



**Board of Trustees Meeting**

June 15, 2023 2:00PM

SC First Steps

Via Zoom

Minutes

**Trustees Present (15):**

Rep. Terry Alexander  
Dr. Shelley Canright, Vice Chair  
Jacque Curtin  
Mary Lynne Diggs  
Matthew Ferguson  
John Hayes  
Tim Holt  
Dave Morley  
Janie Neeley

Roger Pryor  
Dr. Edward Simmer  
Wes Wooten  
Sue Williams  
Dr. Amy Williams  
Dr. Brenda Williams

**Trustees Absent (7)**

Rep. Shannon Erickson  
Sen. Greg Hembree  
Constance Holloway  
Robert Kerr  
Mike Leach  
Jessica Mackey  
Sen. Gerald Malloy

**Attendees (74)**

Georgia Mjartan  
Avian Jones  
Beth Moore  
Laura Baker  
Alie Boykin  
Amber Gillum  
Amy Engle  
Andrea Larry  
Ashlea Hatcher  
Ben Gibson  
Berry Kelly  
Betty Gardiner  
Betty Washington  
Brandie Maness  
Bruce Taylor  
Candi Lalonde  
Carletta Isreal  
Chastine Dickey-Jackson  
Cheryl Scales  
Cindy Ellis  
Cindy Galloway  
Dana Yow  
Darcy Huffman  
Derek Cromwell  
Dorian Young

Dwana Doctor  
Faith McCaul  
Felicia Battle  
Francis Rushton  
Gina Beebe  
Jennifer Williams  
Jenny May  
Jon Artz  
Joy Mazur  
Kaitlyn Richards  
Karen Martini-Waller  
Karen Oliver  
Kate Roach  
Kathy Fitzgerald  
Kathy Jenkins  
Katie Perkins  
Kelly Boniecki  
Kendra McKinney  
Kenna Hoover  
Kerry Cordan  
Khor Mitchell  
Kim Trudell  
Kristen Martocchio  
Kristine Jenkins  
LaMyra Dukes  
Leah Crosby

Lexi Jones  
Lis Guimaraes  
Mark Barnes  
Martha Strickland  
Meredith Dickens  
Myrelo King  
Pauletta Plowden  
Rachal Hatton  
Riley Dixon  
Roddrick Dugger  
Ryan Shinn  
Sally McClellan  
Samantha Ingram  
Sarah Eargle  
Sarah Hocutt  
Stacy Greenwalt  
Shayla Pettigrew  
Sheila Cornwell  
SheKiah Reese  
Shirley Johnson  
Tamatha Kohler  
Tricia Gordon  
Wanda Nelson



Mr. Morley called the meeting to order at 2:05 p.m. Mr. Morley requested a motion to adopt the agenda. Ms. Neeley provided the motion. Mr. Pryor provided a second and the motion was unanimously approved.

Mr. Morley asked for a motion to approve the April 20, 2023 minutes. Dr. Canright provided the motion. Mr. Pryor provided a second and the motion was unanimously approved.

Mr. Morley provided a chairman's report where he acknowledged guest speakers for the meeting and provided updates on board transitions. Alexia Newman fulfilled her commitment to the board by serving two terms. Dr. Brenda Williams was appointed by the Speaker of the House to fulfill the role of medical or childcare development provider.

Mr. Morley asked for a motion to approve the following consent agenda with an amendment to motion C. Rep. Alexander provided the motion. Dr. Canright provided a second and the motion was unanimously approved.

**Consent Agenda: Motions Recommended by Committees (Dave Morley)**

- a. **Motion:** To approve the corrective action determination as presented for Lancaster County First Steps. As a result of corrective action, the Lancaster County First Steps is not eligible to apply for competitive or targeted grants until they have satisfactorily resolved the deficiencies noted on their corrective action plan as determined by SC First Steps. (Local Partnerships Programs and Grants Committee recommends)
- b. **Motion:** To approve the Program and Operational Guidelines with updates by SCFS Staff for implementation for the Grant Year 2024 beginning July 1, 2023. (Local Partnerships Program and Grants Committee recommends)
- c. **Motion:** To approve the Formula Funding grant requests, with the exception of the Scholarship Program in which budgeted administrative cost that exceed 25% of the value of the scholarships received from DSS as recommended by SCFS Staff to the forty-six (46) First Steps Local Partnerships for Grant Year 2024 beginning July 1st, 2023. (Local Partnerships Programs and Grants Committee recommends)
- d. **Motion:** To approve thirteen (13) grant awards for the Resources for Early Acceleration and Development in Youth (READY) Grants in order to serve more children and families in their communities. Twelve (12) Local Partnerships have been selected by the SCFS State Office staff review committee; Allendale, Bamberg, Charleston, Darlington (2), Dillon, Greenville, Greenwood, McCormick, Orangeburg, Pickens, Spartanburg, and York counties for amounts documented on attached table. (Local Partnerships Programs and Grants Committee recommends)
- e. **Motion:** To approve the Targeted grant applications funded through the Resources for Early Acceleration and Development in Youth (READY) Grant opportunity for six (6) local partnerships for the Family Café; Barnwell, Darlington, Fairfield, Greenwood, Lee, and Williamsburg counties, and four (4) Local Partnerships for the Supporting Providers Through Visits (SCPV); Beaufort, Charleston, Colleton, and Williamsburg counties for amounts documented on attached table (Local Partnership Programs and Grants Committee recommends)
- f. **Motion:** To approve the Corrective Action Plan for Lancaster County First Steps as amended. (Finance and Administration Committee recommends)



Gina Beebe, Director of Parenting Programs, shared information on the Parents as Teacher program and introduced Talkea Guess, a parent participant with Orangeburg County First Steps. Ms. Guess shared her experience with her parent educator and how the Parents as Teachers program has impacted her family.

Dr. Jenny May, Director of Evaluation at the Education Oversight Committee, presented data on the kindergarten readiness assessment.

Dr. Williams reported on the Strategic Planning and Evaluation Committee. Dr. Williams shared that the committee discussed the idea of making Countdown to Kindergarten an evidence-based program and the statistics related to the idea provided by the University of South Carolina's Research, Evaluation and Measurement Center.

Dr. Canright reported on the Local Partnerships Programs and Grants Committee. Dr. Canright and Mr. Cromwell shared updates on current and upcoming grant awards. Dr. Canright brought forth a motion on behalf of the committee regarding the early care and education guidelines.

**Motion:** To approve the language change for the Enhanced Early Care Onsite Tutoring program as follows: Children that receive Enhanced Early Education Onsite Tutoring, must meet SCFS age-eligibility requirements of students age three (3) to entrance into 5k classrooms for implementation for Grant Year 2024 beginning July 1, 2024.

Dr. Simmer asked to amend the motion to add age 3. Dr. Simmer provided the motion. Dr. A. Williams seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved.

Mr. Holt reported on the Finance and Administration Committee. He shared that the agency has received a record amount in donations. Mr. Holt also shared that SLED investigations remain ongoing related to local partnerships.

Rep. Alexander provided a legislative report where he provided an update on the FY23-24 budget that was sent to conference committee and the H. 4023 bill.

Ms. Mjartan gave the Executive Director's report she provided information and statistics on First Steps 4K for the end of the school year which included the new 2023-2024 tuition reimbursement rates. Ms. Mjartan provided an update on the First Steps AmeriCorps grant, an award increase for the Alliance for Early Success grant, and where the agency was in the process of applying for a Harvard Data Fellow via the Gates Foundation. Ms. Mjartan shared the FY24 formula funding allocations and the restructuring of the First Steps Local Partnership team which included two new roles. She concluded with an introduction of new staff members and vacancies.

Mr. Morley asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Pryor provided the motion. Rep. Alexander seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:12 p.m. by Mr. Morley.