



Board of Trustees Meeting
June 20, 2019
2:00 PM
Conference America – Phone Meeting
1-888-537-7715

MINUTES

Members Present (17):

Chip Stanley, Chair
Julie Hussey, Vice Chair
Josh Baker
Shelley Canright
Walter Fleming Jr.
Representative Jerry Govan
Amy Williams
Tim Holt
Mary Lynne Diggs
Angel Johnson-Brebner
Jennifer McConnell
Alexia Newman
Roger Pryor
Mike Leach
Rick Toomey
Sue Williams
Mary Poole

Members Absent (4):

Representative Rita Allison
David Mathis
Senator Greg Hembree
Senator Gerald Malloy

Others Present:

Georgia Mjartan	Candi Lalonde
Samantha Ingram	Jon Artz
Zack Catoe	Melanie Barton
Mark Barnes	Bunnie Ward
Debbie Robertson	
Betty Gardiner	
Cassie Barber	
Porlan Cunningham	
Lavinia Tejada	
Sara Eargle	
Laura Baker	

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Call to Order/Quorum Call

Mr. Chip Stanley called the SC First Steps Board of Trustees meeting to order at 2:04 p.m.

Mr. Stanley welcomed Director Mike Leach, Department of Social Services, to the board and thanked him for his service and participation.

Mr. Tim Holt introduced a motion to approve the meeting agenda as written. Dr. Shelley Canright provided a second and the motion was unanimously approved.

The meeting opened for public comment. No members of the public present wished to speak.

Mr. Stanley called the board's attention to the consent agenda and asked for any discussion. With no request for discussion, Rep. Jerry Govan called for a motion to approve the consent agenda followed by a second by Dr. Amy Williams. The consent agenda was unanimously approved.

The following items on consent agenda were unanimously approved:

- To adopt the April 26, 2019 minutes as submitted.
- To approve the Local Partnership budgets for state funds as proposed in their grant applications and summarized in the attached report.

Mr. Stanley then asked Ms. Julie Hussey to brief the group on the Agency Head Survey for Board and Commission Members, as well as, the Agency Head 2018-2019 Evaluation process.

Ms. Hussey briefed the board on the outcome of the survey and noted that she strongly agreed with the positive ratings and comments regarding the agency's Executive Director, Georgia Mjartan. Ms. Hussey stated that the detailed survey results would be shared with the Executive Committee at their next meeting, at which time the formal evaluation for Ms. Mjartan will be conducted. Ms. Hussey explained that the full board will receive a report on the evaluation and the results at the next board meeting.

Mr. Stanley thanked Ms. Hussey for leading the evaluation process and stated that composite survey score indicated the full board's support of the agency's Executive Director. Ms. Hussey then thanked the board for their participation in the survey.

Mr. Stanley gave the report for the Executive Committee. Mr. Leach gave a brief overview of his background and previous work in Tennessee.

Mr. Stanley pointed the board to the Executive Committee items in their packets and asked for questions. With no questions, Mr. Stanley introduced Ms. Melanie Barton and Ms. Bunnie Ward from the SC Education Oversight Committee.

Ms. Ward and Ms. Barton then presented the "Analysis of Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) Results".

Ms. Barton stated that Education Oversight Committee is charged with approving all the accountability measures by which schools are rated in our state and when going through the process, districts overwhelmingly asked the EOC to include the information on kindergarten readiness for their elementary school. Ms. Barton noted that on the Annual School Report Cards for every district and every elementary



school you will find the KRA results and is one of the reasons the EOC got involved in publishing the reports and giving information district by district.

Ms. Barton explained that the other part of the EOC's requirements is to analyze the impact of the full-day 4K program for at risk students in our state. Ms. Barton said besides using 4K assessments that were imposed on early literacy, the EOC used the results of the KRA to analyze how well students who were in full-day 4K performed when they got to school in 5K.

Ms. Ward then went on to explain the results of the KRA. Ms. Ward said the general purpose of the KRA is to provide information on children's preparedness for kindergarten as it tells the public that children are entering kindergarten with skills needed to be prepared for kindergarten. Ms. Ward noted that specific assessment measures included in the KRA are language and literacy, mathematics, physical well-being and motor development, as well as, social foundation. For each of the areas Ms. Ward mentioned, individual children's scores can be classified in one of three categories: demonstrating readiness, approaching readiness and emerging readiness.

Ms. Ward stated that according to this year's report, 37% of kindergarteners were considered ready as compared to 36% in 2017. Ms. Ward explained that the students performed slightly worse in language and literacy and math, with math being the lowest domain or the domain with the lowest percentage across the state at demonstrating readiness, but that social foundations and physical development, as well as, wellbeing scores were higher in 2018 than they were in 2017. Among ethnicities, the reports says that 46% of white children, 27% of African-American children and 24% of Hispanic children performed at the demonstrating readiness level.

Ms. Ward said 86% of students who were CERDEP 4K students during the prior school year '17-'18 took the KRA and about 36 percent of those students that had been enrolled in CERDEP when they entered 5K scored at demonstrating readiness compared to 37 percent of all other kindergarteners.

Ms. Ward said it was important to note that kindergarteners who also participated in CERDEP are a homogenous group of being low income, at or below the 185 percent of poverty and/or with developmental delays. Ms. Ward said that that we know that that group in CERDEP is coming in either with a socioeconomic challenge or a developmental delay challenge and yet they are scoring very, very close to the range of all kindergarteners on the KRA.

Ms. Ward explained how the KRA is administered as a mixed model, or it is multi model, meaning some of the direct observations are by teachers, especially around a child's social development readiness versus language and literacy or mathematics which is a more direct, less subjective assessment approach. Ms. Ward noted that the EOC will look at ongoing training for teachers around how and when to administer the KRA. Ms. Barton noted that the EOC will be working with the district to make sure the date of the assessment is put on the assessment record so that data can be collected and analyzed to help improve on the consistency of when the KRA is administered.

Ms. Ward said other findings came about when trying to match the children or look at them by their indicator of whether or not they were in public CERDEP, public 4K settings or private 4K settings. Ms. Ward said there was difficulty showing that we have incomplete data based upon whether or not that child was in a public setting or a private setting. When that matching actually occurred only 39 of the children that were matched were actually First Steps students or were students that had been in a private CERDEP setting in the prior year. Ms. Ward stated that it is a real issue with the data being carried over from what happens in 4K where they are first assigned that individual student ID number. Collectively, SC



need to do a better job as a system making sure that those ID numbers, which are called SUNS numbers, are transferred over when they register or enroll in a 5K program. Ms. Ward noted that the data set is showing that we are not capturing the children who participated in a private 4K setting.

Ms. Mjartan reminded the board that part of the legislatively-mandated five-year external evaluation that the agency is in the midst of is conducting an analysis that will specifically look at First Steps 4K.

Ms. Jennifer McConnell asked who assigned the SUNS numbers. Ms. Ward said the SC Department of Education assigns the numbers once SCFS submits the names of enrolled First Steps 4K students.

Ms. Mjartan clarified that SCFS confirms that SUNS numbers are assigned when a child is enrolled in First Steps 4K and that the agency has confirmation that over 2,220 children were assigned SUNS numbers and that would have been the same group who took this particular KRA.

Dr. Amy Williams asked if the children identified as Latino were given the assessment in English or Spanish. Ms. Ward answered by saying that it depended on the district, but if the child had been identified as an English as a Second Language learner, that it is the EOC's understanding that the assessment is provided in Spanish.

Ms. Barton discussed the efficacy of home visitation and parenting education programs and how those programs can look on the KRA. Ms. Barton noted that the KRA is a helpful tool and will become more and more helpful with the capability to include SUNS numbers to kids who participate in other programs, for example, Parents as Teachers or other home visitation programs.

Ms. Mary Lynne Diggs requested that the board look at this as a continuum of where SC's children are and how they are doing so we all can better plan for them long term. Ms. Diggs stated that the board, and the Early Childhood Advisory Council, would look at the opportunity for all children in any setting be assigned a SUNS number.

Mr. Stanley thanked Ms. Ward and Ms. Barton for their presentation.

Mr. Walter Fleming gave the Finance and Administration Committee report. Mr. Fleming pointed the board to the financial reports and noted the addition of the Preschool Development Grant funding to the budget. Mr. Fleming stated that 4K spending is on track with the projections.

Mr. Fleming stated that the Office of Material Management has awarded the contract for the new local partnership finance software system and that it will take about six months to get this new system, Blackbaud, fully operational.

Mr. Fleming told the board that SCFS is currently recruiting for a 4K Fiscal Manager, hired a data analyst to look into data software systems, and will be establishing an IT Manager position for the agency.

Ms. McConnell gave the Program and Grants Committee report. Ms. McConnell stated that the committee met to approve the proposed budget and programs at the local partnerships for Fiscal Year 2020.

Ms. McConnell said the committee brings, for information only, the reallocation of state funds requiring a budget reduction of more than 15% for McCormick County (transfer of \$1,000 from Imagination Library to Scholarships) and Saluda County (transfer of \$6,500 from Child Care Quality Enhancement to Early Education Summer program).



Ms. McConnell said the committee further discussed the formula funding grant application and process. The committee also reviewed the timeline of events for the FY2020 Formula Funding Grant Review and Quality Improvement Cycle, along with possible changes to corrective action plans.

Ms. McConnell stated the need for grant applications (including budget spending plans as submitted) to comply with the requirements in legislation regarding both the 15% match and 13% administrative overhead limit. Ms. McConnell expressed that those items are being more closely monitored by finance staff as the end of the fiscal year approaches and local partnerships are being reminded to pay close attention to expenditures. Ms. McConnell reminded the board that exceeding the administrative overhead cap will result in loss of state funding as our law no longer allows the board to grant waivers.

Ms. McConnell pointed the board to the Projected Local Partnerships Budget, FY2020 document in their packet and thank Mr. Zack Catoe and Ms. Debbie Robertson for creating the document.

Ms. McConnell stated that according to the document, the top program where SCFS is spending money and based on the projected budget, the number one funded program Parents as Teachers. Ms. McConnell noted that Childcare Quality Enhancement and then the third area where most state funds are spent is in the Scholarship Initiatives.

Ms. McConnell said overall the impact that First Steps contributes to local partnerships is \$14.4 million in state funds awarded to the partnership. Then, with other funding sources like federal, local, private, in-kind the local impact is \$19.1M making the total investment in Early Childhood through the SCFS local partnerships is \$33.5M.

Dr. Amy Williams gave the Strategic Planning and Administration Committee report. Dr. Williams reported that the agency is ready to begin writing the strategic plan after a successful board retreat held on April 26, 2019. Dr. Williams stated that in preparation for writing, SCFS and other early childhood stakeholders have identified that collectively the agency values high quality, equity, value and results. Dr. Williams said the next step is to identify strategic priorities and our values will apply to these.

Ms. Mjartan briefed the board on legislative matters and stated that a proviso was proposed to create an Early Childhood Education Study Committee with the purpose to study early childhood integration efforts. Ms. Mjartan said Governor McMaster did veto the study committee proviso, however, the General Assembly would convene once more to take up all vetoes.

Rep. Govan added that it is critical that we report all of the things SCFS is doing, in order to stave off the efforts like the study committee. Rep. Govan encouraged board members to approach legislators to remind them to sustain the veto.

Ms. Mjartan said she, along with Mr. Stanley, would draft a veto letter that would be shared with all legislators to encourage them to sustain the veto.

Ms. Mjartan gave the Executive Director's report. Ms. Mjartan discussed the importance of securing private funding and noted things the state office is doing to raise private funds to help reach more kids and families. Ms. Mjartan announced the hire of Ms. Betty Gardiner as the agency's Director of Grantmaking and Development as well as the recruitment of a Development Coordinator.



Ms. Mjartan stated that there will be fundraising component in Blackbaud, the new local partnerships finance software system, for use by all Local Partnerships.

Ms. Mjartan announced that SCFS will be planning an inaugural fundraising event in 2020 in addition to celebrating the agency's 20th Anniversary this fall. Ms. Mjartan would like to have board members help plan or suggest members to be on the planning team for the events.

Ms. Mjartan then informed the board that she has hired a Strategic Impact Manager, Chelsea Richard.

Mr. Stanley asked for any questions or comments.

With no further business, Dr. Canright made a motion to adjourn the meeting which was seconded by Rep. Govan. The meeting was adjourned at 3:09 p.m.