

## **Meeting of the Early Childhood Advisory Council**

February 18, 2021, immediately following the SC First Steps Board Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/92434118920?pwd=VzAwYUFWblhMMjFiWlBITG5YWWZZQT09>

### **AGENDA**

- I. Call to Order and Approve Agenda (David Morley)  
**Motion:** To adopt the agenda as submitted.
- II. Approve December 4, 2020 Minutes (David Morley)  
**Attachments:** December 4, 2020 Minutes  
**Motion:** To approve the minutes of the December 4, 2020 Early Childhood Advisory Council Meeting.
- III. Building South Carolina's Birth through Five Plan (Bill Potapchuk and Mary Beth Salomone Testa)  
**Attachments:** Building South Carolina's Birth through Five Plan
- IV. South Carolina Early Learning Extension (Justina Siuba)  
**Attachments:** South Carolina Early Learning Extension Summary
- V. Report from the Interagency Collaboration Committee (Dr. David Mathis)  
**Attachments:** Interagency Collaboration Committee Recap & Report
- VI. Adjourn  
**Motion:** To adjourn the meeting of the Early Childhood Advisory Council

## Early Childhood Advisory Council Meeting

December 4, 2020, immediately following the SCFS Board of Trustees Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/99827298279?pwd=T0FQWlhGcmR1WHlMY3pFN20zRVJwQT09>

*Draft Minutes*

### **Members Present (19):**

Dave Morley, Chair  
Dr. Shelley Canright, Vice Chair  
Rep. Rita Allison  
Alexia Newman  
Dr. Amy Williams  
Dr. David Mathis  
Sen. Greg Hembree  
Jennifer McConnell  
Jessica Mackey

John Hayes  
Mary Lynne Diggs  
Mike Leach  
Roger Pryor  
Marshall Taylor  
Tim Holt  
Walter Fleming  
Sen. Gerald Malloy  
Rep. Jerry Govan

Mary Poole

### **Members Absent (2):**

Josh Baker  
Sue Williams

### **Others Present (44):**

Georgia Mjartan  
Avian Jones  
Zack Catoe  
Samantha Ingram  
Angela Pruitt  
Anna Workman  
Beth Moore  
Betty Gardiner  
Carletta Isreal  
Cassie Barber  
Chelsea Richard  
Cheryl Scales-Chavis  
Cindy Ellis  
Cindy Galloway  
Crystal Campbell  
Debbie Robertson  
Delores Rock  
Dorian Young  
Janice Kilburn  
Jennifer Williams  
J Kimrey  
Jon Artz

Joy Mazur  
Julie Hussey  
Kim Spigner  
Kim Trudell  
Kristine Jenkins  
Laura Baker  
Laura McNair  
Lis Guimaraes  
Lavinia Tejada  
Mark Barnes  
Martha Strickland  
Nancy Ziobro  
Rachal Hatton  
Rogers Pender  
Shayla Pettigrew  
Suzanne McGougan  
Tierra Thomas  
Trimeka Johnson  
Valencia Johnson  
Carla Brown  
Sheila Cornwell  
Sarah Crawford

Mr. Morley called the ECAC meeting to order at 3:03 p.m.

Mr. Morley asked for a motion to adopt the agenda. Sen. Hembree provided the motion. Dr. Canright provided a second and the motion was unanimously approved.

Mr. Morley requested a motion to approve the October 22, 2020 minutes. Mr. Pryor provided the motion. Ms. McConnell provided a second and the motion was unanimously approved.

Dr. Mathis presented on the Interagency Collaboration Committee and welcomed Dr. Brennan Traxler, Interim Director of Public Health, to the committee. He provided an update on the State Longitudinal Data System and Palmetto PreK.

Ms. Mjartan provided an update on the review of the procurement of First Five South Carolina project and the application that was submitted to Education Commission of the States to improve Pre-K to K transitions. She also discussed the planning and sponsoring of the next SC Summit on Early Childhood. She reviewed the 2019-2020 Annual Report which included the different programs, collaborations, events, recognitions, and overall impact the ECAC was able to accomplish during the year.

Mr. Morley asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Dr. Mathis provided the motion. Rep. Govan provided a second and the motion unanimously approved.

The meeting was adjourned by Mr. Morley at 3:28 p.m.

## Building South Carolina's Birth through Five Plan

South Carolina's Birth through Five Plan will build a coherent framework for our collective efforts to strengthen the early childhood system. It will bring together various strategic planning efforts conducted over the past five years into a bold, comprehensive, actionable strategy for our state that includes joint interagency commitments. The plan will cover Birth through Five with a discrete section focused on Birth through Three.

Partners and key stakeholders will play essential roles in the development of the plan:

### Background

We will have **engaged leadership** from:

- Governor's Office
- Agency Directors, Deputies, and Division Leaders
- Legislative Leaders

**Expert advice** will be available from:

- BUILD
- ZERO TO THREE

**Over 4,400 South Carolinians** informed the development of the 2019 SC Early Childhood Needs Assessment, and additional voices will be solicited through the 2021 – 2023 SC Early Childhood Needs Assessment Plan. These voices will be brought forward into this process by Dr. Leigh D'Amico, University of South Carolina.

**Expert facilitation** will be provided by:

- Community Building Institute (Bill Potapchuk)
- MBST Solutions (Mary Beth Salomone Testa)

In developing this plan, we will respect each agency's autonomy and governance structure and seek guidance from agency directors on how the plan can best support and serve our youngest children and their families, their agency, and the state.

**We will be building upon existing plans** that have been recently completed or are still in process including the Preschool Development Grant Plan, Pritzker Children's Initiative South



Carolina B-3 Plan, Agency Accountability Reports, State Agency Strategic Plans, and Federally-Required Plans

The final plan will include:

- Context and baseline data
- Comprehensive goals
- Measures of success
- Action items
- Joint, Interagency Commitments

## Plan Development Process

The major steps of the process will include:

- **Key Informant Interviews.** 15 - 20 key stakeholders will be interviewed to learn their perspectives and ideas for the plan (February and March)
- **System Goal Teams.** Four system goal teams will be at the heart of the process, each meeting 2-3 times to review language from existing state plans, consider ideas from plans from other states, and develop consensus on direction and language for this plan. These teams will meet in March and April. Teams will include ECAC members and staff. The five teams are:
  1. **School Readiness.** South Carolina's children arrive at school ready to reach their highest potential.
  2. **Health & Safety.** South Carolina's youngest children are healthy and safe.
  3. **Family & Community.** South Carolina's youngest children are actively supported by their families and communities.
  4. **Family-Centered, Coordinated & Aligned System.** South Carolina's early childhood system is family-centered, coordinated, and aligned.

**As a part of this work, there will be regular coordination meetings that include** Leigh D'Amico, Peggy Ball, Karen Oliver, Chelsea Richard, Georgia Mjartan, and the facilitation team.

## Plan Review and Approval Process

**Development of draft sections of the plan.** This work will be completed by System Goal Teams with the support of the facilitation team.

**Development of draft plan.** This work will be completed by staff, expert advisors, members of the System Goal Teams, and the facilitation team.



**Review of initial internal working draft plan.** The draft plan will be reviewed by agency leadership, members of the ECAC, Interagency Collaboration Committee, and members of system goal teams. The initial plan will be revised based on this guidance and become a public review draft.

**Presentation of Review Draft.** The review draft of the plan will be available for Public Comments which includes all stakeholders and residents. There will also be specific opportunities for key partners such as the PDG team, the Pritzker team, BUILD, ZERO TO THREE, and other early childhood organizations to review the initial working draft plan and offer comment. Comments will be reviewed and incorporated into the Review Draft as appropriate. This work will be completed by staff, expert advisors, and the facilitation team.

**Present Final Plan for Approval.** The final approval of the plan will be by the ECAC.

**Interagency Collaboration Committee  
Meeting Recap  
January 5, 2021**

Present: Georgia Mjartan, SC First Steps/ECAC; Leesa Aiken, State Library; Eric Bellamy, Children's Trust; Jennifer Buster, Department of Health and Human Services; Mary Lynne Diggs, Head Start Collaboration Office; Stephanie Frazier, SC Educational Television; Amber Gillum, Department of Social Services; Louise Johnson, Department of Mental Health; Rusty Monhollon, Commission on Higher Education.

Absent: Joyce Kimrey, Dept. of Disabilities and Special Needs; David Mathis, Dept. of Education; Brannon Traxler, Department of Health and Environmental Control

Guest: Kerrie Schnake, CEO SC Infant Mental Health Association and Director, SC Program for Infant and Toddler Care

Staff: Cassie Barber, Laura Baker, Chelsea Richard, Rachal Hatton, and Justina Siuba, SC First Steps/ECAC

Georgia Mjartan convened the meeting in the absence of Chair David Mathis. Two new ECAC staff members were introduced: Rachal Hatton, Two-Generation Coordinator; and Justina Siuba, Statewide Longitudinal Data System Grant Coordinator.

To better inform committee members about work being conducted through the Preschool Development Grant, various initiative/program leaders will be invited to briefly share their activities.

Kerrie Schnake, director of SCIMHA and SCPTIC shared information about three programs being expanded or enhanced thanks to PDG funding.

- The PEAR (Partners for Early Attuned Relationships) Network provides free infant and early childhood mental health consultations to overwhelmed caregivers, currently via tele-health.
- Be Well Care Well establishes supports for childcare providers. Primarily center based, the program fosters security, health and well-being for directors and teachers. Two years of data show the program improves job satisfaction.
- Baby Jam is quality professional development facilitated by SCPITC for providers focused on social-emotional health of infants and toddlers.

Georgia Mjartan reported that the First 5 SC procurement process is on track and will be going to the multi-agency review committee soon. It is expected that the award will be made this quarter. Rachal Hatton will be taking the lead on this project.

After brief discussion the committee decided to continue meeting on the first Tuesday of odd months but agreed to change the meeting time to 1:00 PM until 2:30 PM.

Rusty Monhollon shared that the Commission on Higher Education is working on an implementation plan to strengthen the relationship between colleges and K-12 education to facilitate transitions from secondary school into early childhood professional programs. In addition, many parents of young children are enrolled in technical colleges and some are opening 4K programs to meet student needs.

DHHS is conducting Part C visits virtually. Jennifer Buster reported the department is in the process of updating their training and professional development information and preparing for the exit of Director Josh Baker.

There was discussion within the group regarding the vaccine eligibility status of various categories of early childhood professionals. There were no clear answers and members agreed to share information as it known.

Leesa Aiken reported that 35 out of the 46 county libraries are open. Many have added software to supplement learning opportunities. Some have undergone Wi-Fi upgrades to better serve patrons who have no or inadequate access in their homes. Libraries have are critical resources for many families who need help to submit unemployment applications online and have other needs arising from the pandemic.

Georgia announced that Governor McMaster has allocated GEER funds so South Carolina Department of Education and South Carolina First Steps can provide extended day and summer learning for three summers and two school years. The funds would support the whole family by allowing parents to go to work. In November and December, First Steps, DSS and Head Start collaborated to distribute masks to centers across the state.

Palmetto Pre-K agencies have applied to be part of the national cohort focusing on transition and family engagement. Additional agencies and organizations have also joined the endeavor.

Mary Lynne Diggs shared that Head Start has no national or regional director at this time. Building on Leesa's comments, she noted that Head Start and child care centers are not eligible to receive reduced cost WiFi through E-Rate. Currently, one-fourth of Head Start centers are operating virtually, one-half are hybrid and one-fourth are in-person.

Amber Gillum said operating grants for child care providers are in the second round. More than 5,000 applications have been received; 4,000 have been approved; and 1,700 are on a waiting list. There is a resolution for another round of pandemic EBT in collaboration with SDE, which may be expanded to child care students. The benefit would be on-going through the school year. Facilitating this is complicated and guidance will need to be developed before this can happen.

Louise Johnson shared that some mental hospitals have closed their doors because of the spike in COVID. Special Mental Health Department *Highway to Hope* RVs are going across the state treating residents in rural areas.

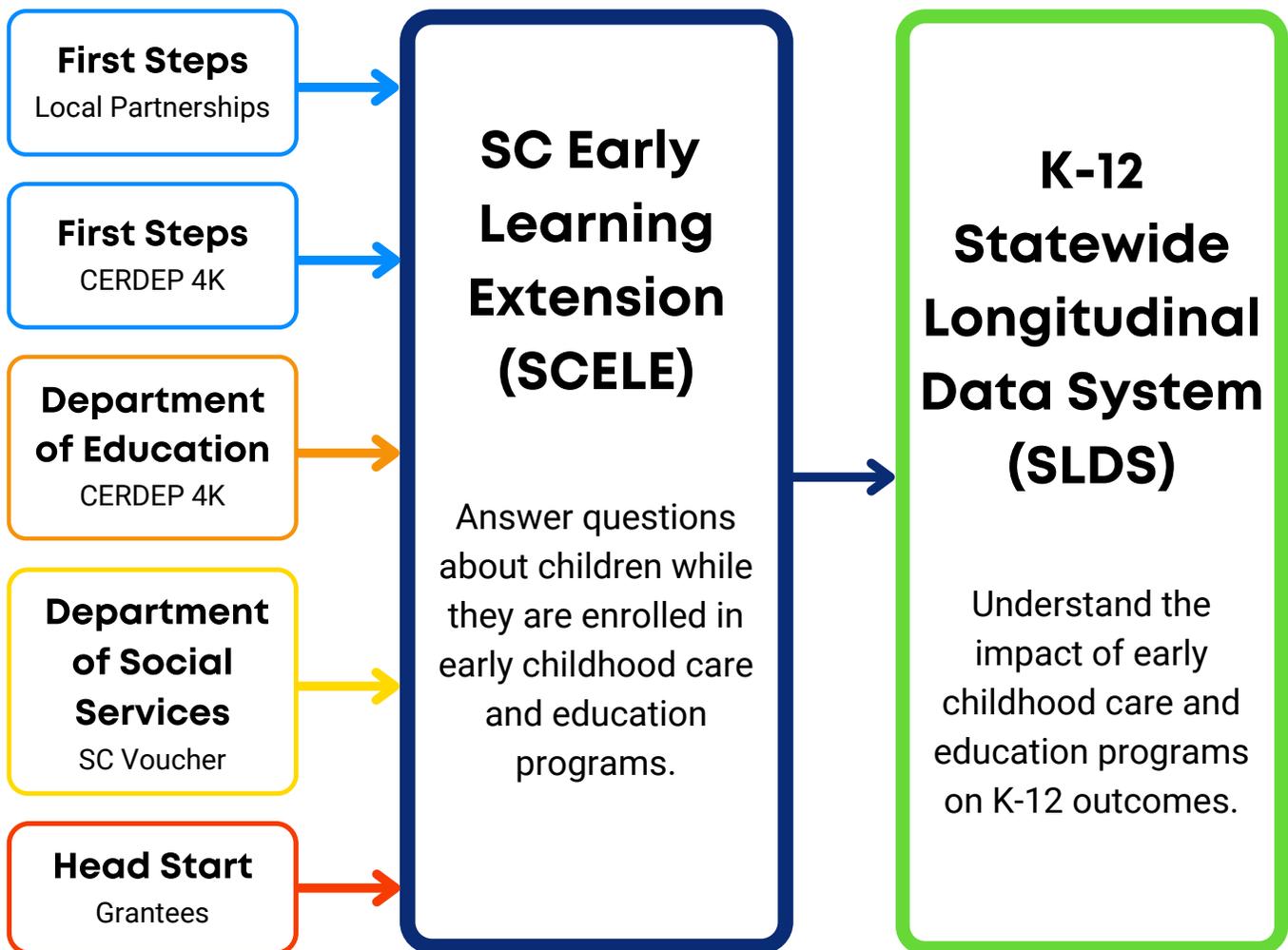
Eric Bellamy said that the Children's Trust is working to build a network of family resource centers to facilitate interventions through connections with higher education institutions and tapping into community resources. The Trust's conference, Building Hope for Children, will be held virtually March 23 through 25 and registration goes live this week. Sessions geared toward professionals, advocates and leaders will center around its theme of building resilience and equity and Anton Gunn will be one of the featured keynoters. It will include opportunities for peer to peer dialogue.

Stephanie Frazier shared that SCETV is working with the Department of Education to support rural communities with its At-Home Learning initiative to provide early learning programs. The agency is piloting with five school districts to use ETV's broadband signal to bring Internet to schools in rural areas. Data casting through broadband is being used to send targeted instruction content. Libraries across the state are teaming up to share resources.

Meeting adjourned at 3:00 PM.

The Interagency Collaboration Committee meets bi-monthly on the first Tuesday of odd months 1:00PM – 2:30PM. Remaining meeting dates for 2021: March 2; May 4; July 6; September 7; and November 2.

The mission of the **South Carolina Early Learning Extension (SCELE)** is to improve outcomes for young children and their families through an aligned system for data-informed decisions and policies.



The **SCELE** will provide insight into utilization of early childhood care and education programs and articulate the return on public investment in early childhood to better understand their impact and to build the case for more long-term investment.

## THE **SCELE** IS A SYSTEM TO:

- Provide information to families and the public about the impact of early childhood care and education programs
- Evaluate alignment of programs and child progress to highlight opportunities for growth and new developments
- Help program administrators, teachers, and service providers identify and analyze short- and long-term outcomes for continuous program improvement
- Articulate the return on current investments in early childhood programs and build the case for future funding

## THE **SCELE** IS A TOOL FOR:

- Families and the public to learn with near real-time dashboards about early learning programs and their long-term impact
- Policymakers to inform community needs, resource allocation, and program impact
- Researchers and evaluators to access data quickly and efficiently

## THE **SCELE** IS NOT:

- A replacement for individual program data systems
- A duplication of the Department of Education's K-12 longitudinal data system
- An infringement on privacy or confidentiality of young children and their families
- A system that rates, ranks, or evaluates the performance or development of young children on the individual level
- A duplication or replacement of Palmetto Pre-K, a portal for families to connect with publicly-funded pre-K programs

## On the horizon for **SCELE**:

The Early Childhood Advisory Council will take the lead in establishing the Data Governance Committee in early spring of 2021. The Data Governance Committee will safeguard program and outcome data and its accessibility. The Data Governance Committee will work to align the program data to K-12 and build a portal accessible to stakeholders by February 2024. The work of the Data Governance Committee is supported by the Early Childhood Advisory Council Data Governance Coordinator.