



To: The Honorable Hugh K. Leatherman, Sr., Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee
The Honorable G. Murrell Smith, Jr., Chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee

From: Georgia Mjartan, Director, SC First Steps

Date: September 10, 2021

RE: First Steps 4K Unexpended Funds Report Pursuant to Proviso 1.59

Proviso 1A.59 of the General Appropriations Act for FY21 specifies that:

For Fiscal Year 2018-19, the Office of First Steps to School Readiness is permitted to retain the first \$1,000,000 of any unexpended CDEPP funds of the prior fiscal year and expend these funds to enhance the quality of the full-day 4K program in private centers and provide professional development opportunities.

By August first, the Office of First Steps is directed to allocate any additional unexpended CDEPP funds from the prior fiscal year and any CDEPP funds carried forward from prior fiscal years that were transferred to the restricted account for the following purpose: Education Oversight Committee - \$1,000,000 for the South Carolina Community Block Grants for Education Pilot Program. If carry forward funds are less than the amounts appropriated, funding for the items listed herein shall be reduced on a pro rata basis.

If by August first, the Department of Education or the Office of First Steps determines there will be funds available, funds shall be allocated on a per pupil basis for districts eligible for participation first, who have a documented waiting list, and funded an extended program per this proviso in the prior school year, then to districts to increase the length of the program to a maximum of eight and a half hours per day or two hundred and twenty days per year or to fund summer programs. By August 1, the Department of Education and the Office of First Steps must collect the documented waiting lists and determine a process to notify parents of eligible students of available slots in all approved providers. If a district chooses to fund summer enrollment the program funding shall conform to the funding in this act for full year programs, however shall be reduced on a pro rata basis to conform with the length of the program. A summer program shall be no more than eight and a half hours per day and shall be not more than ten weeks in length. The per pupil allocation and classroom grant must conform with the appropriated amount contained in this Act and end of year adjustments shall be based on the one hundred and thirty five day student average daily membership or later student average daily membership for districts choosing to extend the program past one hundred and eighty days. Funds may also be used to provide professional development and quality evaluations of programs. No later than April first, the Department of Education and the Office of First Steps must report to the Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee and the Chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee on the expenditure of these funds to include the following information: the amount of money used and specific steps and measures taken to enhance the quality of the 4K program and the amount of money used for professional development as well as the types of professional development offered and the number of participants.

Pursuant to the terms of the proviso, under the continuing resolution into the 20-21 state fiscal year, I am writing to provide an update on the status of activities associated with this proviso. With the expansion of services during FY 19-20 the amount of unexpended funds carried into the new year was minimalized and unspent prior year funds were not spent on these purposes. Funds provided from other sources were used to cover these costs. We are sending you an update now to ensure that we are being transparent with our activities and to meet the required reporting.

cc: David Morley, Chair, SC First Steps Board of Trustees
Mark Barnes, Director of Administration, SC First Steps
Martha Strickland, 4K State Director, SC First Steps
Kenzie Riddle, House Ways and Means
Grant Gibson, Senate Education