



**South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness  
Board of Trustees Meeting  
April 20, 2018**

**Canal Room, EdVenture Children's Museum, Columbia  
11 a.m.**

**MINUTES**

**Members Present (19):**

Ken Wingate, Chair  
Julie Hussey, Vice-Chair  
Deputy Superintendent David Mathis  
Representative Rita Allison  
Senator Gerald Malloy  
Senator Greg Hembree  
Representative Jerry Govan  
Judith Aughtry  
Amy Williams  
Walter Fleming  
Jennifer McConnell  
Sue Williams  
Rick Noble  
Roger Pryor  
Susan Alford  
Josh Baker  
David Wilson  
Tim Holt

**Members Absent (1):**

Pat Talley  
Alexia Newman

**Staff Present:**

Georgia Mjartan  
Dan Wuori  
Martha Strickland  
Debbie Robertson  
Mark Barnes  
Russell Brown  
Samantha Ingram  
Betty Gardiner  
Kate Roach  
Ginger Ryall



Mr. Ken Wingate called the meeting to order at 11:19 a.m. and stated that a quorum was present.

Mr. Wingate stated that pursuant to Section VI(b) of the Bylaws of the SC First Steps to School Readiness Board of Trustees, Superintendent Molly Spearman designated Mr. David Mathis as her designee and will be a voting member.

Mr. Wingate noted that Ms. Tracy Lamb had submitted a resignation letter, effective immediately. Pursuant to the aforementioned Bylaws, a quorum consists of 11 board members.

Mr. Wingate called for a motion to approve the agenda for the meeting. After a motion by Dr. Amy Williams and a second by Represented Jerry Govan, the minutes were unanimously approved.

Mr. Wingate called for a motion to approve the minutes of the February 16, 2018 meeting. After a motion by Senator Greg Hembree and a second by Ms. Judith Aughtry, the minutes were unanimously approved.

Mr. Ken Wingate, along with Ms. Georgia Mjartan gave the report for the Executive Committee. Both Mr. Wingate and Ms. Mjartan informed the board that it was the recommendation of the Executive Committee to procure a search firm to assist with the recruitment of the Early Head Start – Child Care Partnership Director. Ms. Sue Williams asked for a cost estimate and Ms. Mjartan said the cost for would be approximately \$18,000.

Upon the recommendation by the Executive Committee, the motion to authorize the engagement of a search firm to assist with the recruitment of candidates for the position of Early Head Start – Child Care Partnership Director passed unanimously.

Ms. Judith Aughtry gave the Finance and Administration Committee report. Ms. Aughtry pointed the board to the completed Form 990 in their packet. After no questions, the motion from the Finance and Administration Committee to approve the 990 Form as presented by Manley Garvin for the 2017 state fiscal year was passed unanimously. Ms. Aughtry deferred to Mr. Mark Barnes to discuss the Local Partnerships allocations. Mr. Barnes mentioned that the free and reduced lunch risk factor is no longer captured by school districts, therefore that data point is not current. He suggested that a committee form to recommend what factors moving forward would be used to determine allocations since this factor was not up-to-date anymore. Allocations this year were based on what factors are available.

Mr. Wingate asked if the Local Partnerships had seen this information. Mr. Barnes answered and said the dollar amounts had not changed from what was preliminarily shown to the Local Partnerships.



Upon a recommendation by the Finance and Administration Committee, the motion to approve the Local Partnerships Allocations for State Fiscal Year 2018-2019 was approved unanimously.

Ms. Georgia Mjartan discussed establishment of a new code to capture core functions within the Local Partnerships. Ms. Mjartan gave context and the purpose for this recommendation which is to be more transparent while not changing administrative cap. Upon a recommendation by the Finance and Administration Committee, a motion was presented to approve the establishment of a new code for core functions and community mobilization, allowing local partnerships to appropriate not more than 12% of South Carolina First Steps funds for these purposes. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Aughtry pointed the board to the finance dashboard and Mr. Barnes gave details of the financial report. Mr. Barnes stated that the 4K program will have the largest difference in the amount of money which is due to all of the changes with extended care and summer school options for the students.

Ms. Williams asked about \$2M in balance remaining in the Local Partnership line item. Ms. Barnes said that is a timing issue with the Regional Finance Managers and that money has already been paid, but was done after this report had run.

Mr. Roger Pryor asked about the projected carry forward for 4K. Mr. Barnes said most of the funds allocated for this year will be spent for the extended care and summer school options and that we will have significantly less carry forward than in years past.

Mr. Pryor gave the Early Head Start Governance Council report. Upon recommendation by the Early Head Start Governance Council, the motion to approve the Early Head Start Round One Continuation Application as approved by both the Policy Council and the Early Head Start Governance Council, Wednesday, April 18, was approved unanimously.

Upon recommendation by the Early Head Start Governance Council, the motion to approve the proposed final center/slot assignments for First Steps Round 2 Early Head Start grant was approved unanimously.

Ms. Mjartan asked for an amendment to the next motion to decrease from \$270K to \$250K to provide for the Early Head Start playground equipment. Several board members had questions regarding the cost of the playground equipment and Ms. Mjartan and Dr. Williams explained about the cost of equipment for infant and toddler playgrounds.

Upon a recommendation by the Early Head Start Governance Council a motion was made (with the proposed amendment) to approve the inclusion of \$460,000 (an increase of \$250,000 in unexpended operating funds) to provide for up to eight Early Head Start playgrounds in the agency's pending Round 2 budget revision. The motion passed unanimously.



Mr. Pryor gave a brief overview of the reason for the Governance Council's recommendation to return to the Policy Council bylaws back to them for review and revisions. Mr. Wingate talked about the importance of legal lines of authority in place through his past work and reminded the Trustees that their authority is to be certain that bylaws of this grant meet the standards of the grantee. Mr. Wingate stated that moving the bylaws back to Policy Council will help everyone have clarity on roles and expectations.

Upon recommendation by the Early Head Start Governance Council, a motion was made to reject adoption of 2017 revisions to the Policy Council bylaws and return them to the Policy Council for review and revision. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Pryor briefed the board on the overall status of the grant. Mr. Pryor met with Maisah Williams, Office of Head Start Region IV Specialist, about four weeks ago, to talk about current issues and look at the funding model. Mr. Pryor stated that he does have questions about the sustainability of this grant and hopes to have clarity soon.

The Governance Council will meet and then make recommendations to the Executive Committee who will then have the ability to meet and vote. Mr. Wingate asked Mr. Pryor to have the Governance Council bring any recommendations to the Executive Committee and he will move those recommendations along as quickly as possible.

Ms. Hussey mentioned how the Governance Council and Board of Trustees are really starting to understand this grant and are excited that the committees are able to really tackle the big, hard questions.

Ms. Hussey reported out for the Program and Grants committee. She gave a brief overview of why the agency has a Local Partnership Renewal Plan/Grant Application. Ms. Hussey went over the new legislative requirements that are now incorporated into the renewal plan. She stated that the agency will not ask them to provide data that is already in the data system and for any data that is being asked for in their required annual report in order to not to have Local Partnerships duplicate their efforts.

Upon recommendation by the Program and Grants Committee, the motion to approve the content for the Local Partnership renewal plan was passed unanimously.

Ms. Hussey then went over the highlights of changes to the Partnership and Program Accountability Standards.

Ms. Debbie Robertson talked about the Imagination Library program. She stated the biggest change in the program standards is the board has always required 50/50 match and Local Partnerships have requested a 75/25 match because this evidence-based program is receiving a big push in communities. The State Office felt more comfortable adding more money toward that program and including Diversity, Equity and Inclusion language, along with more flexibility in child care trainings.



Mr. Pryor asked how many hours of training is required by child care workers and if there are any links between the voucher and having it tied to an evidence-based program.

Upon recommendation by the Program and Grants Committee, the motion to approve the FY19 First Steps Partnership and Program Accountability Standards as presented to and reviewed by the committee was passed unanimously.

Rep. Jerry Govan gave the report for the Legislative Committee and noted that the First Steps Reauthorization bill was signed into law. Rep. Govan talked about the event on the State House grounds during the 2018 SC Read In. He also noted that the Governor had agreed to a ceremonial signing on Wednesday, April 25 at 12:15 pm. An email with details will go out. Rep. Govan then acknowledged all the Senate and House members of the board for their hard work.

Govan briefly went over changes to the bill like the school readiness results report out, longitudinal goals and other additional changes.

Rep. Govan thinks it is a great day for SCFS and can see that bipartisan support can help things continue to move forward and meet a critical need for our state. Senator Hembree talked about the seven-year sunset clause and discussed Sen. Shane Martin's requests and that Georgia Mjartan met with Sen. Martin and satisfied his requests. Sen. Martin said that as long as everything is going good in a couple of years, Sen. Martin would consider removing the sunset clause all together.

Rep. Govan thanked Pierce McNair and Sally Cauthen for doing the leg work and Rep. Rita Allison for continuing to push the bill forward. Ms. Mjartan thanked legislators on our board and the Governor's office.

Ms. Hussey asked the board to write a note of thanks to legislators using the SCFS stationary on the table. SCFS staff will mail out the notes.

Ms. Mjartan briefed the board on the request of seven additional FTE boxes and how they will be used at the agency. Ms. Mjartan stated that First Steps was selected to be reviewed by the Senate Oversight Committee and thanked senate staffer Phillip Willis for attending the board meeting.

Ms. Mjartan discussed her listening tour status and encouraged board members to go out and meet with their own local partnership offices and boards. She also talked about our help connecting Local Partnerships to resources like funding the Local Partnerships to participate in the Together SC annual conference.

Ms. Mjartan briefed on the EHS expansion and discussed the fact that roll-out of slots and enrollment of children was moving more slowly than anticipated but highlighted the addition of the Parents As Teachers program into the family services component of EHS.



Ms. Mjartan then focused on First Steps 4K. She pointed the board to their 4K information in their packet and talked about the program's history and the expansion, along with the different options for expansion. Ms. Mjartan talked about the increase in 4K student participation at day 45. She stated that 2707 students are currently served on day 45. She discussed charts and graphics illustrating growth of the program year over year. She mentioned that this will be the first summer that 4K summer programs will take place across most of our private providers.

Dr. David Mathis talked about public 4K noting that they will also offer summer program in 35 sites and that expansion money allowed both the private and public benefits.

Rep. Govan asked about the poverty level and asked the income requirements. He stated his hope is to help more of the working poor and lower the poverty level in order to serve more. Ms. Mjartan said the agency is looking at the data as a starting point to project our growth. The goal is to work with a marketing firm to get the word out to SC parents that there are resources available to them. She thanked the SC Department of Education for helping bring a unified message to parents about their choices when it comes to 4K.

Ms. Martha Strickland shared a story about a First Steps 4K teacher who received a national preschool teacher award. She then proceeded to go over NIEER Report.

Ms. Mjartan talked about the AmeriCorps VISTA program, seeking input from the board on their interest in such a program at SCFS. She stated that the bulk of people would work with Local Partnership staff and include support for ECAC.

Mr. Tim Holt would like an Executive Summary/Concept Paper that shows need and cost. Rep. Govan would like to see this as well to see the cost benefit analysis and how the 25% match would occur.

Ms. Mjartan stated she would develop a concept paper that she would share with the board and would submit to AmeriCorps VISTA who would then decide whether First Steps would receive be invited to apply.

Mr. Holt made a motion and Ms. Hussey seconded authorizing SC First Steps to develop a concept paper for this grant opportunity. The motion passed unanimously.

Rep. Govan made a motion to move into the Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) portion of the meeting. Ms. Mjartan said ECAC has not met but have suggested members such as, Dr. Lillian Peake (DHEC) and Ginger Catoe, (SCDOE) Director of Early Learning and Literacy; and Josh Baker, SC DHHS.

Ms. Mjartan thanked the Education Oversight Committee for mandating the sharing of waiting lists between SDE and SCFS. She also discussed their efforts toward co-promotion.



Mr. Holt made a motion to adjourn ECAC and return to SCFS Board of Trustees business.

Upon a motion by Senator Hembree and a second by Ms. Hussey, both meetings were adjourned at 1:32 p.m.