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December 18, 2015

VIA EMAIL AND US MAIL

Interim Executive Director Julia-Ellen Davis
South Carolina First Steps
1300 Sumter Street, Suite 100
Columbia, South Carolina 29201

Re: Matter #15-124; S.C. First Steps to School Readiness
Friday, December 11, 2015 Meeting with Subcommittee

Dear Ms. Davis:

Congratulations on being named as the interim Executive Director of South Carolina First Steps. We look forward to speaking with you at our next meeting and appreciate the information your staff provided at our Education and Cultural Subcommittee meeting on Friday, December 11, 2015.

During our meeting on December 11, there were several issues we discussed as ones for which we needed additional information. Below is a list of those issues.

- Financials - The following information for 2008-09 to the present,
 - Year-end cash balances, which clearly outlines carry-forward amounts and interests earned from cash in the bank, for each of the programs identified in the agency's Program Evaluation Report, with all documentation which supports the figures provided.
 - Number of additional students who could have, if all carry-forward money had been spent and providers were available, participated in the 4K program.
- 4K Program - The following information for each of the last five years,
 - Number of students, by district, eligible to participate in the public or private 4K program
 - Private
 - Total money available and total amount spent on the private 4K program
 - Number of students, by district, participating in the private 4K program
 - Number of eligible providers for the private 4K program, by district

- Number of eligible providers for the private 4K program, by district, who are actually participating in the 4K program
 - Surveys or other information obtained from eligible providers who are not participating in the private 4K program, which provides insight into why the provider is not participating
 - Metrics, for the last five years, the agency is utilizing to determine if its methods for attracting new providers to the private 4K programs are successful or need to be altered.
 - Metrics, for the last five years, the agency is utilizing to determine if its methods for attracting new students to the private 4K programs are successful or need to be altered.
 - Surveys or other information obtained from parents, which provides insight into why their children are participating in the private 4K program instead of the public 4K program.
 - Public
 - Same questions as for private, but for the public 4K program. If there are any questions for which you do not have information, please state which ones and which entity would have the information.
- Base Amount Per Student for 4K Program
 - Documentation which demonstrates why the \$4,218 base amount per student for tuition in the private 4K program should be increased.
 - The recommended base amount per student for tuition in the private 4K program and methodology for ensuring it does not become too low an amount in the future.
 - Summary of efforts, for each of the last five years, made by the agency to have the base amount per student increased along with the agency's understanding as to why the amount was not increased including the House or Senate Committee from whose communication the agency took that understanding.
- Test Data
 - Data from Teaching Strategies Gold, by district
 - Test result goals for Teaching Strategies Gold that will be administered at the middle and end of the year (or the other set increments in which it will be administered).
 - Evaluation tools used to track outcomes for each major program as testified to by Dr. Dan Wuori.
 - Explanation and results of the common outcomes utilized by the local partnerships that Dr. Dan Wuori testified had been utilized since the agency developed the accountability standards in 2007. Place the outcomes in an excel sheet which has each outcome category in a column and each local partnership in a row.

Please provide the above information by January 4, 2016. Your continued cooperation in the legislative oversight process is appreciated.

Sincerely,

Signature Redacted

James E. Smith Jr.
Subcommittee Chair

cc: The Honorable Wm. Weston J. Newton
The Honorable Gary E. Clary
The Honorable Joseph H. Jefferson Jr.
The Honorable Tommy M. Stringer