



To: South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness Board of Trustees

From: Julia-Ellen C. Davis, Interim Director

Date: December 1, 2017

RE: Interim Director's Report

Since our last Board of Trustees meeting in October, we have focused on preparing for the transition of our new Executive Director, Georgia Mjartan, planning for the 2017 Chairmen's Summit on Early Childhood Education, and addressing the start of Round 2 for the Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership. Over the past weeks Georgia has met with several board members and other stakeholders in preparation for taking the reins of leadership at this wonderful organization.

During an all-staff meeting on October 26, everyone was fascinated to learn about her personal and professional experiences all of which are so relevant to the work we do. Staff left that meeting impressed with the wisdom of the Board to have selected such a capable leader. The Executive Directors of the Local Partnerships were provided an opportunity to meet our incoming First Steps Executive Director at the state office in Columbia prior to the monthly First Steps Leadership Webinar on November 14.

By the time this report is read, Georgia will be on the job and everyone will have an opportunity to greet her at the Summit on December 8 in the Columbia Convention Center.

LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS

- Conducted the November First Steps Leadership Webinar, where an overview of the FY 17 statewide numbers served data and trends for the past three years were presented. This data was a compilation of individual partnership data for all programs and services provided to families and children during the 2017 fiscal year.
- Reviewed and finalized the "Local Partnership Profile" pages for each county. They were included in the 2017 First Steps State Annual Report highlighting key statistics, programs and accomplishments for each county.
- Continued to support, through our Partnership Technical Assistance team, the comprehensive planning activities of local partnerships across the state. The comprehensive planning process is designed to educate and engage local board members as well as align local partnership programs with:
 - State Board Adopted Strategic Priorities
 - First Steps Legislative Goals
 - *Profile of the Ready Kindergartner* benchmarks
 - Comprehensive Plans, adopted by each local board, are due to the state office by February 2018

- Worked to support our Summit Coordinator in planning and preparation for the Chairmen's Summit. The TA Team is responsible for the morning and afternoon panels which are designed to highlight successes and promising new programs.
- Distributed information regarding *Palmetto Basics*, a community mobilization strategy begun in the upstate, which will be featured at the Chairmen's Summit. Local Partnership participation is now available state wide.
- Began planning for partnering with TogetherSC (previously SCANPO) to encourage and support local partnership participation at their Annual Non-profit Summit (March 4-7, 2018). The summit offers targeted professional development for our partnership executive directors and board members and provides a great opportunity for networking.
- Scheduled to participate in the Race Equity and Inclusion (REI) Learning Collaborative kick-off at the Sisters of Charity Foundation on December 5. The REI Partnership aims to disseminate knowledge and facilitate collaboration to advance race equity and inclusion. The "Race for Results" 2017 Kids Count Policy Report was released which compares how children are progressing on key milestones across racial and ethnic groups in South Carolina.

EARLY HEAD START- CHILD CARE PARTNERSHIP (EHS-CCP)

The current EHS-CCP enrollment is 256 students in 15 centers with a total of 32 classrooms. Program highlights in the second quarter include the following:

EHS-CCP: Governance

- Held Policy Council meeting on November 9, 2017. The last meeting for 2017 is on December 19, 2017.
- Elected the new Policy Council Chair, Kiki Billings, and Vice Chair, Felicity Bradley, for the 2017-2018 program year.,
- Conducted monthly EHS-CCP Director conference calls on October 25 and November 22, 2017.
- Estimated renovation costs for additional classrooms at six current partners and eight new child care centers for expansion. Twenty more EHS-CCP classrooms will be added. Contracts were reviewed by the SC First Steps attorney and distributed to eight child care partners for fourteen new classrooms.

EHS-CCP: Education

- Collected the Fall Checkpoints for educational outcomes data using the Teaching Strategies (TS) Gold assessment tool.
- Provided training on entering children's anecdotal records into TS Gold over the summer months to Early Head Start-CCP teachers. All classrooms entered data for the Fall checkpoint. Most children met or exceeded the developmental expectations for their age.

EHS-CCP: Personnel

- Scheduled interviews for Health Coordinator and Health Advocate positions on December 15. Posted ad for the new position of Education Manager.
- Developed a required three-day preservice training for new EHS-CCP staff to be held January 10-12, 2018. A majority of the staff at the training will be teachers and family advocates who have been hired for the Round Two sites.
- Provided Child Plus and Parents as Teachers training to Family Services staff.

EHS-CCP: Family and Community Partnerships/ERSEA

- Maintained a waiting list of 254 children with a funded enrollment of 256 infants and toddlers. This represents 15% infants, 38% one year olds, and 47% two year olds.
- Identified that the majority (79%) of Early Head Start families are living below the Federal Poverty Guidelines. The percentage of families who are eligible based on other factors such as public assistance, foster care or homeless status is 21%.
- Maintained a monthly Average Daily Attendance (ADA) of 86.14 % in October 2017.
- Enrolled 23% of children with SC Vouchers. This grant requirement is for 25%.
- Family Services staff received a week of orientation training in November.

EHS-CCP: Health and Disability Services

- Served at least 29 children (11%) who have either an IFSP or IEP this program year. Have referred children to BabyNet.
- Identified the following health conditions of children in the program: Anemia (8) Asthma (17) Hearing Difficulties 53 (2) Vision (7) Diabetes (1)
- Referred two children for Mental Health Services this program year
- Met 100% of our 45 day sensory and developmental screening requirements and all children are covered by health insurance.
- Scheduled the Health Services Advisory Committee to meet on December 19.
- Installed new playgrounds at fifteen child care partner sites

FIRST STEPS 4K

Our 4K program has a current enrollment of 2,296 students in 215 classrooms at 196 centers as of November 30, 2017. Center choices of the 4 model options, enabled by proviso for 2017-2018:

Option A: **29 classrooms** - Standard School Year, 6.5 hours x 180 days

Option B: **32 classrooms** - Extended School Day 8.5 hours x 180 days

Option C: **25 classrooms** - Extended School Year 6.5 hours x 220 days

Option D: **129 classrooms** - Standard School Year + 8 weeks of summer instruction for 8.5 hours daily

- Implemented the first semester of *Building Learners and Outcomes through Opportunities and Models* (BLOOM) for our 4K Lead Teachers. BLOOM is a progress and development tool to challenge teachers of every skill and experience level to help change the growth trajectory for the teacher and his/her students. As of November 15, 151 out of the 215 teachers had designed and met their goals. All

teachers are completing self-reflections to plan goals for second semester. First semester goals were based on social-emotional skill building with curriculum objectives set for second semester goals. Joy Mazur is the project lead for BLOOM.

- Maintained participation on the SC Early Learning Standards (SC ELS) Leadership Team. ADA compliance work is happening now and the final print and on-line versions will be ready by mid-January. Plans are being made for the professional development offerings of the SC ELS so that all stakeholders can access.
- Awarded the National Director's Credential through National Louis University's McCormick Center to twelve of our SC First Steps 4K directors through our Aim for Excellence cohort. Five more directors are scheduled to complete requirements within the next two weeks. Directors report overwhelming growth and progress in their skillsets through this opportunity. A panel discussion from this group is scheduled at the Chairmen's Summit. Kristine Jenkins and Sharon Bruton shepherded our cohort.
- Hired Regional Coordinator for the upstate, Carla Brown, and another for the coastal region, Cindy Galloway. Their strong early childhood backgrounds will serve our children and programs well.

SC PARENTS AS TEACHERS (PAT)

South Carolina First Steps is the State Office for Parents as Teachers, a nationally recognized, evidence-based home visitation model, which is widely implemented by local partnerships. Since the last BOT meeting in Oct. PAT has been busy putting all state affiliates into the state report for FY 16/17.

- 42 National Annual Performance Reports were reviewed and were notified of status related to model requirements.
- 37 SC affiliates met all 17 Essential Requirements which is great improvement from the previous year. The other 7 are working on success plans to ensure they meet all 17 in this current program year.

Highlights from the 2016-17 State Report are as follows:

- 1,967 families were served and 2,259 children
 - 94 % had at risk factors for school readiness and 77% had 2 or more risk factors
 - 31,674 personal visits were made
 - 97% Goals documented and 91% of families had complete Annual Screenings
 - 572 potential delays/concerns identified
 - 97% of 19-35 month olds reported up-to-date immunizations
 - 87 % family retention rate (excluding those who moved out of the service area)
- ASQ-3, ASQ-SE2, ACIRI and LSP trainings have been conducted for new affiliates through November and December.

HUMAN RESOURCES

- Scheduled and completed State Human Resources Division's *Supervisory Practices* training for seven supervisors in 4K, EHS-CCP and Finance. Senior management and approximately four other supervisors will take this training in 2018.
- EPMS evaluations of all First Steps staff were due for completion November 30.

FINANCE AND OPERATIONS

Baby Net

All Baby Net staff have moved out of First Steps' offices. We continue to work with DHHS on finalizing the expense transfers. DHHS has been responsive in ensuring that we are reimbursed for the costs of their operations for this fiscal year.

State Budget Request

Senior staff will be meeting with representatives of the House Ways and Means Committee during the week of December 11 to discuss the state budget request for 2018-19.

Child Care Partner Tax Credits

First Steps continues to work as a part of a collaborative effort that includes The Children's Trust, the Institute for Child Success, Save the Children, and the United Way Association of SC, for improving the quality of childcare in the state. A state budget proviso has been developed for a pilot project in 5 counties that would implement Tax Credits for Teachers, center directors and centers that are in the DSS Quality Rating system. We hope to present it to the House Ways and Means during the upcoming meeting.

Local Partnership Financial System

As was reported in the State Budget Request, the financial software that is being used by the Local Partnership Financial Manager, the SC First Steps State Office, and the Local Partnerships will no longer be supported by the vendor that developed the software as of December of 2018. In lieu of this, we are pursuing replacement software that will improve the level of financial management throughout the system. We hope to include additional functions such as fundraising, electronic work flow processing for procurement, invoicing, etc. The purchase process will include Executive Directors from Local Partnerships, the LP's Financial Manager's staff, state office staff and a representative from the First Steps Board. We hope to have the system in place by July 1, 2018.

Operations

- Completed 90% of work on the upgrades to the two conference rooms for the state office. This will improve the quality of teleconferencing and video conferencing for the organization.

- Began the security system improvements for the state office. This will improve the overall security of the building and provide ID badges for all employees. These badges will allow for entry into the building and help identify staff externally.
- Completed the sign design of the First Steps exterior signs on the building at the state office. The design will be submitted to the lessor for approval and should be installed in the next six weeks.