by Ms. Davis. Ms. Mjartan said next year we will serve 416 children in the EHS-CCP program using the expansion grant. Ms. Mjartan thanked the Local Partnership Executive Directors for making the programs happen in their counties.

Ms. Mjartan mentioned that Mr. Wingate would be honoring Governor Jim Hodges at the Summit and encouraged everyone to attend. She then thanked our sponsors for the Summit, especially Children's Trust, for being a presenting sponsor.

Ms. Mjartan said the SC First Steps 4K program now has 2000+ children enrolled. Ms. Mjartan also mentioned the improvements to the First Steps building and increased capacity for technology and the impact of adding an exterior sign.

Ms. Mjartan talked about the restrictions of our resources/funds. The goal is to have the board raise \$20K in private funds and would be looking for 100% engagement of the board and wants to be able to report to others that our board is "all-in." Ms. Mjartan then asked that board members consider giving in calendar year 2017 and / or pledging a gift for calendar year 2018. She then distributed pledge forms to all board members present, noting that some members had already committed to give ahead of the meeting.

The Board participated in an asset mapping activity by creating an asset map for early childhood in SC. Board members and meeting guests were asked to write on a sticky note what they know is happening for young children and families in our state, the name of the organization and the name of the person that Ms. Mjartan needs to meet.

The board completed the activity.

With no other business, the meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.