



**SC First Steps Board of Trustees Annual Meeting
December 6, 2018**

**Columbia Metropolitan Convention Center – Columbia, SC
3:00 p.m.**

DRAFT MINUTES

Members Present (13):

Julie Hussey, Vice-Chair
Sue Williams
Tim Holt
Representative Jerry Govan
Mary Lynne Diggs
Walt Fleming
Jennifer McConnell
Joan Meacham
Roger Pryor
David Wilson
Mary Poole
Alexia Newman
Shelly Canright

Members Absent (6):

Joshua Baker
Senator Greg Hembree
Amy Williams
David Mathis
Representative Rita Allison
Senator Gerald Malloy

Others Present:

Georgia Mjartan	Sarah Eargle
Dan Wuori	Felicia Patrick
Martha Strickland	Crystal Campbell
Susan Jones	Janice Kilburn
Samantha Ingram	Betty Washington
Zack Catoe	Doris Mitchell
Debbie Robertson	Pauletta Plowden
Mark Barnes	Amy Breault
Constance Gully	Centuria Watson
Brook Wickersham	Darnell McPherson
Lora Bryson	Dwana Doctor
David Lisk	Shirleen Lewis
Valerie Johnson	Lilian Peake
Carletta Isreal	Francis Rushton
Cindy Riley	Shante McRae
Marcia Bacon	Jim Riddle



Ms. Julie Hussey called the meeting to order at 3:07 p.m.

Ms. Hussey called for a motion to approve the agenda as written for the meeting. After a motion by Ms. Hussey, followed by a second from Ms. Sue Williams, the agenda was approved unanimously.

Ms. Hussey opened up the public comment period and announced that no one signed up, prior to the meeting, to address the board, but encouraged members of the public present to let her know if they wished to address the board at the end of the meeting.

Ms. Hussey then presented the Executive Committee report and reminded the board that this was their annual meeting for the year. Ms. Hussey stated the committee did not make any motions during their committee meeting on November 16 so therefore the committee did not have action items to bring forward to the group.

Ms. Hussey then thanked the Speaker of the House, Representative Jay Lucas, on his recent appointments to the board and introduced Dr. Shelley Canright and Ms. Angel Johnson-Brebner. Ms. Hussey noted that Ms. Alexia Newman and Ms. Tim Holt were reappointed by Representative Lucas to serve another four year term.

Ms. Shelley Canright gave her remarks to the group. Ms. Hussey stated that Ms. Johnson-Brebner was unable to attend the meeting due to a prior commitment.

Ms. Hussey, then recognized those members whose terms ended this year and thanked Mr. Ken Wingate, Ms. Judith Aughtry, and Mr. Rick Noble for their board service.

The board, along with Ms. Hussey then thanked Dr. Dan Wuori for his commitment and longevity of service to the organization. Ms. Hussey pointed the board to the 2018 Annual Report in their packet and thanked Dr. Wuori for his hard work on the report.

Ms. Hussey also thanked everyone who helped with the SC Parenting Conference and Summit on Early Childhood and expressed gratitude to the members of the Early Childhood Advisory Council and Summit sponsors for contributing their time and resources to make the two day event a success.

Ms. Hussey introduced Dr. Francis Ruston and noted that Dr. Rushton was a former, longtime board member and remains very involved in the Parents as Teachers program. Ms. Hussey also introduced Ms. Constance Gully, the President and CEO of Parents as Teachers National Center. Ms. Hussey told the group that the Parents as Teachers National Center is the leading, international, non-profit, parent education and early childhood development organization that serves professionals who work annually with more than 200,000 families in all 50 states, 115 tribal communities and six other countries. The Parents as Teachers National Center is headquartered in St. Louis, Missouri.

Ms. Hussey recognized Ms. Mary Anne Mathews for her involvement with Parents as Teachers in South Carolina. Ms. Hussey said having Ms. Gully at the board meeting was a true honor.

Ms. Hussey gave a brief overview of Ms. Gully's professional background.



Ms. Gully then gave her presentation on data from SC's Parents as Teachers program to the group. Ms. Gully thanked the SC First Steps board for their support of early childhood in SC and congratulated on the reauthorization of SC First Steps funding. Ms. Gully also thanked Dr. Rushton for serving on the Parents as Teachers National board along with Ms. Mathews for her service on the Parents as Teachers National board also.

Ms. Georgia Mjartan shared photographs of a Parents as Teachers home visitor in Richland County and illustrated in those photos were people in the community implementing the Parents as Teachers model across the state. Ms. Mjartan noted that in the photos the group would see examples of "Group Connections" such as a dual-language learning family who had recently immigrated to SC enjoying a trip to the zoo to culminate their completion of Lexington County First Steps' Parents as Teachers program. Ms. Mjartan thanked Ms. Gully for her leadership at the national level and Ms. Gully thanked Ms. Mjartan for her leadership in SC.

Ms. Hussey called for a motion to approve the minutes from the October 26 meeting. After a motion by Mr. Walt Fleming and second by Rep. Jerry Govan, the minutes were approved unanimously.

Ms. Jennifer McConnell gave the report from the Program and Grants Committee. Ms. McConnell stated that the committee is bringing exciting news to the board in regards to the launch of the Competitive Grants process, which allowed local partnerships to apply to receive funding available for innovative ideas in their community.

A total of 18 grant applications were received from 16 counties and Ms. McConnell stated that the External Review Panel reviewed and scored the grant applications and the Program and Grants Committee reviewed the scoring and recommendations provided by the external panel.

Ms. McConnell named the members of the external reviewers. The members included Ms. Ellen Still, Mr. Marc Drews, Dr. Arthur Brewton, and Dr. Floyd Creech.

Ms. McConnell noted that the committee reconfirmed their decision that grant awards would be a minimum of \$10,000 and also discussed the importance of making sure that grant activities proposed would be sustainable beyond the one year grant period. Ms. McConnell reminded the board that First Steps legislation does not permit use of state funds for capital expenditures and the intent of these grant funds is to be directly linked to outcomes for children and families.

Ms. McConnell read summaries of the grant proposals and gave the committee recommendation to award the following Early Childhood Innovation Grants:

- Beaufort - In-Depth Training Series for Early Learning Standards - \$10,000
- Cherokee – Talk to Me Cherokee Initiative (Lena portion of proposal) - \$10,000
- Colleton – Targeted/Collaborative Book Distribution - \$10,000
- Newberry – Let's Get Ready (STEAM) - \$13,415
- Richland – Step-Up to School Readiness - \$13,800
- Spartanburg – The Basics - \$11,000
- York – Nurse Family Partnerships (NFP)-Infant and Toddler Safety - \$15,000
- Williamsburg – Home Visiting Enhancement (Parents as Teachers Training) - \$16,785



Ms. McConnell reminded the board that money for the innovative grants came from reclaimed carry-forward money with the intent to ensure that money awarded to SC First Steps by the state are put to use to help young children. Ms. McConnell applauded all local partnerships who took the time to complete the application process, speak with their boards, put the information together and submit the application. Ms. McConnell asked for everyone to give the local partnerships a round of applause.

Ms. McConnell said it is the committee's hope to be able to provide this opportunity again so the board can support the local partnerships in a way in which they can continue to expand programs in their communities.

Ms. McConnell encouraged local partnerships to apply for other potential grant opportunities from the state office and thanked the External Review Panel members.

On behalf of the committee, Ms. McConnell made the following motion: The Program and Grants Committee recommends that \$100,000 in funding for the Early Childhood Innovative Grants be awarded accordingly to the following list of partnership applications and respective grant amounts as per the attached list (attachment 2). Rep. Jerry Govan seconded the motion.

Ms. Sue Williams asked if these grant awards were from one-time money or if the agency needed to budget for this next year.

Ms. Mjartan stated that earlier in the year the agency brought a concept to the board to raise a pool of funds that would potentially result in \$5 million in funding for the Early Childhood Innovative Grants Program which would allow a very significant resource to be distributed to the local partnerships through competitive grant funding. Ms. Mjartan said the concept would need to be approved by the legislature as a tax credit and then the State Office, along with support from all of the local communities, would need to go out and raise those dollars from SC taxpayers.

Ms. Mjartan mentioned that the concept was included in a proviso that has been submitted and presented to the Governor's Office. Ms. Mjartan noted that the Governor's Office is receptive of the idea. Ms. Mjartan said State Office staff also spoke with the Joint Citizens and Legislative Committee on Children and their staff person thought the concept was a good idea.

Ms. Mjartan stated that because this is a legislative decision, the board would not know the outcome until at least July, but the hope for the future is to have a privately-raised pot of funds that can be used for this purpose.

Ms. Hussey said the funds used to support this year's Early Childhood Innovative Grants were carry-forward funds in excess and the other hope is to not have carry-forward funds in excess. Ms. Hussey acknowledged that the board has worked to address carry-forward funds.

After no further discussion, the motion was approved unanimously.

Ms. McConnell asked in the room from the local partnerships awarded grants to participate in a photo opportunity after the meeting and thanked the local partnerships again for their hard work.

On behalf of Dr. Amy Williams, Ms. Mjartan gave the report from the Strategic Planning and Evaluation Committee.



Ms. Mjartan started by sharing that new board member, Ms. Angel Johnson-Brebner, will join the committee.

Ms. Mjartan said the committee met on November 16 and received an update from staff on the Vision 2020 Action Steps, which is shared with the board in their packet. Ms. Mjartan thanked Dr. Dan Wuori, Ms. Debbie Robertson and Mr. Mark Barnes for their work in reflecting back on the last three years of a five-year strategic planning cycle that ended in 2020 was operationalized as the 2016, 2017, 2018 Work Plan. Ms. Mjartan said the board did review the work plan but in the most recent years of transition, the board did not have the opportunity to review the progress of the work plan. The Strategic Planning and Evaluation Committee said that as the agency moves into 2019, which will be the new year for the strategic planning cycle for the coming five years, the work starts by reflecting back on the previous strategic plan and associated work plan to see where the agency stands.

Ms. Mjartan pointed the board to the Vision 2020 Action Steps document in their packet and noted that most items were completed, others items are no longer applicable, and a few items at the end of the chronological ordered document are not yet completed and staff are working to complete now, such as items around interagency collaboration and the work of the Early Childhood Advisory Council. Ms. Mjartan noted those particular action items have become more energized in the last few months.

Ms. Mjartan said the committee made a process decision, which does not require a board vote, that rather than taking the old strategic plan and updating it, the committee would reflect, appreciate, see what worked in the past and what did not and in the year 2019 really start afresh with a new process.

Dr. Williams and Ms. Alexia Newman came up with the idea to start with our values and reflect back on the agency's value statement which is current focused on the programmatic work of the organization. Ms. Mjartan said one idea from the committee is to have a value statement that is brief, applicable to staff, board members, and local partnership staff as well as the agency's programs. Ms. Mjartan stated the board would do an exercise together at their next meeting to work on the organization's value statement to kick off the strategic planning year.

Ms. Mjartan acknowledged that the board and committees values the State Office staff having an important role in the strategic planning process. Historically, the process has been inclusive of the communities and local partnerships and this year, so the committee affirmed that the voice of the people that do this work every day at the state-level is also important. Ms. Mjartan told the board that the staff's strategic planning process started in November with an All Team Retreat where all staff members participated in value exercises under the direction of facilitator, Mr. Dave Beckwith.

Ms. Mjartan said that in addition to the strategic planning work, there will be significant state-level strategic planning and work through the Early Childhood Advisory Council and the Preschool Development Grant.

Ms. Mjartan asked the board members to mark their calendars for April 26 as that will be the Board Retreat at Saluda Shoals with the same facilitator, Mr. Beckwith. Ms. Mjartan gave background information about Mr. Beckwith.



Ms. Mjartan talked briefly about the two upcoming external evaluations and noted that Ms. Robertson, along with other SCFS staff, such as Ms. Betty Gardiner, has taken the lead in providing the scope for the two evaluations that will take place in the 2019 calendar year.

Ms. Mjartan stated that the committee has deferred much of the decision-making to the staff because of the significant timeline, a legislative deadline and the agency is committed to getting this work completed on time.

Ms. Mjartan thanked the University of South Carolina's Institute for Families and Society and the Arnold School of Public Health's Core for Applied Research and Evaluation in their support in developing the scopes for the evaluations.

Mr. Walt Fleming gave the report for the Finance and Administration Committee.

Mr. Fleming noted no new financial changes since the last board meeting and pointed the board to the Financial Status Report and thanked everyone for their private donations and their monetary support for the Summit on Early Childhood.

Mr. Fleming made a motion to accept the Financial Status Report as information only. Rep. Govan followed by a second. After no further discussion, the motion was approved unanimously.

Ms. Mjartan gave the Executive Director's report and began by publicly thanking Dr. Dan Wuori and gave remarks regarding her time working alongside Dr. Wuori over the past year. Ms. Mjartan asked Dr. Wuori to come to the podium after her report to give his own reflections of his time at SCFS.

Ms. Mjartan gave a 2018 year in review to the group and acknowledged the 2018 Annual Report in their packet. Ms. Mjartan said that reauthorization language including specific permissions that needed to be included in the report such as the two pages per local partnership that gives information on which counties have First Steps 4K, their kindergarten readiness assessment scores, and what the local partnerships are doing to address the scores. Ms. Mjartan hopes the local partnerships will use the two pages as a pullout and use it within their communities.

Ms. Mjartan reminded the group that earlier in 2018, SCFS held a convening with the local partnerships to talk about the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) results and a table-top guide was given out to help local partnerships have community discussions on how to move the needle in the kindergarten readiness metrics.

Ms. Mjartan then gave a 2018 Year in Review by the Numbers, along with noting other highlights for the year, to the board. These highlights included 4K quality and expansion, local partnerships, home-visitation programs, parenting education, school transition, redevelopment of the Early Childhood Advisory Council, reception of collaborative grant applications, the reorganization of the State Office and investing more in Countdown to Kindergarten and moving the needle for the initiative to become an evidence-based program.

Ms. Mjartan said her report intentionally broke down the numbers by program area in order to avoid inflated numbers because of duplication due to the fact that the organization does not have a simple way to induplicate data on children receiving services using two different data systems.



Ms. Mjartan thanked Rep. Govan for championing reauthorization through 2025. Ms. Mjartan noted a great transition within the local partnerships with ten Executive Director's retiring and named all former Executive Directors who stepped down after many years of service. Ms. Mjartan stated that of the eight grants approved by the board earlier in the meeting, five of those were submitted by new Executive Directors.

Dr. Wuori then gave his remarks to the board.

Upon a motion by Rep. Govan, followed by a second by Ms. Williams, the meeting was adjourned at 4:09 p.m.

