



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

2 p.m.
June 26, 2014
Brown Building, Room 252

Minutes

Voting members present:

Lewis Smoak
Senator Mike Fair
Representative Rita Allison
Representative Jerry Govan
Lisa Van Riper
Judith Aughtry
Rick Noble
Julia Ellen Davis
Julie Hussey
Linda O'Quinn
Mary Lynn Diggs
Kim Aydlette
Amber Gillum
Sue Williams
Jennifer McConnell (via telephone)
Reece Yandle (via telephone)

Others Present:

Jennifer Buster, DDSN
Anne Marie Dwyer, DHHS
Chris Yates, State Library
Susan DeVenny, SCFS
Dan Wuori, SCFS
Debbie Robertson, SCFS
Betty Gardiner, SCFS
Linda Leonard, SCFS
Russell Brown, SCFS
Samantha Ingram, SCFS
Ginger Ryall, SCFS
Barbara Black, SCFS
LaDrica Christian, SCFS
Dana Gray, SCFS
Glinda Patterson, SCFS
Ida Thompson
Melanie Barton, EOC
Dana Yow, EOC
Bud Ferillo, USC Children's Law Center

Dave Wilson, McAlister Communications
Desiree Watson, McAlister Communications
Norman Dover, Thornwell Home for Children
Dorothy Priester, Cherokee County First Steps
Centuria Watson, Chester County First Steps
Jim Riddle, Lexington County First Steps
Carolyn Brooks, Spartanburg County First Steps
Libby Sweat Lambert, Fort Lawn Community Center
Jim Reynolds, New Carolina
Duchette Polite, Jasper County First Steps
Ethel Faust, Barnwell County First Steps
Alex Lambert
Harriett Clark, Intern

Mr. Lewis Smoak welcomed the Board and began the meeting with a recap of recent legislative activity culminating in the passage of H.3428, the First Steps Reauthorization. In doing so Mr. Smoak and Ms. Susan DeVenny made formal recognition of Senator Mike Fair, Senator Lourie, Rep. Rita Allison and Rep. Jerry Govan for their legislative leadership - as well as to New Carolina, the Education Oversight Committee, and the State Library, for their support of reauthorization.

The board unanimously adopted the minutes of the April 10, 2014 meeting.

Ms. Lisa Van Riper presented on behalf of the Strategic Planning and Evaluation Committee, reviewing a pair of documents detailing key First Steps outcomes and evaluations since inception. Ms. Van Riper called upon Dr. Sarah Heinemeier of Compass Evaluation and Research, First Steps' current external evaluation vendor, for an update on their work, due in November 2014. Dr. Heinemeier made a short presentation to the Board outlining the current evaluation's goals and timeline.

Ms. Van Riper then called upon Dr. Dan Wuori to present the recommendations of the First Steps Early Literacy Working Group, convened in March 2014, pursuant to H.4749. Dr. Wuori described recent legislative activity designed to implement a statewide school readiness assessment, beginning with the assessment of early literacy in 2014-2015. This will entail a statewide procurement via RFP. The working group was convened to provide recommendations to the SC Department of Education regarding the desirable attributes of such an instrument. The group met throughout March and April 2014 and made ten recommendations to the SCDE on May 5.

These recommendations were to seek an assessment which:

1. Has been demonstrated as reliable and valid with the student population(s) in question
2. Is instructionally diagnostic (capable of meaningfully informing classroom instruction)
3. Provides for progress monitoring via multiple administrations
4. Is respectful of teachers' existing workloads in terms of administration time and necessary professional development
5. Provides useful and timely reporting, including reporting to parents.
6. Incorporates ongoing professional development
7. Is aligned with state standards

8. Measures key literacy components
9. Is culturally, linguistically and developmentally appropriate
10. Is curriculum neutral (does not require the use of any specific early childhood curriculum model)

The FY15 General Appropriations Act includes proviso language which directs the SC Education Oversight Committee (EOC) to make a similar set of recommendations, with input from First Steps. Dr. Wuori presented a crosswalk between the original recommendations of the First Steps Working Group and those adopted by the EOC on June 6, 2014, noting significant overlap between the two sets. Three recommendations of the First Steps group (4. Is respectful of teachers' existing workloads in terms of administration time and necessary professional development, 6. Incorporates ongoing professional development, and 10. Is curriculum neutral) were not included in the EOC's recommendations. Upon a motion from Ms. Van Riper and a second from Rep. Govan, the board approved providing additional feedback pertaining to these three recommendations to the EOC.

Ms. Julia Ellen Davis presented the recommendations of the Program and Grants Committee regarding FY15 grant renewals. The committee recommended the FY15 approval of 187 prevalent and non-prevalent strategies and the conditional approval of an additional 22 strategies. After discussion and a description of the review process by Ms. Debbie Robertson, the Board unanimously adopted the committee recommendation.

Ms. Judith Aughtry presented the draft FY15 budget to the Board on behalf of the Finance and Administration Committee. Ms. Aughtry called upon Ms. Kristie Musick to provide an overview of the BabyNet budget and on Ms. DeVenny and Dr. Wuori to provide an update on 4K expansion. After discussion, the Board voted unanimously to adopt the committee recommendation. Ms. Aughtry reviewed the year to date financials as information to the Board.

Ms. DeVenny introduced visitors from The Riley Institute at Furman University's Emerging Public Leaders program. Ms. DeVenny reported that First Steps has been contacted about the prospect of a federal site visit in recognition of the state's innovative public-private 4K program. Ms. DeVenny called upon Jim Riddle to provide an update on the July 11 reauthorization celebration, a no cost bring-your-own picnic dinner to be held at his home. Participants will be asked to make an optional offering to the Tamala Toney Scholarship Fund. Ms. DeVenny reminded the group of the Countdown to Kindergarten celebration to be held August 8 at EdVenture Children's Museum.

Ms. DeVenny introduced Norman Dover of the Thornwell Children's Home. Mr. Dover described his positive experience as a First Steps 4K provider. Thornwell began its 4K program in 2012-2013 and expanded to two full classrooms in 2013-2014.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned.