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## **Legislative Oversight Committee**



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**Education and Cultural Subcommittee Meeting  
March 15, 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 15, 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. Representative Tommy Stringer arrived later.

### **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 March 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 March 10, 2016, meeting:</b>	<b>Yea</b>	<b>Nay</b>	<b>Not Voting</b>
Rep. Gary E. Clary	✓		
Rep. Joseph H. Jefferson Jr.	✓		
Rep. Tommy M. Stringer			✓
Rep. James E. Smith Jr.	✓		

**Further Discussion of First Steps to School Readiness**

- I. This was the Subcommittee’s eighth meeting with South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness (First Steps). Chairman Smith provided a brief overview of the oversight process and stated that the purpose of the day’s meeting was for the Subcommittee to consider any of its members’ recommendations for First Steps.
- II. Representative Jefferson moved that the Subcommittee include a statement in the Subcommittee Study of First Steps that the Subcommittee received that Office of First Steps Study Group Report and agency response for informational purposes. A roll call vote was held, and all present voted in favor of the motion.

<b>Rep. Jefferson’s motion that the Subcommittee include a statement in the Subcommittee Study that the Subcommittee received the Office of First Steps Study Group Report and agency response for informational purposes:</b>	<b>Yea</b>	<b>Nay</b>	<b>Not Voting</b>
Rep. Gary E. Clary	✓		
Rep. Joseph H. Jefferson Jr.	✓		
Rep. Tommy M. Stringer			✓
Rep. James E. Smith Jr.	✓		

- III. Chairman Smith swore under oath all of those present who intended to testify before the Subcommittee on behalf of First Steps. Those representatives were: Mark Barnes (Chief Financial Officer and Chief Operating Officer), Dan Wuori (Deputy Director), and Julia Ellen-Davis (Interim Director).

Mr. Barnes provided to the Subcommittee a presentation about the agency’s path forward, and presented the following pending agency reforms:

- 1) Formation of local First Steps teams;
- 2) Performance of detailed program and operations audits of local partnerships on a recurring basis; and
- 3) Formation of an Executive Director Leadership Council.

Chairman Smith if the South Carolina First Steps Board of Trustees (Board) had approved the pending agency reforms. Mr. Barnes testified that some of the pending agency reforms had already been approved by the Board, and that he was confident that the remaining reforms would also be approved.

Representative Clary asked for Mr. Barnes to identify which of the pending agency reforms had been approved by the Board as he presented them. Mr. Barnes agreed to do so and testified that reforms 1) and 2) had been approved by the Board, and that reform 3) had not yet been approved by the Board.

Mr. Barnes acknowledged that the BabyNet had suffered from difficulties and deficiencies since it was established. He testified about the actions that First Steps had taken in order to improve the program.

Chairman Smith asked for a description of the remaining deficiencies in the BabyNet program. Mr. Barnes testified that First Steps had effectively eliminated every deficiency that was not a deficiency solely addressable by the General Assembly.

Representative Jefferson asked for the measures First Steps used to identify young children who qualified for BabyNet services but had relocated across county lines. Mr. Barnes testified that First Steps ensures open lines of communication with local childcare providers so that locals can refer potential BabyNet clients to First Steps. He testified that First Steps also maintains ongoing communication with parents of BabyNet children so that relocation across county lines does not end services. He testified that First Steps was interested in establishing data sharing agreements with the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Social Services so that the agencies can refer clients to each other.

Representative Clary asked for a summary of First Steps' status in regard to the agency's compliance with its enabling legislation, and for an expected end date on which the agency would be fully compliant. Mr. Barnes testified that it was his opinion that the agency could be in full compliance within four years.

Representative Clary asked if First Steps was the proper agency home for the BabyNet program, or if it should be moved to another agency. Mr. Barnes testified that it was his opinion that First Steps was the ideal agency home for BabyNet.

Mr. Barnes testified that a significant difficulty with the 4K program was that a 4K provider has to offer the same quality of education as a public school, but on a significantly smaller budget.

Mr. Barnes testified that First Steps had recently partnered with Sprint, SCETV, and DSS in order to provide iPads and internet connectivity to its 4K providers.

Mr. Barnes testified that First Steps expected to have its Early Head Start Child Care Partnership Program fully operational and serving 254 children by July 21, 2016.

IV. Dr. Wuori submitted his recommendations for the Subcommittee's considerations. Some of his recommendations were:

- That the state use a common measurement test to assess school readiness across the state for both public and private schools;

- That the state should provide resources for the establishment of an interagency, early childhood data system; and
- That the state should channel the funding for BabyNet through First Steps since First Steps is the “lead agency” for the program.

Representative Smith asked for the ways in which First Steps identifies the communities that lack the resources to have their own self-sufficient 4K providers in order for the agency to prioritize aiding those communities.

Representative Clary asked for more specific identification of the communities that lack the resources to have their own self-sufficient 4K providers.

Representative Jefferson stated that the state should provide increases in compensation for the 4K providers without too much regard for the educational credentials of the providers.

- V. Representative Jefferson moved that the Subcommittee recommend that South Carolina continue investment in a comprehensive, results-oriented initiative for improving early childhood development by providing through local partnerships public and private funds and support for high-quality early childhood development and education services for children by providing support for their families’ efforts toward enabling their children to reach school read to succeed. A roll call vote was held, and the motion was passed unanimously.

<b>Rep. Jefferson’s motion that the Subcommittee recommend that South Carolina continue investment in a comprehensive, results-oriented initiative for improving early childhood development by providing through local partnerships public and private funds and support for high-quality early childhood development and education services for children by providing support for their families’ efforts toward enabling their children to reach school read to succeed:</b>	<b>Yea</b>	<b>Nay</b>	<b>Not Voting</b>
Rep. Gary E. Clary	✓		
Rep. Joseph H. Jefferson Jr.	✓		
Rep. Tommy M. Stringer	✓		
Rep. James E. Smith Jr.	✓		

Representative Jefferson moved that the Subcommittee recommend that the early childhood education initiative continue under First Steps. A roll call vote was held, and the motion was passed unanimously.

<b>Rep. Jefferson’s motion that the Subcommittee recommend that the early childhood education initiative continue under First Steps:</b>	<b>Yea</b>	<b>Nay</b>	<b>Not Voting</b>
Rep. Gary E. Clary	✓		
Rep. Joseph H. Jefferson Jr.	✓		
Rep. Tommy M. Stringer	✓		
Rep. James E. Smith Jr.	✓		

Representative Clary moved that the Subcommittee adopt the agency’s recommendation that South Carolina establish a common assessment tool for school readiness for use within the public and private sectors, and commit to use the assessment tool over a period of years. Representative Clary expressed his view that having a common assessment benchmark by which educational outcomes can be measured is essential to evaluating the effectiveness of early childhood education. A roll call vote was held, and the motion was passed unanimously.

<b>Rep. Clary’s motion that the Subcommittee adopt the agency’s recommendation that South Carolina establish a common assessment tool for school readiness for use within the public and private sectors, and commit to use the assessment tool over a period of years:</b>	<b>Yea</b>	<b>Nay</b>	<b>Not Voting</b>
Rep. Gary E. Clary	✓		
Rep. Joseph H. Jefferson Jr.	✓		
Rep. Tommy M. Stringer	✓		
Rep. James E. Smith Jr.	✓		

Representative Clary moved that the Subcommittee adopt the agency’s recommendation that the General Assembly should appropriate resources to develop an interagency, early childhood data system. A roll call vote was held, and the motion was passed unanimously.

<b>Rep. Clary’s motion that the Subcommittee adopt the agency’s recommendation that the General Assembly should appropriate resources to develop an interagency, early childhood data system:</b>	<b>Yea</b>	<b>Nay</b>	<b>Not Voting</b>
Rep. Gary E. Clary	✓		
Rep. Joseph H. Jefferson Jr.	✓		
Rep. Tommy M. Stringer	✓		
Rep. James E. Smith Jr.	✓		

Representative Jefferson moved that the Subcommittee adopt the Legislative Audit Council’s recommendation that First Steps continue to be the lead agency for the BabyNet program, and that the BabyNet funds follow First Steps. A roll call vote was held, and the motion was passed unanimously.

<b>Rep. Jefferson’s motion that the Subcommittee adopt the Legislative Audit Council’s recommendation that First Steps continue to be the lead agency for the BabyNet program, and that the BabyNet funds follow First Steps:</b>	<b>Yea</b>	<b>Nay</b>	<b>Not Voting</b>
Rep. Gary E. Clary	✓		
Rep. Joseph H. Jefferson Jr.	✓		
Rep. Tommy M. Stringer	✓		
Rep. James E. Smith Jr.	✓		

Representatives Smith and Stringer asked if South Carolina is the only state that does not charge sliding-scale fees for its BabyNet program. Dr. Wuori testified that federal law permits a state to have sliding-scale fees, but that other states had chosen not to charge those fees.

Representative Stringer moved that the Subcommittee recommend that First Steps study the feasibility, cost, and impact on access of the implementation of sliding-scale fees and report those findings to the Subcommittee. A roll call vote was held, and the motion was passed unanimously.

<b>Rep. Stringer’s motion that the Subcommittee recommend that First Steps study the feasibility, cost, and impact on access of the implementation of sliding-scale fees and report those findings to the Subcommittee:</b>	<b>Yea</b>	<b>Nay</b>	<b>Not Voting</b>
Rep. Gary E. Clary	✓		
Rep. Joseph H. Jefferson Jr.	✓		
Rep. Tommy M. Stringer	✓		
Rep. James E. Smith Jr.	✓		

Representative Clary moved that the Subcommittee adopt the agency’s recommendation that First Steps and the Department of Education work in collaboration to study and to depict the comprehensive costs of public and private sector 4K service provision. A roll call vote was held, and the motion was passed unanimously.

<b>Rep. Clary’s motion that the Subcommittee adopt the agency’s recommendation that First Steps and the Department of Education work in collaboration to study and to depict the comprehensive costs of public and private sector 4K service provision:</b>	<b>Yea</b>	<b>Nay</b>	<b>Not Voting</b>
Rep. Gary E. Clary	✓		
Rep. Joseph H. Jefferson Jr.	✓		
Rep. Tommy M. Stringer	✓		
Rep. James E. Smith Jr.	✓		

Representative Jefferson moved that the Subcommittee adopt the agency’s recommendation that the General Assembly 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. A roll call vote was held, and the motion was passed unanimously.

<b>Rep. Jefferson’s motion that the Subcommittee adopt the agency’s recommendation that the General Assembly 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:</b>	<b>Yea</b>	<b>Nay</b>	<b>Not Voting</b>
Rep. Gary E. Clary	✓		
Rep. Joseph H. Jefferson Jr.	✓		
Rep. Tommy M. Stringer	✓		
Rep. James E. Smith Jr.	✓		

Representative Stringer moved that the Subcommittee adopt the agency’s recommendation that First Steps adopt 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, and that the agency look to best practices from other states and Utah’s use of social impact bonds to determine the best funding options for the project. A roll call vote was held, and the motion was passed unanimously.

<b>Rep. Stringer’s motion that the Subcommittee adopt the agency’s recommendation that First Steps adopt 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, and that the agency look to best practices from other states and Utah’s use of social impact bonds to determine the best funding options for the project:</b>	<b>Yea</b>	<b>Nay</b>	<b>Not Voting</b>
Rep. Gary E. Clary	✓		
Rep. Joseph H. Jefferson Jr.	✓		
Rep. Tommy M. Stringer	✓		
Rep. James E. Smith Jr.	✓		

Representative Clary moved that the Subcommittee adopt the agency’s recommendation that First Steps work with its local partnerships to establish 4K classrooms in communities where no other providers are available. A roll call vote was held, and the motion was passed unanimously.

<b>Rep. Clary’s motion that the Subcommittee adopt the agency’s recommendation that First Steps work with its local partnerships to establish 4K classrooms in communities where no other providers are available:</b>	<b>Yea</b>	<b>Nay</b>	<b>Not Voting</b>
Rep. Gary E. Clary	✓		
Rep. Joseph H. Jefferson Jr.	✓		
Rep. Tommy M. Stringer	✓		
Rep. James E. Smith Jr.	✓		

Representative Clary moved that the Subcommittee hear from the Committee within a period of six months regarding the Subcommittee’s recommendations, and hear a report at that time from First Steps. A roll call vote was held, and the motion was passed unanimously.

<b>Rep. Clary’s motion that the Subcommittee hear from the Committee within a period of six months regarding the Subcommittee’s recommendations, and hear a report at that time from First Steps:</b>	<b>Yea</b>	<b>Nay</b>	<b>Not Voting</b>
Rep. Gary E. Clary	✓		
Rep. Joseph H. Jefferson Jr.	✓		
Rep. Tommy M. Stringer	✓		
Rep. James E. Smith Jr.	✓		

Representative Stringer moved that the Subcommittee recommend that the 4K child development educational program continue in South Carolina. A roll call vote was held, and the motion was passed unanimously.

<b>Rep. Stringer’s motion that the Subcommittee recommend that the 4K child development educational program continue in South Carolina:</b>	<b>Yea</b>	<b>Nay</b>	<b>Not Voting</b>
Rep. Gary E. Clary	✓		
Rep. Joseph H. Jefferson Jr.	✓		
Rep. Tommy M. Stringer	✓		
Rep. James E. Smith Jr.	✓		

Representative Clary moved that the Subcommittee recommend that the First Steps local partnerships be continued in South Carolina. A roll call vote was held, and the motion was passed unanimously.

<b>Rep. Clary’s motion that the Subcommittee recommend that the First Steps local partnerships be continued in South Carolina:</b>	<b>Yea</b>	<b>Nay</b>	<b>Not Voting</b>
Rep. Gary E. Clary	✓		
Rep. Joseph H. Jefferson Jr.	✓		
Rep. Tommy M. Stringer	✓		
Rep. James E. Smith Jr.	✓		

Representative Jefferson moved that Subcommittee recommend that South Carolina continue to be involved in early head start education, and that First Steps continue to be the lead agency for early head start education. A roll call vote was held, and the motion was passed unanimously.

<b>Rep. Jefferson’s motion that Subcommittee recommend that South Carolina continue to be involved in early head start education, and that First Steps continue to be the lead agency for early head start education:</b>	<b>Yea</b>	<b>Nay</b>	<b>Not Voting</b>
Rep. Gary E. Clary	✓		
Rep. Joseph H. Jefferson Jr.	✓		
Rep. Tommy M. Stringer	✓		
Rep. James E. Smith Jr.	✓		

Representative Clary moved that any written comments provided by any member of the Subcommittee to Committee staff before 5 p.m. on Tuesday, April 12, 2016, be included with the Subcommittee’s report to the Committee. A roll call vote was held, and the motion was passed unanimously.

<b>Rep. Clary’s motion that any written comments provided by any member of the Subcommittee to Committee staff before 5 p.m. on Tuesday, April 12, 2016, be included with the Subcommittee’s report to the Committee:</b>	<b>Yea</b>	<b>Nay</b>	<b>Not Voting</b>
Rep. Gary E. Clary	✓		
Rep. Joseph H. Jefferson Jr.	✓		
Rep. Tommy M. Stringer	✓		
Rep. James E. Smith Jr.	✓		



Representative Clary moved that the meeting be the Subcommittee’s final meeting with First Steps unless after review of the Subcommittee Study a member of the Subcommittee request in writing to Chairman Smith by the close of business of Tuesday, April 12, 2016, an additional meeting to discuss any issues of concern. A roll call vote was held, and the motion was passed unanimously.

<b>Rep. Clary’s motion that the meeting be the Subcommittee’s final meeting with First Steps unless after review of the Subcommittee Study a member of the Subcommittee request in writing to Chairman Smith by the close of business of Tuesday, April 12, 2016, an additional meeting to discuss any issues of concern:</b>	<b>Yea</b>	<b>Nay</b>	<b>Not Voting</b>
Rep. Gary E. Clary	✓		
Rep. Joseph H. Jefferson Jr.	✓		
Rep. Tommy M. Stringer	✓		
Rep. James E. Smith Jr.	✓		

Representative Clary moved that the minutes for the Subcommittee meeting be published online. A roll call vote was held, and the motion was passed unanimously.

<b>Rep. Clary’s motion that the minutes for the Subcommittee meeting be published online:</b>	<b>Yea</b>	<b>Nay</b>	<b>Not Voting</b>
Rep. Gary E. Clary	✓		
Rep. Joseph H. Jefferson Jr.	✓		
Rep. Tommy M. Stringer	✓		
Rep. James E. Smith Jr.	✓		

VI. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.