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**Education and Cultural Subcommittee Meeting  
March 1, 2016  
9:00 a.m.  
Room 108 - Blatt Building**

### **Archived Video Available**

- I. You may access archived video of this meeting by visiting the South Carolina General Assembly's website (<http://www.scstatehouse.gov>) and click on "Citizens' Interests," then click on "House Legislative Oversight Committee Postings and Reports." Lastly, click on "Video Archives" for a listing of archived videos for the Legislative Oversight Committee.

### **Minutes**

- I. House Rule 4.5 requires the standing committees of the House to prepare and make available for public inspection, in compliance with Section 30-4-90, the minutes of full committee meetings. House Rule 4.5 further provides that such minutes need not be verbatim accounts of such meetings. It is the practice of the House Legislative Oversight Committee to provide minutes, which are not verbatim accounts of such meetings, for its Subcommittee meetings.

### **Attendance**

- I. The Education and Cultural Subcommittee (Subcommittee) meeting was called to order by Chairman James E. Smith Jr. on Tuesday, March 1, 2016, in Room 108 of the Blatt Building, Columbia, South Carolina. Representative Gary E. Clary and Representative Joseph H. Jefferson Jr. were also in attendance.

### **Approval of Minutes**

- I. House Rule 4.5 requires the standing committees of the House to prepare and make available for public inspection, in compliance with Section 30-4-90, the minutes of full committee meetings. House Rule

4.5 further provides that such minutes need not be verbatim accounts of such meetings. It is the practice of the House Legislative Oversight Committee to provide minutes which are not verbatim accounts of such meetings, for its subcommittee meetings.

II. Representative Clary moved to approve the minutes from February 10, 2016. A roll call vote was held, and all present voted in favor of approval.

<b>Rep. Clary’s motion to approve the minutes from the February 10, 2016, meeting:</b>	<b>Yea</b>	<b>Nay</b>	<b>Not Voting</b>
Rep. Gary E. Clary	✓		
Rep. Joseph H. Jefferson Jr.			Not Present
Rep. Tommy M. Stringer			Not Present
Rep. James E. Smith Jr.	✓		

**Continued Discussion of First Steps**

I. This was the Subcommittee’s sixth meeting with South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness (First Steps). Chairman Smith provided a brief overview of the oversight process and gave the purpose of the day’s meeting. He also explained that all testimony given before the Subcommittee was required to be given under oath. He administered the oath simultaneously to all of those who intended to testify. Those who were present on behalf of First Steps were: Dan Wuori (Deputy Director), Mark Barnes (Chief Operating Office and Chief Financial Officer), Debbie Robertson (Chief Partnership Officer), Julia-Ellen Davis (Interim Director), and Kristie Musick (BabyNet State Director).

Dr. Wuori testified in response to Chairman Smith’s question about the changes in the way that First Steps measures its performances. He explained that the state has mandated some of the performance measurement changes and provided a historical view of the various performance measurements that First Steps has used over the years.

Representative Clary asked about the effectiveness of the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA). Dan Wuori testified that he was not an expert on DRA since it primarily affects 5K students, but he gave his opinion that DRA was well-respected for giving administrators the ability to detect when children are falling behind in their education.

Representative Jefferson asked how damaging it is to a child’s development for him to be retained in a grade level. Dan Wuori testified that the body of research on retention shows that it is not effective in helping kids develop, and that the children can benefit greatly from remediation without the stigma associated with being retained in a specific grade. He cautioned against the use of retention in education.

Dr. Wuori then began to explain First Steps programs and performance in implementing those programs. Representative Smith asked why First Steps is essential to the 4K system. Dr. Wuori’s responded that there has been a certain level of distrust amongst private childcare operators about how the entry of the public sector into 4K would affect their businesses. First Steps helps to bridge that gap. He also responded that there is a capacity issue in the public school system. Representative Clary asked whether lack of capacity in 4K is an issue in both the public and private sectors and if the capacity issues mirror

the Abbeville plaintiff districts. Dr. Wuori responded in some cases it is. Representative Smith remarked that some attention should be paid to determining why some private providers will not participate in 4K.

Representative Clary asked if BabyNet is located in the correct lead agency. Dr. Wuori responded that there are other places that could be appropriate for BabyNet, including Governor Haley's recommendation of the Department of Health and Human Services. He also stated that wherever BabyNet might go, First Steps would always be a partner in the effort.

Dr. Wuori explained the work that the state office does with the local partnerships, and the primary ways that they measure the programs. He also explained how the local partnerships support the state office by serving in a gatekeeping role for some programs that are run out of the state office. That has really helped First Steps get a handle on BabyNet referrals and get closer to the federally required 45 days from referral to service. Representative Jefferson congratulated First Steps on the work that they do. Chairman Smith thanked First Steps staff for their continued cooperation.

### **Adjournment**

- I. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.