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**Darlington County First Steps Partnership Board of Directors Meeting**

**Date: September 16, 2025** I **Time: 12:00 pm** I **Location: Virtual**

**MINUTES**

This meeting was held within FOIA and ADA Compliance. Board Meetings are open to the public and meeting minutes are kept on file in the office of Darlington County First Steps and are available to the public for review.

**Board Directors Present:** Howard Nettles, Chairman; Linda George, Secretary; Dr. Lilkenya Jenkins; Rudell Dubose

**Board Directors Absent:** Barbara Carraway; Lucretia Bellamy, Vice Chair (excused)

**Staff:** Britney Dargan, Parent Educator; Whitney Davis, Community Health Manager; Darnell Byrd McPherson, Executive Director; Patricia Sullivan-Steward, Operations Director; Ritha Ponds, Community Health Worker; Shannon O’Berry, Finance & Administration Director

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|  | **Discussion** | **Outcome/Action** | **Responsible Person(s)** |
| 1. Welcome & Invocation |  |  | Chairman Nettles; Operations Director, Sullivan-Steward |
| 1. Roll Call | Bellamy was unable to attend due to technical difficulties.  Board Chairman encouraged board to seek potential board of directors to join board who will be active. | Quorum established. | Chairman Nettles |
| 1. Approval to add 5-child care scholarship award to FY26 Budget Spending Plan (BSP): $39,670 | Motion to approval – Director Rudell Dubose  Seconded by – Secretary Linda George | Motion passed unanimously. | Board Directors |
| 1. Approval of Dual Employment of Shannon O’Berry, Finance & Administration Director | Motion to approve- Director Dubose  Seconded by- Secretary George | Motion passed unanimously. | Board Directors |
| 1. Approval to add Eastern Carolina Community Foundation funds to FY26 BSP | Motion to approve – Director Dubose  Seconded by- Secretary George | Motion passed unanimously. | Board Directors |
| 1. Summary of Executive Director’s Report | Report was sent to Board of Directors prior to the meeting. The Executive Director highlighted partnership with Darlington Library System for the Community Health Alignment Initiative, encouraged board of directors to make a donation to the organization via PayPal, announcement of new Reach Out and Read partner – Lamar Hometown Pediatrics, and the need to complete and distribute the online Needs and Resource Assessment Survey. It was also stated that the Motheread/Fatheread program will be changing from an evidence-based program to evidence-informed program. |  | Executive Director, Byrd McPherson & Operations Director, Sullivan-Steward |
| 1. Summary of Updates from South Carolina First Steps (SC First Steps) | SC First Steps adapted new accounting system called SAGE, Blackbaud will no longer be utilized soon. Timekeeping & other payroll items will be going through SAGE as well.  SC First Steps Fiscal Operations Training updates- many operational plans have been paused due to concerns of local First Steps partnerships. Feedback was submitted through link provided by SC First Steps. The Executive Director sent the Board the email correspondence detailing stipends and discretionary funds.  The Finance Department is currently working on FY26 budget. By the next meeting, Board of Directors will receive FY26 budget. |  | Finance & Administration Director, O’Berry |
| 1. Announcements | Save the Date- Lamar Fall Festival on October 18, 2025, 11am-2pm.  Board Invited to South Carolina First Steps meeting on September 15th at 10am to hear concerns from local partnership Executive Directors and Board Directors. |  | Executive Director, Byrd McPherson |
| 1. Adjournment |  |  |  |