

1 ~~Indicates Matter Stricken~~

2 Indicates New Matter

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4 AS PASSED BY THE SENATE

5 June 4, 2014

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H. 3428

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9 Introduced by Reps. Allison, Erickson, M.S. McLeod, J.E. Smith,
10 Spires, Hiott, Owens, Whitmire, Douglas, Hamilton, Bannister,
11 Neal, Alexander, Weeks, Powers Norrell, Bales, Anderson,
12 Robinson-Simpson, Williams, Henderson, Sottile, Munnerlyn,
13 Rutherford, Vick, R.L. Brown, Whipper, Branham, Govan,
14 J.R. Smith, Hayes, George, Funderburk, W.J. McLeod, Bernstein,
15 Felder, Wood, Patrick and Jefferson

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17 S. Printed 6/4/14--S.

18 Read the first time March 5, 2014.

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A BILL

TO AMEND THE CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, BY ADDING SECTION 59-152-25 SO AS TO DEFINE TERMS CONCERNING THE FIRST STEPS TO SCHOOL READINESS INITIATIVE; BY ADDING SECTION 59-152-32 SO AS TO PROVIDE THE FIRST STEPS BOARD OF TRUSTEES SHALL DEVELOP A COMPREHENSIVE LONG-RANGE INITIATIVE AND STRATEGY FOR SCHOOL READINESS; BY ADDING SECTION 59-152-33 SO AS TO PROVIDE A STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT SCHOOL READINESS; BY ADDING SECTION 63-11-1725 SO AS TO PROVIDE FOR THE COMPOSITION, FUNCTION, AND DUTIES OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA EARLY CHILDHOOD ADVISORY COUNCIL; BY ADDING SECTION 63-11-1735 SO AS TO PROVIDE FIRST STEPS SHALL ENSURE THE COMPLIANCE OF BABYNET WITH FEDERAL MAINTENANCE OF EFFORT REQUIREMENTS, AND TO DEFINE CERTAIN TERMS; TO AMEND SECTION 59-152-10, RELATING TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF FIRST STEPS, SO AS TO REDESIGNATE COUNTY FIRST STEPS PARTNERSHIPS AS LOCAL FIRST STEPS PARTNERSHIPS; TO AMEND SECTION 59-152-20, RELATING TO THE PURPOSE OF FIRST STEPS, SO AS TO REDESIGNATE COUNTY PARTNERSHIPS AS LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS; TO AMEND SECTION 59-152-30, RELATING TO THE GOALS OF FIRST STEPS, SO AS TO RESTATE CERTAIN GOALS OF STUDENT READINESS; TO AMEND SECTION 59-152-40, RELATING TO OVERSIGHT OF THE INITIATIVE BY THE FIRST STEPS BOARD OF TRUSTEES, SO AS TO REQUIRE THE BOARD ALSO BE ACCOUNTABLE FOR THE INITIATIVE; TO AMEND SECTION 59-152-50, RELATING TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE OFFICE OF FIRST STEPS TO SCHOOL READINESS, SO AS TO REVISE THE

1 TIME FOR REQUIRED PERFORMANCE AUDITS AND TO
2 CORRECT AN OBSOLETE REFERENCE; TO AMEND
3 SECTION 59-152-60, RELATING TO FIRST STEPS
4 PARTNERSHIPS, SO AS TO REQUIRE A LOCAL
5 PARTNERSHIP IN EACH COUNTY, TO PROVIDE THAT
6 MEETINGS AND ELECTIONS OF A LOCAL PARTNERSHIP
7 ARE SUBJECT TO THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT
8 AND CERTAIN DISCLOSURE REQUIREMENTS, TO
9 SPECIFY AND REVISE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
10 COMPOSITION OF A LOCAL PARTNERSHIP BOARD AND
11 TO CORRECT AN OBSOLETE REFERENCE; TO AMEND
12 SECTION 59-152-70, RELATING TO THE POWERS AND
13 DUTIES OF A LOCAL PARTNERSHIP BOARD, SO AS TO
14 REVISE THE REQUIREMENTS CONCERNING COUNTY
15 NEEDS ASSESSMENTS, RECORD KEEPING AND
16 REPORTING, TO PROVIDE STAFFING PURSUANT TO
17 LOCAL BYLAWS, AND TO PROVIDE MULTIPLE LOCAL
18 PARTNERSHIPS MAY COLLABORATE TO MAXIMIZE
19 EFFICIENT DELIVERY OF SERVICES AND THE
20 EXECUTION OF THEIR DUTIES AND POWERS; TO AMEND
21 SECTION 59-152-90, RELATING TO FIRST STEPS GRANTS,
22 SO AS TO ESTABLISH THE GRANTS AS LOCAL
23 PARTNERSHIP GRANTS, AND TO REVISE THE PROCESS
24 FOR OBTAINING A GRANT AND THE METHOD OF
25 ALLOCATING GRANT FUNDS; TO AMEND SECTION
26 59-152-100, RELATING TO USE OF FIRST STEPS GRANT
27 FUNDS, SO AS TO PROVIDE THE SECTION APPLIES TO
28 GRANTS EXPENDED BY A FIRST STEPS PARTNERSHIP,
29 AND TO REVISE THE PERMISSIBLE USES OF GRANT
30 FUNDS; TO AMEND SECTION 59-152-120, RELATING TO
31 THE USE OF GRANT FUNDS FOR CAPITAL
32 EXPENDITURES, SO AS TO REVISE THE PURPOSE FOR
33 WHICH FUNDS MAY BE USED AND TO REQUIRE PRIOR
34 APPROVAL OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES; TO AMEND
35 SECTION 59-152-130, RELATING TO A MANDATORY
36 MATCHING OF FUNDS BY LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS, SO AS
37 TO REVISE THE MANDATORY AMOUNT, TO ENCOURAGE
38 PRIVATE CONTRIBUTIONS TO HELP LOCAL
39 PARTNERSHIPS MEET THEIR MANDATORY MATCHING
40 REQUIREMENT, AND TO DELETE A PROVISION
41 ALLOWING CERTAIN EXPENSES TO BE INCLUDED IN
42 DETERMINING MATCHING FUNDS; TO AMEND SECTION
43 59-152-140, RELATING TO THE PERMISSIBILITY OF

1 CARRY FORWARD FUNDS BY A LOCAL PARTNERSHIP,
2 SECTION 59-152-150, RELATING TO ACCOUNTABILITY
3 SYSTEMS, AND SECTION 59-152-160, RELATING TO
4 PROGRESS EVALUATIONS, ALL SO AS TO DELETE
5 OBSOLETE TERMS; TO AMEND SECTION 63-11-1720,
6 RELATING TO THE FIRST STEPS BOARD OF TRUSTEES,
7 SO AS TO REVISE THE COMPOSITION OF THE BOARD;
8 AND TO REPEAL SECTION 59-152-80 RELATING TO FIRST
9 STEPS GRANTS AND SECTION 59-152-110 RELATING TO
10 THE USE OF FIRST STEPS LOCAL PARTNERSHIP GRANT
11 FUNDS.

12
13 Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of South
14 Carolina:

15
16 SECTION 1. Chapter 152, Title 59 of the 1976 Code is amended
17 by adding:

18
19 “Section 59-152-25. For the purposes of this title:

20 (A) ‘Evidence-based program’ means a program based on a
21 clear and consistent program model that is designated as such by
22 the South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness Board of
23 Trustees because the program:

24 (1)(a) is grounded in published, peer reviewed research that
25 is linked to determined outcomes;

26 (b) employs well trained and competent staff to whom the
27 program provides continual professional development that is
28 relevant to the specific model being delivered;

29 (c) demonstrates strong linkages to other community
30 based services; and

31 (d) is operated to ensure program fidelity; or

32 (2) is commonly recognized by experts in the field as such a
33 program.

34 (B) ‘Board of trustees’ or ‘board’ means the First Steps School
35 to Readiness Board of Trustees pursuant to Article 17, Title 63.”

36 (C) ‘Evidence-informed program’ means a program that does
37 not satisfy the criteria of an evidenced-based program model but
38 that the South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness Board of
39 Trustees determines is supported by research indicating its
40 potential effectiveness.

41 (D) ‘Partnership’ refers to a local First Steps organization
42 designated as such by the South Carolina First Steps to School
43 Readiness Board of Trustees, organized under Section 501(c)(3) of

1 the Internal Revenue Code as a nonprofit corporation, and formed
2 to further, within the coverage area, the purpose and goals of the
3 First Steps initiative as stated in Sections 59-152-20 and
4 59-152-30.

5 (E) 'Preschool child' means a child from the prenatal stage to
6 entry into five-year-old kindergarten.

7 (F) 'Prevalent program investment' means a program
8 administered by a partnership and funded with state grant money,
9 which accounts for at least ten percent of total programmatic
10 spending in First Steps.

11 (G) 'School readiness' means the level of child development
12 necessary to ensure early school success as measured in the
13 following domains: physical health and motor skills; emotional
14 and social competence; language and literacy development; and
15 mathematical thinking and cognitive skills. School readiness is
16 supported by the knowledge and practices of families, caregivers,
17 healthcare providers, educators, and communities."

18

19 SECTION 2. Chapter 152, Title 59 of the 1976 Code is amended
20 by adding:

21

22 "Section 59-152-32. (A) In Section 63-11-1720, the South
23 Carolina First Steps to School Readiness Board of Trustees may
24 carry out its assigned functions by developing a comprehensive
25 long-range initiative for improving early childhood development,
26 increasing school readiness and literacy, establishing results
27 oriented measures and objectives, and assessing whether services
28 provided by First Steps Partnerships to children and families are
29 meeting the goals and achieving the results established in this
30 chapter. The board shall do the following to fulfill these duties
31 before July 1, 2015:

32 (1) in consultation with the State Board of Education, and
33 with the advice and consent of that board, adopt a description of
34 school readiness that includes specific:

35 (a) characteristics and development levels of a ready child
36 that must include, but are not limited to, emerging literacy,
37 numeracy, and physical, social, and emotional competencies;

38 (b) characteristics of school, educators, and caregivers that
39 the board considers necessary to create an optimal learning
40 environment for the early years of students' lives; and

41 (c) characteristics of the optimal environment which
42 would lead to the readiness of students and their continued
43 success;

1 (2) establish specific benchmarks and objectives for use by
2 the board of trustees, local partnership boards, and any agency that
3 administers a program to benefit preschool children;

4 (3) determine whether state and local programs and activities
5 are effective and contribute to achieving the goals established in
6 Section 59-152-30; and

7 (4) publish and distribute a list of approved evidence-based
8 and evidence-informed programs.

9 (B) The board of trustees shall review the school readiness
10 description, benchmarks, and objectives and adopt any revisions it
11 considers appropriate before December 31, 2014, again before
12 December 31, 2019, and every five years afterward.”

13

14 SECTION 3. Chapter 152, Title 59 of the 1976 Code is amended
15 by adding:

16

17 “Section 59-152-33. (A) Before July 1, 2015, the South
18 Carolina Education Oversight Committee shall recommend an
19 assessment to evaluate and measure the school readiness of
20 students prior to their entrance into a pre-kindergarten or
21 kindergarten program per the goals pursuant to Section 59-152-30
22 to the State Board of Education. Prior to submitting the
23 recommendation to the State Board, the Education Oversight
24 Committee shall seek input from the South Carolina First Steps to
25 School Readiness Board of Trustees and other early childhood
26 advocates. In making the recommendation, the South Carolina
27 Education Oversight Committee shall consider assessments that
28 are research-based, reliable, and appropriate for measuring
29 readiness. The assessment chosen must evaluate each child’s early
30 language and literacy development, numeracy skills, physical
31 well-being, social and emotional development, and approaches to
32 learning. The assessment of academic readiness must be aligned
33 with first and second grade standards for English language arts and
34 mathematics. The purpose of the assessment is to provide
35 teachers, administrators, and parents or guardians with information
36 to address the readiness needs of each student, especially by
37 identifying language, cognitive, social, emotional, and health
38 needs, and providing appropriate instruction and support for each
39 child. The results of the screenings and the developmental
40 intervention strategies recommended to address the child’s
41 identified needs must be provided, in writing, to the parent or
42 guardian. Reading instructional strategies and developmental
43 activities for children whose oral language and emergent literacy

1 skills are assessed to be below the national standards must be
2 aligned with the district's reading proficiency plan for addressing
3 the readiness needs of each student. The school readiness
4 assessment adopted by the State Board of Education may not be
5 used to deny a student admission or progress to kindergarten or
6 first grade. Every student entering the public schools for the first
7 time in prekindergarten and kindergarten must be administered a
8 readiness screening by the forty fifth day of the school year.

9 (B) The results of individual students in a school readiness
10 assessment may not be publicly reported.

11 (C) Following adoption of a school readiness assessment, the
12 State Board of Education shall adopt a system for reporting
13 population-level results that provides baseline data for measuring
14 overall change and improvement in the skills and knowledge of
15 students over time. The Department of Education shall house and
16 monitor the system.

17 (D) The South Carolina First Steps of School Readiness Board
18 of Trustees shall support the implementation of the school
19 readiness assessment and must provide professional development
20 to support the readiness assessment for teachers and parents of
21 programs supported with First Steps funds. The board shall utilize
22 the annual aggregate literacy and other readiness assessment
23 information in establishing standards and practices to support all
24 early childhood providers served by First Steps.”

25
26 SECTION 4. Article 17, Chapter 11, Title 63 of the 1976 Code is
27 amended by adding:

28
29 “Section 63-11-1725. (A) For the purposes of this article,
30 ‘advisory council’ means the South Carolina Advisory Council
31 established by Executive Order Number 2010-06 in compliance
32 with the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007,
33 42 U.S.C. Section 9837b, et seq.

34 (B) The membership of the advisory council is exclusively
35 composed of the membership of the Board of Trustees of the South
36 Carolina First Steps to School Readiness Initiative. Each voting
37 and nonvoting member shall serve as a voting member of the
38 South Carolina Advisory Council, concurrent with his service on
39 the board.

40 (C) The advisory council is an entity distinct from the Board of
41 Trustees and must act accordingly to fulfill its responsibilities
42 under 42 U.S.C. Section 9837b(b)(1)(D)(i) of the Improving Head
43 Start for School Readiness Act of 2007. The advisory council shall

1 keep separate minutes that explicitly distinguish its actions and
2 votes from those made when acting in the capacity of the board of
3 trustees. The advisory council must officially adjourn before acting
4 as the board of trustees, and the board of trustees shall adjourn
5 before acting as the advisory council.

6 (D) The State Director of First Steps shall coordinate the
7 activities of the advisory council. Pursuant to 42 U.S.C. Section
8 9837b(b)(1)(D)(i), the advisory council shall:

9 (1) conduct a periodic statewide needs assessment
10 concerning the quality and availability of early childhood
11 education and development programs and services for children
12 from birth to the age of school entry, including an assessment of
13 the availability of high quality prekindergarten services for low
14 income children in the State;

15 (2) identify opportunities for, and barriers to, collaboration
16 and coordination among federally funded and state-funded child
17 development, child care, and early childhood education programs
18 and services, including collaboration and coordination among state
19 agencies responsible for administering these programs;

20 (3) develop recommendations for increasing the overall
21 participation of children in existing federal, state, and local child
22 care and early childhood education programs, including outreach
23 to underrepresented and special populations;

24 (4) develop recommendations regarding the establishment of
25 a unified data collection system for public early childhood
26 education and development programs and services throughout the
27 State;

28 (5) develop recommendations regarding statewide
29 professional development and career advancement plans for early
30 childhood educators in the State;

31 (6) assess the capacity and effectiveness of two-year and
32 four-year public and private institutions of higher education in the
33 state for supporting the development of early childhood educators,
34 including the extent to which these institutions have in place
35 articulation agreements, professional development and career
36 advancement plans, and practice or internships for students to
37 spend time in a Head Start or prekindergarten program;

38 (7) make recommendations for improvements in state early
39 learning standards and undertake efforts to develop high quality
40 comprehensive early learning standards, as appropriate;

41 (8) develop and publish, using available demographic data,
42 an indicators-based measure of school readiness at the state and
43 community level;

1 (9) incorporate, within the periodic statewide needs
2 assessments required in 42 U.S.C. Section 9837(b), any data
3 related to the capacity and efforts of private sector providers, Head
4 Start providers, and local school districts to serve children from
5 birth to age five, including fiscal, enrollment, and capacity data;
6 and

7 (10) perform all other functions, as permitted under federal
8 and state law, to improve coordination and delivery of early
9 childhood education and development to children in this State.

10 (E) The advisory council shall designate a meeting as its annual
11 meeting. All of the chief executive officers of the State agencies
12 represented on the Early Childhood Advisory Council must attend
13 the annual meeting in person.

14 (F) The advisory council shall prepare an annual report of its
15 activities for presentation to the Governor and General Assembly.”
16

17 SECTION 5. Article 17, Chapter 11, Title 63 of the 1976 Code is
18 amended by adding:
19

20 “Section 63-11-1735. (A) For the purposes of this article:

21 (1) ‘BabyNet’ is the interagency early intervention system
22 that is the Part C program in South Carolina.

23 (2) ‘I.D.E.A.’ means the Individuals with Disabilities
24 Education Act, 20 U.S.C. Section 1400, et seq.

25 (3) ‘Maintenance of effort’ means the requirement of Part C
26 that relevant state and local agencies maintain a specified level of
27 financial support for early intervention services in compliance with
28 34 C.F.R. 303.124.

29 (4) ‘Part C program’ means an program of early intervention
30 services to infants and toddlers with disabilities required in each
31 state by I.D.E.A. and for which South Carolina First Steps to
32 School Readiness is designated as the lead agency to administer
33 the Part C program in South Carolina by Executive Order Number
34 2009-12 in compliance with Subchapter VIII, Chapter 33, Title 20,
35 U.S. Code Annotated relating to Head Start programs, and as
36 provided in Section 44-7-2520(A), which relates to definitions
37 concerning the South Carolina Infants and Toddlers with
38 Disabilities Act.

39 (B) First Steps shall ensure that BabyNet complies with the
40 maintenance of effort requirement by coordinating with all
41 agencies that provide early intervention services in this State to
42 ensure they each properly document all Part C expenditures
43 annually.”

1
2 SECTION 6. Section 59-152-10 of the 1976 Code is amended to
3 read:

4
5 “Section 59-152-10. There is established South Carolina First
6 Steps to School Readiness, a comprehensive, results-oriented
7 initiative for improving early childhood development by providing,
8 through ~~county~~ local partnerships, public and private funds and
9 support for high-quality early childhood development and
10 education services for children by providing support for their
11 families’ efforts toward enabling their children to reach school
12 ready to ~~learn~~ succeed.”

13
14 SECTION 7. Section 59-152-20 of the 1976 Code is amended to
15 read:

16
17 “Section 59-152-20. The purpose of the First Steps initiative is
18 to develop, promote, and assist efforts of agencies, private
19 providers, and public and private organizations and entities, at the
20 state level and the community level, to collaborate and cooperate
21 in order to focus and intensify services, assure the most efficient
22 use of all available resources, and eliminate duplication of efforts
23 to serve the needs of young children and their families. First Steps
24 funds must not be used to supplant or replace any other funds
25 being spent on services but must be used to expand, extend,
26 improve, or increase access to services or to enable a community
27 to begin to offer new or previously unavailable services in their
28 community. The South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness
29 Board of Trustees, Office of First Steps to School Readiness, and
30 the ~~County~~ local First Steps Partnerships shall ~~assure that~~
31 ~~collaboration, the development of partnerships, and the sharing and~~
32 ~~maximizing of resources are occurring before funding for the~~
33 ~~implementation/management grants, as provided for in this~~
34 ~~chapter, are made available~~ ensure that collaborations, the
35 existence and continued development of partnerships, and the
36 sharing and maximizing of resources occur so that the funding of
37 grants and services, as provided in this chapter, may continue.”

38
39 SECTION 8. Section 59-152-30 of the 1976 Code is amended to
40 read:

41
42 “Section 59-152-30. The goals for South Carolina First Steps to
43 School Readiness are to:

1 (1) provide parents with access to the support they might seek
2 and want to strengthen their families and to promote the optimal
3 development of their preschool children;

4 (2) increase comprehensive services so children have reduced
5 risk for major physical, developmental, and learning problems;

6 (3) promote high quality preschool programs that provide a
7 healthy environment that will promote normal growth and
8 development;

9 (4) provide services so all children receive the protection,
10 nutrition, and health care needed to thrive in the early years of life
11 so they arrive at school ready to ~~learn~~ succeed; and

12 (5) mobilize communities to focus efforts on providing
13 enhanced services to support families and their young children so
14 as to enable every child to reach school healthy and ready to ~~learn~~
15 succeed.”

16
17 SECTION 9. Section 59-152-40 of the 1976 Code is amended to
18 read:

19
20 “Section 59-152-40. The South Carolina First Steps to School
21 Readiness Board of Trustees established in Section 63-11-1720
22 shall oversee and be accountable for the South Carolina First Steps
23 to School Readiness initiative.”

24
25 SECTION 10. Section 59-152-50 of the 1976 Code is amended
26 to read:

27
28 “Section 59-152-50. ~~Within~~ Under supervision of the South
29 Carolina First Steps to School Readiness Board of Trustees, there
30 is created an Office of South Carolina First Steps to School
31 Readiness ~~shall be established~~. The office shall:

32 (1) provide to the board information on best practice,
33 successful strategies, model programs, and financing mechanisms;

34 (2) review the ~~county~~ local partnerships’ plans and budgets in
35 order to provide technical assistance and recommendations
36 regarding local grant proposals and improvement in meeting
37 statewide and local goals;

38 (3) provide technical assistance, consultation, and support to
39 ~~county~~ local partnerships to facilitate their success including, but
40 not limited to, model programs, strategic planning, leadership
41 development, best practice, successful strategies, collaboration,
42 financing, and evaluation;

1 (4) evaluate each program funded by the South Carolina First
2 Steps to School Readiness Board of Trustees on a regular cycle to
3 determine its effectiveness and whether it should continue to
4 receive funding;

5 (45) recommend to the board the applicants meeting the criteria
6 for First Steps partnerships and the grants to be awarded;

7 (56) submit an annual report to the board by December first
8 which includes, but is not limited to, the statewide needs and
9 resources available to meet the goals and purposes of the First
10 Steps to School Readiness initiative, a list of risk factors the office
11 considers to affect school readiness, identification of areas where
12 client-level data is not available, an explanation of how First Steps
13 programs reach the most at-risk children, the ongoing progress and
14 results of the First Steps to School Readiness initiative statewide
15 and locally, fiscal information on the expenditure of funds, and
16 recommendations and legislative proposals to further implement
17 the South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness initiative
18 statewide;

19 ~~(6) provide for on-going data collection and contract for an~~
20 ~~in-depth performance audit due January 1, 2003, and every three~~
21 ~~years thereafter, to ensure that statewide goals and requirements of~~
22 ~~the First Steps to School Readiness initiative are being met; and~~

23 (7) provide for ongoing data collection. Before June 30, 2015,
24 the board shall develop a response to the November 2014 external
25 evaluation of each prevalent program and the overall goals of the
26 initiative, as provided in Section 59-125-160. The office shall
27 contract with an external evaluator to develop a schedule for an
28 in-depth and independent performance audit designed to measure
29 the success of each prevalent program in regard to its success in
30 supporting the goals of the State Board and those set forth in
31 Section 59-152-20 and Section 59-152-30. Results of all external
32 performance audits must be published in the First Steps annual
33 report; and

34 (78) coordinate the First Steps to School Readiness initiative
35 with all other state, federal, and local public and private efforts to
36 promote good health and school readiness of young children and
37 support for their families.”

38
39 SECTION 11. Section 59-152-60 of the 1976 Code is amended
40 to read:

41
42 “Section 59-152-60. (A) ~~The Office of First Steps to School~~
43 ~~Readiness, in collaboration with each county legislative delegation,~~

1 ~~shall initiate county forums for the purpose of bringing together~~
2 ~~stakeholders who are actively involved or interested in early~~
3 ~~childhood development and education so as to initiate a County~~
4 ~~First Steps Partnership. The times and locations of these forums~~
5 ~~and county wide meetings must be publicized in the local print and~~
6 ~~broadcast media.~~

7 ~~(B) At a countywide meeting the participants shall begin to~~
8 ~~select, to the extent possible within the area covered by the~~
9 ~~partnership:~~

10 ~~(1) Not more than two members from each of these~~
11 ~~categories to sit on the First Steps partnership board:~~

12 ~~(a) pre-kindergarten through primary educator; Each~~
13 ~~county must be represented by a Local First Steps Partnership~~
14 ~~Board and each local board must provide services within every~~
15 ~~county it represents. A local partnership board must be comprised~~
16 ~~of individuals with resources, skills, knowledge, and interest in~~
17 ~~improving the readiness of young children for school. A list of all~~
18 ~~local partnership board members must be published in the~~
19 ~~partnership's annual report, be reported annually to the local~~
20 ~~legislative delegation, and be on file with the Office of First Steps.~~

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

27 ~~(C) In accordance with the bylaws established by the board of~~
28 ~~trustees, each local partnership board shall maintain a total~~
29 ~~minimum membership of twelve and a maximum membership of~~
30 ~~thirty elected, appointed, and designated individuals. Elected and~~
31 ~~appointed members shall comprise a voting majority of the board.~~

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

34 ~~(a) pre-kindergarten through primary educator;~~

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

36 ~~(c) childcare ~~and~~ or early childhood~~
37 ~~development/education provider;~~

38 ~~(d) healthcare provider;~~

39 ~~(e) ~~transportation provider~~ local government;~~

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

42 ~~(g) faith community; ~~and~~~~

43 ~~(h) business community;~~

1 (i) philanthropic community; and
2 (j) parents of preschool children.
3 (2) ~~Three parents of pre-school children. After the first year~~
4 ~~of the implementation of the First Steps to School Readiness~~
5 ~~initiative, parents serving on the County First Steps Partnership~~
6 ~~Board must have pre-school children being served by First Steps~~
7 ~~programs; and~~
8 (3) ~~Four members from early childhood education.~~
9 (C) ~~After the county partnership board has been formed, if~~
10 ~~necessary to~~ To assure that all areas of the county or multicounty
11 region are adequately represented and reflect the diversity of the
12 county coverage area, each county legislative delegation may
13 appoint up to four additional members to a local partnership board.
14 Of these members, two are appointed by the Senate members and
15 two by the House of Representative members of the delegation
16 from persons with resources, skills, or knowledge that have
17 specific interests in improving the readiness of young children for
18 school.
19 (D) ~~Each of the following entities located within a particular~~
20 First Steps Partnership coverage area shall designate one member
21 to serve as a member of its County the local First Steps Partnership
22 Board:
23 (a) county department of social services;
24 (b) county department of health and environmental
25 control;
26 (c) Head Start or early Head Start;
27 (d) county library; and
28 (e) each of the school districts in the county.
29 (D) In conjunction with the independent external program
30 evaluation established in Section 59-152-160, the South Carolina
31 First Steps to School Readiness Board of Trustees shall conduct a
32 formal review of the membership categories for First Steps
33 Partnership Board composition. Upon completion of the review,
34 the South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness Board of
35 Trustees shall submit to the General Assembly a statement either
36 verifying the continued applicability and appropriateness of the
37 composition categories for First Steps Partnership Boards in place
38 at that time, or recommending any appropriate and necessary
39 changes.
40 (E) Members who miss more than three consecutive meetings
41 without excuse or members who resign must be replaced from the
42 same categories as their predecessor. The terms of the members of
43 a County local First Steps Partnership Board are for two four

1 years; however, membership on the board may not exceed ~~six~~ eight
2 consecutive years.

3 (F) The chairman of a ~~County First Steps~~ local partnership
4 board must be elected by majority vote of the board. The chairman
5 shall serve a one-year term; however, the chairman may be elected
6 to subsequent terms not to exceed a total of four consecutive years.

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

14
15 SECTION 12. Section 59-152-70 of the 1976 Code is amended
16 to read:

17
18 “Section 59-152-70. (A) A First Steps Partnership Board shall,
19 among its other powers and duties:

20 (1) adopt by-laws as established by the First Steps to School
21 Readiness Board to effectuate the provisions of this chapter which
22 must include the creation of a periodic meeting schedule;

23 (2) coordinate a collaborative effort at the county or
24 ~~multi-county~~ multicounty level which will bring the community
25 together to identify the area needs related to the goals of First
26 Steps to School Readiness; develop a strategic long-term plan for
27 meeting those needs; develop specific initiatives to implement the
28 elements of the plan; and integrating service delivery where
29 possible;

30 (3) coordinate and oversee the implementation of the
31 comprehensive strategic plan including, but not limited to, direct
32 service provision, contracting for service provision, and
33 organization and management of volunteer programs;

34 (4) effective July 1, 2016, each partnership’s comprehensive
35 plan shall include the following core functions:

36 (a) service as a local portal connecting families of
37 preschool children to community-based services they may need or
38 desire to ensure the school readiness of their children;

39 (b) service as a community convener around the needs of
40 preschool children and their families; and

41 (c) support of state-level school readiness priorities as
42 determined by the State Board.

1 ~~(45) create and annually revise a county update a needs~~
2 ~~assessment every three years;~~

3 ~~(56) implement fiscal policies and procedures as required by~~
4 ~~the First Steps office and as needed to ensure fiscal accountability~~
5 ~~of all funds appropriated to the partnership;~~

6 ~~(67) keep accurate records of the partnership's board~~
7 ~~meetings, board member's attendance, programs, and activities for~~
8 ~~annual submission to the First Steps to School Readiness Board of~~
9 ~~Trustees;~~

10 ~~(78) collect information and submit an annual report by~~
11 ~~October 4 first to the First Steps to School Readiness Board of~~
12 ~~Trustees, and otherwise participate in the annual review and the~~
13 ~~three-year evaluation of operations and programs. The first annual~~
14 ~~report must be submitted October 1, 2000. Reports must include~~
15 ~~but not be limited to:~~

16 (a) ~~determination of the current level and data pertaining~~
17 ~~to the delivery and effectiveness of services for young children and~~
18 ~~their families, including the numbers of preschool children and~~
19 ~~their families served;~~

20 (b) ~~strategic goals for increased availability, accessibility,~~
21 ~~quality, and efficiency of activities and services for young children~~
22 ~~and their families which will enable children to reach school ready~~
23 ~~to learn succeed;~~

24 (c) ~~monitoring of progress toward strategic goals;~~

25 (d) ~~report on implementation activities;~~

26 (e) ~~recommendations for changes to the strategic plan~~
27 ~~which may include new areas of implementation;~~

28 (f) ~~evaluation and report of program effectiveness and~~
29 ~~client satisfaction before, during, and after the implementation of~~
30 ~~the strategic plan, where available; and~~

31 (g) ~~estimation of cost savings attributable to increased~~
32 ~~efficiency and effectiveness of delivery of services to young~~
33 ~~children and their families, where available.~~

34 ~~(B) Each County First Steps local partnership may, in the~~
35 ~~performance of its duties, employ or acquire administrative,~~
36 ~~clerical, stenographic, and other personnel as may be necessary to~~
37 ~~effectuate the provisions of this section. However, overhead staff~~
38 ~~pursuant to the local partnership bylaws established by the South~~
39 ~~Carolina First Steps School to Readiness Board of Trustees.~~
40 ~~Overhead costs of the partnership's a First Step partnership's~~
41 ~~operations may not exceed eight percent of its~~
42 ~~implementation/management grant allocation unless prior approval~~
43 ~~is received from the First Steps to School Readiness Board of~~

1 ~~Trustees~~ the total state funds appropriated for partnership grants.
2 The South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness Board of
3 Trustees shall contract with an independent cost accountant to
4 provide recommendations as to an adequate, and not excessive,
5 overhead cost rate for individual partnerships no later than July 1,
6 2017. Once these recommendations are received, the First Steps to
7 School Readiness Board of Trustees may adjust the overhead
8 percentage for the local partnership.

9 (C) Each ~~County~~ First Steps partnership may apply for, receive,
10 and expend federal, state, and local funds, grants, and other
11 funding in order to improve programs as provided in Section
12 59-152-25(A).

13 ~~(D) Day care facilities receiving grants must first use a portion~~
14 ~~of their funds to achieve licensed status and then to achieve the~~
15 ~~equivalent status to that of enhanced ABC provider.~~

16 ~~(E) To be designated a County First Steps partnership, the~~
17 ~~county or multi-county local partnership must be a private~~
18 ~~nonprofit corporation organized under Section 501(c)(3) of the~~
19 ~~Internal Revenue Code. However, developing partnerships which~~
20 ~~have not yet received 501(c)(3) status may qualify for grants if~~
21 ~~they have received a state charter for incorporation and meet other~~
22 ~~criteria as established by the board.~~

23 (E) Multiple First Steps local partnerships may collaborate in a
24 manner they determine will maximize the efficient and effective
25 provision of First Steps services and programs to children and their
26 families and best enable the partnerships to execute their duties
27 and powers established in this chapter. In such a collaboration,
28 partnerships may merge or work in concert with one or more of
29 their program, administrative, or development functions or
30 establish multicounty partnerships. The decision to collaborate in
31 the manner permitted in this subsection rests entirely with the local
32 partnership boards of directors involved.

33 (F) As a condition of receiving state funds, each local
34 partnership must be subject to performance reviews by South
35 Carolina First Steps, including, but not limited to, local board
36 functioning and collaboration and compliance with state standards
37 and fiscal accountability. If any significant operational
38 deficiencies or misconduct are identified within the partnership,
39 the South Carolina First Steps Board of Trustees must identify a
40 remedy with input from the local legislative delegation.”

41
42 SECTION 13. Section 59-152-90 of the 1976 Code is amended
43 to read:

1
2 “Section 59-152-90. (A) A local partnership’s grant may be
3 funded annually by the First Steps School to Readiness Board of
4 Trustees and must be contingent on the General Assembly’s
5 appropriation of funds to use for offering grants.

6 ~~(B) To obtain a grant, a County First Steps partnership or~~
7 ~~developing partnership must qualify by meeting the grant~~
8 ~~requirements established pursuant to subsection (C). A First Steps~~
9 ~~Partnership shall submit an application to the Office of First Steps~~
10 ~~in a format specified by the First Steps to School Readiness Board.~~
11 ~~The application shall include, as appropriate to the level of grant~~
12 ~~applied for, the level of funding requested, a description of needs~~
13 ~~of children and families; assets and resources available; and the~~
14 ~~proposed strategies to address needs as they relate to the goals of~~
15 ~~South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness.~~

16 ~~(B) To receive a Level One development of the collaborative~~
17 ~~effort, needs assessment, and strategic planning grant, the County~~
18 ~~First Steps Partnership must meet the criteria established by the~~
19 ~~First Steps to School Readiness Board including, but not limited~~
20 ~~to, total population covered by the partnership and quality of any~~
21 ~~pre-existing needs assessment and/or strategic plans for that~~
22 ~~geographic area.~~

23 ~~(C) To receive a Level Two implementation/management grant~~
24 ~~for First Steps to School Readiness, a County First Steps~~
25 ~~Partnership must have completed a needs assessment and review~~
26 ~~by the First Steps to School Readiness Board and develop a~~
27 ~~comprehensive, long-range plan to provide high quality early~~
28 ~~childhood development and education services. The plan must~~
29 ~~identify the needs of children and their families in the local area;~~
30 ~~assets and resources available; explain how supports and services~~
31 ~~are to be organized and delivered; establish measurable objectives~~
32 ~~and interim goals for meeting the local and state goals for First~~
33 ~~Steps; and an evaluation plan.~~

34 ~~(D) In developing these plans, the First Steps Partnership must~~
35 ~~be given sufficient flexibility, but they must be accountable to the~~
36 ~~First Steps to School Readiness Board for fiscal management,~~
37 ~~program management, and program results.~~

38 ~~(EC)(1) The allocations for the grants shall take into~~
39 ~~consideration the quality of the grant proposal; the population of~~
40 ~~children birth to age five contained in the area served by the~~
41 ~~partnership; the percentage of students in grades 1-3 who are~~
42 ~~eligible for the free and reduced-price lunch program; average per~~
43 ~~capita income; and the area’s ability to support the strategic plan~~

1 ~~initiative. The criteria also shall take into account the standing of~~
2 ~~the geographical area covered by a county partnership in relation~~
3 ~~to the statewide Kids Count indicators. Priority must be given to~~
4 ~~strategic plans that incorporate models with demonstrated success.~~
5 Pursuant to 63-11-1730, the South Carolina First Steps to School
6 Readiness Board of Trustees shall establish the grant qualification
7 requirements. The board shall develop and promulgate grant
8 qualification requirements in regulation pursuant to the
9 Administrative Procedures Act. These requirements must include,
10 but not be limited to, the following:

11 (a) adoption and adherence to bylaws promulgated by the
12 South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness Board of Trustees,
13 which includes, but is not limited to, compliance with the board
14 composition, attendance, voting, and disclosure requirements;

15 (b) utilization of the South Carolina First Steps to School
16 Readiness benchmarks and objectives;

17 (c) implementation of programs and activities, which are
18 effective and contributing to state goals, and otherwise acceptable
19 pursuant to the requirements of Chapter 152, Title 59; and

20 (d) fulfillment of all the duties in Section 59-152-70.

21 (2) The South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness
22 Board of Trustees shall establish a formula, which includes the
23 identification of the most relevant and effective factors, by which
24 the allocations for qualifying Partnership grants are calculated.
25 The board shall identify the factors, develop the funding formula,
26 and promulgate both in regulation pursuant to the Administrative
27 Procedures Act. The factors utilized in the funding formula, and
28 the weight given to each factor by the formula, must reflect that the
29 intent of the General Assembly is to ensure that the money
30 allocated to each local partnership is in proportion to the
31 following:

32 (a) population of eligible children;

33 (b) population of at-risk children; and

34 (c) population with below average income.

35 (3) First Steps shall include the grant qualification
36 requirements and funding formula on its website. The website
37 information shall include formula details, announcements
38 regarding proposed changes to the formula, and directions for
39 public input.

40 (E) In conjunction with the independent external program
41 evaluation established pursuant to Section 59-152-160, the board
42 of trustees shall conduct a formal review of the grant qualification
43 requirements and funding process adopted pursuant to subsections

1 (C) and (D) and, upon completion of the review, shall submit to
2 the General Assembly a statement either verifying the continued
3 applicability and appropriateness of the grant qualification
4 requirements and funding process in use at that time or
5 recommending any appropriate and necessary changes

6 (F) Funding must reflect the combined total allocations of the
7 coverage area of a multicounty partnership.”
8

9 SECTION 14. Section 59-152-100 of the 1976 Code is amended
10 to read:

11
12 “Section 59-152-100. (A) Grant funds expended by First Steps
13 partnerships must be used to address the needs of young children
14 and their families as identified in the partnerships’ comprehensive
15 plans. The funds must be used to expand, extend, or improve the
16 quality of provided services if there is evidence as to existing
17 programs’ effectiveness; offer new or previously unavailable
18 services in the area; or increase access to services. Partnership
19 grant funds may not supplant comparable current expenditures by
20 counties or state agencies on behalf of young children and their
21 families, and may not be used where other state or federal funding
22 sources are available. Partnerships are expected to collaborate
23 with other community organizations or entities expending funds on
24 early childhood services designed to impact school readiness in
25 order to maximize impact and minimize duplication of efforts.

26 (B) At least seventy-five percent of state funds appropriated for
27 programs must be used by the local partnership for evidence-based
28 programs. Not more than twenty-five percent of state funds
29 appropriated for programs to a local partnership may be used for
30 evidence-informed programs.

31 (C) All activities and services provided by a First Steps local
32 partnership must be made available to young children and families
33 on a voluntary basis and must focus on the following:

34 (1) lifelong learning:

35 (a) school readiness;

36 (b) parenting skills;

37 (c) family literacy; and

38 (d) adult and continuing education.

39 (2) health care:

40 (a) nutrition;

41 (b) affordable access to quality age appropriate health
42 care;

43 (c) early and periodic screenings;

1 (d) required immunizations;
2 (e) initiatives to reduce injuries to infants and toddlers;
3 and
4 (f) technical assistance and consultation for parents and
5 child care providers on health and safety issues.
6 (3) quality child care:
7 (a) staff training and professional development incentives;
8 (b) quality cognitive learning programs;
9 (c) voluntary accreditation standards;
10 (d) accessibility to quality child care and development
11 resources; and
12 (e) affordability.
13 (4) transportation:
14 (a) coordinated service;
15 (b) accessibility;
16 (c) increased utilization efficiency; and
17 (d) affordability solely on 'school readiness' as defined in
18 Section 59-152-25 by implementing programs geared specifically
19 toward the achievement of First Steps goals pursuant to Section
20 59-152-30.

21 (BD) Any part of the initiative within the county strategic plan
22 using local district resources within a school district must be
23 conducted only with approval of the district's board of trustees.”
24

25 SECTION 15. Section 59-152-120 of the 1976 Code is amended
26 to read:
27

28 “Section 59-152-120. Funds received for implementation of a
29 county partnership's implementation/management grant by a local
30 partnership may not be used for capital expenses for, new
31 construction, or to renovate, refurbish, or upgrade existing
32 facilities without prior approval by the South Carolina First Steps
33 to School Readiness Board of Trustees. However, funds may be
34 made available for renovating, refurbishing, or upgrading of
35 existing facilities used to support First Steps to School Readiness
36 activities and services for children, families, and providers from
37 funds made available to the partnerships in Section 59-152-150(C)
38 and Section 63-11-1750(A). The county partnership must
39 demonstrate to the satisfaction of the First Steps to School
40 Readiness Board that the capital expenditure is:

41 (1) a priority need for the local initiative and other state or
42 federal funds for such projects are insufficient; and

1 ~~(2) necessary to provide services to under served children~~
2 ~~and families.”~~

3
4 SECTION 16. Section 59-152-130 of the 1976 Code is amended
5 to read:

6
7 “Section 59-152-130. (A) ~~The County First Steps~~ Local
8 partnerships shall provide an annual match of at least fifteen
9 percent, to include private donations, grant funds, and in-kind
10 donated resources, or any combination of them. The South
11 Carolina First Steps to School Readiness Board of Trustees may
12 decrease this percentage requirement for a partnership based on
13 their capacity to provide that match. ~~Private~~ The First Step
14 partnership shall encourage private individuals and groups ~~must be~~
15 ~~encouraged~~ to contribute to a partnership’s efforts to meet its
16 match. The match required of individual partnerships by the First
17 Steps board should take into consideration such factors as:

18 (1) local wealth, using such indicators as the number and
19 percentage of children eligible for free and reduced lunches in
20 grades 1-3; and

21 (2) in-kind donated resources.

22 Only in-kind donations, as defined by the standard fiscal
23 accountability system provided for in Section 59-152-~~140~~150,
24 which meet the criteria established by the South Carolina First
25 Steps to School Readiness Board of Trustees and that are
26 quantifiable may be applied to the in-kind match requirement.
27 ~~Expenses, including those paid both by cash and through in-kind~~
28 ~~contributions, incurred by other nonstate entities participating in~~
29 ~~county partnerships may be included in determining matching~~
30 ~~funds.~~

31 (B) The Office of ~~the~~ South Carolina First Steps to School
32 Readiness shall establish guidelines and reporting formats for
33 ~~county~~ partnerships to document expenses to ensure they meet
34 matching fund requirements. The office shall compile a report
35 annually on the private cash and in-kind contributions received by
36 the South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness Board of
37 Trustees and ~~County~~ First Steps partnerships.”

38
39 SECTION 17. Section 59-152-140 of the 1976 Code is amended
40 to read:

41
42 “Section 59-152-140. To ensure effective use of funds, awards
43 under contract for ~~County~~ First Steps Partnerships, with the

1 approval of the Office of First Steps to School Readiness, may be
2 carried forward and used in the following fiscal year. Funds
3 appropriated to South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness
4 may also be carried forward into subsequent years.”

5
6 SECTION 18. Section 59-152-150 of the 1976 Code is amended
7 to read:

8
9 “Section 59-152-150. (A) The Office of South Carolina First
10 Steps to School Readiness shall develop and require local
11 partnerships to adopt and implement a standard fiscal
12 accountability system including, but not limited to, a uniform,
13 standardized system of accounting, internal controls, payroll,
14 fidelity bonding, chart of accounts, and contract management and
15 monitoring. Additionally, the accountability system shall require
16 competitive bids for the purchase or procurement of goods and
17 services of ten thousand dollars or more. A bid other than the
18 lowest bid may be accepted by a majority vote of the ~~county~~
19 partnership board if other considerations outweigh the cost factor;
20 however, written justification must be filed with the Office of First
21 Steps. The Office of First Steps may contract with outside firms to
22 develop and ensure implementation of this standard fiscal
23 accountability system, and the Office of First Steps may inspect
24 fiscal and program records of ~~county~~ partnerships and developing
25 partnerships to ensure their compliance with the required system.
26 The Office of First Steps may contract with a state entity with
27 existing means for developing contracts and disbursing funds in
28 order to make use of the existing infrastructure, if it is efficient and
29 not administratively burdensome to partnerships.

30 (B) Each ~~County~~ local First Steps partnership shall expend
31 funds through the South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness
32 Board of Trustees or its fiscal designees until the capacity of the
33 ~~County First Steps~~ local partnership to manage its fiscal and
34 administrative responsibilities in compliance with the standard
35 accountability system has been reviewed and certified by the South
36 Carolina First Steps to School Readiness Board of Trustees or its
37 designee.

38 (C) All private and non-state funds sought by local partnerships
39 must be used exclusively for meeting the goals and purpose of
40 First Steps as specified in Section 59-152-20 and Section
41 59-152-30. Private funds received by a ~~County~~ First Steps
42 partnership must be deposited in a separate fund subject to review
43 by the Office of First Steps and the State Board.

1 (D) Disbursements may be made only on the written
2 authorization of the individual designated by the ~~county~~
3 partnership board and only for the purposes specified. A person
4 violating this section is guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon
5 conviction, must be fined five thousand dollars or imprisoned for
6 six months, or both.

7 (E) The offenses of misuse, misappropriation, and
8 embezzlement of public funds, apply to this chapter.”
9

10 SECTION 19. Section 59-125-160 of the 1976 Code is amended
11 to read:
12

13 “Section 59-125-160. (A) The South Carolina First Steps to
14 School Readiness Board of Trustees shall establish internal
15 evaluation policies and procedures for ~~County First Steps~~ local
16 partnerships for an annual review of the functioning of the
17 partnership, implementation of strategies, and progress toward the
18 interim goals and benchmarks. In instances where no progress has
19 been made, the Office of First Steps to School Readiness shall
20 provide targeted assistance and/or the South Carolina First Steps to
21 School Readiness Board of Trustees may terminate the grant. ~~In~~
22 ~~addition, a program evaluation of The First Steps to School~~
23 ~~Readiness initiatives at the state and local levels must be~~
24 ~~conducted every three years~~ An independent evaluation of each
25 prevalent program investment using valid and reliable measures
26 must be completed and published by the First Steps Board of
27 Trustees no less than every five years. The First Steps board shall
28 adopt a cyclical evaluation calendar including each major program
29 investment no later than June 30, 2015. After publication of a
30 baseline report for each major program investment as defined in
31 Section 59-152-25, subsequent reports will be published no later
32 than five calendar years from the date of each prior publication. In
33 addition to the independent evaluation of each prevalent program,
34 an evaluation of the progress on the initiative’s goals and purpose
35 must be completed by November 1, 2014, and every five years
36 thereafter by an independent, external evaluator under contract
37 with the South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness Board of
38 Trustees. ~~However, the selected evaluator shall be approved, and~~
39 ~~the evaluation overseen, by a committee consisting of three~~
40 ~~members, one appointed by the First Steps Board, one appointed~~
41 ~~by the President Pro Tempore of the Senate and one appointed by~~
42 ~~the Speaker of the House. These committee members must be~~
43 ~~professionally recognized as proficient in child development, early~~

1 ~~childhood education, or a closely related field. The first report~~
2 ~~shall be provided no later than January 1, 2003. The purpose of~~
3 ~~this evaluation will be to gauge First Steps' progress in meeting the~~
4 ~~goals established in Section 59-152-20 and Section 59-52-30.~~

5 (B) ~~County First Steps~~ Local partnerships must agree to
6 participate in such an evaluation in order to receive a First Steps
7 grant. Subsequent grant approval and grant allocations must be
8 dependent, in part, on the results of the evaluations. If an
9 evaluation finds no progress has been made in meeting local goals
10 or implementing strategies as agreed to in the First Steps grant, the
11 grant ~~must~~ may be terminated.

12 (C) The purpose of the evaluation is to assess progress toward
13 achieving the First Steps goals and to determine the impact of ~~the~~
14 ~~initiative on children and families at the state and local levels~~ each
15 strategy in supporting improved school readiness as defined in
16 Section 52-152-15. The impact assessment shall include, but is not
17 limited to, school readiness measures; benefits from child
18 development services; immunization status; low birth-weight rates;
19 parent literacy; parenting skills; parental involvement;
20 transportation; and developmental screening results. During the
21 course of the evaluation, if an evaluator determines that any state
22 agency has failed to comply with the coordination and
23 collaboration provisions as required in this chapter, the final report
24 must reflect that information. ~~Program~~ Each program evaluation
25 ~~reports~~ report must be reported to the General Assembly no later
26 than three months after conclusion of the evaluation. ~~All County~~
27 ~~First Steps~~ Local partnerships shall cooperate fully in collecting
28 and providing data and information for the evaluation of their
29 funded strategies."

30
31 SECTION 20. A. Section 63-11-1720 of the 1976 Code is
32 amended to read:

33
34 "Section 63-11-1720. (A) There is created the South Carolina
35 First Steps to School Readiness Board of Trustees which must be
36 chaired by the Governor, or his designee, and must include the
37 State Superintendent of Education, or his designee, who shall serve
38 as ex officio voting members of the board. ~~The board is composed~~
39 ~~of the twenty appointed, voting members as follows:~~

40 (B) In making the appointments specified in subsection (C)(1),
41 (2), and (3) of this chapter, the Governor, President Pro Tempore
42 of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives
43 shall seek to ensure diverse geographical representation on the

1 board by appointing individuals from each congressional district as
2 possible.

3 (C) The board shall include members appointed in the
4 following manner:

5 (1) ~~The~~ the Governor shall appoint ~~two members~~ one
6 member from each of the following sectors:

7 (a) parents of young children;

8 (b) business community;

9 (c) early childhood educators;

10 (d) ~~medical or child care and development~~ providers; ~~and~~

11 (e) child care and development providers; and

12 ~~(e)f~~ the General Assembly, one member from the Senate
13 and one member from the House of Representatives;:

14 (2) ~~The~~ the President Pro Tempore of the Senate shall
15 appoint one member from each of the following sectors:

16 (a) parents of young children;

17 (b) business community;

18 (c) early childhood educators; and

19 (d) medical or child care and development providers;:

20 (3) ~~The~~ the Speaker of the House of Representatives shall
21 appoint one member from each of the following sectors:

22 (a) parents of young children;

23 (b) business community;

24 (c) early childhood educators; and

25 (d) medical or child care and development;:

26 (4) ~~The~~ the chairman of the Senate Education Committee or
27 his designee;:

28 (5) ~~The~~ the chairman of the House Education and Public
29 Works Committee or his designee; and

30 (6) ~~The~~ the chief executive officer of each of the following
31 shall serve as an ex officio ~~nonvoting~~ voting member:

32 (a) Department of Social Services ~~or his designee;~~

33 (b) Department of Health and Environmental Control ~~or~~
34 ~~his designee;~~

35 (c) Department of Health and Human Services ~~or his~~
36 ~~designee;~~

37 (d) ~~Department of Mental Health or his designee;~~

38 ~~(e) Department of Disabilities and Special Needs or his~~
39 ~~designee;~~

40 ~~(f) Department of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse~~
41 ~~Services or his designee;~~

42 ~~(g) Department of Transportation or his designee;~~

1 (h) ~~State Budget and Control Board, Division of Research~~
2 ~~and Statistics or his designee; and~~

3 (i) ~~State Board for Technical and Comprehensive~~
4 ~~Education~~

5 (e) State Head Start Collaboration Officer; and

6 (f) Children's Trust of South Carolina.

7 ~~(7) The following organizations shall designate one member~~
8 ~~to serve as an ex officio nonvoting member:~~

9 (a) ~~South Carolina State Library;~~

10 (b) ~~Transportation Association of South Carolina; and~~

11 (c) ~~State Advisory Committee on the Regulation of~~
12 ~~Childcare Facilities.~~

13 (BD) The terms of the members are for four years and until
14 their successors are appointed and qualify, ~~except of those first~~
15 ~~appointed. When making the initial appointments, the Governor,~~
16 ~~the President Pro Tempore of the Senate, and the Speaker of the~~
17 ~~House of Representatives shall designate half of their~~
18 ~~appointments to serve two year terms only.~~ The appointments of
19 the members from the General Assembly shall be coterminous
20 with their terms of office.

21 (CE) Vacancies for any reason must be filled in the manner of
22 the original appointment for the unexpired term. A member may
23 not serve more than two terms or eight years, whichever is longer.
24 A member who misses more than three consecutive meetings
25 without excuse or a member who resigns must be replaced in the
26 same manner as his predecessor. Members may be paid per diem,
27 mileage, and subsistence as established by the board not to exceed
28 standards provided by law for boards, committees, and
29 commissions. A complete report of the activities of the First Steps
30 to School Readiness Board of Trustees must be made annually to
31 the General Assembly.

32 (F)(1) There is created the Office of First Steps Study
33 Committee to review the structure, responsibilities, governance by
34 an organization exempt from federal income tax pursuant to
35 Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, and
36 administration of the Office of First Steps. The goal of the study
37 committee is to guarantee that children from birth to school-age
38 receive needed services from the Office of First Steps in the most
39 effective way through coordination with other agencies that serve
40 the same population. Also, the study committee shall determine
41 whether the services provided by the Office of First Steps are
42 provided in the most cost-effective and direct manner to entities
43 served by the Office of First Steps, including County First Steps

1 Partnerships Boards. The study committee shall evaluate the
2 structure and costs of the Office of First Steps becoming an
3 independent agency and make a recommendation as to whether the
4 Office of First Steps should become an agency, remain as a
5 program at the Department of Education, be relocated within a
6 state agency other than the Department of Education, or any other
7 alternative structure the study committee deems fit. The study
8 committee shall also address the issues concerning the governance
9 of an organization exempt from federal income tax pursuant to
10 Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 relative to
11 the structure recommended by the study committee. When making
12 its recommendation as to the structure, the study committee must
13 include an analysis of the costs associated with a change in
14 structure. Such costs include, but are not limited to, personnel,
15 data security, data management, and fiscal services.

16 (2) The study committee shall be composed of:

17 (a) four members of the Senate appointed by the
18 Chairman of the Senate Education Committee. Of these members,
19 one must be appointed upon the recommendation of the Senate
20 Majority Leader, one must be appointed upon the recommendation
21 of the Senate Minority Leader, and one must be a member of the
22 South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness Board of Trustees;

23 (b) four members of the House of Representatives
24 appointed by the Chairman of the House Education and Public
25 Works Committee. Of these members, one must be appointed
26 upon the recommendation of the House Majority Leader, one must
27 be appointed upon the recommendation of the House Minority
28 Leader, and one must be a member of the South Carolina First
29 Steps to School Readiness Board of Trustees;

30 (c) one member appointed by the Governor, who shall
31 serve as chairman;

32 (d) the President of the Institute for Child Success, or his
33 designee;

34 (e) the Chairman of the Education Oversight Committee,
35 or his designee; and

36 (f) the Chairman of the Joint Citizens Legislative
37 Committee on Children, or his designee.

38 Except for the two members of South Carolina First Steps to
39 School Readiness Board of Trustees appointed pursuant to
40 subitems (a) and (b), no member of the study committee may be a
41 member of the South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness
42 Board of Trustees or a member of a County First Steps Partnership
43 Board.

1 (3) The study committee must be staffed by the staff of the
2 Senate Education Committee and the House Education and Public
3 Works Committee.

4 (4) The study committee shall complete its review and
5 submit its recommendation to the General Assembly no later than
6 March 15, 2015. Upon submission of its recommendation, the
7 study committee is dissolved.”
8

9 B. Act 99 of 1999, South Carolina First Steps to School
10 Readiness Act, is reauthorized until July 1, 2016.

11
12 SECTION 21. Section 63-11-1730 of the 1976 Code is amended
13 to read:

14
15 “Section 63-11-1730. To ~~carry out its assigned functions, the~~
16 ~~board is authorized, but not limited to~~ oversee and be accountable
17 for the South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness Initiative, in
18 accordance with the APA, the board shall:

19 (1) develop and promulgate a comprehensive long-range
20 initiative for improving early childhood development and
21 increasing school readiness and literacy, which shall include the
22 specific requirements of Chapter 152, Title 59;

23 (2) in accordance with the APA, promulgate regulations,
24 establish guidelines, policies and procedures for the continued
25 implementation of the South Carolina First Steps to School
26 Readiness initiative;

27 (3) provide oversight on the continued implementation and
28 evaluation of the South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness
29 initiative at the state and county local levels;

30 (4) ~~facilitate and direct the establishment of developing County~~
31 ~~First Steps Partnerships and establish the criteria for designation of~~
32 ~~County First Steps Partnerships;~~

33 ~~(5) establish criteria and procedures for awarding state First~~
34 ~~Steps grants to County First Steps Partnerships and promulgate~~
35 grant qualification requirements and a formula by which
36 allocations for qualifying partnership grants shall be calculated;

37 ~~(6) provide~~ ensure the provision of technical assistance,
38 consultation services and support to ~~County~~ First Steps
39 Partnerships including: the creation and annual revision of county
40 needs assessments; the prioritization, implementation, and
41 evaluation of each First Steps Partnership’s strategic plans based
42 on needs assessments; and the identification of assets from other
43 funding sources;

1 (76) assess and develop recommendations: for ensuring
2 coordination and collaboration among service providers at both the
3 state and county level, for increasing the efficiency and
4 effectiveness of state programs and funding and other programs
5 and funding sources, as allowable, as necessary to carry out the
6 First Steps to School Readiness initiative, including additional
7 fiscal strategies, redeployment of state resources, and development
8 of new programs;

9 (87) ~~establish results-oriented~~ and promulgate results-oriented
10 measures and objectives and assess whether services provided by
11 ~~County~~ First Steps Partnerships to children and families are
12 meeting the goals and achieving the results established for the First
13 Steps initiative pursuant to Chapter 152, Title 59;

14 (98) receive gifts, bequests, and devises for deposit for awarding
15 grants to First Steps Partnerships; ~~and~~

16 (409) report annually to the General Assembly by January first
17 on activities and progress to include recommendations for changes
18 and legislative initiatives and results of program evaluations;

19 (10) establish and promulgate internal policies and procedures to
20 allow the board to operate optimally, which shall include, but not
21 be limited to, an established and consistent process for decision
22 making;

23 (11) develop, implement, and document an annual performance
24 process for the Director of the Office of South Carolina First Steps;

25 (12) establish and promulgate bylaws for adoption by local First
26 Steps Partnerships;

27 (13) establish and promulgate internal evaluation policies and
28 procedures for local partnerships for annual review pursuant to
29 Chapter 152, Title 59; and

30 (14) arrange for the conduction of an independent external
31 program evaluation pursuant to Chapter 152, Title 59.”
32

33 SECTION 22. Section 1-5-40(A) of the 1976 Code is amended
34 by adding an item at the end to read:
35

36 “(107) South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness Board of
37 Trustees.”
38

39 SECTION 23. Sections 59-152-80 and 59-152-110 of the 1976
40 Code are repealed.
41

42 SECTION 24. This act takes effect upon approval by the
43 Governor.

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