



Board of Trustees Meeting

August 17, 2023 2:00PM

SC First Steps

Via Zoom

Minutes

Trustees Present (20):

Rep. Terry Alexander
Dr. Robert Bank
Mary Lynne Diggs
Rep. Shannon Erickson
Matthew Ferguson
John Hayes
Sen. Greg Hembree
Michael Leach
Jessica Mackey

Sen. Gerald Malloy
Jack McBride
Dave Morley, Chairman
Janie Neeley
Roger Pryor
Mary Anne Scott
Dr. Edward Simmer
Dr. Amy Williams
Dr. Brenda Williams

Sue Williams
Wes Wooten

Trustees Absent (3)

Jacque Curtin
Constance Holloway
Robert Kerr

Attendees (79)

Georgia Mjartan
Avian Jones
Beth Moore
Laura Baker
Amanda Bailey
Amber Gillum
Betty Gardiner
Brenda Cantey
Buetine Pressley
Candi Lalonde
Carletta Isreal
Caroline Sexton
Cathy Kovacs
Chastine Dickey-Jackson
Chelsea Richard
Cheri Shapiro
Cheryl Scales
Cindy Ellis
Cindy Galloway
Cindy Riley
Clarice Blakenley
Crystal Hill-Chapman
Darcy Huffman
David Lisk
Debora DePaoli

Derek Cromwell
Donna Mason
Dorian Young
Dorothy Priester
Dean Bryant
Dwana Doctor
Elizabeth Dudek
Georgia Beckett
Gina Beebe
Hannah Espeleta
Heather Googe
James Calhoun
Jane Farnell
Janice Kilburn
Javonna Lewis
Jennifer Williams
Jon Artz
Joy Mazur
Kaitlyn Richards
Karen Oliver
Kate Roach
Kathy Fitzgerald
Kenna Hoover
Kenya Johnson
Kerry Cordan

Kim Trudell
Kirsten Chapman
Kristine Jenkins
LaMyra Dukes
Leah Crosby
Lexi Jones
Mark Barnes
Martha Strickland
Michelle Maxberry
Myrelo King
Rachal Hatton-Moore
Rachel Amrhein
Rebecca Harris
Renita Barksdale
Roddrick Dugger
Rosa Linda Contreras
Ryan Shinn
Samantha Ingram
Shayla Pettigrew
Sheila Cornwell
Silvia Landrum
Spence Scott
Stacy Greenwalt
Tekethia Burrell
Teresa Jenkins

Tiffany Outlaw
Tricia Gordon
Tyshica McConner
Veronica Reynolds
Meghan Wood



Mr. Morley called the meeting to order at 2:06 p.m. Mr. Morley requested a motion to adopt the agenda. Dr. A. Williams provided the motion. Mr. Hayes provided a second and the motion was unanimously approved.

Mr. Morley asked for a motion to approve the June 15, 2023 minutes. Dr. Simmer provided the motion. Mr. Ferguson provided a second and the motion was unanimously approved.

Michelle Maxberry, Communications AmeriCorps VISTA, introduced Rushell Pernell, a parent participant of the Parenting Program with Barnwell County First Steps. Ms. Pernell shared her experience with the Early Steps to School Success program and how it has impacted her family.

Mr. Morley reported on the Executive Committee. The committee reviewed the agency head performance evaluation for FY 2022-2023. They voted on a recommendation for the evaluation rating and a salary change. Mr. Morley provided updates on board transitions. Dr. Shelley Canright and Tim Holt have fulfilled their commitments to the board. Jack McBride was appointed by the Speaker of the House to fulfill the role of business community. He will serve on the Local Partnerships Program and Grants Committee. Dr. Robert Bank joined the board as the Acting Director of the Department of Mental Health. He will serve on the Interagency Collaboration Committee. Mary Anne Scott was appointed by the Speaker of the House to fulfill the role of early childhood educator. As a result of Act 81, two local partnership executive directors will serve on the ECAC. Dorothy Priester, Executive Director of Cherokee County First Steps, was appointed by the Chairwoman of the House Education and Public Works Committee. David Lisk, Executive Director of York County First Steps, was appointed by the Chairman of the Senate Education Committee. Jesica Mackey will chair the Finance and Administration Committee. Wes Wooten will chair the Local Partnerships Program and Grants Committee. Dr. Brenda Williams will serve on the Strategic Planning and Evaluation Committee.

Mr. Morley asked for a motion to approve the following consent agenda. Mr. McBride provided the motion. Dr. A. Williams provided a second and the motion was unanimously approved.

Consent Agenda: Motions Recommended by Committees (Dave Morley)

- a. **Motion:** To approve the Interim Process for Local Partnership Executive Director Hiring Salary and Annual Evaluation (Executive Committee recommends)
- b. **Motion:** To approve the awarding of the READY Sustaining and Expanding Effective Programs Serving Children and Families Grants in the amount of \$290,756.17 in READY funding and \$129,558.59 in recaptured state funding for a total of \$420,314.76 (see attached table) to four (4) Local Partnerships, Chesterfield, Darlington, Florence, and Williamsburg Counties for implementation beginning in grant year 2024. (Local Partnerships Programs and Grants Committee recommends)
- c. **Motion:** To approve the corrective action determination as presented for the eleven (11) local partnerships identified (Aiken, Allendale, Beaufort, Charleston, Clarendon, Georgetown, Hampton, Horry, Kershaw, Lancaster, and Oconee Counties. As a result of corrective action, the local partnerships affected are 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 state staff (Local Partnerships Programs and Grants Committee recommends)



Rep. Alexander made a motion to enter into executive session for the purpose of a personnel matter: to review the board survey results, discuss and rate agency head performance for FY2023, and discuss the agency head salary. The motion was seconded by Mr. Pryor and unanimously approved. Ms. Mackey made a motion to exit executive session, seconded by Rep. Alexander, and unanimously approved. Rep. Erickson made a motion to approve the agency head evaluation rating of exceeds in all categories, seconded by Rep. Alexander, and unanimously approved. Mr. Pryor made a motion recommend to the Agency Head Salary Commission an agency head salary of \$160,446, seconded by Mr. McBride, and unanimously approved.

Dr. A. Williams reported on the Strategic Planning and Evaluation Committee. Dr. A. Williams shared that the committee focused on the Carolina Collaborative for Early Childhood Innovation which is a grantmaking process that uses READY funds to fund innovative projects. The committee also discussed the work that is taking place in the South Carolina Early Learning Extension through the State Longitudinal Data System.

Ms. Roach shared that First Steps is legislatively required to contract with an external vendor to evaluate the prevalent programs on a 5-year schedule. She shared how the organization changed how they operated the Child Care Scholarships program in collaboration with the Department of Social Services. DSS reserves scholarships for the local partnerships at no cost to the partnerships to connect families to childcare. At the start of FY23 the qualifying criteria for the scholarships required families who receive the scholarship must be participating in an evidence-based program with the local partnership. This resulted in 99% utilization of the available scholarships. Ms. Roach then introduced Dr. Cheri Shapiro, Research Associate Professor and Director of the Institute for Families and Society in the College of Social Work at the University of South Carolina, who presented the preliminary analysis of the Child Care Scholarship program.

Mr. Pryor reported on the Local Partnerships Programs and Grants Committee. He shared that four local partnerships were recommended for READY grant awards. He also shared that there were eleven local partnerships recommended for corrective actions.

Ms. Mackey reported on the Finance and Administration Committee. She shared that the committee reviewed the financial report and the upcoming budget. She shared that the agency continues to work with SLED on an ongoing investigation regarding two local partnerships.

Ms. Mjartan gave the Executive Director's report where she highlighted the agency's permanent authorization, the Governor's ceremonial bill signing of Act 81, and the plan for implementation of the new bill. She shared the success of the recent 4K Academy for 350 leaders and 550 4K teachers. Ms. Mjartan shared that there was a 62% increase in the number of students approved to enroll in First Steps 4K, a 16% increase in 4K providers, and an 18% increase in the number of 4K classrooms compared to the same time last year. She concluded with an update on AmeriCorps recruitment, an introduction of new staff members, and current vacancies.

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

The meeting was adjourned at 3:34 p.m. by Mr. Morley.