



Getting children ready for school.

SOUTH CAROLINA

House Oversight Committee

March 15, 2016
9:00 AM



South Carolina First Steps: **Looking Forward**

1. Introduction

Julia-Ellen Davis

2. Looking Forward

Mark Barnes

- **Local Partnerships**
- **BabyNet**
- **4K**
- **Early Head Start**

3. Recommendations

Dan Wuori

South Carolina First Steps: Looking Forward

LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS

- Additional resources, particularly to the rural communities participating in the Abbeville lawsuit. (House Ways and Means **increases base funding from \$138K to \$200K**, benefits all 46 Partnerships.)
- Additional **technical assistance resources** (Ways and Means: 4 new FTEs).
- **Local First Steps Teams**: Collaborative, convening effort between state programs (state office technical assistant, 4K regional coordinators, local BabyNet supervisor, and Early Head Start staff) and local partnership directors. Will include quality circles, 360 degree reviews, formal communication methods and requirements, incentives to partnerships.

South Carolina First Steps: Looking Forward

LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS

- **Additional accountability** to include detailed program and operations audits, review of board functioning, annual Executive Director appraisals, and hiring standards.
- Convening of **Executive Director Leadership Council**, to include working committees (mirroring those of the state board) designed to inform policies, procedures and processes.

South Carolina First Steps: Looking Forward

BABYNET

BEFORE:

- **25 years** of non-compliance
- First state to enter a federal **compliance agreement** in 2003
- Concerns over performance **resulted in transfer** from DHEC to First Steps in 2010.
- At the time of transfer BabyNet was **insolvent**, cited for **lacking a system of general supervision**.

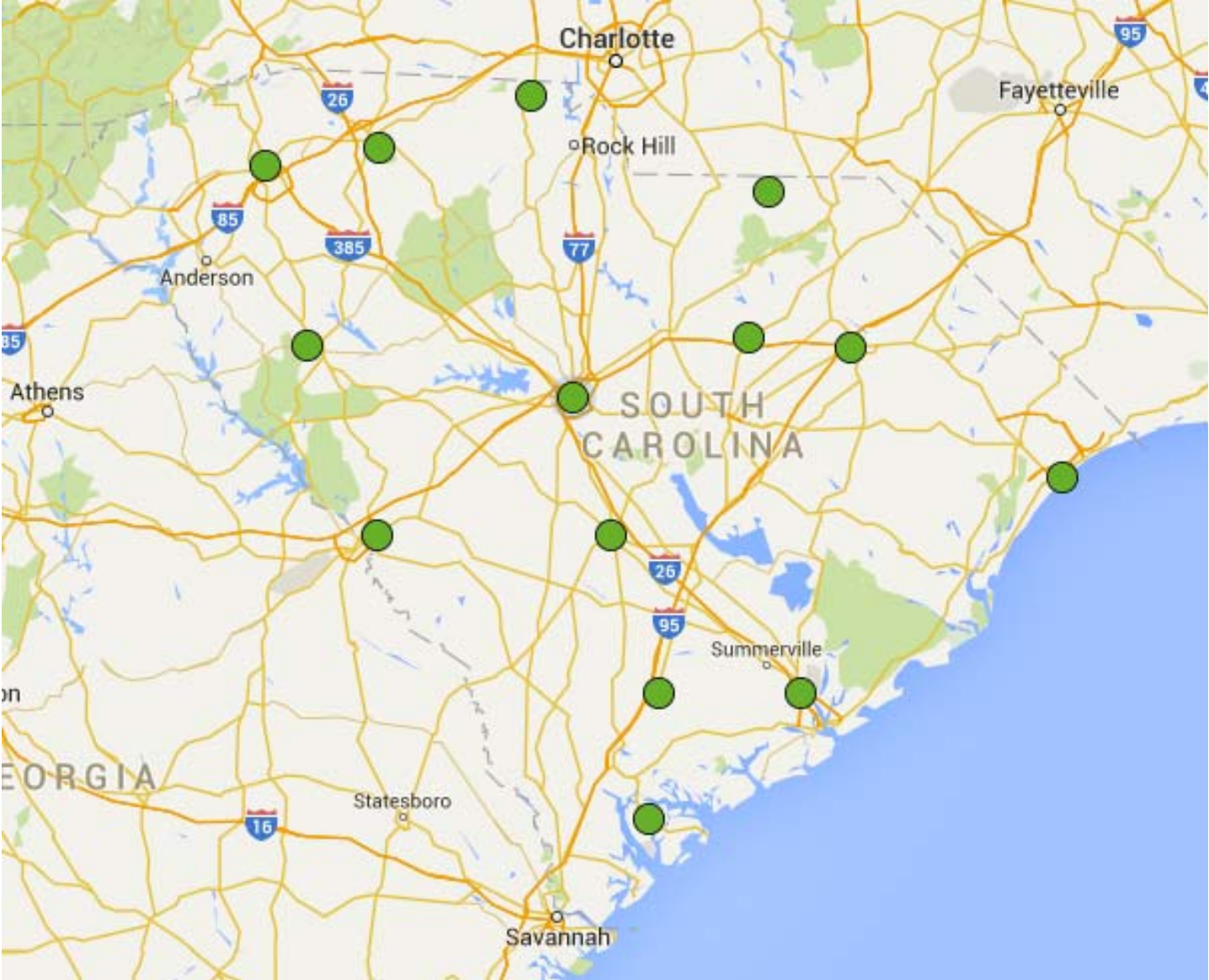
South Carolina First Steps: Looking Forward

BABYNET

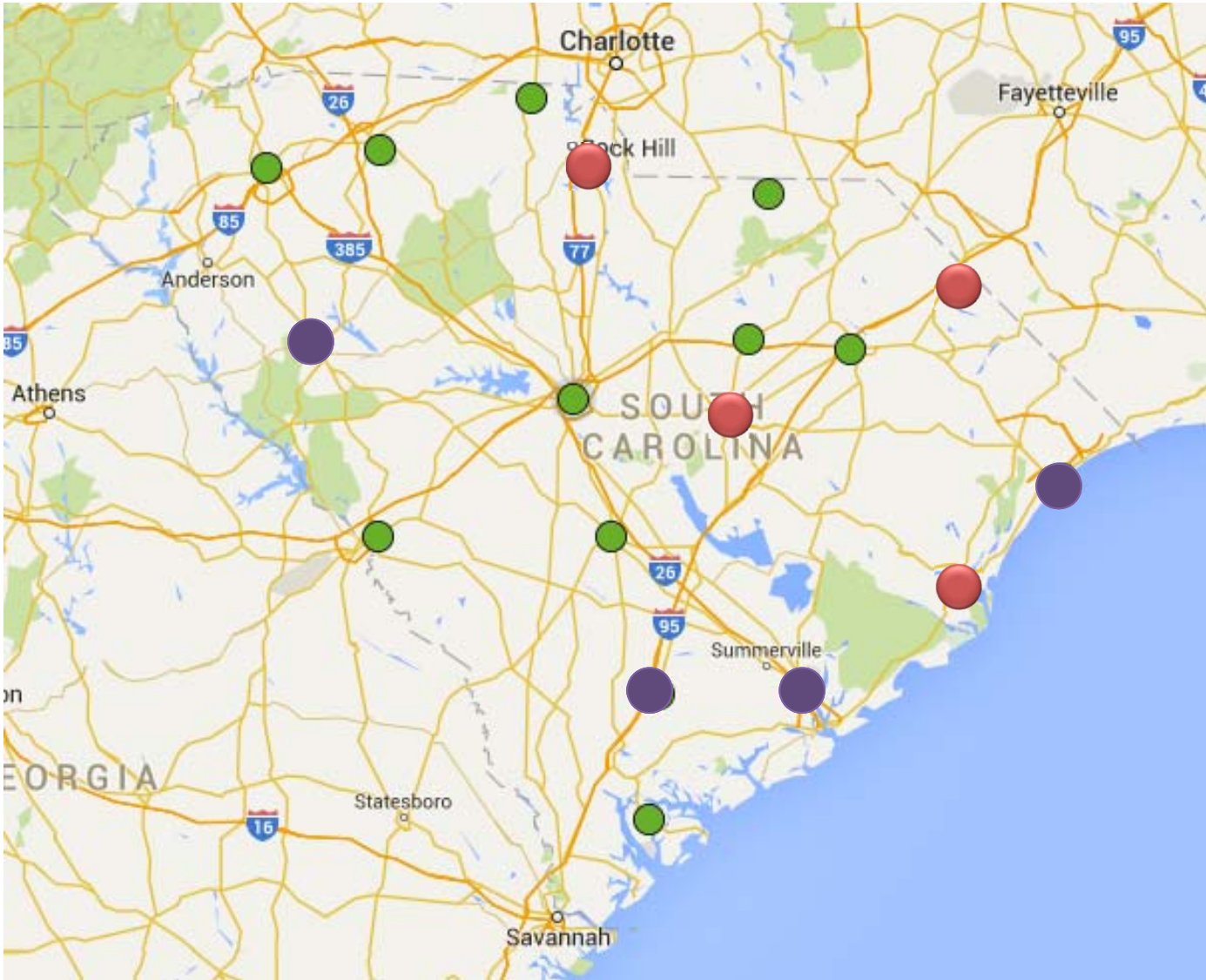
TO DATE:

- Successfully **implemented LAC recommendations** to agency.
- Reinstated required **supervisory structure**.
- Consolidated, interagency **fiscal reporting**.
- Implemented new BRIDGES **data system**.
- Improved **system of payments**.
- **23 new staff** for **improved customer access** and 45-day compliance.
- Improved **quality assurance** for providers and services.
- Increased number of sites and **client access** capacity (Sumter, Rock Hill, Dillon, Myrtle Beach, Greenwood, and Georgetown).

BabyNet Offices: 2014



New/Expanded Capacity BabyNet Offices: 2015/2016



-  Existing: Greenville, Spartanburg, Clover, Chesterfield, Bishopville, Florence, Charleston, Walterboro, Conway, Columbia, Orangeburg, Aiken, Greenwood, Anderson
-  New: Rock Hill, Dillon, Georgetown, and Sumter
-  Expanded: Myrtle Beach, Charleston, Walterboro, and Greenwood

South Carolina First Steps: Looking Forward

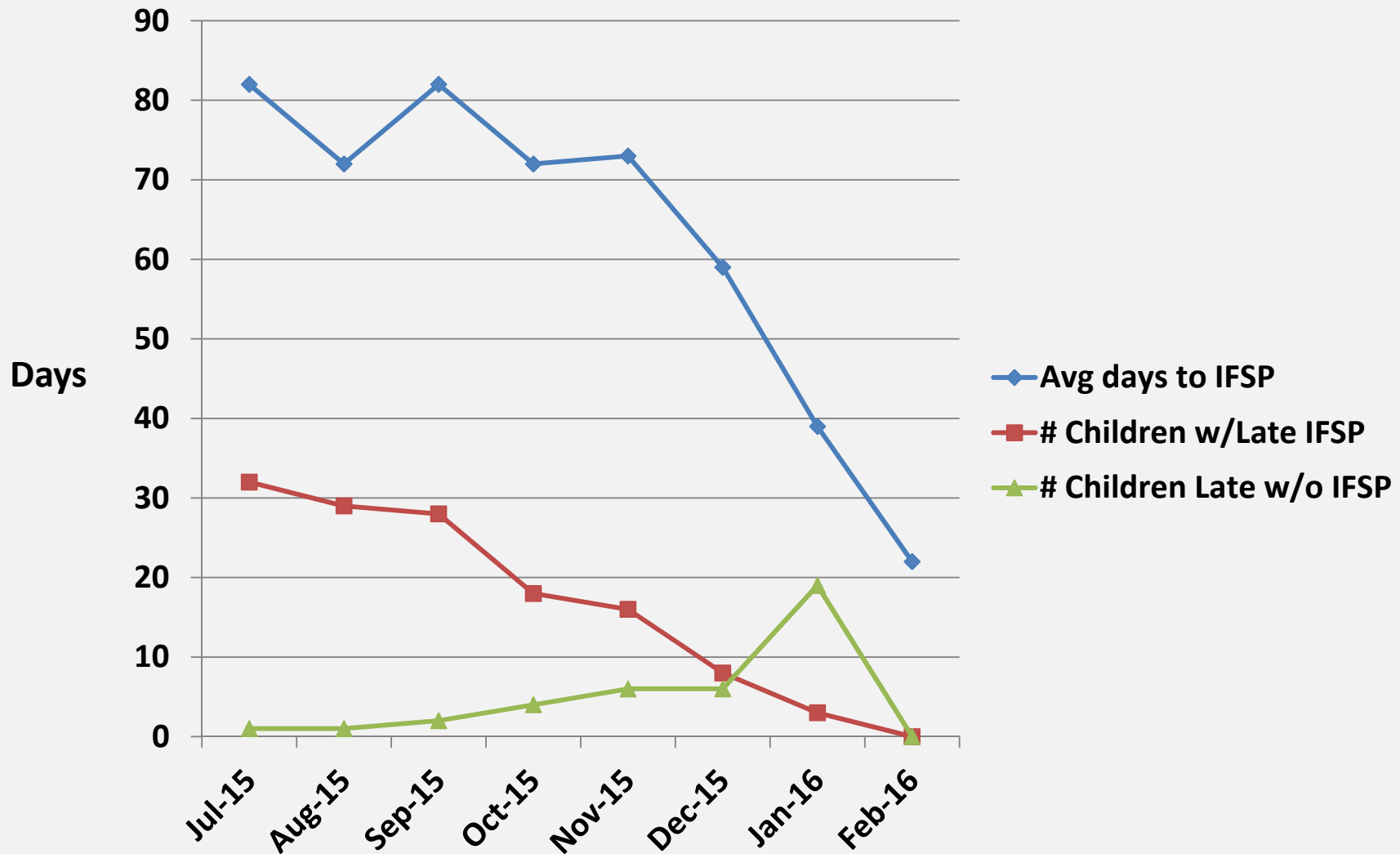
BABYNET

WHAT HAS THIS ACCOMPLISHED?

- Increased **timely client access** (45-day process).
- Improved **supervision and accountability**.
- Improved **payment systems** for 1,200 private therapy providers.
- Improved **tracking of referrals**.

- **IMPROVED FEDERAL COMPLIANCE**

Performance of Columbia BabyNet Intake Office



South Carolina First Steps: Looking Forward

BABYNET

GOING FORWARD:

- Developed **comprehensive improvement plan** in collaboration with 50 member BabyNet Think Tank, representing all partners and sectors of the BabyNet System. Recommendations submitted to the General Assembly, December 2015. (Complete)
- Presented to Governor and Ways and Means, both of which have recommended **new resources**:
 - \$3.1M for increased client services
 - \$750K to create independent, statewide Eligibility and Assessment Team
 - \$300K to improve rural provider access via mileage reimbursement

South Carolina First Steps: Looking Forward

BABYNET

GOING FORWARD:

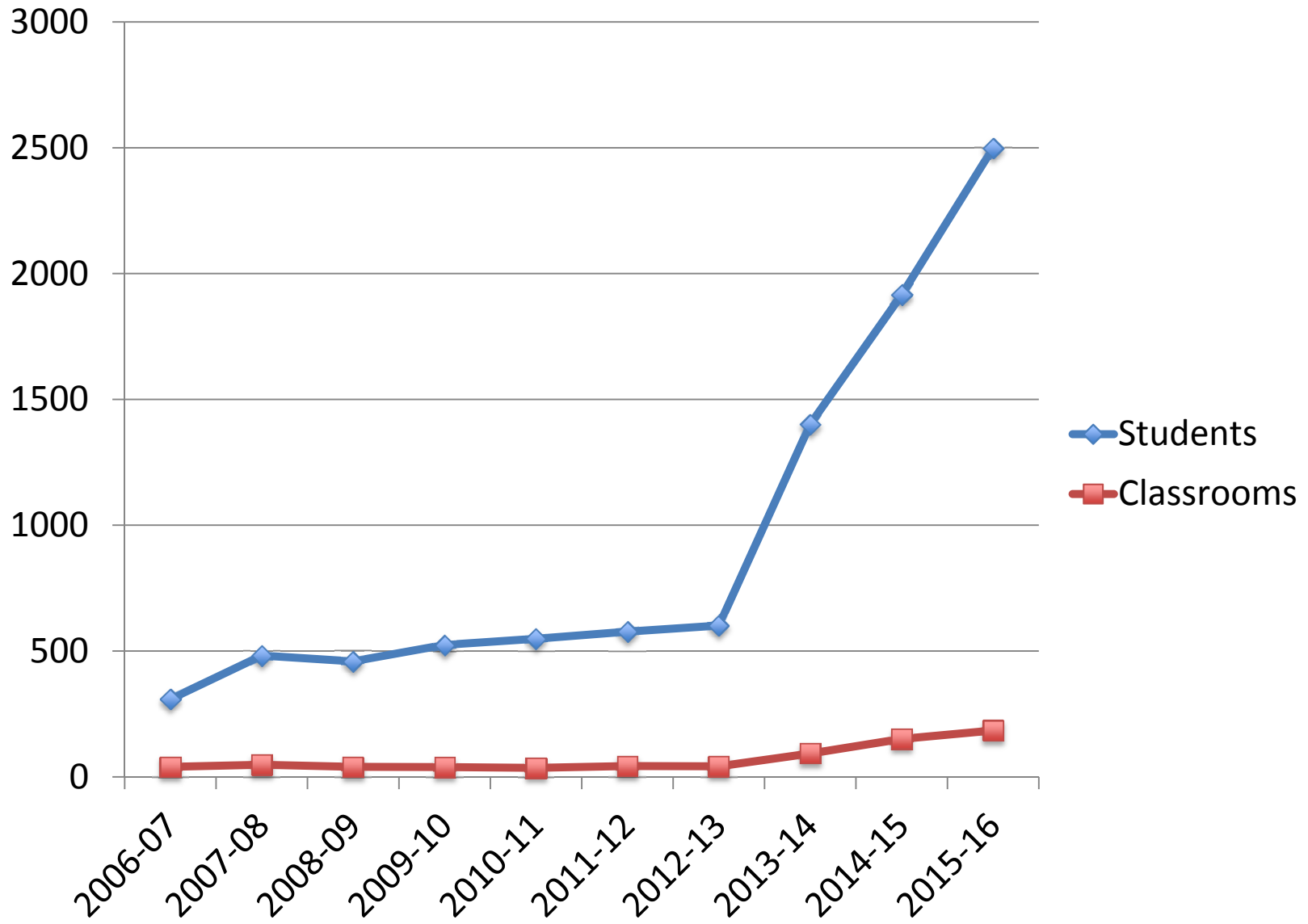
- **Coordination with DHHS** to share data, improve billing systems and Medicaid coding.
- **Coordination with DDSN/SCSDB to integrate data and maximize service and system efficiency.**
- **Further improve payment system efficiency, reduce administrative costs, and reduce time for payments.**
- **Resolution of federal compliance issues.**

South Carolina First Steps: Looking Forward

4K

- **Student outcomes comparable to those of public school providers (High/Scope, 2010, Education Oversight Committee, 2015)**
- **High-quality services delivered in the private sector for 75 cents on the dollar (First Steps 4K: \$4218 vs. Public School 4K: \$5632 plus facilities, utilities, etc.) (SC Department of Education, 2016)**
- **Intensive, on-site monitoring, technical assistance and support**
- **High-quality, year-round professional development**

First Steps 4K



South Carolina First Steps: Looking Forward

4K

- **Partnering to Improve connectivity and support student learning and assessment: i-Pads via DSS, wireless broadband via Sprint/SCETV.**
- **Classroom quality assessment audits.**
- **New mentoring system designed to recognize high-quality teachers, provide peer-to-peer supports for new teachers.**

South Carolina First Steps: Looking Forward

Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships

- **\$18.5M expansion of Early Head Start model in partnership with 15 private preschool providers in 12 SC counties (4 ½ years). 18th largest expansion grant in the country.**
- **Service to low-income infants and toddlers.**
- **Collaboration with local First Steps partnerships.**
- **Provider contracts signed, renovations underway, staff being hired.**
- **Working on required policies/procedures.**
- **Fully operational by July 31, 2016.**

South Carolina First Steps: Looking Forward

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- **South Carolina should establish a common assessment tool for school readiness for use within the public and private sectors and commit to its use over a period of years.**
- **The SC General Assembly should appropriate resources to develop an interagency, early childhood data system.**
- **The SC General Assembly should implement the remaining recommendations of the Legislative Audit Council pertaining to the interagency BabyNet system.**

South Carolina First Steps: Looking Forward

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- **First Steps and the SCDE should work in collaboration to study and depict the comprehensive costs of public and private sector 4K service provision.**
- **The General Assembly should take steps to ensure greater equity in 4K provider funding, to include teacher pay and the exploration of tax and other incentives to participating private providers.**
- **First Steps should develop a pilot project designed to provide startup funds for potential private 4K providers in underserved areas of the state to address lack of community capacity.**

South Carolina First Steps: Looking Forward

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- **As a second capacity building activity, First Steps should work with its local partnerships to establish 4K classrooms in communities where no other providers are available.**