



# **2023 Annual Accountability Report**

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**First Steps to School Readiness  
Agency Code: H620**

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## **AGENCY'S DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS**

In FY23, after 24 years of existing with a sunset – effectively a “pilot” – the General Assembly unanimously voted to make South Carolina First Steps permanent. Signed into law as Act 81 by Governor McMaster in June 2023, the permanent authorization of First Steps also included significant changes to the structure of the local partnership boards, new mechanisms for local partnership oversight and accountability, and a direct link between the local partnerships and the state early childhood system through seats on the Early Childhood Advisory Council.

During FY23, First Steps:

- Served 54,241 children directly through First Steps local partnerships and First Steps 4K
- Enrolled 3,650 students in in-person, full-day 4K in 280 classrooms within private, non-profit, and faith-based First Steps 4K providers through the 180th day of school (+9% student enrollment over FY22)
- Served 7,996 children in high-intensity programs through First Steps local partnerships, which includes evidence-based home visiting and early care and education programs (+77.2% over FY22)
- Hosted over 32,240 hours of professional development for child care providers through on-site technical assistance from local partnerships and First Steps 4K coaches (+60% over FY22)
- Implemented high-intensity health strategies for the first time serving 682 intensively through HealthySteps and 835 intensively through Family Connects

### **Expanded and Enhanced Services to Children and Families: Local Partnerships**

- In FY23, South Carolina First Steps used a competitive and targeted grantmaking process to expand and sustain the reach and impact of early childhood programs and services, prioritizing investment in rural communities and communities with persistently low kindergarten readiness scores. READY funds - \$3 million in recurring state funds secured in the 2022 legislative session—were granted to local partnerships to increase capacity to serve young children and establish infrastructure; to improve childcare quality; and to sustain and expand effective programs for young children and their families.
- In FY23, South Carolina First Steps streamlined the eligibility and application process for families enrolling in local partnership programs by including every local partnership program on First5SC.org, establishing a uniform process for eligibility and enrollment, making programs and services more accessible to the families who benefit most from our programs (infants and toddlers) and reducing the administrative burden for families. The number one application completed by families on the First5SC common application was for First Steps local partnership programs, with the largest percentage of applicants having children birth to age one and with more than half of families completing the application after business hours.

### **Expanded Access to Quality Early Education: First Steps 4K**

- **Continued expansion** of First Steps 4K statewide (year two of implementation), increasing students served by 9% compared to previous year (3,650 students in SY2022 – SY2023) and providing high-quality 4K options across more than 250 child care, private school and charter school providers.
- **Countdown to 4K:** Developed and piloted a new transition to 4K program, modifying Countdown to Kindergarten (CTK), a long-standing, evidence-informed program, to serve students transitioning into PreK 4 classrooms. First Steps' school transition programs served 1,982 children during summer 2022 with CTK reaching 1,372 children and Countdown to 4K (CT4K) impacting 610 children during its first year of implementation. 2,708 children are projected to be served in the summer of 2023, a 42.6%

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increase, with 1,838 in Countdown to Kindergarten and 870 in Countdown to 4K. The program is a three-way collaboration involving First Steps local partnerships, First Steps 4K, and public schools.

- **Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY):** Engaged the families of First Steps 4K students in a weekly, academically enriching, home-based program throughout the school year, served 109 families (95% of projected to serve) and was delivered by First Steps AmeriCorps members, filling a gap in home-visiting offerings for preschoolers and parent engagement in the academic development of their 4K student.
- **First Steps 4K+:** This partnership between DSS and First Steps 4K completed its second year with 4,447 children approved for the extended day, extended year or sibling voucher (since inception) and with 84% of children successfully connecting with a child care provider (3,723). For First Steps 4K providers to participate in this partnership, they must participate in the voluntary child care quality rating and improvement system called ABC Quality. It has been a longstanding goal to increase participation in this program, and in FY23, the percentage of First Steps 4K providers enrolled in ABC Quality and, therefore, able to accept the additional support through First Steps 4K+ rose to 85%.
- **Language and Literacy Boost:** 96% of classrooms participating in this initiative improved their average Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation Tool (ELLCO) score from the pre- to post-assessments. Over 1,400 students have benefitted from their teacher's participation in the language and literacy boost program, and participation in family literacy events offered by providers has increased.
- **Recruitment and Retention Stipends:** 366 First Steps 4K Lead Teachers received at least one stipend during the first two years of the initiative, and of those who received that first stipend, 39% received all four quarterly stipends, meaning they were successfully retained. Notably, over half of the teachers who received all four stipends had less than three years' experience as the Lead Teacher for First Steps 4K, indicating that the intervention worked to retain newer teachers.
- **First Steps 4K Academy:** More than 450 teachers and 350 leaders (center directors, school leaders, and owners) participated in intensive, multi-day, in-person professional development through First Steps 4K Academy ahead of the 2022 – 2023 school year. First Steps 4K staff developed and offered over 90 hours of targeted training and professional development opportunities throughout the year for teachers and directors.
- **Aim4Excellence:** First Steps funded, staffed, and supported a cohort to participate in the national director's credentialing program through National Louis University's McCormick Center for Early Childhood Leadership. Expanding this program beyond First Steps 4K providers to also incorporate early childhood leaders participating in First Steps Local Partnership child care quality programs was an indicator of the way we are bringing knowledge and opportunities from one part of the organization (First Steps 4K) into another, breaking down internal silos and maximizing resources.
- **Read-In:** In 2023, 28 First Steps 4K providers, representing 9 counties, participated in the Read-In. This annual event, in partnership with the SC State Library, helps get children excited about reading.

#### Aligned and Strengthened the State's Early Childhood System: Early Childhood Advisory Council

- **South Carolina's Birth through Five Plan:** In April 2023, the ECAC reviewed the Birth through Five Plan Progress Report, and approved Birth through Five plan priorities for the remainder of 2023. This progress report included updates on needs and resource assessments, key achievements in the previous year that impact young children and their families, and priorities for 2023. The report is posted on the ECAC website, [www.earlychildhoodsc.org](http://www.earlychildhoodsc.org).
- Since the publication of the Birth through Five Plan, a range of reports relating to young children and their families were produced, posted on the [earlychildhoodsc.org](http://www.earlychildhoodsc.org) website, and discussed at ECAC meetings. Reports and presentations also served to share work and progress of ECAC and its partners in

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meeting goals of the Birth through Five Plan. The following reports and presentations were posted from July 2022 through June 2023. They have a direct relationship with the Birth through Five Plan:

- 2022 Family Voice Council Report: A Year of Family Voice (October 2022)
- Preschool Development Grant Caregiver Survey Report 2023 (February 2023)
- Needs Assessment Parent/Caregiver Survey Summary (April 2023)
- **South Carolina's Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS):** This system initially includes the following: (1) Palmetto Drive to Five (PDt5) initiative, a state and county-level data dashboard including disaggregated early childhood program data. Currently there are 11 agencies with a total of 15 programs participating to date and (2) Early Learning Extension (ELE), an integration of early learning data from 3 entities, Head Start (22 grantees), First Steps (both 4K and Partnerships) and SC DSS Child Care Scholarships into the K-12 Statewide Longitudinal Data System. The ELE initiative also includes the establishment of a data governance framework for the ECIDS to manage all initiatives. This will include the establishment of a system-wide early childhood data request process by FY25. In FY24 the ELE and PDt5 are focused on answering Key Question #4 "How many young children are enrolled in early childhood programs?". Throughout FY25, the focus will address the remaining Key Questions identified for the ECIDS. Plans are in place to discuss and develop a Data Hub visualization for the ELE initiative and will look to include links to all early childhood related dashboards offered in South Carolina. The PDt5 Dashboard went live in April 2023. It currently shows historical data from 8 agencies for the years 2020-2022. The Dashboard's data will continue to build out to full capacity by the end of FY24. Further, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation invited First Steps to apply for and then awarded a two-year Strategic Data Fellowship to support data use for the South Carolina Early Childhood Advisory Council. The fellow will be placed at the ECAC in August 2024.
- **First Five SC:** In FY23, working together with partner agencies across the early childhood system, the Early Childhood Advisory Council successfully developed and launched a common application for 27 of South Carolina's publicly-funded early childhood programs, harnessing technology to dramatically improve the way families with young children get the services they want, need and deserve. Since the launch of the common application (soft launch in April and public launch in May 2023), 697 applications have been received for child care scholarships, WIC, First Steps Local Partnership Programs, and First Steps 4K (numbers include first month of FY24). A preliminary review of First Steps applications received in May, the month the common application formally launched, indicated that the largest percentage of application was for children birth to age one, and 59% of application were submitted after business hours. The responsive technology not only meets the needs of families, streamlining their eligibility and application process and saving them time in government waiting rooms, but also produces efficiencies that save the state time and money by directly connecting applications received on the portal to the systems used by each agency or entity through API or secure file and aiding in the move from paper processes to online application.
- **Palmetto PreK:** South Carolina's single portal into all publicly-funded PreK programs three- and four-year-olds continued to be promoted, further developed, and used as a mechanism for co-promotion of programs that are federally, state and locally funded and had, prior to the launch of this site in 2020, been disconnected and siloed.
- **Palmetto PreK Jamboree:** Provided training and professional development to over one thousand teachers of three- and four-year-olds from Head Start, public school, and child care including First Steps 4K providers.
- **Palmetto PreK Transitions working group,** an interagency initiative supported by the national organization Education Commission of the States, developed a cohesive state plan and toolkit for engaging families in the transition from PreK to K, a time of significant change and opportunity for children and their parents that sets the stage for a successful start to school.

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- **Family Voice Council**, a formal parent leadership group consisting of twenty parents, grandparents and primary caregivers to young children who participate in public programs, continues to be an active and supported part of the early childhood system's mechanism for learning from and modifying programs and services based on customer feedback. The Council is diverse in geography and lived experiences to close the gap between program and project designers and users.

#### **Increased Engagement with and Expanded Knowledge of Families: Signature Events**

- **Early Childhood Summit:** The 2022 SC Summit on Early Childhood engaged 500 early childhood professionals, community leaders, policy-makers and state leaders from across the early childhood system in a day-long professional development and field-building opportunity.
- **First Steps AmeriCorps' MLK Week of Service** signature event, the 4K Read Alouds, had its biggest year yet with 124 volunteers reading in 194 locations and distributing 3,100 books. Twenty-nine of our volunteers were elected officials from local and state government, and by partnering with Enterprise Rent-A-Car, every First Steps 4K classroom had a volunteer reader.
- **Countdown to Kindergarten Summit** was attended by over 150 parents, teachers, child care providers, and community partners on April 27, 2023. At this free, virtual professional development opportunity, participants learned and were inspired to better support rising kindergartners and their families during the transition to school.

#### **Maximized First Steps' Investment in Early Childhood**

- **Permanent Authorization:** Led a comprehensive effort to engage key stakeholders in the legislative process that ultimately resulted in Act 81. This stakeholder engagement included externally-facilitated in-person and online feedback sessions with local partnership executive directors, local board members (by region), state board members (two sessions), state office staff (by team), and key legislators and decision-makers.
- **Diversified Funding Streams:** In FY23, South Carolina First Steps secured and successfully leveraged state, federal, private and philanthropic dollars – diversified funding streams – to ensure long-term sustainability of programs and services offered to infants, toddlers, young children and their families by South Carolina First Steps. The agency presented four requests to the General Assembly, three of which were successful. Specifically, through the state budget process, First Steps was able to secure recurring funds to address unfunded but mandatory personnel cost increases at the state level (EIA funded personnel), to obtain recurring state funds to support the work of the Early Childhood Advisory Council – the first significant allocation of funds for this work since its creation over a decade ago, and to increase funding for First Steps 4K and the statewide expansion efforts.
- **Private and Federal Grants:** In FY23 alone, South Carolina First Steps was able to deliver to local partnerships \$5,593,636 in non-state funds including private grant dollars from the Duke Endowment, Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, and Enterprise Holdings Foundation, competitively awarded federal funds through ESSER III (via SDE) and Preschool Development Grant Birth - Five (via DSS).
- **Fundraising:** Made full use of the nonprofit status of South Carolina First Steps, raising \$154,262 in private contributions from 118 donors including \$98,448 through the organization's signature fundraising event, Night to Celebrate Community, as well as annual appeals and online giving, and a robust tax check-off campaign. We also helped local partnerships raise an additional \$27,871 by supporting their local giving day campaigns.
- **AmeriCorps VISTA:** Pursued and successfully received an AmeriCorps VISTA grant award providing the agency with resources for 6 full-time, federally-funded team members.

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- **AmeriCorps:** Achieved 100% recruitment of AmeriCorps positions with an exceptionally high number of returning members, validating the positive experience they had in their previous term or terms of service.
- **Staffing:** In FY23, South Carolina First Steps made significant progress toward the goal of utilizing all FTE's allocated to the agency by the legislature, most notably by retaining and / or filling vacant positions promptly. On June 30, 2023, First Steps had a 9% FTE vacancy (6 / 68), compared with a 13% rate on July 1, 2022 (9/68).

### **National Recognition**

- In FY23, First Steps' model for addressing challenging early childhood concerns was highlighted by the National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine in the publication, "Responding to the Current Youth Mental Health Crisis and Preventing the Next One."
- First Steps staff presented at numerous national conferences, lifted up examples in online publications, and spoke on national webinars throughout FY23 sharing the work of First Steps in using state, federal and private funds to engage more families in home visiting; how feedback loops are used to improve program service delivery; and how blending and braiding of funds results in better impact for children and families.
- **First Five SC Toolkit:** In FY23, the ECAC received a grant from the Pritzker Children's Initiative, one of the most prominent funders of early childhood programs and policy development nationally, to develop a toolkit and provide support to other states interested in replicating First 5 SC. Indicative of the tremendous interest in how South Carolina successfully harnessed political will, interagency commitments, and technology to streamline eligibility and application processes, in this first year of Pritzker funded support, the ECAC team has presented about First Steps at four national conferences or webinars, four state conferences, and are providing direct support to seven states and one large municipality with additional states reaching out for advice and partnership at least once per month.
- **For Our Future: South Carolina's Birth through Five Plan** won both state and national awards. The National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) chose the plan was one of the top 15 documents with relevance to state legislators in the nation produced in the past two years. The plan also won the Notable State Document Award by the South Carolina State Library. The plan was lauded for significantly contributing to the knowledge of the state and of legislators, being innovative and accurate in its presentation of materials, using graphics that are readily grasped, and providing a balanced perspective from various sides of the political spectrum. Additionally, the state award recognized the attention to citations and data as key features worth noting.

### **Continuous Quality Improvement and Customer / Client Focus**

- South Carolina First Steps and the Early Childhood Advisory Council continued to prioritize client and provider feedback, family voice, and user experience in the design, development, planning, and continuous quality improvement efforts of the agency. Since Mjartan joined First Steps and initiated a formal and nationally supported process for obtaining client feedback and making changes based on this input, First Steps has completed 17 feedback loops with clients involved in First Steps local partnership and First Steps 4K programs as well as early childhood educators and home visiting professionals. Our feedback work has won us national attention, with staff sharing findings at local and national conferences and being recognized in a case study published by Listen4Good. Through these ongoing efforts, First Steps has heard from over 4,900 individuals who have interacted with First Steps, either as a recipient or a provider of our services.

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- The Family Voice Council, a formal parent leadership group consisting of 20 parents, grandparents and primary caregivers to young children who participate in public programs, continues to be an active and supported part of the early childhood system's mechanism for learning from and modifying programs and services based on customer feedback.
- By modeling this customer focus at the state level and directly supporting it at the local partnership and First Steps 4K center level, we have embedded in our work the expectation that clients and community members will be informed, engaged, and feedback will be solicited and heard. This year, we provided targeted support to First Steps Local Partnerships to build their capacity as local convenings, early childhood service and support hubs, and community educators. With AmeriCorps members placed at the local partnership level for community and family outreach and engagement and a Family Café “core function” pilot funded and implemented in FY23, the capacity of our local partnerships to play this important role was greatly enhanced.
- First Steps is Here: Implemented a family speaker series at the First Steps’ Board of Trustees meetings, highlighting the impact of programs across the state implemented by First Steps.

#### **Accountability and Transparency**

- South Carolina First Steps’ strategic plan “Every Child Ready” continues to guide agency decisions including: legislative, budgetary, programmatic, and grant-making. Agency “rocks” (big, measurable, SMART goals) for 2023, team priorities, and individual objectives and evaluations tied directly to the strategic plan, ensuring agency-wide alignment and a unified focus.
- Quarterly data-driven implementation progress meetings involve approximately 20 staff members who engage in cross-team data presentation and analysis to discuss the reach and impact of our agency. Programmatic, communications, grantmaking and development and research and strategy staff all participate in these meetings. To build data literacy and capacity, the research and strategy team developed data visualization guidelines and provide technical assistance to staff as they prepare their quarterly data reports.
- In FY23, First Steps contracted with an external evaluator (Institute for Families in Society at the University of South Carolina) to evaluate the reach and impact of child care technical assistance and training programs implemented by First Steps Local Partnerships between FY18-19 and FY20-21. This aligns with legislative requirements to evaluate prevalent programs on a five-year schedule (SC State Code 59-152-50). The report was provided to the General Assembly and posted publicly on the agency’s website in October 2022. Key findings from the report include:
  - o At the end of FY21, 6,265 unique child care providers participated in training programs offered by First Steps Local Partnerships.
  - o Child care providers who received technical assistance and were enrolled in the ABC Quality Program showed an increase in their ABC Quality rating.
- First Steps has led an internal evaluation of First Steps 4K student outcomes. First Steps 4K uses GOLD® by TeachingStrategies to assess children’s readiness across six domains: language, literacy, cognitive, math, physical, and social-emotional. Preliminary data show that First Steps 4K students show an improvement in their readiness in the six domains across their year in 4K. An evaluation report with findings will be completed by December 2023.
- First Steps used funding from the Preschool Development Grant to contract with the Research, Evaluation, and Measurement (REM) Center at the University of South Carolina (UofSC) to evaluate Countdown to Kindergarten (CTK), the agency’s evidence-informed school transition program developed by First Steps in 2004. The multi-level evaluation of CTK aligns with the agency’s strategic plan (Strategy 1.4.8: “Evaluate the impact of Countdown to Kindergarten using both quantitative and qualitative methods”) and with the program’s goal of establishing a robust evidence base for consideration of

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moving the program's designation from evidence-informed to evidence-based. Through the partnership with UofSC, staff have submitted four scientific manuscripts to peer-reviewed journals.

- The Strategic Planning and Evaluation Committee of the Board met in March 2023 and established a plan to enter into a five-year contract with a consistent evaluation team to address four legislatively mandated evaluations to be completed between FY 24-28. The five-year evaluation request for proposal was submitted to SDE/MMO in May 2023.
- To ensure continuous quality improvement and process management related to First Steps Local Partnership programs, in FY23, First Steps began a multi-part evaluation of the agency's portfolio of evidence-based and evidence-informed programs. One component of this is a collaborative project with North Carolina's early childhood public-private partnership, Smart Start, where the two agencies are working together to establish a searchable program catalogue that includes details about model implementation, evidence-based outcomes and average cost. Spinning out of this partnership was a new rapid cycle evaluation and CQI process for piloting and testing innovations through the Carolina Collaborative for Early Childhood Innovation. Using READY funds, this initiative, developed in FY23, will roll out in FY2024. Another component of the local partnership quality improvement process involved the utilization of a graduate intern and now external evaluator who helped us dive more deeply into the effects of Local Partnership evidence-based parenting programs on well-child visits and health outcomes.
- Through quarterly implementation progress meetings with executive leadership, program directors, local partnership team members, and 4K team members, key stakeholders come together to monitor the reach and impact of the agency's First Steps 4K and Local Partnership programs.
- In FY23, staff presented the findings and lessons learned from their rapid-cycle feedback work at local and national conferences, establishing the agency as an emerging leader in the field of CQI.
- Across the agency, administrative, operational, and internal process changes have reflected our top-to-bottom commitment to continuous quality improvement. Examples from FY23 include improvements in procurement processes, the building of a digital "bridge" between two First Steps 4K data systems that increased efficiencies and saved staff from reentering data, the development and piloting of a timekeeping system for grant billing, and the initial roll out of an agency-wide CRM system (to name just a few examples).
- Brought a rigorous focus on data-driven decision-making and clarity about outcomes. Additional staffing, reorganization, qualitative and quantitative data gathering practices and a clear focus on key performance indicators (KPI's) within First Steps 4K have all been a key contributors to the positive growth and quality outcomes cited above. In FY23, we further developed the data and evaluation infrastructure and systems within First Steps 4K to ensure all team members are knowledgeable about performance indicator targets and are working collaboratively to ensure goal attainment across First Steps.
- In the Spring and Fall of each year, First Steps 4K uses online survey instruments to gather feedback from First Steps 4K families and First Steps 4K providers. The 4K leadership team meets biweekly to discuss opportunities to respond to feedback gathered during the surveys. In response to feedback shared by families, First Steps 4K has begun using text messages to notify families on the status of their child's 4K application. First Steps 4K also responded to teachers and directors who identified the need for additional training in challenging behaviors and identification of developmental delays by incorporating these topics into ongoing professional development opportunities, such as Palmetto Pre-K Jamboree and First Steps 4K Academy. A professional development opportunity designed for parents and caregivers is planned for August 2023 (Preschool Power Hour). This is in direct response to requests by our families for more information on how to help their children have the best start to school.
- The State Director of First Steps 4K and the Chief Partnership Officer also lead a cross-agency team whose goal is to increase the number of children enrolled in high-intensity programs funded by First

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Steps (a board-approved measure of success as outlined in Every Child Ready, First Steps' 5-year strategic plan). Through this partnership, the First Steps 4K and Local Partnership team collaborate to recruit, enroll, and refer children and families to each other's programs. This was a Senate Oversight Committee recommendation.

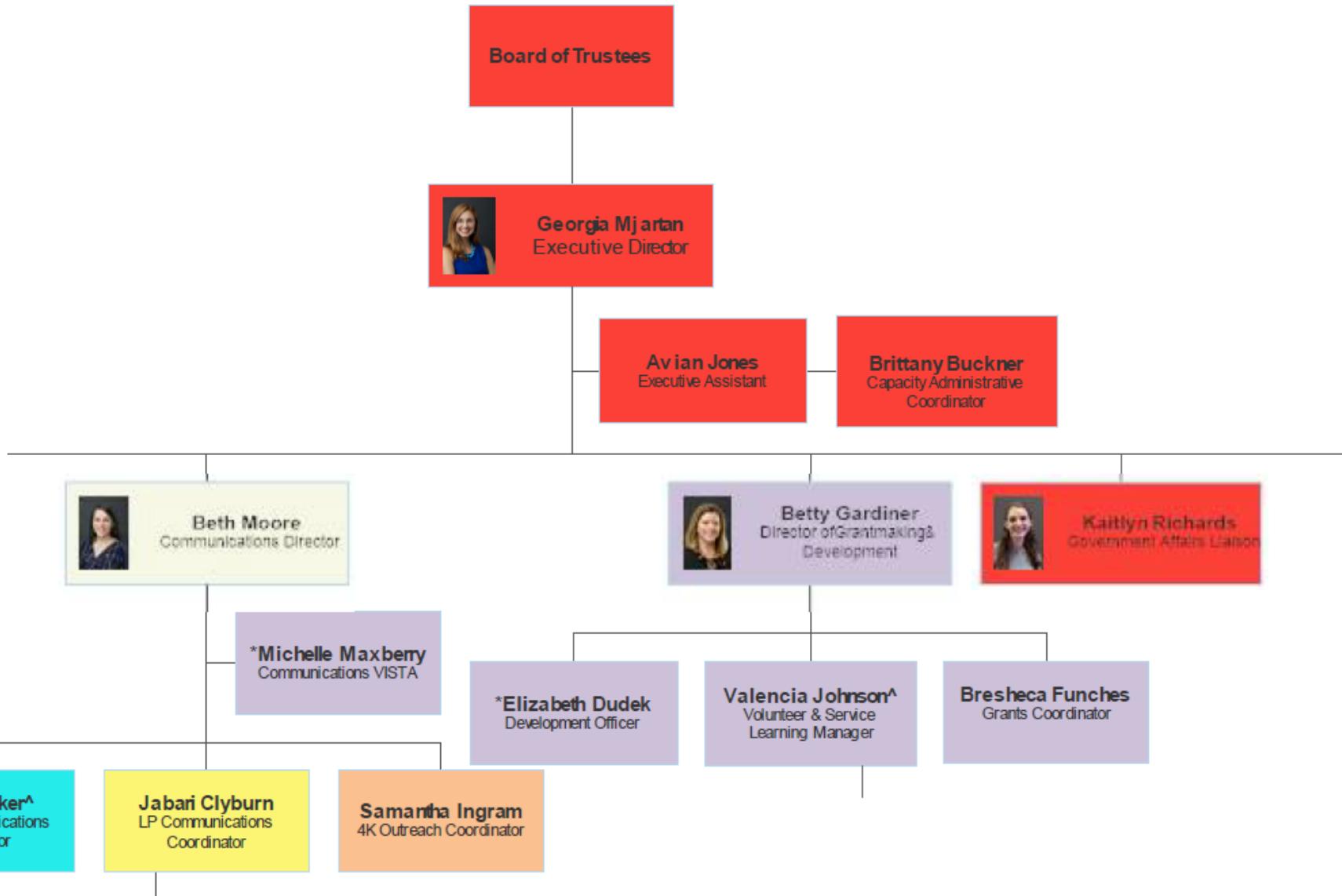
### **Risk Assessment and Mitigation Strategies**

Should First Steps fail to meet its goals and objectives, South Carolina's young children will be less prepared for success in school and life. But it doesn't end there. The evidence-based strategies delivered by the initiative are documented by research to help reduce the occurrence of costly negative outcomes, including child abuse and neglect, poor health, special education placements, academic remediation, unemployment, incarceration and more. In this sense, the work of SC First Steps is not only advancing the long-term success and prosperity of its clients but reducing substantial taxpayer burdens associated with a host of undesirable outcomes.

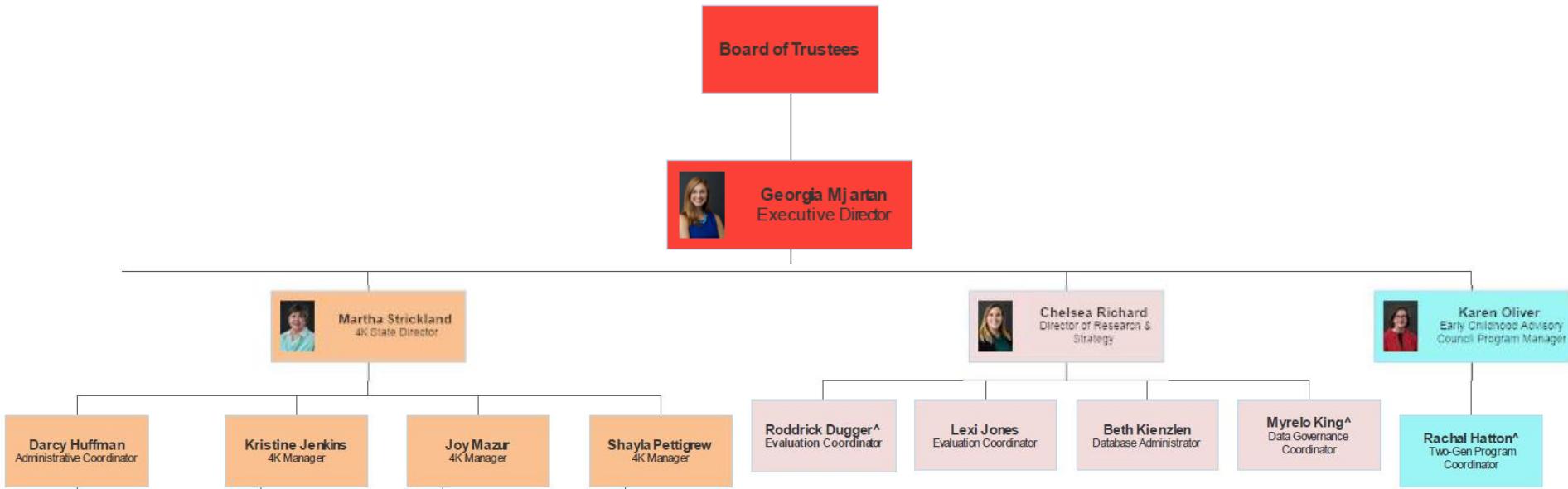
In order to promote success and mitigate against these negative outcomes, First Steps requires the ongoing support of its public and private partners, Governor Henry McMaster, and the SC General Assembly.

To better ensure the success of South Carolina's children at-risk for early school failure, policy makers might consider expanding the resources made available to local First Steps Partnerships – allowing for the expansion of evidence-based early childhood interventions proven to impact the long-term success and prosperity of their participants. Continuing to increase the reach of 4K is also a key lever in addressing early school failure.

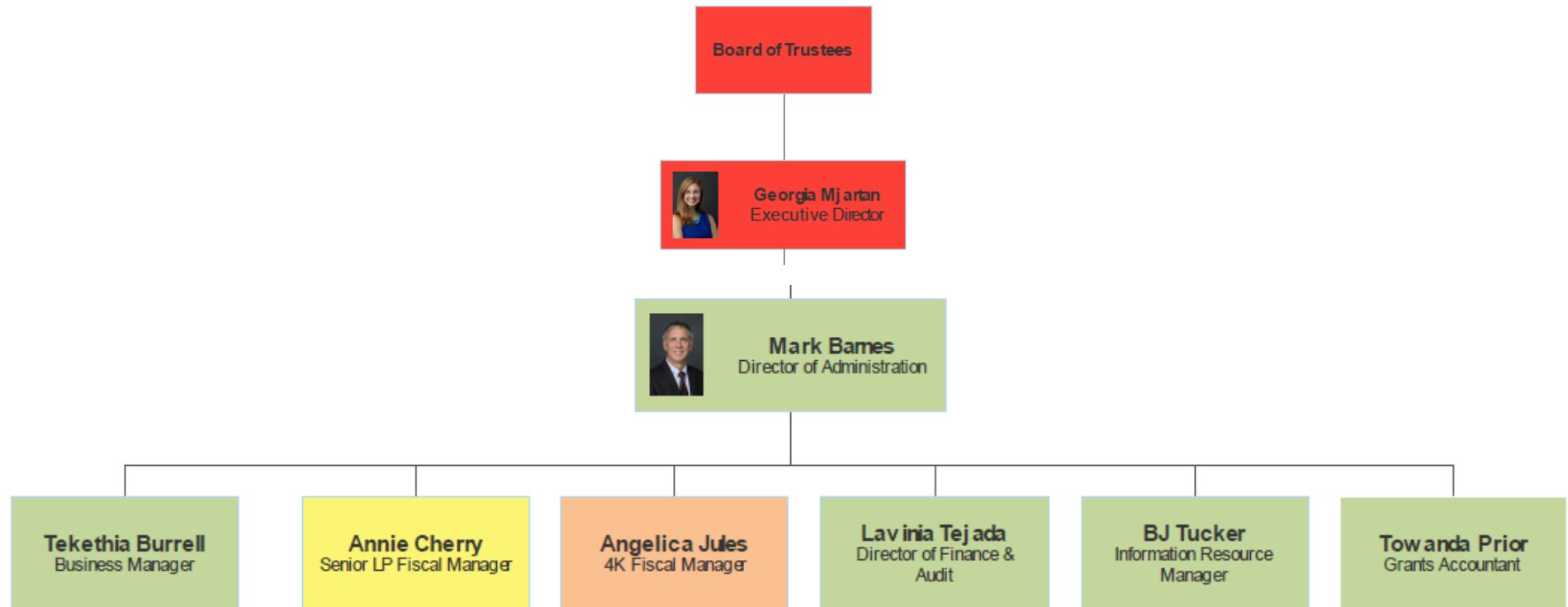
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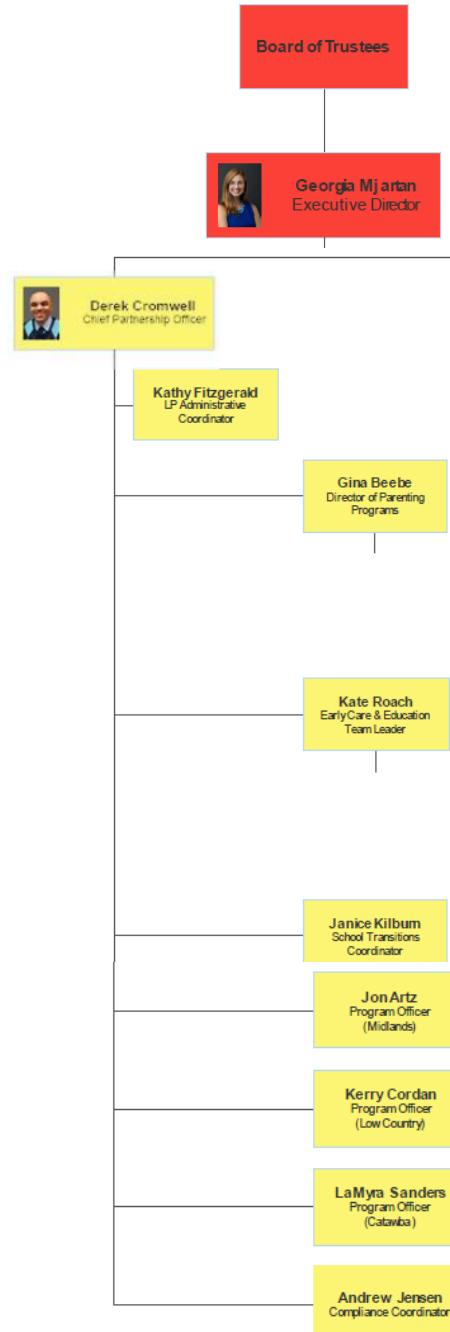
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# 2023

## Reorganization and Compliance

as submitted for the Accountability Report by:

### H620 - SC First Steps to School Readiness

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#### Agency Mission

**Adopted in: 2019**

South Carolina First Steps works collaboratively to ensure that all children start school ready to reach their highest potential with engaged support from their parents, caregivers, and communities.

#### Agency Vision

**Adopted in: 2019**

We will be successful when all children reach their highest potential.

#### Recommendations for reorganization requiring legislative change:

Proviso 1.97 requires the agency to develop a plan to operate independently from the State Department of Education.

#### Agency intentions for other major reorganization to divisions, departments, or programs to allow the agency to operate more effectively and efficiently in the succeeding fiscal year:

None
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#### Significant events related to the agency that occurred in FY2023

Description of Event	Start	End	Agency Measures Impacted	Other Impacts
First Steps received permanent authorization	June	June	By 2025, the percentage of children in need who are directly served by First Steps will increase to 20%.	
Second year of statewide expansion of First Steps 4K	July	June	Expand student enrollment within the First Steps 4K program.	
First year of Resources for Early Acceleration and Development in Youth (READY) funding deployed through targeted and competitive grants to local partnerships	July	June	By 2025, the percentage of children in need who are directly served by First Steps high intensity programs will increase from 5% to 8%.	
Launched the first-in-the-nation First5SC common application	May	May	Increase leads generated from FirstFiveSC by 5% annually.	
For Our Future, South Carolina's inaugural birth through five system strategic plan won a 2022 Notable State Document Award from the SC State Library	April	April	Increase website traffic to scfirststeps.org, countdownnsc.org, free4ksc.org, firstfivesc.org, palmettorek.org, and earlychildhoodsc.org by 5% annually.	

For Our Future, South Carolina's inaugural birth through five system strategic plan won a 2023 Notable Document Award from the National Conference of State Legislatures	June	June	Increase website traffic to scfirststeps.org, countdownsc.org, free4ksc.org, firstfivesc.org, palmettorek.org, and earlychildhoodsc.org by 5% annually.	
First year of First Steps' AmeriCorps VISTA program	August	June	Recruit 44 service-minded adults throughout targeted communities in SC to serve as AmeriCorps and VISTA Members or Interns at First Steps supporting local and state First Steps programs annually.	
<b>Is the agency in compliance with S.C. Code Ann. § 2-1-220, which requires submission of certain reports to the Legislative Services Agency for publication online and the State Library? (See also S.C. Code Ann. § 60-2-20).</b>			Yes	
Reason agency is out of compliance: (if applicable)				
<b>Is the agency in compliance with various requirements to transfer its records, including electronic ones, to the Department of Archives and History? See the Public Records Act (S.C. Code Ann. § 20-1-10 through 20-1-180) and the South Carolina Uniform Electronic Transactions Act (S.C. Code Ann. § 26-6-10 through 26-10-210).</b>			Yes	
<b>Does the law allow the agency to promulgate regulations?</b>			Yes	
Law number(s) which gives the agency the authority to promulgate regulations:	Section 59-152-90			
<b>Has the agency promulgated any regulations?</b>			No	
<b>Is the agency in compliance with S.C. Code Ann. § 1-23-120 (J), which requires an agency to conduct a formal review of its regulations every five years?</b>			Yes	
(End of Reorganization and Compliance Section)				

## Strategic Plan Results

# FY2023

as submitted for the Accountability Report by:

**H620 - SC First Steps to School Readiness**

- Goal 1** Families are supported as their child's first and most important teachers.
- Goal 2** Families can access and afford high quality early care and education programs that meet the needs of their children and families
- Goal 3** Disparities in educational, developmental, and health outcomes for children of color and from low-income families are reduced
- Goal 4** The early childhood state system works collaboratively, aligning resources, strategy, and focus across agencies to benefit young children and their families

Perf. Measure Number	Description	Base	Target	Actual	Value Type	Desired Outcome	Time Applicable	Calculation Method	Data Source	Data Location	Stakeholder Need Satisfied	Primary Stakeholder	State Funded Program Number Responsible	Notes
<b>1.1</b> <i>Provide parents with access to support and resources that strengthen their families; build their confidence, knowledge and skills; and promote the optimal development of their children.</i>														
<b>State Objective: Healthy and Safe Families</b>														
1.1.1	Across high-intensity parenting programs, at least 50% of families will show improvement in parent-child interaction.	-	50%	52%	Percent	Equal to or greater than	July 1 - June 30	HFPI results in parent-child interaction domain across all parenting programs, where available, per fiscal year; weighted proportion of those improving from below average at baseline to at/above average at 6 months of enrollment and those improving from at average at baseline to above average at 6 months of enrollment	First Steps Data Collection System	First Steps Data Collection System is owned by First Steps and housed/maintained by the Office of Revenue and Fiscal Affairs - all data are owned by First Steps	Family outcomes will improve through high-intensity interventions.	Families served by high intensity programs through First Steps Local Partnerships.	3500.100100.000; 4400.920100.000; 4400.920500X000; 4400.921000X000; 44NW.991800X000; 8200.010000.000; \$200.100000X000	
<b>1.2</b> <i>Increase the number of families participating in evidence-based and evidence-informed parenting programs.</i>														
<b>State Objective: Healthy and Safe Families</b>														
1.2.1	By 2025, the percentage of children in need who are directly served by First Steps will increase to 20%.	37%	20%	37%	Percent	Equal to or greater than	July 1 - June 30	Numerator: Estimated number of children served directly, excluding those served in quality enhancement, training, community education, and convenor from Local Partnership matrix, plus 4K; Denominator: Children under age 6 <185% FPL from American Community Survey 5-year estimates	First Steps Data Collection System + ChildPlus	First Steps Data Collection System is owned by First Steps and housed/maintained by the Office of Revenue and Fiscal Affairs; ChildPlus is licensed by First Steps - all data are owned by First Steps	Child outcomes will improve by being directly served by First Steps.	Children served directly by First Steps 4K and Local Partnerships.	3500.100100.000; 4400.920100.000; 4400.920500X000; 4400.921000X000; 44NW.991800X000; 8200.010000.000; \$200.100000X000	
1.2.2	By 2025, the percentage of children in need who are directly served by First Steps high intensity programs will increase from 5% to 8%.	5%	6%	8%	Percent	Equal to or greater than	July 1 - June 30	Numerator: Estimated number of children served directly in high intensity programs from Local Partnership matrix, plus 4K; Denominator: Children under age 6 <185% FPL from American Community Survey 5-year estimates	First Steps Data Collection System + ChildPlus	First Steps Data Collection System is owned by First Steps and housed/maintained by the Office of Revenue and Fiscal Affairs; ChildPlus is licensed by First Steps - all data are owned by First Steps	Child outcomes will improve by being directly served by First Steps.	Children served by high intensity programs through First Steps 4K and Local Partnerships.	3500.100100.000; 4400.920100.000; 4400.920500X000; 4400.921000X000; 44NW.991800X000; 8200.010000.000; \$200.100000X000	
<b>1.3</b> <i>Maximize parent and family knowledge, choice and engagement in their child's early learning and development. Engage in public information campaigns and parent outreach efforts to promote and educate about available options.</i>														
<b>State Objective: Healthy and Safe Families</b>														
1.3.1	Increase SC First Steps, Palmetto Pre-K, and ECAC social media followers by 5% annually.	8,120	8,526	10,425	Count	Equal to or greater than	July 1 - June 30	Cumulative number of followers across platforms	Facebook ( <a href="https://www.facebook.com/scfirststeps">https://www.facebook.com/scfirststeps</a> ; <a href="https://www.facebook.com/palmettoperk">https://www.facebook.com/palmettoperk</a> ), Twitter ( <a href="https://twitter.com/SCFirstSteps">https://twitter.com/SCFirstSteps</a> ), Instagram ( <a href="https://www.instagram.com/SCFIRSTSTEPS/">https://www.instagram.com/SCFIRSTSTEPS/</a> )	On each website	Child outcomes will improve when families and providers have access to resources.	All children in South Carolina.	3500.100100.000; 4400.920100.000; 4400.920500X000; 4400.921000X000; 44NW.991800X000; 8200.010000.000; \$200.100000X000	

Perf. Measure Number	Description	Base	Target	Actual	Value Type	Desired Outcome	Time Applicable	Calculation Method	Data Source	Data Location	Stakeholder Need Satisfied	Primary Stakeholder	State Funded Program Number Responsible	Notes
1.3.2	Increase leads generated from Palmetto Pre-K by 5% annually.	7,855	8,248	7,257	Count	Equal to or greater than	July 1 - June 30	Number of leads reported by Google Analytics	Number of leads	Google Analytics	Child outcomes will improve when families and providers have access to resources.	All children in South Carolina.	3500.100100.000; 4400.920100.000; 4400.920500X000; 4400.921000X000; 44NW.991800X000; 8200.010000.000; 8200.100000X000	Same programs as included on First5SC, which had a lot of paid marketing/publicity in FY23, so this could explain the drop in leads from Palmetto Pre-K
1.3.3	Increase leads generated from FirstFiveSC by 5% annually.	2,009	6,300	10,023	Count	Equal to or greater than	July 1 - June 30	Number of leads reported by Google Analytics; baseline is from launch to end of FY22 (Feb 17, 2022 - Jun 30, 2022) - target based on 500 leads per month for 12 months + 5%	Number of leads	Google Analytics	Child outcomes will improve when families and providers have access to resources.	All children in South Carolina.	3500.100100.000; 4400.920100.000; 4400.920500X000; 4400.921000X000; 44NW.991800X000; 8200.010000.000; 8200.100000X000	
<b>2.1</b> Expand statewide the geographic reach and enrollment in state- funded, full-day 4-year-old Kindergarten available at no charge for eligible children in public schools, private schools and private child care centers. <span style="float: right;">State Objective: Education, Training, and Human Development</span>														
2.1.1	On Day 45 of the school year, 60% of licensed, approved 4K slots will be filled.	44%	60%	67%	Percent	Equal to or greater than	Day 45 is October 18, 2022	Numerator: students enrolled on Day 45; denominator: licensed capacity of active centers on Day 45	ChildPlus	ChildPlus is licensed by First Steps - all data are owned by First Steps	Child outcomes will improve when they enroll in First Steps 4K.	Children eligible for First Steps 4K.	3500.100100.000; 4400.920100.000; 4400.920500X000; 4400.921000X000; 44NW.991800X000; 8200.010000.000; 8200.100000X000	
2.1.2	Expand student enrollment within the First Steps 4K program.	3,343	6,045	3,650	Count	Equal to or greater than	SY2022-23	Total students served through day 180	ChildPlus	ChildPlus is licensed by First Steps - all data are owned by First Steps	Child outcomes will improve when they enroll in First Steps 4K.	Children eligible for First Steps 4K.	3500.100100.000; 4400.920100.000; 4400.920500X000; 4400.921000X000; 44NW.991800X000; 8200.010000.000; 8200.100000X000	Second year of statewide expansion (three years for full implementation)
2.1.3	Expand the number of classrooms offering First Steps 4K to meet student enrollment goal.	278	388	280	Count	Equal to or greater than	SY2022-23	Number of classrooms at average of 12 students per classroom for FTE goal (4656)	Program records	Housed at First Steps	Child outcomes will improve when they enroll in First Steps 4K.	Children eligible for First Steps 4K.	3500.100100.000; 4400.920100.000; 4400.920500X000; 4400.921000X000; 44NW.991800X000; 8200.010000.000; 8200.100000X000	Second year of statewide expansion (three years for full implementation)
2.1.4	Increase the proportion of families that would "highly recommend" First Steps 4K to a friend or family member.	88%	90%	84%	Percent	Equal to or greater than	Around day 60 SY2022-23	Percentage scoring 9 or 10 to the question, "How likely is it that you would recommend First Steps 4K to a friend or family member?" on a scale of 0-10	SurveyMonkey	SurveyMonkey is licensed by First Steps - all data are owned by First Steps	Child outcomes will improve when they enroll in First Steps 4K. Family feedback will be utilized in continuous quality improvement processes.	Children eligible for First Steps 4K.	3500.100100.000; 4400.920100.000; 4400.920500X000; 4400.921000X000; 44NW.991800X000; 8200.010000.000; 8200.100000X000	stretch goal - definition is those that rate a 9 or a 10 (scale of 0-10) First Steps 4K on the question, "How likely is it that you would recommend First Steps 4K to a friend or family member?"
<b>2.2</b> Engage early care and education programs and providers in training, quality enhancement, and coaching, equipping them with the skills and resources to promote positive child development. <span style="float: right;">State Objective: Education, Training, and Human Development</span>														
2.2.1	Increase the availability of high quality early care and education opportunities offered by First Steps. By 2025, the percentage of children under age 6 who benefit from First Steps quality enhancement and training efforts will increase to 15%.	15%	15%	19%	Percent	Equal to or greater than	July 1 - June 30	Numerator: Estimated number of children in centers where quality enhancement and training have occurred from Local Partnership matrix + 4K students; Denominator: Children under age 6 for whom poverty status is known from American Community Survey 5-year estimates	Local partnership numbers served matrix/ChildPlus	First Steps Data Collection System is owned by First Steps and housed/maintained by the Office of Revenue and Fiscal Affairs. ChildPlus is licensed by First Steps - all data are owned by First Steps	Child outcomes will improve when they enroll in high quality child care.	All children in South Carolina.	3500.100100.000; 4400.920100.000; 4400.920500X000; 4400.921000X000; 44NW.991800X000; 8200.010000.000; 8200.100000X000	

Perf. Measure Number	Description	Base	Target	Actual	Value Type	Desired Outcome	Time Applicable	Calculation Method	Data Source	Data Location	Stakeholder Need Satisfied	Primary Stakeholder	State Funded Program Number Responsible	Notes
2.2.2	Provide professional development: The number of hours of intensive, on-site technical assistance for child care providers through Quality Enhancement/Quality Counts via local partnerships and estimated 4K coaching hours will increase by 2% annually.	20,142	20,545	32,241	Count	Equal to or greater than	July 1 - June 30	Hours of on-site technical assistance provided to child care centers participating in intensive facility quality enhancement efforts (via local partnerships), plus estimated 4K coaching hours (8 hours per month of total centers enrolled through day 180 for 8 months)	Local partnership numbers served matrix/4K program records	First Steps Data Collection System is owned by First Steps and housed/maintained by the Office of Revenue and Fiscal Affairs; ChildPlus is licensed by First Steps - all data are owned by First Steps	Child outcomes will improve when they enroll in high quality child care.	All children in South Carolina.	3500.100100.000; 4400.920100.000; 4400.920500X000; 4400.921000X000; 44NW.991800X000; 8200.010000.000; 8200.100000X000	
2.2.3	Provide professional development: The number of certified training hours provided to child care providers via local partnerships and annual First Steps-4K Teacher and Leadership academies will increase by 2% annually.	845	862	932	Count	Equal to or greater than	July 1 - June 31	Certified child care training hours via local partnerships, plus total hours of 4K leadership and teacher academies	Local partnership numbers served matrix/4K program records	First Steps Data Collection System is owned by First Steps and housed/maintained by the Office of Revenue and Fiscal Affairs; 4K program records are housed/maintained at First Steps - all data are owned by First Steps	Child outcomes will improve when they enroll in high quality child care.	All children in South Carolina.	3500.100100.000; 4400.920100.000; 4400.920500X000; 4400.921000X000; 44NW.991800X000; 8200.010000.000; 8200.100000X000	
<b>3.1 Expand reach by implementing a service delivery system that includes both programs that are intensive and targeted plus those that are light-touch and have a broader reach</b>														
<b>State Objective: Healthy and Safe Families</b>														
3.1.1	Of those entities that received discretionary grant funding from SC First Steps to expand service reach in underserved communities, 80% will reach their service targets annually.	76%	80%	75%	Percent	Equal to or greater than	July 1 - June 30	Proportion of service targets reached for grants with at least 9 months of funding during fiscal year	First Steps Data Collection System/Program records	First Steps Data Collection System is owned by First Steps and housed/maintained by the Office of Revenue and Fiscal Affairs; other relevant local Partnership program records are housed/maintained at First Steps or at the Local Partnership - all data are owned by First Steps	Child outcomes will improve by being served by First Steps.	All children in South Carolina.	3500.100100.000; 4400.920100.000; 4400.920500X000; 4400.921000X000; 44NW.991800X000; 8200.010000.000; 8200.100000X000	
3.1.2	Recruit 44 service-minded adults throughout targeted communities in SC to serve as AmeriCorps and VISTA Members or Interns at First Steps supporting local and state First Steps programs annually.	-	44	41	Count	Equal to or greater than	July 1 - June 30	Number of AmeriCorps and VISTA members and interns recruited	Program records	All AmeriCorps and VISTA program records are housed, maintained, and owned by First Steps	Child outcomes will improve by being served by First Steps. Adult outcomes will improve through voluntary service via AmeriCorps.	All children and adults in South Carolina.	3500.100100.000; 4400.920100.000; 4400.920500X000; 4400.921000X000; 44NW.991800X000; 8200.010000.000; 8200.100000X000	
3.1.3	Following their initial year of service, 50% of AmeriCorps members and interns will return for a second year of service, get a job, or enroll in school.	-	50%	72%	Percent	Equal to or greater than	July 1 - June 30	AmeriCorps and VISTA members and interns who return to service, get a job, or enroll in school/AmeriCorps members in program year	Program records	All AmeriCorps and VISTA program records are housed, maintained, and owned by First Steps	Child outcomes will improve by being served by First Steps. Adult outcomes will improve through voluntary service via AmeriCorps.	All children and adults in South Carolina.	3500.100100.000; 4400.920100.000; 4400.920500X000; 4400.921000X000; 44NW.991800X000; 8200.010000.000; 8200.100000X000	
<b>3.2 Set benchmarks using disaggregated data to track progress in reducing disparities of specific target groups</b>														
<b>State Objective: Healthy and Safe Families</b>														

Perf. Measure Number	Description	Base	Target	Actual	Value Type	Desired Outcome	Time Applicable	Calculation Method	Data Source	Data Location	Stakeholder Need Satisfied	Primary Stakeholder	State Funded Program Number Responsible	Notes
3.2.1	Reduce the racial/ethnic gap in kindergarten readiness: By 2025, the gap in the percentage of children who score at the highest level on the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment between white Kindergartners and Black/Hispanic Kindergartners will reduce by 1% each year to 15%.	24%	17%	19%	Percent	Equal to or less than	Fall 2022 Kindergarten Readiness Assessment Results	(Numerator: white Kindergartners "Demonstrating Readiness"; Denominator: Total white Kindergartners assess with the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment) (Numerator: Black and Hispanic Kindergartners "Demonstrating Readiness"; Denominator: Total Black and Hispanic Kindergartners assess with the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment)	Education Oversight Committee KRA Report	Education Oversight Committee KRA Report	All children should arrive at kindergarten ready, regardless of race or ethnicity.	All children in South Carolina.	3500.100100.000; 4400.920100.000; 4400.920500X000; 4400.921000X000; 44NW.991800X000; 8200.010000.000; 8200.100000X000	
3.2.2	More children arrive at kindergarten ready for success: By 2025, the percentage of children who score at the highest level on the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment will increase by 3% each year to 47%.	36%	39%	38%	Percent	Equal to or greater than	Fall 2021 Kindergarten Readiness Assessment Results	Provided in Education Oversight Committee KRA Report	Education Oversight Committee KRA Report	Education Oversight Committee KRA Report	All children should arrive at kindergarten ready.	All children in South Carolina.	3500.100100.000; 4400.920100.000; 4400.920500X000; 4400.921000X000; 44NW.991800X000; 8200.010000.000; 8200.100000X000	
<b>4.1 Develop and implement an ongoing process for communicating across the early childhood state system</b>														
4.1.1	Grow SCFS and ECAC contact lists 10% annually.	6,368	7,005	10,408	Count	Equal to or greater than	June 30 of fiscal year	Number of contacts	Robly, Raiser's Edge	Robly, Raiser's Edge	Child outcomes will improve when families and providers have access to resources.	All children in South Carolina.	3500.100100.000; 4400.920100.000; 4400.920500X000; 4400.921000X000; 44NW.991800X000; 8200.010000.000; 8200.100000X000	
4.1.2	Increase website traffic to scfirststeps.org, countdownsc.org, free4ksc.org, firstfivesc.org, palmettoprek.org, and earlychildhoodsc.org by 5% annually.	150,967	158,515	442,504	Count	Equal to or greater than	June 30 of fiscal year	Cumulative unique visitors	Google Analytics	Google Analytics	Child outcomes will improve when families and providers have access to resources.	All children in South Carolina.	3500.100100.000; 4400.920100.000; 4400.920500X000; 4400.921000X000; 44NW.991800X000; 8200.010000.000; 8200.100000X000	

# FY2024

## Strategic Plan Development

as submitted for the Accountability Report by:

H620 - SC First Steps to School Readiness

- Goal 1** Families are supported as their child's first and most important teachers.
- Goal 2** Families can access and afford high quality early care and education programs that meet the needs of their children and families
- Goal 3** Disparities in educational, developmental, and health outcomes for children of color and from low-income families are reduced
- Goal 4** The early childhood state system works collaboratively, aligning resources, strategy, and focus across agencies to benefit young children and their families

Perf. Measure Number	Description	Base	Target	Value Type	Desired Outcome	Time Applicable	Calculation Method	Data Source	Data Location	Stakeholder Need Satisfied	Primary Stakeholder	State Funded Program Number	Responsible	Notes
1.1	Provide parents with access to support and resources that strengthen their families; build their confidence, knowledge and skills; and promote the optimal development of their children.									State Objective: Healthy and Safe Families				
1.1.1	Across high-intensity parenting programs, at least 50% of families will show improvement in parent-child interaction.	52%	50%	Percent	Equal to or greater than	State fiscal year	HFPI results in parent-child interaction domain across all parenting programs, where available, per fiscal year; weighted proportion of those improving from below average at baseline to at/above average of 6 months of enrollment and those improving from average at baseline to above average at 6 months of enrollment	First Steps Data Collection System	First Steps Data Collection System is owned by First Steps and housed/maintained by the Office of Revenue and Fiscal Affairs - all data are owned by First Steps	Family outcomes will improve through high-intensity interventions.	Families served by high intensity programs through First Steps Local Partnerships.	3500.100100.000; 4400.920100.000; 4400.920500X000; 4400.921000X000; 44NW.991800X000; 8200.010000.000; 8200.100000X000		
1.2	Increase the number of families participating in evidence-based and evidence-informed parenting programs.									State Objective: Healthy and Safe Families				
1.2.1	By 2025, the percentage of children in need who are directly served by First Steps will increase to 20%.	37%	20%	Percent	Equal to or greater than	State fiscal year	Numerator: Estimated number of children served directly, excluding those served in quality enhancement, training, community education, and conveners from Local Partnership matrix, plus 4K; Denominator: Children under age 6 <185% FPL from American Community Survey 5-year estimates	First Steps Data Collection System + ChildPlus	First Steps Data Collection System is owned by First Steps and housed/maintained by the Office of Revenue and Fiscal Affairs; ChildPlus is licensed by First Steps - all data are owned by First Steps	Child outcomes will improve by being directly served by First Steps.	Children served directly by First Steps 4K and Local Partnerships.	3500.100100.000; 4400.920100.000; 4400.920500X000; 4400.921000X000; 44NW.991800X000; 8200.010000.000; 8200.100000X000		
1.2.2	By 2025, the percentage of children in need who are directly served by First Steps high intensity programs will increase from 5% to 8%.	8%	8%	Percent	Equal to or greater than	State fiscal year	Numerator: Estimated number of children served directly in high intensity programs from Local Partnership matrix, plus 4K; Denominator: Children under age 6 <185% FPL from American Community Survey 5-year estimates	First Steps Data Collection System + ChildPlus	First Steps Data Collection System is owned by First Steps and housed/maintained by the Office of Revenue and Fiscal Affairs; ChildPlus is licensed by First Steps - all data are owned by First Steps	Child outcomes will improve by being directly served by First Steps.	Children served by high intensity programs through First Steps 4K and Local Partnerships.	3500.100100.000; 4400.920100.000; 4400.920500X000; 4400.921000X000; 44NW.991800X000; 8200.010000.000; 8200.100000X000		
1.3	Maximize parent and family knowledge, choice and engagement in their child's early learning and development. Engage in public information campaigns and parent outreach efforts to promote and educate about available options.									State Objective: Healthy and Safe Families				

Perf. Measure Number	Description	Base	Target	Value Type	Desired Outcome	Time Applicable	Calculation Method	Data Source	Data Location	Stakeholder Need Satisfied	State Funded Program Number		
											Primary Stakeholder	Responsible	Notes
1.3.1	Increase SC First Steps, Palmetto Pre-K, and ECAC social media followers by 5% annually.	10,425	10,946	Count	Equal to or greater than	State fiscal year	Cumulative number of followers across platforms	Facebook ( <a href="https://www.facebook.com/scfirststeps">https://www.facebook.com/scfirststeps</a> ; <a href="https://www.facebook.com/palmettoprek">https://www.facebook.com/palmettoprek</a> ), Twitter ( <a href="https://twitter.com/SCFirstSteps">https://twitter.com/SCFirstSteps</a> ), Instagram ( <a href="https://www.instagram.com/SCFIRSTSTEPS/">https://www.instagram.com/SCFIRSTSTEPS/</a> )	On each website	Child outcomes will improve when families and providers have access to resources.	All children in South Carolina.	3500.100100.000; 4400.920100.000; 4400.920500X000; 4400.921000X000; 44NW.991800X000; 8200.010000.000; 8200.100000X000	
1.3.2	Increase leads generated from Palmetto Pre-K by 5% annually.	7,257	7,620	Count	Equal to or greater than	State fiscal year	Number of leads reported by Google Analytics	Google Analytics	Google Analytics	Child outcomes will improve when families and providers have access to resources.	All children in South Carolina.	3500.100100.000; 4400.920100.000; 4400.920500X000; 4400.921000X000; 44NW.991800X000; 8200.010000.000; 8200.100000X000	
1.3.3	Receive 6,300 leads through FirstFiveSC.	10,023	6,300	Count	Equal to or greater than	State fiscal year	Number of leads reported by Google Analytics; Leads are families who complete the eligibility screener and are eligible for at least one program or service.	Google Analytics	Google Analytics	Child outcomes will improve when families and providers have access to resources.	All children in South Carolina.	3500.100100.000; 4400.920100.000; 4400.920500X000; 4400.921000X000; 44NW.991800X000; 8200.010000.000; 8200.100000X000	
1.3.4	Receive 1,800 applications through FirstFiveSC common application portal.	0	1,800	Count	Equal to or greater than	State fiscal year	Number of applications reported by Google Analytics	Google Analytics	Google Analytics	Child outcomes will improve when families and providers have access to resources.	All children in South Carolina.	3500.100100.000; 4400.920100.000; 4400.920500X000; 4400.921000X000; 44NW.991800X000; 8200.010000.000; 8200.100000X000	
2.1	Expand statewide the geographic reach and enrollment in state-funded, full-day 4-year-old Kindergarten available at no charge for eligible children in public schools, private schools and private child care centers.										State Objective: Education, Training, and Human Development		
2.1.1	On Day 45 of the school year, 60% of licensed, approved 4K slots will be filled.	67%	60%	Percent	Equal to or greater than	Other	Numerator: students enrolled on Day 45; denominator: licensed capacity of active centers on Day 45	ChildPlus	ChildPlus is licensed by First Steps - all data are owned by First Steps	Child outcomes will improve when they enroll in First Steps 4K.	Children eligible for First Steps 4K.	3500.100100.000; 4400.920100.000; 4400.920500X000; 4400.921000X000; 44NW.991800X000; 8200.010000.000; 8200.100000X000	
2.1.2	Increase student enrollment within the First Steps 4K program by 10% annually.	3,650	4,015	Count	Equal to or greater than	Other	Total students served through day 180	ChildPlus	ChildPlus is licensed by First Steps - all data are owned by First Steps	Child outcomes will improve when they enroll in First Steps 4K.	Children eligible for First Steps 4K.	3500.100100.000; 4400.920100.000; 4400.920500X000; 4400.921000X000; 44NW.991800X000; 8200.010000.000; 8200.100000X000	
2.1.3	Increase the number of classrooms offering First Steps 4K to meet student enrollment goal.	280	257	Count	Equal to or greater than	Other	Number of classrooms at average of 12 students per classroom	Program records	Housed at First Steps	Child outcomes will improve when they enroll in First Steps 4K.	Children eligible for First Steps 4K.	3500.100100.000; 4400.920100.000; 4400.920500X000; 4400.921000X000; 44NW.991800X000; 8200.010000.000; 8200.100000X000	

Perf. Measure Number	Description	Base	Target	Value Type	Desired Outcome	Time Applicable	Calculation Method	Data Source	Data Location	Stakeholder Need Satisfied	Primary Stakeholder	State Funded Program Number Responsible	Notes
2.1.4	Increase the proportion of families that would "highly recommend" First Steps 4K to a friend or family member.	84%	90%	Percent	Equal to or greater than	Other	Percentage scoring 9 or 10 to the question, "How likely is it that you would recommend First Steps 4K to a friend or family member?" on a scale of 0-10	SurveyMonkey	SurveyMonkey is licensed by First Steps - all data are owned by First Steps	Child outcomes will improve when they enroll in First Steps 4K. Family feedback will be utilized in continuous quality improvement processes.	Children eligible for First Steps 4K.	3500.100100.000; 4400.920100.000; 4400.920500X000; 4400.921000X000; 44NW.991800X000; 8200.010000.000; 8200.100000X000	
2.1.5	85% of students enrolled on day 45 will still be enrolled on day 135.	88%	85%	Percent	Equal to or greater than	Other	Proportion of students enrolled on day 135 who were also enrolled on day 45	ChildPlus	ChildPlus is licensed by First Steps - all data are owned by First Steps	Child outcomes will improve when they enroll in First Steps 4K.	Children eligible for First Steps 4K.	3500.100100.000; 4400.920100.000; 4400.920500X000; 4400.921000X000; 44NW.991800X000; 8200.010000.000; 8200.100000X000	
2.2	Engage early care and education programs and providers in training, quality enhancement, and coaching, equipping them with the skills and resources to promote positive child development.										State Objective: Education, Training, and Human Development		
2.2.1	Increase the availability of high quality early care and education opportunities offered by First Steps: By 2025, the percentage of children under age 6 who benefit from First Steps quality enhancement and training efforts will increase to 15%.	19%	15%	Percent	Equal to or greater than	State fiscal year	Numerator: Estimated number of children in centers where quality enhancement and training have occurred from Local Partnership matrix + 4K students; Denominator: Children under age 6 for whom poverty status is known from American Community Survey 5-year estimates	Local partnership numbers served matrix/ChildPlus	First Steps Data Collection System is owned by First Steps and housed/maintained by the Office of Revenue and Fiscal Affairs; ChildPlus is licensed by First Steps - all data are owned by First Steps	Child outcomes will improve when they enroll in high quality child care.	All children in South Carolina.	3500.100100.000; 4400.920100.000; 4400.920500X000; 4400.921000X000; 44NW.991800X000; 8200.010000.000; 8200.100000X000	
2.2.2	Provide professional development: The number of hours of intensive, on-site technical assistance for child care providers through Quality Enhancement/Quality Counts via local partnerships and estimated 4K coaching hours will increase by 2% annually.	32,241	32,886	Count	Equal to or greater than	State fiscal year	Hours of on-site technical assistance provided to child care centers participating in intensive facility quality enhancement efforts (via local partnerships), plus estimated 4K coaching hours (8 hours per month of total centers enrolled through day 180 for 8 months)	Local partnership numbers served matrix/4K program records	First Steps Data Collection System is owned by First Steps and housed/maintained by the Office of Revenue and Fiscal Affairs; ChildPlus is licensed by First Steps - all data are owned by First Steps	Child outcomes will improve when they enroll in high quality child care.	All children in South Carolina.	3500.100100.000; 4400.920100.000; 4400.920500X000; 4400.921000X000; 44NW.991800X000; 8200.010000.000; 8200.100000X000	
2.2.3	Provide professional development: The number of certified and registered training hours provided to child care providers via local partnerships and annual First Steps 4K Teacher and Leadership Academies will increase by 2% annually.	1,476	1,506	Count	Equal to or greater than	State fiscal year	Certified and registered child care training hours via local partnerships, plus total hours of 4K leadership and teacher academies	Local partnership numbers served matrix/4K program records	First Steps Data Collection System is owned by First Steps and housed/maintained by the Office of Revenue and Fiscal Affairs; 4K program records are housed/maintained at First Steps - all data are owned by First Steps	Child outcomes will improve when they enroll in high quality child care.	All children in South Carolina.	3500.100100.000; 4400.920100.000; 4400.920500X000; 4400.921000X000; 44NW.991800X000; 8200.010000.000; 8200.100000X000	
3.1	Expand reach by implementing a service delivery system that includes both programs that are intensive and targeted plus those that are light-touch and have a broader reach										State Objective: Healthy and Safe Families		

Perf. Measure Number	Description	Base	Target	Value Type	Desired Outcome	Time Applicable	Calculation Method	Data Source	Data Location	Stakeholder Need Satisfied	Primary Stakeholder	State Funded Program Number		
												Responsible	Notes	
3.1.1	Of those entities that received discretionary grant funding from SC First Steps to expand service reach in underserved communities, 80% will reach their service targets annually.		75%	80%	Percent	Equal to or greater than	State fiscal year	Proportion of service targets reached for grants with at least 9 months of funding during fiscal year	First Steps Data Collection System/Program records	First Steps Data Collection System is owned by First Steps and housed/maintained by the Office of Revenue and Fiscal Affairs; other relevant Local Partnership program records are housed/maintained at First Steps or at the Local Partnership - all data are owned by First Steps	Child outcomes will improve by being served by First Steps.	All children in South Carolina.	3500.100100.000; 4400.920100.000; 4400.920500X000; 4400.921000X000; 44NW.991800X000; 8200.010000.000; 8200.100000X000	
3.1.2	Recruit 52 service-minded adults throughout targeted communities in SC to serve as AmeriCorps and VISTA Members or Interns at First Steps supporting local and state First Steps programs annually.	41	52	Count	Equal to or greater than	State fiscal year	Number of AmeriCorps and VISTA members recruited	Program records	All AmeriCorps and VISTA program records are housed, maintained, and owned by First Steps	Child outcomes will improve by being served by First Steps. Adult outcomes will improve through voluntary service via AmeriCorps.	All children and adults in South Carolina.	3500.100100.000; 4400.920100.000; 4400.920500X000; 4400.921000X000; 44NW.991800X000; 8200.010000.000; 8200.100000X000		
3.1.3	Following their initial year of service, 50% of AmeriCorps members and interns will return for a second year of service, get a job, or enroll in school.		72%	50%	Percent	Equal to or greater than	State fiscal year	AmeriCorps and VISTA members who return to service, get a job, or enroll in school/AmeriCorps members in program year	Program records	All AmeriCorps and VISTA program records are housed, maintained, and owned by First Steps	Child outcomes will improve by being served by First Steps. Adult outcomes will improve through voluntary service via AmeriCorps.	All children and adults in South Carolina.	3500.100100.000; 4400.920100.000; 4400.920500X000; 4400.921000X000; 44NW.991800X000; 8200.010000.000; 8200.100000X000	
3.2	Set benchmarks using disaggregated data to track progress in reducing disparities of specific target groups											State Objective: Healthy and Safe Families		
3.2.1	Reduce the racial/ethnic gap in kindergarten readiness: By 2025, the gap in the percentage of children who score at the highest level on the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment between white Kindergartners and Black/Hispanic Kindergartners will reduce by 1% each year to 15%.	19	16	Percent	Equal to or less than	Other	(Numerator: white Kindergartners "Demonstrating Readiness"; Denominator: Total white Kindergartners assessed with the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment)-(Numerator: Black and Hispanic Kindergartners "Demonstrating Readiness"; Denominator: Total Black and Hispanic Kindergartners assessed with the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment)	Education Oversight Committee KRA Report	Education Oversight Committee KRA Report	All children should arrive at kindergarten ready, regardless of race or ethnicity.	All children in South Carolina.	3500.100100.000; 4400.920100.000; 4400.920500X000; 4400.921000X000; 44NW.991800X000; 8200.010000.000; 8200.100000X000		
3.2.2	More children arrive at kindergarten ready for success: By 2025, the percentage of children who score at the highest level on the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment will increase by 3% each year to 47%.	38	42	Percent	Equal to or greater than	Other	Provided in Education Oversight Committee KRA Report	Education Oversight Committee KRA Report	Education Oversight Committee KRA Report	All children should arrive at kindergarten ready.	All children in South Carolina.	3500.100100.000; 4400.920100.000; 4400.920500X000; 4400.921000X000; 44NW.991800X000; 8200.010000.000; 8200.100000X000		
4.1	Develop and implement an ongoing process for communicating across the early childhood state system											State Objective: Government and Citizens		

Perf. Measure Number	Description	Base	Target	Value Type	Desired Outcome	Time Applicable	Calculation Method	Data Source	Data Location	Stakeholder Need Satisfied	State Funded Program Number Responsible Notes		
											Primary Stakeholder	Responsible	Notes
4.1.1	Grow SCFS and ECAC contact lists 10% annually.	10,408	11,449	Count	Equal to or greater than	Other	Number of contacts	Robly, Raiser's Edge	Robly, Raiser's Edge	Child outcomes will improve when families and providers have access to resources.	All children in South Carolina.	3500.100100.000; 4400.920100.000; 4400.920500X000; 4400.921000X000; 44NW.991800X000; 8200.010000.000; 8200.100000X000	
4.1.2	Increase website traffic to scfirststeps.org, countdownsc.org, free4ksc.org, firstfivesc.org, palmettoprek.org, and earlychildhoodsc.org by 5% annually.	442,504	464,629	Count	Equal to or greater than	Other	Cumulative unique visitors	Google Analytics	Google Analytics	Child outcomes will improve when families and providers have access to resources.	All children in South Carolina.	3500.100100.000; 4400.920100.000; 4400.920500X000; 4400.921000X000; 44NW.991800X000; 8200.010000.000; 8200.100000X000	

# 2023

## Budget Data

as submitted for the Accountability Report by:

### H620 - SC First Steps to School Readiness

State Funded Program No.	State Funded Program Title	Description of State Funded Program	(Actual) General	(Actual) Other	(Actual) Federal	(Actual) Total	(Projected) General2	(Projected) Other	(Projected) Federal4	(Projected) Total
8200.010000.000	First Steps To Sch Readiness	Policy and Accountability Private Funds	\$ 79,683.00	\$ 3,328,932.00	\$ -	\$ 3,408,615.00	\$ 126,000.00	\$ 2,813,200.00	\$ -	\$ 2,939,200.00
8200.10000X000	CDEPP - Private	General Funds for 4K	\$ 6,531,957.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 6,531,957.00	\$ 10,806,206.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 10,806,206.00
4400.920100.000	First Steps to School Readiness	First Steps and ECAC	\$ 111,738.00	\$ 13,611.00	\$ 4,093,186.00	\$ 4,218,535.00	\$ 966,000.00	\$ 5,160,517.00	\$ 743,717.00	\$ 6,870,234.00
4400.920500X000	County Partnerships	Local Partnership Funding	\$ -	\$ 17,195,174.00	\$ 2,811,796.00	\$ 20,006,970.00	\$ -	\$ 18,199,982.00	\$ 7,335,241.00	\$ 25,535,223.00
4400.921000X000	CDEPP	EIA Funds for 4K	\$ -	\$ 20,887,227.00	\$ -	\$ 20,887,227.00	\$ -	\$ 25,709,588.00	\$ 2,607,565.00	\$ 28,317,153.00
3500.100100.000	Office of First Steps to School Readiness	READY Grant Funds	\$ 602,358.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 602,358.00	\$ 5,397,642.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 5,397,642.00
						\$ 55,655,662.00				\$ 79,865,658.00

# 2023

## Legal Data

as submitted for the Accountability Report by:

### H620 - SC First Steps to School Readiness

Law number	Jurisdiction	Type	Description	Purpose the law serves:	Notes:	Changes made during FY2023
§59-152-10 through §59-152-160	State	Statute	The South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness is 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 ready to succeed. The organization was created as a tax exempt organization under section 501 (c)(3) with Act 99 in 1999. Statute was updated in 2014 and again in 2018 with several changes. Modifications included a long range plan requirement, changes to the membership of the Board of Trustees, and direction in relation to allocation funding for local partnerships and others. Statute allows all funds received by SC First Steps to carry forward if unspent.	Requires a service	Changes include modifications to the local partnership board structure, additional accountability from the local partnership boards, the First Steps Board of Trustees, and the addition of path for local partnerships to regionalize. Permanent authorization granted for SC First Steps.	Amended
§59-156-110	State	Statute	Statute spells out the responsibilities for the State Department of Education and SC First Steps to School Readiness for the Child Early Reading Development and Education Program, or the states 4 year old kindergarten program. The statute restates much of the content in provisos included in the SFY 2015 appropriations act. Statute was updated in 2014 and in 2018.	Requires a service	High-quality early childhood development and education service	No Change
\$63-11-1710 thru 1750	State	Statute	Statute creates the First Steps to School Readiness Board of Trustees whose purpose is to oversee the South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness initiative, a broad range of innovative early childhood development and education, family support, health services, and prevention efforts to meet critical needs of South Carolina's children through the awarding of grants to partnerships at the county level as provided for in Section 59-152-90. Statute was created in Act 361 in 2008. Act also creates the SC Advisory Council. This council is formed to fulfill the responsibilities under 42 U.S.C. Section 9837(b)(1)(D)(i) of the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007. Act was modified in 2014 and 2018 with a number of modifications. In 2014 the changes include the addition of the Early Childhood Advisory Council responsibilities and additional BabyNet responsibilities. In 2018, additional reporting requirements and a 7 year reauthorization of the agency. BabyNet was moved to DHHS per Executive Order effective June 30, 2017.	Requires a service	Changes include the addition of the Department of Mental Health to the First Steps Board of Trustees and the Early Childhood Advisory Council and the addition of 2 members representing First Steps local partnerships to the Council. The Council's responsibilities were updated and two additional duties were added. Additions were also made to the responsibilities of the Board of Trustees.	Amended
PL 110-134	Federal	Statute	Federal Head Start Act, governing operations of Early Head Start Program	Requires a service	High-quality early childhood development and education service	No Change
Proviso 1.65 (SDE: First Steps 4K Technology)	State	FY21 Proviso	Proviso allows for unspent funds from the previous state fiscal year in the 4K Program to be used for specified information technology needs.	Requires a service	High-quality early childhood development and education service	Repealed
Proviso 1.66 (SDE: First Steps 4K Technology)	State	FY20 Proviso	Proviso allows for unspent funds from the previous state fiscal year in the 4K Program to be used for specified information technology needs.	Requires a manner of delivery	High-quality early childhood development and education service	Repealed
Proviso 1.73 (SDE: Military Child Care Centers)	State	FY21 Proviso	Proviso allows SC First Steps to deliver CERDEP 4K program in military child care centers monitored by the US Department of Defense.	Requires a service	High-quality early childhood development and education service	Repealed
Proviso 1.74 (SDE: First Steps 4K Underserved Communities)	State	FY21 Proviso	Proviso authorizes First Steps to create a pilot program through which grants of up to \$30,000 may be awarded for the purpose of creating new 4K classroom enrollment capacity in underserved communities. In addition, it allows up to \$1 million in grant funds for Public Private Partnerships that serve multi counties and multi districts for building renovations and designs to increase student enrollment.	Distribute funding to another entity		Repealed
Proviso 1.75 (SDE: Military Child Care Centers)	State	FY20 Proviso	Proviso allows SC First Steps to deliver CERDEP 4K program in military child care centers monitored by the US Department of Defense.	Requires a manner of delivery	High-quality early childhood development and education service	Repealed

Law number	Jurisdiction	Type	Description	Purpose the law serves:	Notes:	Changes made during FY2023
Proviso 1.76 (SDE: First Steps 4K Underserved Communities)	State	FY20 Proviso	Proviso authorizes First Steps to create a pilot program through which grants of up to \$30,000 may be awarded for the purpose of creating new 4K classroom enrollment capacity in underserved communities. In addition, it allows up to \$1 million in grant funds for Public Private Partnerships that serve multi counties and multi districts for building renovations and designs to increase student enrollment.	Requires a manner of delivery		Repealed
Proviso 1A.44 (SDE-EIA: CDEPP Student Information and Reporting)	State	FY23-24 Proviso	State Department of Education and SC First Steps to School Readiness required to acquire unique student numbers and report that. SDE and First Steps required to provide information to Education Oversight Committee.	Report our agency must/may provide	Previously Proviso 1A.50: FY 22-23	Amended Proviso Number Only
Proviso 1A.53 (SDE-EIA: CDEPP Student Information and Reporting)	State	FY21 Proviso	State Department of Education and SC First Steps to School Readiness required to acquire unique student numbers and report that. SDE and First Steps required to provide information to Education Oversight Committee.	Report our agency must/may provide		Repealed
Proviso 1A.9	State	FY23-24 Proviso	Proviso directs payment of teacher supply funds to individuals, including teachers serving in private First Steps 4K classrooms.	Funding agency deliverable(s)	Reimbursement rate was increased.	Amended
Proviso 1A.9	State	FY22-23 Proviso	Proviso directs payment of teacher supply funds to individuals, including teachers serving in private First Steps 4K classrooms.	Distribute funding to another entity		No Change
Provisos 1.48 and 1A.26 (SDE: Full Day 4K)	State	FY23-24 Proviso	Companion provisos (General Fund and EIA) set the funding, payment guidance, and geographical parameters of the SC Early Reading and Child Development Program per Act 284 which included Read to Succeed. Requires payments to the EOC annually. Proviso allows SC First Steps to deliver CERDEP 4K program in military child care centers monitored by the US Department of Defense. Proviso authorizes First Steps to create a pilot program with up to \$2,000,000 for higher reimbursement rates, and up to \$100,000 through which grants of up to \$30,000 may be awarded for the purpose of creating new 4K classroom enrollment capacity in underserved communities. In addition, if funding is available, funds may be used to extend the day up to 8 1/2 hours, and the year up to 220 days. \$1 million can be used for Public Private Partnerships that serve multi counties and multi districts for building renovations and designs to increase student enrollment. Identifies specific reports that have to be delivered related to the activities specified in the proviso.	Requires a service	Previously Provisos 1.56 and 1A.29: FY 22-23. Changes include an increase in the minimum reimbursement rates, the addition of specified methods for informing parents, and the deletion of COVID-19 provisions and the public-private partnership pilot language.	Amended
Provisos 1.57 and 1A.29 (SDE: Full Day 4K)	State	FY21 Proviso	Companion provisos (General Fund and EIA) set the funding and geographical parameters of the SC Early Reading and Child Development Program per Act 284 which included Read to Succeed.	Requires a manner of delivery	High-quality early childhood development and education service	No Change
Provisos 1.68 and 1A.56 (SDE: CDEPP Unexpended Funds)	State	FY21 Proviso	Companion provisos (General Fund and EIA) permit First Steps to retain and utilize up to \$1M in unexpended 4K funding from the prior fiscal year for the purpose of improving classroom quality. Establishes the option of delivering extended-day, extended-year and summer programs in the event of available carry forward.	Requires a service	High-quality early childhood development and education service	Repealed
Provisos 1.69 and 1A.59 (SDE: CDEPP Unexpended Funds)	State	FY20 Proviso	Companion provisos (General Fund and EIA) permit First Steps to retain and utilize up to \$1M in unexpended 4K funding from the prior fiscal year for the purpose of improving classroom quality. Establishes the option of delivering extended-day, extended-year and summer programs in the event of available carry forward.	Requires a manner of delivery	High-quality early childhood development and education service	Repealed
Title 12-6-5060	State	Statute	Creates tax check off donation to the First Steps to School Readiness Fund.	Funding agency deliverable(s)		No Change
Provisos 1.55 and 1A.29 (SDE: Full Day 4K)	State	FY22-23 Proviso	Companion provisos (General Fund and EIA) set the funding, payment guidance, and geographical parameters of the SC Early Reading and Child Development Program per Act 284 which included Read to Succeed. Requires payments to the EOC annually. Proviso allows SC First Steps to deliver CERDEP 4K program in military child care centers monitored by the US Department of Defense. Proviso authorizes First Steps to create a pilot program with up to \$2,000,000 for higher reimbursement rates, and up to \$100,000 through which grants of up to \$30,000 may be awarded for the purpose of creating new 4K classroom enrollment capacity in underserved communities. In addition, if funding is available, funds may be used to extend the day up to 8 1/2 hours, and the year up to 220 days. \$1 million can be used for Public Private Partnerships that serve multi counties and multi districts for building renovations and designs to increase student enrollment. Identifies specific reports that have to be delivered related to the activities specified in the proviso.	Requires a service	Changes include establishing a minimum amount for the funding for the 4K providers, rather than a standard amount. In addition, quarterly reports for those amounts paid will be required starting Oct. 1, 2022. Dates were updated.	Repealed

<b>Law number</b>	<b>Jurisdiction</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Purpose the law serves:</b>	<b>Notes:</b>	<b>Changes made during FY2023</b>
Proviso 1.88 (SDE: READY Program)	State	FY23-24 Proviso	Creates new grant program for SC First Steps and establishes that the funds appropriated will be awarded to the Local Partnerships through a competitive and targeted grants process. Establishes the priorities and restricts amount for each partnership and the amount used by SC First Steps to administer, monitor and evaluate the program. It also requires an annual report on the state's investment in early learning and development.	Requires a service	Previously Proviso 1.105: FY 22-23. Date of required report updated.	Amended
Proviso 1.97 (SDE: First Steps Transfer Plan)	State	FY23-24 Proviso	First Steps shall work with other state entities to develop a plan to operate independently from the Department of Education.	Report our agency may/must provide		Added
\$63-11-1726	State	Statute	Statute prompts all publicly funded early childhood-serving agencies and entities to participate in data-sharing initiatives supported by the Early Childhood Advisory Council in furtherance of the Council's duties.	Requires a manner of delivery		Added

# 2023

## Services Data

as submitted for the Accountability Report by:

### H620 - SC First Steps to School Readiness

Description of Service	Description of Direct Customer	Customer Name	Others Impacted by Service	Division or major organizational unit providing the service.	Description of division or major organizational unit providing the service.	Primary negative impact if service not provided.	Changes made to services during FY2023	Summary of changes to services
Oversight of the finances and programming of 46 local First Steps partnerships.	Approximately 341,000+ children under age 6	Children under age 6	Families (adult family members and siblings); child care providers; other local early childhood partners and service providers	Early Childhood Services; Policy and Accountability	SC First Steps serves as a grantor and provides oversight and technical assistance to 46 local non-profit First Steps partnerships charged under state law with meeting local school readiness needs.	Children across the state will not receive necessary direct or indirect supports to be successful in kindergarten and beyond.	No Change	
Oversight and technical assistance to ensure compliant, high-quality service delivery in 200+ non-public school preschool settings.	Non-public school settings serving age and income eligible four-year-olds.	Child care providers in non-public school settings	Families (adult family members and siblings)	First Steps 4K	First Steps administers publicly-funded full-day, four-year-old kindergarten within a network of non-public school preschool providers. On a rolling basis, providers are approved and students enroll.	Children across the state will not receive necessary direct supports to be successful in kindergarten and beyond.	No Change	
Provision of tuition and transportation payment for age-income- and geographically-eligible children and their families.	Eligible children must be four years of age by September 1, reside in South Carolina, and qualify for free- or reduced-price school lunches or Medicaid.	Age and income eligible four-year-olds	Families (adult family members and siblings); child care providers in non-public school settings	First Steps 4K	First Steps administers publicly-funded full-day, four-year-old kindergarten within a network of non-public school preschool providers. On a rolling basis, providers are approved and students enroll.	Children across the state will not receive necessary direct supports to be successful in kindergarten and beyond.	No Change	
Development and maintenance of First Five SC, an online eligibility screener and common application for families to access publicly-funded early childhood services statewide	Approximately 341,000+ children under age 6	Children under age 6	Families (adult family members and siblings); child care providers; other local early childhood partners and service providers	Early Childhood Advisory Council	South Carolina's Early Childhood Advisory Council is a collaborative body representing the state's early childhood system. Established in law, the ECAC includes the directors of eight state agencies and government entities that provide state- and federally-funded services to young children. South Carolina First Steps coordinates the activities of the council.	Children across the state will not receive necessary direct supports to be successful in kindergarten and beyond.	Add	Common application launched publicly in May 2023

# 2023

## Partnerships Data

as submitted for the Accountability Report by:

### H620 - SC First Steps to School Readiness

Type of Partner Entity	Name of Partner Entity	Description of Partnership	Change to the partnership during the past fiscal year
Non-Governmental Organization	Alliance for Early Success	Funding to First Steps	No Change
State Government	Department of Disabilities and Special Needs (DDSN)	DDSN is a valued partner and service provider within the interagency BabyNet system. Agency Interim Director Constance Holloway sits on the SC First Steps Board of Trustees.	No Change
Non-Governmental Organization	Doris Duke Charitable Foundation	Funding direct service via First Steps local partnerships	No Change
Non-Governmental Organization	Fund for Shared Insight	Providing funding and technical assistance to First Steps	Amend
Federal Government	Head Start Collaboration Office	As the federal government's liaison between Head Start and local grantees, the Head Start Collaboration Office is a valued partner. SC Collaboration Director Mary Lynne Diggs sits on the SC First Steps Board of Trustees.	No Change
Non-Governmental Organization	Local First Steps Partnerships	First Steps' local partnership grantees deliver needed early childhood education services in each of the state's 46 counties.	No Change
State Government	Office of Revenue and Fiscal Affairs	Current home of the First Steps Data Collection System; partner in development of Early Childhood Integrated Data System	No Change
Private Business Organization	Private 4K Service Providers	Non-public school settings partner with SC First Steps to ensure the delivery of high-quality four-year-old kindergarten statewide.	No Change
State Government	SC Department of Education	As a co-administrator of the state's four-old-kindergarten program and the representative of public school districts statewide, the SC Department of education is a valued partner. Matthew Ferguson represents State Superintendent Ellen Weaver as a member of the SC First Steps Board of Trustees.	Amend
State Government	SC Department of Health and Environmental Control	DHEC is a valued partner in the area of maternal-child health. Agency Director Edward Simmer sits on the SC First Steps Board of Trustees.	No Change
State Government	SC Department of Health and Human Services	As the state's Medicaid agency, DHHS is a valued partner. Agency Director Robert Kerr sits on the SC First Steps Board of Trustees.	No Change

Type of Partner Entity	Name of Partner Entity	Description of Partnership	Change to the partnership during the past fiscal year
State Government	SC Department of Social Services	DSS is a valued partner in the areas of child care and child welfare. Agency Director Michael Leach sits on the SC First Steps Board of Trustees.	No Change
State Government	The Children's Trust of SC	As the state's Maternal Infant Early Childhood Home Visiting grantee and an active partner in the prevention of child abuse and neglect, The Children's Trust of SC is a valued agency partner. Agency Director Sue Williams sits on the SC First Steps Board of Trustees.	No Change
Non-Governmental Organization	The Duke Endowment	Funding direct service via First Steps local partnerships	No Change
Non-Governmental Organization	United Way Association of South Carolina	As the state's administrative agent for South Carolina's AmeriCorps program, the United Way Association of SC is a valued partner for the success of our AmeriCorps program.	No Change
Non-Government Organization	Aspen Institute	Providing technical assistance to First Steps	No Change
Non-Government Organization	Hunt Institute	Providing technical assistance on early childhood policy development	No Change
Non-Government Organization	Chapin Hall	Providing technical assistance to First Steps	Add
Non-Government Organization	Child Trends	Providing technical assistance to the Early Childhood Advisory Council	Add

# 2023

## Reports Data

as submitted for the Accountability Report by:

### H620 - SC First Steps to School Readiness

Report Name	Law Number (if applicable)	Summary of information requested in the report	Date of most recent submission DURING the past fiscal year	Reporting Frequency	Type of entity/entities	Method to access the report	Direct access hyperlink or agency contact (if not provided to LSA for posting online)	Changes to this report during the past fiscal year	Explanation why a report wasn't submitted
4K Underserved Communities	Proviso 1.76: FY 19-20, and 20-21 State Budget	Process, expenditures and expanded enrollment for needs grants.	March 2023	Annually	Legislative entity or entities	Provided to LSA for posting online	<a href="https://www.scstatehouse.gov/reports/FirstSteps/First%20Steps%204K%20Underserved%20Communities%20Report%20Pursuant%20to%20Proviso%201.55%20-%203.15.2023.pdf">https://www.scstatehouse.gov/reports/FirstSteps/First%20Steps%204K%20Underserved%20Communities%20Report%20Pursuant%20to%20Proviso%201.55%20-%203.15.2023.pdf</a>	Amend	Column E needs to be revised in this template. "Proviso 1.55: FY 22-23 State Budget." Column D needs to be revised, "4K Supplemental Needs Based Grants"
Agency Accountability Report	\$1-1-810, 59-152- 20	The report "must contain the agency's or department's mission, objectives to accomplish the mission, and performance measures that show the degree to which objectives are being met." Agencies must "identify key program area descriptions and expenditures and link these to key financial and performance results measures."	September 2022	Annually	Governor or Lt. Governor AND Legislative entity or entities	Provided to LSA for posting online	<a href="https://www.scstatehouse.gov/reports/uar2022/H620.pdf">https://www.scstatehouse.gov/reports/uar2022/H620.pdf</a>	No Change	
Annual Report	\$59-152-50	Report on the agency's activities, strategic plan, progress on initiatives, financial information, as well as a number of other items for the most recent year.	December 2022	Annually	Legislative entity or entities	Provided to LSA for posting online	<a href="https://www.scstatehouse.gov/reports/FirstSteps/SC%20First%20Steps%20Annual%20Report%202021-22.pdf">https://www.scstatehouse.gov/reports/FirstSteps/SC%20First%20Steps%20Annual%20Report%202021-22.pdf</a>	No Change	
Audited Financial Statement for the year ending June 30, 2022.	\$11-7-20	Audited financial statement.	October 2022	Annually	Legislative entity or entities	Available on another website	<a href="https://oca.sc.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/First-Steps-H63.pdf">https://oca.sc.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/First-Steps-H63.pdf</a>	No Change	
CDEPP Student Information and Reporting	Proviso 1A.53: FY 19-20, and 20-21 State Budget	Report required to inform about students SUNS numbers for each student on the 45th day.	September 2023	Annually	Legislative entity or entities	Provided to LSA for posting online	<a href="https://www.scstatehouse.gov/reports/FirstSteps/First%20Steps%204K%20SUNS%20Numbers%20Report%20Pursuant%20to%20Proviso%201A.50.pdf">https://www.scstatehouse.gov/reports/FirstSteps/First%20Steps%204K%20SUNS%20Numbers%20Report%20Pursuant%20to%20Proviso%201A.50.pdf</a>	No Change	Column E of this template needs to be revised."Proviso 1A.50: FY 22-23 State Budget".
Education Improvement Act (EIA)	Proviso 1A.34: FY 19-20, and 20-21 State Budget	EIA Program Report activites and expenditures	September 2022	Annually	Legislative entity or entities AND South Carolina state agency or agencies	Available on another website	<a href="http://eoc.sc.gov">eoc.sc.gov</a>	Amend	Column E needs to be revised in this template. "Proviso 1A.34 for FY 22-23 State Budget."
Education Oversight Committee Review of 4K	Proviso 1.57 and 1A.29: FY 19-20, and 20-21 State Budget	Annual statutory review of the Child Early Reading Development and Education Program (CERDEP)	March 2023	Annually	Legislative entity or entities AND South Carolina state agency or agencies	Available on another website	<a href="https://eoc.sc.gov/sites/eoc/files/Documents/4K-State-Funded%20Full-Day%204K%20Report%2C%20%20FY2021-22%262022-23.docx.pdf">https://eoc.sc.gov/sites/eoc/files/Documents/4K-State-Funded%20Full-Day%204K%20Report%2C%20%20FY2021-22%262022-23.docx.pdf</a>	Amend	Column E needs to be revised in this template. "Proviso 1.55 and 1A.29: FY 22-23 State Budget."
Education Oversight Committee Review of Kindergarten Readiness Assessment	Proviso 1.57 and 1A.29: FY 19-20, and 20-21 State Budget	Annual statutory review of the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment	March 2023	Annually	Legislative entity or entities AND South Carolina state agency or agencies	Available on another website	<a href="https://eoc.sc.gov/sites/eoc/files/Documents/4K-State-Funded%20Full-Day%204K%20Report%2C%20%20FY2021-22%262022-23.docx.pdf">https://eoc.sc.gov/sites/eoc/files/Documents/4K-State-Funded%20Full-Day%204K%20Report%2C%20%20FY2021-22%262022-23.docx.pdf</a>	Amend	"Proviso 1.55 and 1A.29: FY 22-23 State Budget", Column E needs to be revised in this template.
IT Data Collection Plan	\$1-11-10	Summary of the agencies IT Needs and Plans for the next year.	July 2023	Annually	Legislative entity or entities AND South Carolina state agency or agencies	Hard copy available upon request.		No Change	
4K Extended Day, Professional Development, Impact on Parents	Proviso 1.56 & Proviso 1A.29: FY 21-22 State Budget	Expenditures for Extended Day, Quality Improvement and Professional Development, and Impact on Parents	April 2023	Annually	Legislative entity or entities	Provided to LSA for posting online	<a href="https://www.scstatehouse.gov/reports/FirstSteps/First%20Steps%204K%20Quality%20and%20Professional%20Development%20Report%20Pursuant%20to%20Proviso%201.55%20-%20FY%2022-23%20Budget.pdf">https://www.scstatehouse.gov/reports/FirstSteps/First%20Steps%204K%20Quality%20and%20Professional%20Development%20Report%20Pursuant%20to%20Proviso%201.55%20-%20FY%2022-23%20Budget.pdf</a>	Amend	Column E needs to be revised in this template. "Proviso 1.55 and 1A.29: FY 22-23 State Budget."
4K Funding Above the Minimum Reimbursement Rate	Proviso 1.55 and 1A.29: FY 22-23 State Budget	Funding above the minimum reimbursement rate made to any 4K provider	May 2023	Quarterly	Governor or Lt. Governor AND Legislative entity or entities	Provided to LSA for posting online	<a href="https://www.scstatehouse.gov/reports/FirstSteps/First%20Steps%204K%20Report%20Pursuant%20to%20Proviso%201.55.pdf">https://www.scstatehouse.gov/reports/FirstSteps/First%20Steps%204K%20Report%20Pursuant%20to%20Proviso%201.55.pdf</a>	Add	
READY: State's Investment in Early Learning and Development	Proviso 1.105: FY 22-23 State Budget	Annual report on the state's investment in early learning and development	June 2023	Annually	Governor or Lt. Governor AND Legislative entity or entities	Provided to LSA for posting online	<a href="https://www.scstatehouse.gov/reports/FirstSteps/SC%20First%20Steps%20READY%20Report%20Pursuant%20to%20Proviso%201.105.pdf">https://www.scstatehouse.gov/reports/FirstSteps/SC%20First%20Steps%20READY%20Report%20Pursuant%20to%20Proviso%201.105.pdf</a>	Add	

<b>AGENCY NAME:</b>	First Steps to School Readiness
<b>AGENCY CODE:</b>	H620

**2023**  
**Accountability Report**

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**SUBMISSION FORM**

I have reviewed and approved the data submitted by the agency in the following templates:

- Data Template
  - Reorganization and Compliance
  - FY2023 Strategic Plan Results
  - FY2024 Strategic Plan Development
  - Legal
  - Services
  - Partnerships
  - Report or Review
  - Budget
- Discussion Template
- Organizational Template

I have reviewed and approved the financial report summarizing the agency's budget and actual expenditures, as entered by the agency into the South Carolina Enterprise Information System.

The information submitted is complete and accurate to the extent of my knowledge.

<b>AGENCY DIRECTOR (SIGN AND DATE):</b>	<b>SIGNATURE ON FILE</b>	<b>Signature Received:</b> 9/14/2023 2:44 PM
<b>(TYPE/PRINT NAME):</b>	Georgia Mjartan	

<b>BOARD/CMSN CHAIR (SIGN AND DATE):</b>	<b>SIGNATURE ON FILE</b>	<b>Signature Received:</b> 9/14/2023 2:44 PM
<b>(TYPE/PRINT NAME):</b>	Dave Morley	