



South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness
Board of Trustees
January 27, 2016

MINUTES

Members Present (22):

Ken Wingate, Chair
Julie Hussey, Vice Chair
Superintendent Molly Spearman
Roger Pryor
Dr. Beverly Buscemi
Rick Noble
Tim Holt
Mary Lynn Diggs
Alexia Newman
Sue Williams
Judith Aughtry (via Phone)
Walter Fleming
Evelyn Patterson
Jennifer McConnell
Christian Soura
Kathryn Burkhalter

Members Absent (3):

Senator Mike Fair
Senator Gerald Malloy
Rep. Rita Allison
Rep. Jerry Govan
Catherine Heigel
Susan Alford
Dr. Amy Williams
Tracy Lamb

Others Present:

Julia-Ellen Davis
Dr. Dan Wuori
Mark Barnes
Debbie Robertson
Martha Strickland
Betty Gardiner
Ginger Ryall
Rebecca Brown
Russell Brown
Kristie Musick
Mary Anne Mathews
Beverly Mills
Dana Gray

Lisa Cooper
Samantha Ingram
Rosemary Wilson
Cindy Dickerson
Lora Bryson
Patti Wilkes
Pegie White
Carolyn Brooks
Adrienne Troy-Frazier
Dorothy Priester
Randall Johnson
Karen Martini
Jim Riddle
Deb Padgett
Josh Baker

Welcome and Introductions, Quorum Call and Adoption of Minutes

Mr. Wingate called the meeting to order at 1:04 pm, noted the presence of a quorum and reminded those in attendance that the meeting was being held in compliance with the SC Freedom of Information Act. **Upon a motion by Mr. Fleming and a second by Mr. Pryor the Board unanimously adopted the meeting minutes of December 3, 2015.**

Chairman's Report

Mr. Wingate introduced new trustee, Ms. Kathryn Burkhalter, and welcomed Ms. Burkhalter to the board.

Mr. Wingate reviewed board committee assignments and announced Ms. McConnell the new chair of the Program and Grants Committee and Ms. Newman the new chair of the Strategic Planning and Evaluation Committee.

Mr. Wingate then introduced Mr. Josh Baker, Deputy Chief of Staff (Budget and Policy), for Governor Nikki Haley. Mr. Baker presented the Governor's Plan for First Steps Reauthorization. Mr. Baker stated the Governor felt it was appropriate to roll out an education plan for the 2016 legislative session and proceeded to give background on First Steps reauthorization requirements. Mr. Baker noted that program preservation, independent governance, objective assessment of program trajectory and performance and focus of the program's future were guiding principles in the Governor's proposal.

Mr. Baker presented four components of the Governor's proposal. Mr. Baker stated that the Governor's plan included a Deputy Superintendent for Early Childhood Education to oversee all 4K in the public and private settings. The proposal also includes fiscal and technical support to local partnerships via the Children's Trust, reconstitution of the ECAC under the State Department of Education, and a BabyNet partnership between the Department of Health and Human Services and the State Department of Education. Mr. Baker elaborated further on these points and answered questions from Trustees.

Mr. Wingate stated that a meeting with the Governor's Office was scheduled for the next day and that further meetings would be scheduled before the end of February. Mr. Wingate said a reauthorization bill would be filed and that it was important to develop a framework and hear all

ideas before drafting a bill. He asked Mr. Baker to stay and answer questions from partnership directors at the end of the meeting.

Finance and Administration Committee Report

Ms. Aughtry introduced the committee's report to the board and turned the presentation over to Ms. Robertson.

Ms. Robertson provided background regarding a waiver request from Charleston County First Steps, regarding local payment authorizations. Ms. Robertson noted that current process requires a local board member to countersign any Partnership payment authorization exceeding \$500. Noting the inconvenience involved and the large number of payment authorizations associated with their new Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership grant, Charleston First Steps has requested that this threshold be raised to \$2,000. Ms. Robertson reviewed the committee's motion to approve the waiver request of Charleston County First Steps for the remainder of FY16, requiring staff to monitor and evaluate this process.

Mr. Noble offered an amendment to expand the proposed motion, on the table, to allow all counties to request such a waiver and to permit a secondary waiver allowing partnerships to submit of a list of approved, recurring invoices greater than \$2000 for approval with a single signature. **The board unanimously approved the amendment to the motion on the table.**

Ms. Williams asked the committee how the waiver approval program would be evaluated. Mr. Barnes stated that the waiver was for cash payments to be paid to another entity and the evaluation would be based on a cash management approval process.

After more discussion, the **Board unanimously voted to approve the waiver request of Charleston County First Steps and to extend this opportunity to other local partnerships requesting waivers for the remainder of FY16, requiring dual signature invoices exceeding \$2,000. Per Mr. Noble's amendment, the Board also approved a secondary waiver process allowing partnerships to submit of a list of approved, recurring invoices greater than \$2000 for approval with a single signature.**

Mr. Noble asked about the donation report for the I CAN public awareness campaign. Mr. Wingate stated the board would receive a report on the expenses and finance details for the [I CAN] campaign at the March meeting.

Mr. Barnes gave a brief overview on the State Office financial processes and the Regional Finance Manager system and reminded the board that First Steps is funded through EIA funds and those funds which must be requested each quarter.

Mr. Barnes then reviewed the state budget request, noting that First Steps had provided an interagency BabyNet budget request to the House Ways and Means Health Committee for the first time.

Program and Grants Committee

Ms. McConnell introduced the committee's report to the board. Ms. Robertson reviewed local partnership budget reallocation requests presented to the committee.

After discussion, the board unanimously voted to approve new strategy requests from Dorchester and Florence Counties.

Ms. Robertson provided the board with an update on conditional approvals and the FY16 Partnership and Accountability Standards.

Strategic Planning and Evaluation Committee

Ms. Newman noted that Compass Evaluation and Research would begin efforts to evaluate SC's Parents as Teachers program.

Ms. Newman reminded the board of three major components of the strategic plan passed by the board on December 3, 2015. Ms. Newman said it was time to put operational steps in place to address the following the Board's three strategic themes: increase awareness, enhance leadership, and strengthen partnerships. A draft will be presented by the committee at the March meeting.

Executive Committee

Mr. Wingate noted the departure of Lisa Van Riper, the Board's longtime Secretary and noted the need to replace her. Mr. Wingate made a **motion that Ms. Newman be elected the Secretary of the board. Mr. Holt seconded the motion, and the motion was unanimously approved.**

Director's Report

Ms. Davis called the Board's attention to her written Director's Report. She reviewed details regarding legislative presentations, the Early Head Start-Child Care partnership grant, the [I CAN] school readiness campaign, First Steps 4K, and BabyNet.

Ms. Davis called on Ms. Strickland to discuss events pertaining to First Steps 4K.

Ms. Strickland reported that the Education Oversight Committee released Part One of the 2016 4K Report. The report noted that private 4K students' early literacy results on the Circle Assessment were superior in 4K and roughly equivalent in 5K to those of children who had attended 4K in public schools. The report also noted that private providers received a significant amount of training and technical assistance in supporting the early literacy, stating that private 4K providers reported being better prepared to administer the Circle assessment, as they used the results to meaningfully inform instruction, administered the Circle more often (mid-year and year-end), and used the data to inform parents.

Ms. Strickland gave an update on recent 4K professional development opportunities, including training on the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale (ECERS) 3rd Edition.

Old Business

Mr. Wingate made a motion to approve proposed revisions to the Early Head Start Governance Council Charter, contingent on Region IV Review. **The motion was approved unanimously.**

Mr. Wingate made a motion to approve the proposed slate of Early Head Start Governance Council members as proposed by the Executive Committee. Legal Counsel will be provided by the agency as necessary. A Head Start parent nominee will be brought forward at a later date. After discussion by the board, **the motion was approved unanimously.**

Ms. Davis reminded the board of upcoming Governance Council training and reminded the board that each Trustee was invited to attend, independent of their participation in the governance council. Additional training will be provided to the entire Board on March 17, 2016.

Mr. Wingate asked the board to discuss whether or not the SC First Steps Board of Trustees would endorse the Early Childhood Common Agenda. **Mr. Holt made a motion that the SC First Steps Board of Trustees not consider making any endorsement until after reauthorization. Mr. Pryor seconded the motion and the motion was approved unanimously, with Ms. Williams, Ms. Buscemi, and Ms. Diggs abstaining.**

Mr. Wingate acknowledged all local partnership Executive Directors at the meeting and gave each person time to speak and address the board. Mr. Wingate made a commitment to everyone in the room that as information becomes available pertaining to reauthorization and Governor's proposal it would be distributed. He invited everyone to be a part of the ongoing conversations pertaining to such topics. Mr. Wingate stated that a multiple public forums would be scheduled and hoped to have broad participation. Ms. Williams addressed the crowd and stated she was honored by the governor to be included in the proposal.

There being no additional business, the Board adjourned at 3:15 pm.