**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND SECTION 59‑152‑60, CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, RELATING TO LOCAL FIRST STEPS PARTNERSHIP BOARDS, SO AS TO REVISE THE COMPOSITION, MANNER OF APPOINTMENT, AND TERMS OF MEMBERSHIP OF THE BOARDS; AND TO AMEND SECTION 59‑152‑70, RELATING TO REQUIREMENTS FOR LOCAL FIRST STEPS PARTNERSHIP BOARDS, SO AS TO REVISE THE REQUIRED CORPORATE STATUS OF THE BOARDS.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina:

SECTION 1. Section 59‑152‑60 of the 1976 Code is amended to read:

“Section 59‑152‑60. (A) Each county must be represented ~~by~~ on a Local First Steps Partnership Board and each local board must provide services within every county it represents. A local partnership board must be comprised of individuals with resources, skills, knowledge, and interest in improving the readiness of young children for school. A list of all local partnership board members must be published in the partnership’s annual report, be reported annually to the local legislative delegation, and be on file with the Office of First Steps.

(B) The South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness Board of Trustees must establish bylaws for use by each local partnership board. These bylaws must, in addition to other requirements provided in this section, require that a meeting or election of a local partnership board comply with all Freedom of Information Act and IRS disclosure requirements.

(C) In accordance with the bylaws established by the board of trustees, each local partnership board shall maintain a total ~~minimum~~ membership of ~~twelve and a maximum membership of thirty elected, appointed, and designated individuals~~ twenty‑five individuals who are elected or appointed as provided in this subsection. ~~Elected and~~ Appointed members shall comprise a voting majority of the board.

(1) No more than four from any of the following categories may be elected to sit on a First Steps Partnership Board:

(a) prekindergarten through primary educator;

(b) family education, training, and support provider;

(c) childcare or early childhood development/education provider;

(d) healthcare provider;

(e) local government;

(f) nonprofit organization that provides services to families and children;

(g) faith community;

(h) business community;

(i) philanthropic community; and

(j) parents of preschool children.

(2) To assure that all areas of the county or multicounty region are adequately represented and reflect the diversity of the coverage area, each ~~county~~ legislative delegation ~~may~~ shall appoint ~~up to four~~ six members to a local partnership board. Of these members, ~~two~~ three are appointed by the Senate members and ~~two~~ three by the House of Representative members of the delegation from persons with resources, skills, or knowledge that have specific interests in improving the readiness of young children for school.

(3)(a) Each of the following entities located within a particular First Steps Partnership coverage area shall ~~designate~~ recommend one member to the legislative delegation for appointment by the delegation to serve as a member of the local First Steps Partnership Board:

(~~a~~i) county department of social services;

(~~b~~ii) county department of health and environmental control; and

(~~c~~iii) Head Start or early Head Start~~;~~

~~(d)~~ ~~county library; and~~

~~(e)~~ ~~each of the school districts in the county~~.

(b) When an entity in subitem (a) recommends an individual to a legislative delegation for appointment, the delegation either shall make the appointment or reject the appointment and ask the entity to make another recommendation. In multicounty partnerships, the legislative delegations only may appoint one member from each of the categories in subitem (a)(i), (ii), and (iii), and shall collaborate to ensure each county in the partnership coverage area is represented in the appointments.

(4) The county public library system staff located within a particular First Steps Partnership coverage area shall recommend one employee of the system for appointment by its county council to serve as a member of the partnership, and the council either shall make the appointment or reject the appointment and ask the library staff to make another recommendation.

(5) Each public school district board located within a particular First Steps Partnership coverage area shall appoint one of its employee to serve as a member of the local First Steps Partnership.

(6) The county council shall appoint the number of members as will cause the total number of appointed directors to equal thirteen after taking into account the members appointed pursuant to items (2) through (5). Members must be selected from one or more of the categories established in item (1) and may be made notwithstanding the limit of four appointments from each category provided in item (1). Once the appointed members are determined, the elected members shall elect additional members as needed to provide for a total of twenty‑five members.

(D) In conjunction with the independent external program evaluation established in Section 59‑152‑160, the South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness Board of Trustees shall conduct a formal review of the membership categories for First Steps Partnership Board composition. Upon completion of the review, the South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness Board of Trustees shall submit to the General Assembly a statement either verifying the continued applicability and appropriateness of the composition categories for First Steps Partnership Boards in place at that time, or recommending any appropriate and necessary changes.

(E)(1) Members who miss more than three consecutive meetings without excuse ~~or members who resign must be replaced from the same categories as their predecessor~~ are considered terminated from membership and a vacancy is created.

(2) When any membership vacancy occurs, the vacancy timely must be filled with a person from the same category and in the same manner of election or appointment as the vacated member.

(3) The terms of the members of a local First Steps Partnership Board are for four years; however, excluding members appointed pursuant to subsection (C)(3), (4), and (5), membership on the board may not exceed eight consecutive years. Members may not serve in a holdover capacity after their term ends.

(F) The chairman of a local partnership board must be elected by majority vote of the board. The chairman shall serve a one‑year term; however, the chairman may be elected to subsequent terms not to exceed a total of four consecutive years.

(G) A local First Steps Partnership board must have policies and procedures for conducting meetings and disclosing records comparable to those provided for in the Freedom of Information Act. Prior to every vote taken by the board, members must abstain from voting if the issue being considered would result in a conflict of interest. The abstention must be noted in the minutes of the meeting.”

SECTION 2. Section 59‑152‑70(D) of the 1976 Code is amended to read:

“(D) To be designated a First Steps partnership, the local partnership must be a ~~private~~ nonprofit corporation organized under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.”

SECTION 3. The terms of all Local First Steps Partnership members designated pursuant to Section 59‑152‑60(C)(3) terminate on July 1, 2022. Local First Steps Partnerships shall bring the number of their members elected pursuant to Section 59‑152‑60(C)(1) into conformity with the requirements of this act before July 1, 2022.

SECTION 4. This act takes effect upon approval by the Governor.

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