



Board of Trustees

Principles of Engagement

Purpose/Mission

As the South Carolina First Steps community of trustees, staff, local partnership board members, staff, partners and volunteers, we are committed to work together to actualize the mission of First Steps to School Readiness. The mission, as stated in legislation since inception, is clear: *“to develop, promote, and assist efforts of agencies, private providers, and public and private organizations and entities, at the state level and the community level, to collaborate and cooperate in order to focus and intensify services, assure the most efficient use of all available resources, and eliminate duplication of efforts to serve the needs of young children and their families.”* (Section 59-152-20)

To this end, we commit to a high standard of excellence in our behavior as described below and as grounded in the Duties of Care, Loyalty, and Obedience (founded in trust, respect, integrity, teamwork, camaraderie, loyalty, interdependence, and mutuality). The following statements will guide our interaction as we work together to accomplish our mission.

Agreements

As a leader of South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness organization, I understand...

- ♦ When making decisions, I/we always place the interest of South Carolina families and children *first*.
- ♦ I/we act in ways that are selfless and in the interest of the common higher good.
- ♦ I/we practice open-mindedness and transparency in dealings with trustees, volunteers, and/or staff.
- ♦ I/we practice mutual respect, courtesy, and candor with fellow trustees, volunteers, and/or staff.
- ♦ I/we appreciate one another’s opinions, the right to freely express them and the opportunity for constructive debate and respectful disagreement.
- ♦ I/we work in a spirit of collaboration and in a cooperative problem-solving mode.
- ♦ Once decisions are made, we speak with one voice and I/we abide by and support the collective decision(s) of the board.
- ♦ All trustees have access to the same information.
- ♦ I/we prevent and avoid marginalizing any member.
- ♦ I/we are dependable and accountable in regard to attendance, preparation, and engagement.
- ♦ I/we invest the time and preparation necessary to be an effective trustee, one who is prepared to listen, not only to speak.
- ♦ I/we are culturally responsive in all of our dealings.
- ♦ When deemed appropriate, and not a violation of South Carolina law, I/we maintain confidentiality in non-public matters.
- ♦ I/we commit to a board/staff relationship which supports an interactive process for constructive decision-making.
- ♦ I/we are fearless in our vision, commitment, and support for South Carolina’s young children and families.

Reviewed and accepted this ____ day of _____ by _____

Signature

Adopted by the SC First Steps to School Readiness Board of Trustees: June 18, 2015