



## Meeting of the Board of Trustees

December 4, 2024 2:00PM

SC First Steps

636 Rosewood Drive Columbia, SC 29201

### AGENDA

- I. **Roll Call** (Avian Jones)
- II. **Public Comment Period**  
The public is invited to provide comments relevant to the SC Early Childhood Advisory Council and/or South Carolina First Steps during this period. Members of the public wishing to speak must sign up before the meeting. Comments should be limited to no more than three minutes per speaker.
- III. **Call to Order and Approve Agenda** (Dave Morley)  
**Motion:** To adopt the agenda as submitted  
**Motion:** To adopt the October 17, 2024 minutes as submitted  
**Attachments:** SC First Steps Board of Trustees October 17, 2024 Minutes
- IV. **Executive Committee** (David Morley)  
**Motion:** To approve the 2025 SC First Steps Board of Trustees and Early Childhood Advisory Council meeting dates.  
**Attachments:** Executive Committee Report, Executive Committee Minutes, SC First Steps Board of Trustees and Early Childhood Advisory Council 2025 Meeting Schedule
- V. **Strategic Planning and Evaluation Committee** (Dr. Amy Williams)  
**Attachments:** Strategic Planning and Evaluation Committee Minutes
- VI. **Local Partnership Program and Grants Committee** (Wes Wooten)  
**Attachments:** Local Partnership Program and Grants Committee Minutes
- VII. **Finance and Administration Committee** (Jesica Mackey)  
**Attachments:** Finance and Administration Committee Report, Finance and Administration Committee Meeting Minutes, FY2024 Financial Status Report as of October 31, 2024, FY2024 Donations Report as of October 31, 2024
- VIII. **Legislative Committee** (Sen. Greg Hembree)
- IX. **Acknowledgments** (Dave Morley)
- X. **Executive Director's Report** (Tracy Ann Vandervliet)  
**Attachments:** Executive Director's Report – Year In Review, 4K 2024 – 2025 School Year Day 45 Fact Sheet, School Transitions Programs Fact Sheet
- XI. **Motion:** To adjourn the meeting of the SC First Steps Board of Trustees



**Board of Trustees Meeting**  
October 17, 2024 2:00PM  
SC First Steps  
636 Rosewood Drive Columbia, SC 29201  
Minutes

**Trustees Present (14):**

Rep. Terry Alexander  
Dr. Robert Bank  
Jacque Curtin  
Mary Lynne Diggs  
John Hayes  
Sen. Greg Hembree  
Jessica Mackey  
Jack McBride  
Dave Morley, Chairman

Janie Neeley  
Dr. Ed Simmer  
Wes Wooten  
Sue Williams  
Dr. Amy Williams, Vice Chair

**Trustees Absent (8)**

Rep. Shannon Erickson  
Dr. Matthew Ferguson  
Constance Holloway  
Robert Kerr  
Mike Leach  
Sen. Gerald Malloy  
Roger Pryor  
Mary Anne Scott

**Attendees (58)**

Ann Vandervliet  
Mark Barnes  
Avian Jones  
Alissa Durham  
Amanda Bailey  
Amber Gillum  
Amira Hulwe  
Betty Gardiner  
Beverly Dickey Daniel  
Brandie Maness  
Brenda Cantey  
Carletta Isreal  
Chelsea Adamson  
Chelsea Richard  
Christine Zamboki  
Cindy Galloway  
Cindy Riley  
Courtney Johnson  
David O'Kelly  
David Lisk  
Derek Cromwell  
Dorothy Priestler  
Emma Matzko  
Emily Bannister  
Felicia Battle  
Felicia O'Neal  
Janice Kilburn

Jennifer Williams  
Jenny May  
Jessica Sharp  
Jon Artz  
Kaitlyn Richard  
Kathy Fitzgerald  
Karen Oliver  
Kate Roach  
Kenna Hoover  
Kerry Cordan  
Kristen Martocchio  
Kristin Zease-Syder  
Kristine Jenkins  
Krystal Reid  
LaMyra Dukes-Sanders  
Laura Baker  
Lexi Jones  
Mary Laney  
Molly Tuck  
Morgan Maxwell  
Pauletta Plowden  
Samantha Ingram  
Sharonda Burison-Harris  
Shayla Pettigrew  
SheKiah Reese  
Theresa Harrison  
Tiffany Outlaw

Tomeiko Wright  
Typhani Littlejohn  
Vernoica Reynolds  
Willie Mae Graham



Chairman Morley called the meeting to order at 2:06 p.m.

Mr. Morley requested a motion to adopt the agenda. Ms. Curtin provided the motion, seconded by Dr. Williams and the motion was unanimously approved.

Mr. Morley thanked Dr. Brenda Williams and Robert Kerr for their service to the board. He shared that the annual meeting and holiday reception will be held on December 4<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Morley asked for a motion to approve the August 15, 2024 and September 19, 2024 minutes. Mr. Wooten provided the motion, seconded by Ms. Williams and the motion was unanimously approved.

Mr. Morley reported on the Executive Committee where he welcomed Tracy Ann Vandervliet, SC First Steps Executive Director. He shared that the committee met to take action on Local Partnership Executive Director compensation submissions. These actions were taken on behalf of the full board due to their time sensitivity.

Dr. Williams made a motion to adopt the consent agenda and seconded by Ms. Neeley and the motion was unanimously approved.

- a. **Motion:** To amend the Local Partnership Bylaws as submitted. (Executive Committee recommends)
- b. **Motion:** To receive the 2023-24 Fiscal Year Audit as presented by Greene Finney Cauley, LLP. (Finance and Administration Committee recommends)

Emily Sobczak, CPA with Green Finney, LLP provided a financial audit presentation for FY24.

Mr. Barnes reported on the Finance and Administration Committee. He stated that the organization has had 8 years of clean audits. Year to date, the organization has spent down 27% of available funds.

Mr. Wooten reported that Local Partnership Programs and Grants Committee did not meet.

Dr. Williams reported on the Strategic Planning and Evaluation Committee where she provided an update on the development of the next five-year strategic plan.

Ms. Richards provided a legislative update where she shared the FY25-26 budget request.

Mr. Morley thanked Mr. Barnes for his leadership as the interim director. Mr. Barnes gave an Executive Director's report where he provided an update on the agency's separation from the SC Department of Education with an expected completion date of November 30<sup>th</sup>. He shared an update on Act 81 implementation where the revised bylaws were approved and will be shared out to the partnerships. Mr. Barnes went over the 4K day 35 data where there was an 8% increase in the number of students, compared to the previous school year. For FY25 there will be \$24.3 million of grantmaking funds awarded to local partnerships. He provided a save the date for A Night to Celebrate Fundraising event on March 20, 2025. Mr. Barnes gave an update on AmeriCorps VISTA recruitment and agency staffing.

Dr. Williams made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Williams, and the motion was unanimously approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:44 p.m. by Chairman Morley.



To: SC First Steps Board of Trustees  
From: David Morley, Chairman, Executive Committee  
Date: December 4, 2024  
**RE: Executive Committee Report**

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The Executive Committee of the Board of South Carolina First Steps met on November 15<sup>th</sup> and December 2<sup>nd</sup>. The committee discussed and approved the following motions:

To approve the proposed Kershaw County First Steps executive director candidate and salary, as submitted by the local partnership board, and to take this action on behalf of the Board of Trustees of South Carolina First Steps due to the urgency of the matter.

To disallow the costs of the unapproved salary increase for the Lexington County First Steps Executive Director from the date of the increase to the date of approval from the First Steps Board of Trustees, and to take this action on behalf of the Board of Trustees of South Carolina First Steps due to the urgency of the matter.

To disallow the costs of the unapproved bonus and stipend payments for the Barnwell County First Steps Executive Director for FY 2024, and to take this action on behalf of the Board of Trustees of South Carolina First Steps due to the urgency of the matter.

To put a hold on the Executive Director salary increase requests that were received from the Local Partnerships until further study can be completed, and to take this action on behalf of the Board of Trustees of South Carolina First Steps due to the urgency of the matter.

To approve the proposed Oconee County First Steps executive director candidate and salary, as submitted by the local partnership board, and to take this action on behalf of the Board of Trustees of South Carolina First Steps due to the urgency of the matter.

To deny the proposed Aiken County First Steps executive director stipend, as submitted by the local partnership board, and to take this action on behalf of the Board of Trustees of South Carolina First Steps due to the urgency of the matter.

To approve the proposed Allendale County First Steps executive director compensation increase at a revised rate, and to take this action on behalf of the Board of Trustees of South Carolina First Steps due to the urgency of the matter.

To deny the proposed Allendale County First Steps executive director bonus, as submitted by the local partnership board, and to take this action on behalf of the Board of Trustees of South Carolina First Steps due to the urgency of the matter.

To approve the proposed Anderson County First Steps executive director compensation increase at a revised rate, and to take this action on behalf of the Board of Trustees of South Carolina First Steps due to the urgency of the matter.



To approve the proposed Beaufort County First Steps executive director stipend, as submitted by the local partnership board, and to take this action on behalf of the Board of Trustees of South Carolina First Steps due to the urgency of the matter.

To deny the proposed Beaufort County First Steps executive director bonus, as submitted by the local partnership board, and to take this action on behalf of the Board of Trustees of South Carolina First Steps due to the urgency of the matter.

To approve the proposed Berkeley County First Steps executive director compensation, as submitted by the local partnership board, and to take this action on behalf of the Board of Trustees of South Carolina First Steps due to the urgency of the matter.

To deny the proposed Calhoun County First Steps executive director bonus, as submitted by the local partnership board, and to take this action on behalf of the Board of Trustees of South Carolina First Steps due to the urgency of the matter.

To approve the proposed Greenwood County First Steps executive director compensation, as submitted by the local partnership board, and to take this action on behalf of the Board of Trustees of South Carolina First Steps due to the urgency of the matter.

To approve the proposed Lancaster County First Steps executive director compensation, as submitted by the local partnership board, and to take this action on behalf of the Board of Trustees of South Carolina First Steps due to the urgency of the matter.

To approve the proposed Laurens County First Steps executive director compensation, as submitted by the local partnership board, and to take this action on behalf of the Board of Trustees of South Carolina First Steps due to the urgency of the matter.

To approve the proposed McCormick County First Steps executive director compensation, as up to 7%, and to take this action on behalf of the Board of Trustees of South Carolina First Steps due to the urgency of the matter.

To approve the proposed Williamsburg County First Steps executive director compensation at 6%, and to take this action on behalf of the Board of Trustees of South Carolina First Steps due to the urgency of the matter.

To approve the proposed Lexington County First Steps executive director compensation, as submitted by the local partnership board, effective December 2, 2024, and to take this action on behalf of the Board of Trustees of South Carolina First Steps due to the urgency of the matter.

These actions were taken on behalf of the full board due to their time sensitivity.

The minutes from the meeting are attached.



## Executive Committee Meeting Minutes November 15, 2024

**Members Present:** David Morley, Jesica Mackey, and Wes Wooten

**Members Absent:** Sen. Gerald Malloy, Dr. Amy Williams

**Staff Present:** Ann Vandervliet, Mark Barnes, Derek Cromwell

Meeting was called to order at 11:01 am.

As a quorum was not present, Mr. Morley asked for staff to go to the information items on the agenda. Ann gave the Committee an update on staff actions and her progress with connecting with stakeholders and Local Partnership Executive Directors.

A quorum was present as of 11:06. Mr. Morley asked to go back to the agenda items listed as number 1.

Jesica Mackey made the following motion to go into executive session to discuss local partnership personnel items which was seconded by Wes Wooten and was approved unanimously.

**Motion** to enter executive session for the purpose of personnel matters for the local partnerships.

With no action taken in session, the following motion was made by Jesica Mackey, seconded by Wes Wooten, and approved unanimously:

**Motion** to exit executive session.

There was discussion of the proposed actions included on the agenda, which resulted in the following motion from Wes Wooten, seconded by Jesica Mackey, and approved.

**Motion** to approve the proposed Kershaw County First Steps executive director candidate and salary, as submitted by the local partnership board, and to take this action on behalf of the Board of Trustees of South Carolina First Steps due to the urgency of the matter.

There was additional discussion of the proposed actions included on the agenda, which resulted in the following three motions from Jesica Mackey, all were seconded by Wes Wooten, and approved.

**Motion:** To disallow the costs of the unapproved salary increase for the Lexington County First Steps Executive Director from the date of the increase to the date of approval from the First Steps Board of Trustees, and to take this action on behalf of the Board of Trustees of South Carolina First Steps due to the urgency of the matter.

**Motion:** To disallow the costs of the unapproved bonus and stipend payments for the Barnwell County First Steps Executive Director for FY 2024, and to take this action on behalf of the Board of Trustees of South Carolina First Steps due to the urgency of the matter.

**Motion:** To put a hold on the Executive Director salary increase requests that were received from the Local Partnerships until further study can be completed, and to take this action on behalf of the Board of Trustees of South Carolina First Steps due to the urgency of the matter.

Mr. Morley mentioned we would like to get another meeting set up as soon as possible, once additional information is gathered, so that decisions can be made on the requests quickly.

A motion to adjourn was made by Wes Wooten, and seconded by Jessica Mackey, all were in favor, and the meeting concluded at 12:20 pm.



## Executive Committee Meeting Minutes December 2, 2024

**Members Present:** David Morley, Jesica Mackey, Amy Williams, and Wes Wooten

**Members Absent:** Sen. Gerald Malloy

**Staff Present:** Ann Vandervliet, Mark Barnes, Derek Cromwell

Meeting was called to order at 8:18 am.

Jesica Mackey made the following motion to go into executive session to discuss local partnership personnel items which was seconded by Wes Wooten and was approved unanimously.

**Motion** to enter executive session for the purpose of personnel matters for the local partnerships.

With no action taken in session, the following motion was made by Jesica Mackey, seconded by Amy Williams, and approved unanimously:

**Motion** to exit executive session.

There was discussion of the proposed actions included on the agenda, which resulted in the following motions:

**Motion:** To approve the proposed Oconee County First Steps executive director candidate and salary, as submitted by the local partnership board, and to take this action on behalf of the Board of Trustees of South Carolina First Steps due to the urgency of the matter. The motion was made by Jesica Mackey, seconded by Amy Williams, and unanimously approved.

**Motion:** To deny the proposed Aiken County First Steps executive director stipend, as submitted by the local partnership board, and to take this action on behalf of the Board of Trustees of South Carolina First Steps due to the urgency of the matter. The motion was made by Jesica Mackey, seconded by Wes Wooten, and unanimously approved.

**Motion:** To approve the proposed Allendale County First Steps executive director compensation increase at a revised rate, and to take this action on behalf of the Board of Trustees of South Carolina First Steps due to the urgency of the matter. The motion was made by Jesica Mackey, seconded by Amy Williams, and unanimously approved.

**Motion:** To deny the proposed Allendale County First Steps executive director bonus, as submitted by the local partnership board, and to take this action on behalf of the Board of Trustees of South Carolina First Steps due to the urgency of the matter. The motion was made by Jesica Mackey, seconded by Wes Wooten, and unanimously approved.

**Motion:** To approve the proposed Anderson County First Steps executive director compensation increase at a revised rate, and to take this action on behalf of the Board of



Trustees of South Carolina First Steps due to the urgency of the matter. The motion was made by Jesica Mackey, seconded by Wes Wooten, and unanimously approved.

**Motion:** To approve the proposed Beaufort County First Steps executive director stipend, as submitted by the local partnership board, and to take this action on behalf of the Board of Trustees of South Carolina First Steps due to the urgency of the matter. The motion was made by Jesica Mackey, seconded by Amy Williams, and unanimously approved.

**Motion:** To deny the proposed Beaufort County First Steps executive director bonus, as submitted by the local partnership board, and to take this action on behalf of the Board of Trustees of South Carolina First Steps due to the urgency of the matter. The motion was made by Jesica Mackey, seconded by Amy Williams, and unanimously approved.

**Motion:** To approve the proposed Berkeley County First Steps executive director compensation, as submitted by the local partnership board, and to take this action on behalf of the Board of Trustees of South Carolina First Steps due to the urgency of the matter. The motion was made by Jesica Mackey, seconded by Amy Williams, and unanimously approved.

**Motion:** To deny the proposed Calhoun County First Steps executive director bonus, as submitted by the local partnership board, and to take this action on behalf of the Board of Trustees of South Carolina First Steps due to the urgency of the matter. The motion was made by Jesica Mackey, seconded by Wes Wooten, and unanimously approved.

**Motion:** To approve the proposed Greenwood County First Steps executive director compensation, as submitted by the local partnership board, and to take this action on behalf of the Board of Trustees of South Carolina First Steps due to the urgency of the matter. The motion was made by Jesica Mackey, seconded by Wes Wooten, and unanimously approved.

**Motion:** To approve the proposed Lancaster County First Steps executive director compensation, as submitted by the local partnership board, and to take this action on behalf of the Board of Trustees of South Carolina First Steps due to the urgency of the matter. The motion was made by Jesica Mackey, seconded by Amy Williams, and unanimously approved.

**Motion:** To approve the proposed Laurens County First Steps executive director compensation, as submitted by the local partnership board, and to take this action on behalf of the Board of Trustees of South Carolina First Steps due to the urgency of the matter. The motion was made by Jesica Mackey, seconded by Amy Williams, and unanimously approved.

**Motion:** To approve the proposed McCormick County First Steps executive director compensation, up to 7%, and to take this action on behalf of the Board of Trustees of South Carolina First Steps due to the urgency of the matter. The motion was made by Jesica Mackey, seconded by Amy Williams, and unanimously approved.

**Motion:** To approve the proposed Williamsburg County First Steps executive director compensation at 6%, and to take this action on behalf of the Board of Trustees of South

Carolina First Steps due to the urgency of the matter. The motion was made by Wes Wooten, seconded by Amy Williams, and unanimously approved.

**Motion:** To approve the proposed Lexington County First Steps executive director compensation, as submitted by the local partnership board, effective December 2, 2024, and to take this action on behalf of the Board of Trustees of South Carolina First Steps due to the urgency of the matter. The motion was made by Jesica Mackey, seconded Wes Wooten, and unanimously approved.

A motion to adjourn was made by Amy Williams, and seconded by Wes Wooten, all were in favor, and the meeting concluded at 9:20 am.



## **FY2024 - 2025**

### **Board of Trustees and Early Childhood Advisory Council**

#### **Meeting Dates**

*Meetings will be held at 2 p.m. at*

<b>AUGUST 15, 2024</b>	<b>BOARD OF TRUSTEES EARLY CHILDHOOD ADVISORY COUNCIL</b>
<b>OCTOBER 17, 2024</b>	<b>BOARD OF TRUSTEES EARLY CHILDHOOD ADVISORY COUNCIL</b>
<b>DECEMBER 4, 2024</b>	<b>BOARD OF TRUSTEES ANNUAL MEETING EARLY CHILDHOOD ADVISORY COUNCIL</b>
<b>DECEMBER 5, 2024</b>	<b>2024 SC SUMMIT ON EARLY CHILDHOOD</b>
<b>FEBRUARY 20, 2025</b>	<b>BOARD OF TRUSTEES EARLY CHILDHOOD ADVISORY COUNCIL</b>
<b>APRIL 17, 2025</b>	<b>BOARD OF TRUSTEES RETREAT EARLY CHILDHOOD ADVISORY COUNCIL</b>
<b>JUNE 19, 2025</b>	<b>BOARD OF TRUSTEES EARLY CHILDHOOD ADVISORY COUNCIL (Virtual)</b>



## **Strategic Planning and Evaluation Committee Meeting Wednesday, November 6, 2024 via Zoom**

Committee members present: Dave Morley

Committee members absent: Dr. Amy Williams, Janie Neeley

First Steps staff present: Dr. Chelsea Richard, Betty Gardiner, Molly Tuck, Ann Vandervliet

### **MINUTES**

The meeting was called to order at 12:02PM. This month's committee meeting discussion was a request from Chairman Morley in reflection on the South Carolina Early Childhood Integrated Data System (SC ECIDS) data governance policies that the Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) has been approving over the past year. The meeting discussion focused on a deep dive of a data requestor's journey in obtaining data from the SC ECIDS.

The discussion started on describing the current, pre-SC ECIDS state of this journey, which is disjointed and puts a lot of onus on the researcher. Then, the discussion transitions to an understanding of the state of this journey when SC ECIDS is implemented, which is more streamlined and through a centralized point of contact (the data governance coordinator at the ECAC). The meeting wrapped with a discussion of other key questions and the future of SC ECIDS. No action was taken. The meeting adjourned at 1:00PM.



**Local Partnership Program and Grants Committee  
November 21, 2024  
Virtual Meeting  
1:00 p.m.- 3:00 p.m.**

**Minutes**

**Attendance**

**Committee:** Wes Wooten, Roger Pryor.  
Jack McBride and John Hayes were absent

**SCFS Staff:** Derek Cromwell, Anne Vandervliet, Kate Roach, Kerry Cordan, Cheryl Scales, Lis Guimaraes, LaMyra Dukes, Jon Artz, Andy Jensen, Gina Beebe, Janice Kilburn, Delores Rock, Jade Wright, Betty Gardenier, Tyshica Mcconner, Jaiden Branch, and Kathy Fitzgerald

This meeting had no Action items or motions. This meeting was an informational update on activities that the state Local Partnership team has been working on.

- **Open** – Wes Wooten, called the meeting to order at 1:05 pm
  - The floor was then turned over to Chief Local Partnership Officer Derek Cromwell, who explained the Local Partnership Team Strategic planning session which occurred on September 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024. Several outcomes of planning session.
    - Local Partnership team mission: To equip local partnerships to deliver high quality services to young children and families.
- Program Area Updates:

Team Leads Gina Beebe, Kate Roach, Tyshica McConner and Kerry Cordan, presented the ongoing work of each team.

- **Parenting** – Gina Beebe

Gina began by introducing her team, Delores Rock, Cheryl Scales Chavis, Lis Guimaraes. Gina then went into talking about the High intensity programs and light touch programs and the counties that are running them and what the capacity to serve is. She then went into HIPPY updates, it's mission, and the expansion of the program. Gina also talked about connected Families, the 4-year extension, and how it will impact Children and families. Gina finished up her presentation talking about Parents as Teachers program updates, and its affiliate status, the 40th celebration of PAT and national PAT day.

- **Early Care and Education** – Kate Roach

Kate introduced her team, Janice Kilburn, Jade Wright, and Rogers Pender. Kate then went in to talking about Child Care training and Child Care scholarships, how some



counties fall under one or the other, or are in both categories. She then talked about changes to the Child Care Technical Assistance programs that are under way in FY25, as well as updates for Child Care Scholarships, Child Care Training, and child care program support and operation for Enhances Early Education for FY 25. Kate then turned the floor over to Janice Kilburn, who talked about the CTK and the CT4K programs and how they have grown over this past summer.

#### **AmeriCorps** – Tyshica McConner

Tyshica talked about all the counties that are currently partaking in the AmeriCorps program. She highlighted the number of members, the number of service sites, service hours, and the number of ED awards 2022-23 versus 2023-24.

#### **Operations** – Kerry Cordan

Kerry introduced her team; Jon Artz, Andy Jensen, LaMyra Sanders-Dukes, and Haley Spears. Kerry then went into talking about a new training system LMS (Learning Management System by Talent LMS). LMS is an online platform for content creation and delivery of training materials.

Kerry also explained the new process for Corrective Action determination and how we are working to change the process of determining corrective action for local partnerships.

Kerry also talked about the Core Function Tool Kit that went out to all 46 executive directors. She explained what is in the tool kit and how it works. Kerry explained the monthly data reports, the LP eval and monitoring work group, and doing an extensive evaluation and the FY26 grant cycle process.

#### **Health** – Kerry Cordan

Kerry introduced the health team of Cortni Jones; she then went into discussing the health programs and what counties are participating in the programs as well as what the status of the programs is for FY25.

#### **Adjourn**

Meeting was called to adjourn at 2:45 by Committee Chair Wes Wooten.



To: SC First Steps Board of Trustees

From: Jessica Mackey, Chairman, Finance and Administration Committee

Date: November 7, 2024

**RE: Finance and Administration Report**

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The Finance and Administration Committee met via Zoom conference call on November 7, 2024, to receive updates from staff. Detailed meeting minutes are attached. The committee brings forward the following updates.

**First Steps State Office**

**Financial Report**

Mr. Barnes shared the updated financial status of the agency. The total budget for this year is approximately \$75 million. Expenditures to date continue to be a little higher than they should be due to the way we distribute funds to the Local Partnerships and the 4K providers. Otherwise, they are in line with projections for the new year. We expect that will level out by January. The organization is in good financial condition.

**Separation from the State Department of Education**

The separation of SC First Steps from the Department of Education is continuing and will be complete in early December. Overall, it is going very smoothly.

Mr. Barnes discussed the State Budget Request for 2025-26 and provided other updates.

Other updates can be found in the meeting minutes.



## **Minutes from Finance and Administration Committee Meeting**

**November 7, 2024**

Members present: Jesica Mackey, Chairman, Jacque Curtin, CPA, David Morley

Members not present: N/A

Nonmembers present: Mark Barnes, Director of Administration; David O’Kelly, Chief Financial Officer, Lakecia Clemons, Interim Local Partnership Senior Fiscal Manager, Ann Vandervliet, Incoming Executive Director

With all public notices being provided, and a quorum being present, the Zoom meeting was called to order by Jesica Mackey at 11:01 am.

### **First Steps State Office Updates**

#### **Financial Report**

Mr. Barnes referred to attached monthly financial report for October 31, 2024. He mentioned the budget for FY 2024-25 was approximately \$75 million and that we were at 43% expended for the year. This is slightly higher than the 33% projected but that was due to the way we distribute funds to the Local Partnerships and 4K centers. We continue to expect that this will fall back into line as the year progresses. The expenses for November and December will be lower for the 4K Program due to the holidays which will reduce the number of days students are in the classroom. The fund payouts are based on when we get our funds. We receive EIA funds each month from the Department of Education as they are based on sales taxes that are received throughout the year. He also mentioned the attached donations report.

#### **Separation from the State Department of Education**

The separation of SC First Steps from the Department of Education is continuing and will be completed in the next month. Most of the transition has been smooth. Many of the services and support has already moved to the Department of Administration and all will be moved by the end of November. Most of the funds and budgets have been moved to the new accounts. The remaining amounts will be moved early in December.

#### **State Budget Request**

Mark gave an update regarding the state budget request for FY 25-26. We presented the budget request to the Governor’s Office on Tuesday, October 8<sup>th</sup> and will be meeting with legislators and staff at the statehouse prior to our official meetings which will start in January.

#### **Local Partnerships**



The Act 81 activities are continuing. We are working on the second round of HR Policies, but we do not expect them to be ready to present them to the Board in December. They should be ready after the beginning of the new year. Kaitlyn is continuing to provide training of the Local Partnerships and Board Chairs on the ED Hiring/Salary Increases/and Evaluations. The Bylaws have been completed and will be sent out soon. We are working on the package for the Board Chairs and Executive Directors.

We have been having issues with the performance of the Blackboard software that the Local Partnerships use. We have escalated the issues and expect improvements by the first part of December. We are working on a new RFP for a financial management system but may have to reissue the notice.

We are closing out the ESSER Funds and will need to complete the grant in order to submit our final invoice to the State Department of Education. The grant ended on September 30, and the invoice is due in the month of November.

We expect the Financial Reports to be finalized soon for the Local Partnerships for FY 2024, and they should be presented to the Committee early next year for review.

#### **4K Program**

The 4K Program continues to grow, this year it will show an increase of between 6 and 7% over last year.

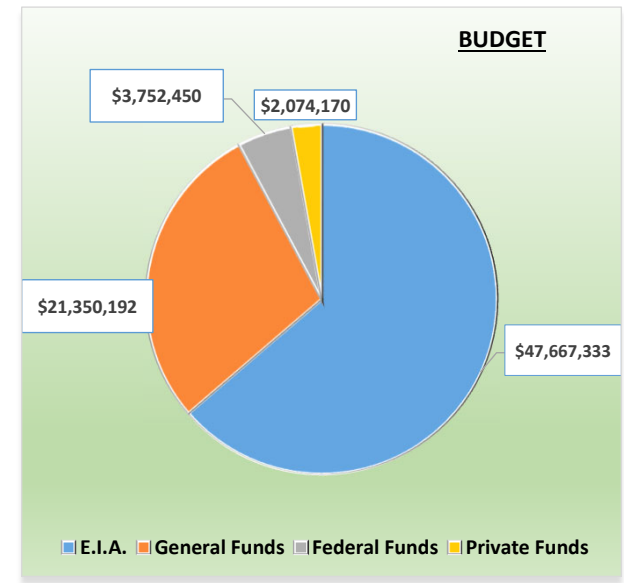
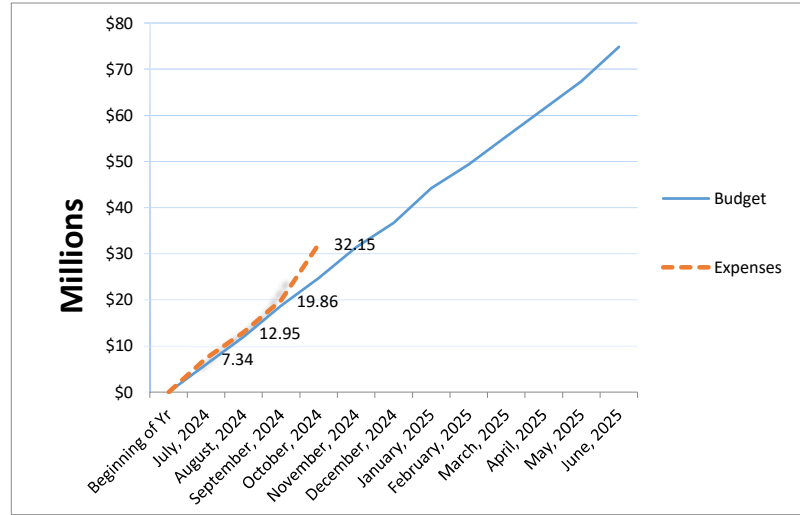
#### **Other**

Mr. Barnes added that the agency is in the process of receiving it's first IT audit. We expect it to be completed soon. Overall, it looks like we should be in good shape, but expect it may have some recommendations for additional documentation and policy modifications.

With no further business to discuss for the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 11:52 am.

**As of  
October 31, 2024**

Spending Rates	
Projected	33%
Actual	43%



PROGRAMS / OPERATIONS Description	STATE APPROPRIATIONS			FEDERAL GRANTS			PRIVATE FUNDS			GRAND TOTAL		
	Budget	Expended	Balance	Budget	Expended	Balance	Budget	Expended	Balance	Budget	Expended	Balance
LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS	24,952,098	10,100,382	14,851,716	1,235,620	373,157	\$ 862,463	1,389,862	33,150	1,356,712	27,577,580	10,506,689	\$ 17,070,891
PRIVATE 4-K	39,993,616	19,566,808	20,426,808	1,675,000	737,336	937,664			-	41,668,616	20,304,144	\$ 21,364,472
EARLY CHILDHOOD ADVISORY COUNCIL	1,010,109	111,177	898,932	768,906	333,367	435,539	461,995	91,179	370,816	2,241,010	535,723	\$ 1,705,287
ADMINISTRATION	3,061,702	732,821	2,328,881	72,925		72,925	222,313	67,832	154,481	3,356,940	800,653	\$ 2,556,287
<b>GRAND TOTAL:</b>	<b>69,017,525</b>	<b>30,511,188</b>	<b>38,506,337</b>	<b>3,752,451</b>	<b>1,443,860</b>	<b>2,308,591</b>	<b>2,074,170</b>	<b>192,161</b>	<b>1,882,009</b>	<b>74,844,146</b>	<b>32,147,209</b>	<b>\$ 42,696,937</b>

**Notes:**

**1) Local Partnerships:**

- a. Funding Sources: Education Improvement Act (EIA) Funds and General Funds
- b. Formula allocation cash advances are disbursed on a quarterly basis
- c. Expenditures reflect disbursements from SC First Steps (state-level)
- d. Includes local-level actual expenses to staff and vendors
- e. Contracted Accounting Firm, Accounting Software Network Support & Programmatic Data Housing
- f. OFS program & finance staff (payroll, rent, contractual, supplies, travel, etc.)

Federal Funds:		E.I.A.
VISTA	62,560	21,350,192
AmeriCorps:	506,152	3,752,451
SLDS:	43,629	2,074,170
PDG:	1,157,176	74,844,146
ESSER Funds	1,982,934	
	3,752,451	

**Local Partnerships (Cont'd):**

- g. External programmatic evaluation
  - h. Financial audits-annually each LP
  - i. Workers' compensation insurance coverage
  - j. Includes LP Countdown to Kindergarten program
- 2) Private budgets based on Private Grants, Projected Fund Raising, & prior year cash.**
- 3) State Appropriations Include EIA Funds, READY, General Funds along with carry forward cash.**

# Donations

FY 2025

As of October 31, 2024



DATE RECEIVED	Amount	DONOR/PAYOR	FUNDS	PURPOSE / COMMENTS
Jul 1, 2024	25.00	Lyle Jacks	Unrestricted	Pickens County FS
Jul 1, 2024	25.00	Liz Rampy	Unrestricted	General Donation
Jul 3, 2024	10,000.00	Children's Trust of South Carolina	Restricted	2024 Summit Sponsorship
Jul 24, 2024	6,500.00	Giving Foundation (Sylvanmo)	Restricted	2025 Night to Celebrate
Jul 24, 2024	1,000.00	Department of Social Services	Restricted	2024 Summit Sponsorship
Jul 24, 2024	25.00	Joe Nation	Restricted	Lexington County FS
Aug 5, 2024	500.00	Kimberly Clark	Unrestricted	General Donation
Aug 7, 2024	350.00	Rick Nobel	Unrestricted	25th Anniversary General Donation
Aug 15, 2024	5,000.00	Department of Public Health	Restricted	2024 Summit Sponsorship
Sep 3, 2024	100.00	Randa Jacobs	Unrestricted	Greenville County FS
Sep 19, 2024	25.00	Joe Nation	Unrestricted	Lexington County FS
Sep 19, 2024	42.00	Pace Butler	Unrestricted	4K Program
Sep 19, 2024	15,000.00	Institute for Child Success	Restricted	2024 Summit Sponsorship
Sep 23, 2024	25.00	Joe Nation	Unrestricted	Lexington County FS
Sep 23, 2024	25.00	Betty Gardiner	Unrestricted	General Donation
Oct 10, 2024	25.00	Joe Nation	Restricted	Lexington County FS
Oct 10, 2024	2,500.00	ABS Kids	Restricted	2024 Summit Sponsorship
Oct 18, 2024	75.00	Kerianne Stone	Unrestricted	2024 Summit Registration
Oct 24, 2024	75.00	Jessica Buzhardt	Unrestricted	2024 Summit Registration
Oct 25, 2024	75.00	Mikayla Moore	Unrestricted	2024 Summit Registration
Oct 30, 2024	75.00	Elizabeth Sims	Unrestricted	2024 Summit Registration
Oct 22, 2024	250.00	Crystal Lapeyrolerie	Unrestricted	2024 Summit Sponsorship
Oct 28, 2024	25.00	Marian McCray	Unrestricted	General Donation
Oct 28, 2024	50.00	Judith Andrews	Unrestricted	General Donation

**Total** 41,792.00



To: SC First Steps Board of Trustees

From: Ann Vandervliet

Date: December 4, 2024

RE: **Executive Director's Report**

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**I. Year In Review**

- [South Carolina First Steps 2024 Annual Report](#)

**II. First Steps 4K**

**Reflections on 2023-2024 School Year**

- Last year, First Steps 4K served 4,119 students for at least one day through Day 180 of the 2023-2024 school year (achievement highlighted in annual report).
- During the 2023-2024 school year, in 94 First Steps 4K classrooms across the state, teachers engaged in a Language and Literacy Boost program, which was an intensive series of professional development activities for teachers and directors related to promoting language and literacy skills in their students and classrooms. During the 2023-2024 school year, 1,553 students were impacted by their teachers' participation in the Language and Literacy Boost program (funded by ESSER).

**Current strategic efforts (July 1, 2024 and beyond)**

- During Summer 2024, 250 First Steps 4K Leaders and 543 First Steps 4K Teachers attended the First Steps 4K Academy to prepare for the 2024-2025 school year.
- First Steps 4K continues their commitment to providing professional development opportunities that promote the development of children's language and literacy skills.
  - o During the 2024-2025 school year, 3 cohorts of First Steps 4K teachers will participate in Literacy Labs that provide tiered support and coaching from the First Steps 4K Literacy Coach and First Steps 4K Coaches.
  - o During the 2024-2025 school year, 3 cohorts of First Steps 4K teachers will complete LETRS EC (Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling, Early Childhood) training. LETRS EC is a state-funded professional development course offered to CERDEP staff to provide early childhood teachers with a comprehensive understanding of the science of reading. Five First Steps 4K Coaches will provide office hours, support, and coaching through a "book study" to teachers who are enrolled in the LETRS EC training.
- First Steps 4K is partnering with First Steps local partnerships technical assistance providers (TAPs) to support quality improvement efforts. In October 2024, First Steps 4K Coaches, Managers, and First Steps local partnerships TAPs met to receive training from the ABC Quality team on the updated ABC-Q Preschool assessment tool.
- First Steps 4K emphasizes the importance of family engagement by requiring providers to hold four parent-teacher conferences throughout the school year to discuss the child's academic development. The first round of parent-teacher conferences have been held and



highlighted how students performed on their fall GOLD assessment. One First Steps 4K provider, Small Impressions of Fountain Inn, highlighted how providers and parents can partner together and support a child's development regardless of distance. At Small Impressions of Fountain Inn, the Leader and Teacher held a virtual parent-teacher conference with a deployed father to discuss his child's academic progress.

### **III. School Transitions Programs**

### **IV. Fundraising and Development**

- FY21 Actual: \$61,536
- FY22 Actual: \$111,172
- FY23 Actual: \$197,484
- FY24 Goal: 363,750 Actual: \$211,272
- FY25 Goal: \$315,000

### **V. Grant Awards 2024**

#### **4K Expansion Grants**

- Especially Children Child Development Center, Greenville \$30,000 (facility renovation)
- Learning on Main, Warrenton \$22,890 (facility renovation)
- Sr. James AME Church Child Care, Summerville \$30,000 (facility renovation)

#### **Local Partnership Discretionary Funding**

- Summer 2024 Countdown to Kindergarten and Countdown to 4K Awards: \$999,263
  - o 25 total CTK/CT4K grants for Summer 2024, serving 27 counties
  - o 2,778 children served
- 2024-2025 Grant Awards: \$7,178,518 to date
  - o Provide additional one-year Capacity funding for 6 local partnerships, via a competitive application process
  - o Continue multi-year READY awards for Capacity, Effective Programs, and Innovation
  - o Sustain effective programs funded by ESSER for an additional year in parenting and early identification and referral, using READY carryforward and recaptured state formula funding
  - o Continue supporting local partnerships as AmeriCorps service sites for HIPPPY and Family/Community Engagement
  - o Sustain Healthy Steps sites in Anderson, Berkeley, Orangeburg and York via agency partner funding (DSS, DPH)
  - o Sustain Connected Families pilot sites for a fourth year via Duke Endowment and Doris Duke Foundation carryforward funding, transitioning to DSS Title IVE funding
  - o Provide private funding support from Night to Celebrate Community proceeds as well as Enterprise Holdings Foundation, Lipscomb Family Foundation, and Sylvamo

### **VI. Act 81 Implementation**



The following policies have been approved by the Board and are currently being implemented:

- Local Partnership Executive Director Hiring, Salary, and Evaluation
- First Round of Local Partnership Core Personnel Policies
- Local Partnership Bylaws

Work has started to draft the second round of core personnel policies and local partnership procurement policies must still be created. Staff are holding ongoing training sessions on all policies, and assisting local partnership directors and board chairs on a one-on-one basis, as needed, which will continue throughout this process.

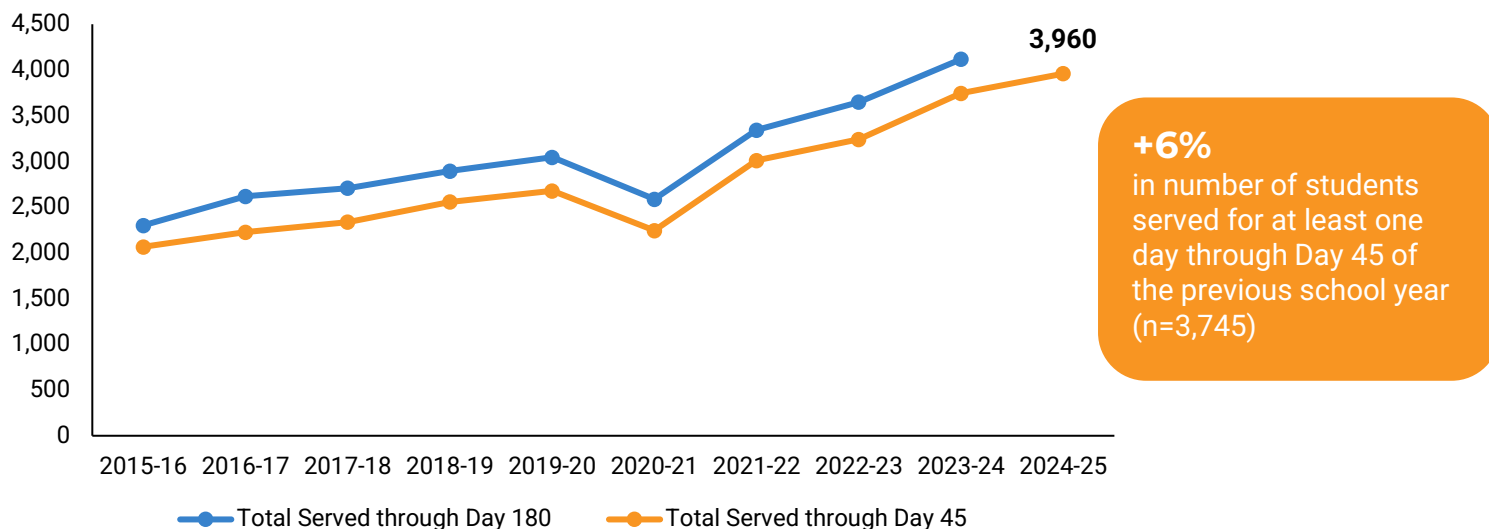
## **VII. HR Updates**

- SC First Steps welcomes the following new staff members:
  - o Taylor Kane Tate, Development Officer
  - o Naya Hall, First 5 Intern
  - o Cate Jones, Scholarship Evaluation Student Assistant
- Currently, the organization has the following vacancies:
  - o 4K Coach (Spartanburg)
  - o 4K Materials Management Coordinator
  - o Child Care Quality Coordinator
  - o Director of Finance
  - o Local Partnership Fiscal Manager
  - o Parenting Coordinator (HIPPIY)
  - o Program Officer (Pee Dee)
  - o Public Engagement Manager

# First Steps 4K aims to increase participation in private, community-based, and faith-based 4K programs across the state

## First Steps 4K served 3,960 students for at least one day through Day 45 of the 2024-2025 school year.

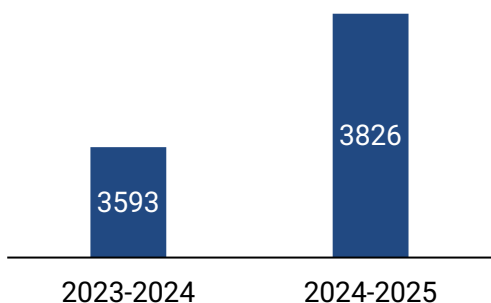
Day 45 of the 2024-2025 school year was October 22, 2024.



**+6%**  
in number of students served for at least one day through Day 45 of the previous school year (n=3,745)

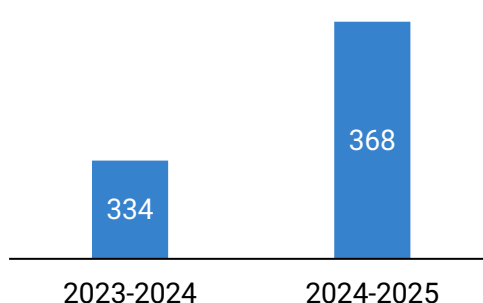
## First Steps 4K had 3,826 students enrolled on Day 45 of the 2024-2025 school year.

**+6%**  
in number of students enrolled on Day 45 of the previous school year



## First Steps 4K had 368 classrooms on Day 45 of the 2024-2025 school year.

**+10%**  
in number of classrooms on Day 45 of the previous school year.



# For 20 years, First Steps local partnerships have supported smooth school transitions



School transition programs promote strong relationships between rising kindergartners, their families, and their teachers. When children are supported in transitions during critical periods of their development, they experience less stress and are more likely to thrive in their new learning environment. In 2004, South Carolina First Steps collaborated with state and local partners to develop and launch Countdown to Kindergarten.

## First Steps local partnerships offer evidence-informed school transition programs.



Countdown teachers complete six sessions with each family in the summer before school entry.



Using an evidence-informed curriculum, Countdown teachers cover topics such as language and literacy, math, and science.

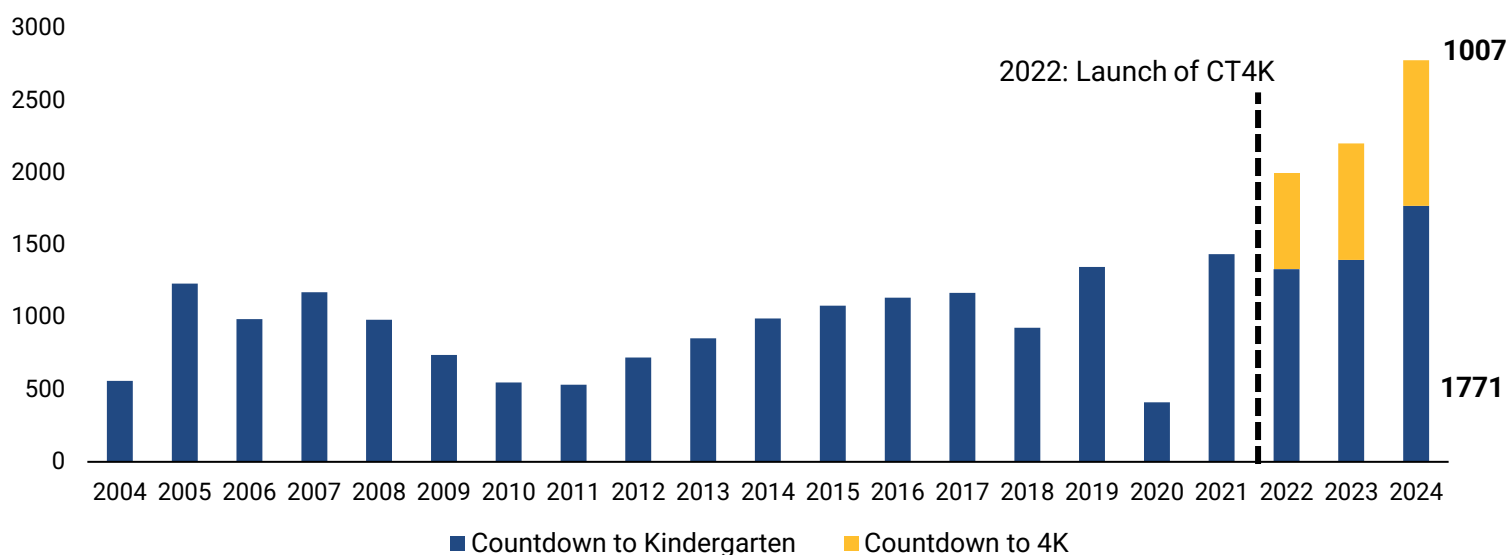


Countdown programs provide learning materials and activities designed to increase family awareness of kindergarten expectations.

## First Steps is serving more children annually through school transition programs.

Countdown to Kindergarten is designed for children entering a kindergarten (5K) program in the upcoming school year. Countdown to 4K is designed for children entering a publicly funded 4K program in the upcoming school year. At the time of enrollment, all families enrolled in Countdown to Kindergarten or Countdown to 4K must have at least one First Steps risk factor.

### Countdown programs served 2,778 children in Summer 2024.



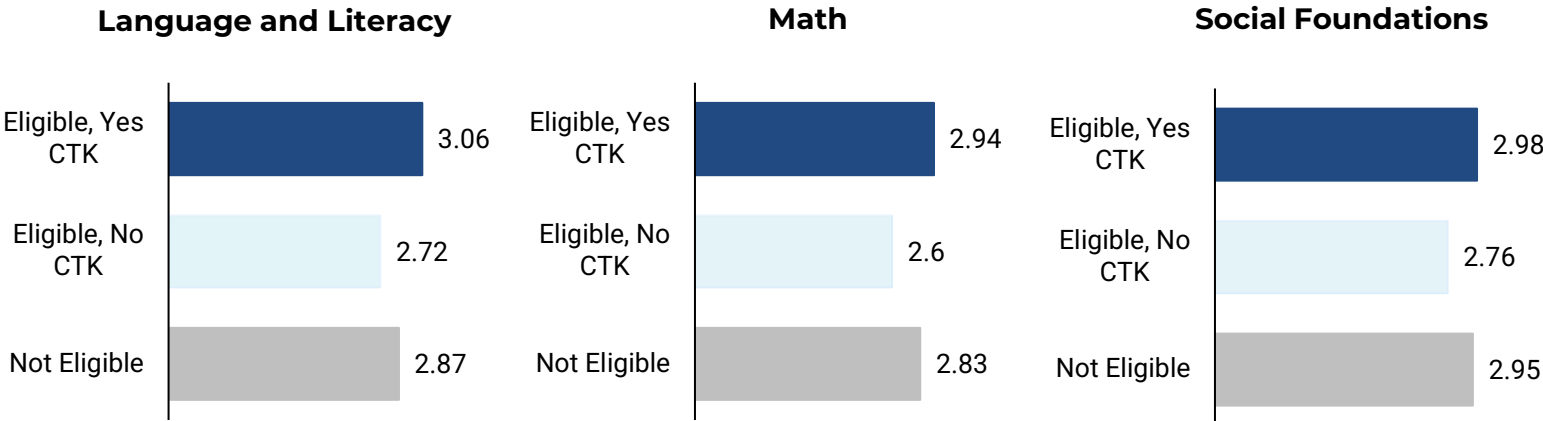


# Countdown to Kindergarten closes the gap in children’s academic skills and home-school relationships.

Thirty kindergarten teachers who participated in Countdown to Kindergarten (CTK) during summer 2022 rated 617 students’ performance in four domains: language and literacy, math, social foundations, and home-school relationships. Of the 617 students, the eligibility status for 201 students was unknown. Of the remaining 416, 42% (n=176) were eligible and participated in CTK, 28% (n=117) were eligible but did not participate in CTK, and 30% (n=123) were not eligible to participate in CTK.

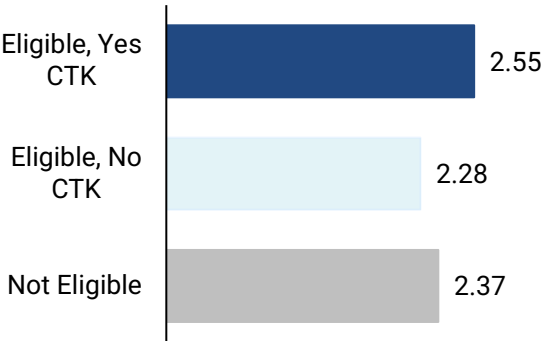
## Children who participated in CTK had statistically significantly higher language and literacy skills, math skills, and social foundation skills, on average, compared to children who were eligible but did not participate in CTK.<sup>1</sup>

Language and literacy, math, and social foundation scores are on a scale from 1 (Not Met) to 4 (Fully Met).



## Children who participated in CTK had statistically significantly stronger home-school relationships, on average, compared to children who were eligible but did not participate in CTK and children who were not eligible to participate in CTK.<sup>1</sup>

Relationship scores are on a scale from 1 (Weak) to 3 (Strong). Engagement scores are on a scale from 1 (Not Engaged) to 3 (Very Engaged).



**These findings provide preliminary evidence that summer transition programs, such as Countdown to Kindergarten, may reduce achievement gaps at kindergarten entry.**

1. Jones, A., Fan, X. D’Amico, L.K., Kilburn, J., & Richard, C. (30 Aug 2024): Impacts of a Summer Transition Program on Kindergarten Readiness for Children from Disadvantaged Backgrounds, Journal of Research in Childhood Education. DOI: 10.1080/02568543.2024.2393808

The project described was supported by the Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five Initiative (PDG B-5), Grant Number 90TP0080-02-01 from the Office of Child Care, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.