



To: Chairman James Smith, House Oversight Education and Cultural Affairs Subcommittee
 From: Dr. Dan Wuori, Deputy Director
 Date: January 8, 2016

RE: Subcommittee Request for Information

Attached as requested, please find the response of SC First Steps to the subcommittee's December 18 4K data request. We look forward to reviewing these materials with you on Thursday, January 14. Additional financial data will be provided on Monday, January 11 as negotiated with committee staff.

1. In response to the subcommittee's request for public and private data on 4K, please find below the most recent, comprehensive data available to us (2013-2014), which depicts – via census estimates – both data on the estimated number of four-year-olds residing in each district and public, private and Head Start enrollment data. We anticipate an update to this information for 2014-2015 will be available in the coming weeks. Note that First Steps anticipates that its 2015-2016 enrollments will exceed 2,500.

2013-2014 South Carolina 4K Penetration by Community

2013-2014 Four-Year-Old Service Penetration by District								
School District	Estimated 4-Year-Olds	2013-14 District Poverty	Estimated 4-Year-Olds in Poverty	4-Year-Olds Served in Head Start	4-Year-Olds in Private	Public Schools CDEPP	Total Served	% of At-Risk 4-Year-Olds
Abbeville	277	78.82	218	62	0	72	134	61.4%
Allendale	126	98.42	124	33	0	52	85	68.5%
Anderson 3	189	80.73	153	27	19	0	46	30.0%
Bamberg 1	101	77.64	78	30	18	46	94	120.5%
Bamberg 2	65	98.13	64	24	18	42	84	131.2%
Barnwell 19	63	93.73	59	14	18	40	72	122.0%
Barnwell 29	71	85.12	60	15	18	18	51	85.0%
Barnwell 45	165	81.86	135	33	19	0	52	38.5%
Berkeley	2,712	72.28	1,966	289	32	933	1,254	63.9%
Calhoun	18	91.49	165	8	17	100	125	75.7%
Cherokee	72	79.80	579	57	27	160	244	42.1%
Chester	42	81.86	344	110	0	200	310	90.1%
Chesterfield	54	82.08	447	138	0	89	227	50.7%
Clarendon 1	86	97.07	83	24	8	48	80	96.3%
Clarendon 2	23	91.48	212	61	0	111	172	81.1%
Clarendon 3	71	71.47	51	14	0	26	40	78.4%
Colleton	53	88.33	472	182	0	260	442	93.6%
Darlington	86	82.66	717	227	42	140	409	57.0%
Dillon 3	10	79.55	87	22	12	58	92	105.7%

Dillon 4	37	93.44	350	91	12	185	288	82.2%
Dorchester	166	87.83	146	8	0	120	128	87.6%
Fairfield	30	94.53	286	22	0	180	202	70.6%
Florence 1	1,314	73.02	959	164	132	349	645	67.2%
Florence 2	86	79.08	68	12	22	48	82	120.5%
Florence 3	30	93.35	288	49	22	160	231	80.2%
Florence 4	77	95.06	73	13	22	40	75	102.7%
Florence 5	73	75.16	55	9	22	44	75	136.3%
Georgetown	613	75.09	460	119	90	200	409	88.9%
Greenwood	79	83.04	66	19	27	40	86	130.3%
Hampton 1	151	85.09	128	52	9	100	161	125.7%
Hampton 2	66	97.24	64	26	8	38	72	112.5%
Jasper	37	93.27	347	42	0	163	205	59.0%
Laurens 55	50	81.38	413	51	28	234	313	75.7%
Laurens 56	26	82.79	215	26	27	135	188	87.4%
Lee	20	97.46	202	42	20	65	127	62.8%
Lexington 2	83	78.03	650	43	26	0	69	10.6%
Lexington 3	177	78.88	140	9	17	100	126	90.0%
Lexington 4	22	86.87	196	13	0	193	203	103.5%
Marion	45	94.56	431	99	67	21	187	43.3%
Marlboro	31	93.24	297	115	0	247	362	121.8%
McCormick	82	90.01	74	38	0	59	97	131.0%
Newberry	48	76.05	369	106	42	80	228	61.7%
Orangeburg	25	96.42	244	25	12	137	174	71.3%
Orangeburg	277	84.04	233	24	12	138	174	74.6%
Orangeburg	712	92.50	659	68	13	445	526	79.8%
Richland 1	2,557	81.37	2,080	240	147	300	687	33.0%
Saluda	197	82.12	162	42	18	66	126	77.7%
Spartanbur	79	78.09	619	58	73	280	411	66.3%
Sumter	1,6	81.76	1,329	250	75	220	545	41.0%
Union	34	80.95	281	71	26	0	97	34.5%
Williamsbu	40	97.57	394	122	111	199	432	109.6%
TOTAL:	22,238		18,287	3,438	1,402	6,981	11,744	64.2%

It is important to note that:

- 1) The population figures in the chart above are premised upon **census estimates (and all the limitations thereof)**, making it possible for districts to serve more than 100% of those estimated as eligible.
- 2) Districts serving a comparatively low percentage of eligible children often **lack physical capacity and/or a robust private sector** capable of supporting service provision. While each of these communities have had expansion funds made available, other barriers appear to prevent expanded 4K service provision at this time.

2. In response to the subcommittee's requests related to the number of eligible and participating private 4K providers, the chart below depicts:
- Center-based, private preschool providers by county
 - Current First Steps 4K providers by county
 - A partial, running student count for 2015-2016 reflecting SUNS numbers assigned to date.

County	Center-Based Preschool Providers	Providers Currently Participating in	Students Assigned SUNS Numbers in
Abbeville	2	0	0
Aiken	33	11	182
Allendale	0	0	0
Anderson*	43	3	29
Bamberg	5	4	55
Barnwell	6	3	52
Beaufort	N/A	1	8
Berkeley	43	7	68
Calhoun	1	1	11
Charleston	N/A	1	9
Cherokee	11	3	43
Chester	6	1	9
Chesterfield	8	1	0
Clarendon	5	1	4
Colleton	5	0	0
Darlington	17	3	45
Dillon	6	3	50
Dorchester*	29	1	0
Edgefield	3	1	7
Fairfield	3	0	0
Florence	45	13	236
Georgetown	18	7	95
Greenwood	19	3	39
Hampton	4	2	16
Horry	67	19	346
Jasper	8	1	5
Kershaw	17	3	47
Laurens	9	5	129
Lee	2	1	21
Lexington*	63	12	129
Marion	15	6	94
Marlboro	6	1	13
McCormick	0	0	0
Newberry	9	3	29

Oconee	9	4	52
Orangeburg	26	5	72
Richland*	115	23	307
Saluda	3	1	21
Spartanburg*	78	12	150
Sumter	31	12	135
Union	6	1	31
Williamsburg	10	5	102
York*	60	1	12
Totals:	713	185	2653

It is important to note that:

- 1) The first column is a best effort to depict the number of eligible center-based preschool providers by county as derived from DSS child care licensing data available at sccildcare.org. These figures have been manually counted and exclude: a) ineligible home-based child care providers, b) licensed school district facilities which would be eligible to participate via the SC Department of Education, and c) Head Start facilities. Note that a limited number of Head Start providers (possessing both the means and physical capacity) do participate as part of the First Steps 4K program, however their inclusion here (particularly in small, rural counties) would misleadingly inflate the number of available service providers, as most lack the space and resources to commit to participation above and beyond their existing federal mandates.

- 2) It is also important to understand limitations in the column one data, which – despite First Steps’ efforts to manually remove ineligible providers as described above) almost certainly overestimates the universe of possible First Steps 4K providers. This is true for a number of reasons:
 - a. First, from licensing data alone it is impossible to determine whether non-participants in column one possess the physical capacity to house First Steps 4K students – or, indeed, if these centers serve four-year-olds at all. Particularly in rural communities, many private preschool providers operate with fewer than 20 total children. State law requires that First Steps 4K students participate in classrooms enrolling 10 or more four-year-olds.
 - b. Second, this count does not reflect upon the center’s capacity to meet stringent state program requirements, including the ability to attract and compensate a qualified 4K teacher and classroom assistant, implement a research-based curriculum and state assessments, and a variety of additional requirements on which their participation and likely success hinge. (A copy of the First Steps 4K Guidelines is attached for the committee’s information.) It is also impossible to depict the desires of individual churches and business owners, some of whom elect to opt out on philosophical grounds.

- c. Finally, note that the counties marked with asterisks are communities in which only specific school districts are eligible. In Richland County, for example, students residing in Richland School District One are eligible to participate, while students in both Richland 2 and Lexington-Richland 5 are not. Child care licensing data is collected by county (as opposed to school district), meaning that many of the providers depicted in these larger counties may be geographically inaccessible to eligible children.
- 3) Column three is a 2015-2016 (partial, running) count of students who applied for enrollment in the First Steps 4K program and received a SUNS number assignment via the SC Department of Education. Final 2015-2016 enrollment data will not be available until the end of the school year.

3. In response to the subcommittee's request for provider and student enrollment methods and metrics, First Steps offers the following:

SC First Steps engages in a robust, annual recruitment efforts designed to attract the participation of both preschool providers and eligible 4K students. A description of each is included below:


PROVIDERS:

In partnership with both the SC Department of Social Services and local First Steps Partnerships, SC First Steps has seen provider enrollment increase steadily since the inception of the CDEPP 4K model in 2006. The agency's current provider recruitment cycle begins in the late fall and runs through the summer of each year. This process begins with a simple, renewal application for existing providers (essentially documenting their intent to continue into the coming school year) and is followed by a formal application process for new providers.

First Steps maintains an informational website for prospective providers year-round, which includes application materials, program guidelines and the answers to frequently asked questions. This provider site, which includes the application materials for 2016-2017 can be viewed at: <http://scfirststeps.org/first-steps-4k-provider>

In addition to this easy, online resource, First Steps directly recruits new 4K providers as follows:

- Direct mailing of postcards and provider information packets to eligible providers (see samples attached),
- Regular (bi-weekly) provider information webinars and toll-free calls during the annual recruitment cycle, promoted via the First Steps website, local partnerships and partner organizations,
- Informational displays at early childhood conferences and trainings.


SOUTH CAROLINA
FIRST STEPS
 Getting children ready for school.

**ARE YOU A REGULATED PRESCHOOL PROVIDER
 OPERATING A HIGH QUALITY 4K CLASSROOM?**

If the answer is "yes," then you may be eligible to receive state funding as part of the South Carolina Child Development Education Pilot Program (CDEPP) – a unique public-private partnership in which "public" four-year-old kindergarten is offered in non-school district settings.

South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness is seeking new applications from private for-profit, private non-profit, Head Start and faith-based preschool providers interested in serving as CDEPP providers during the 2011-2012 school year.

Eligible providers must:

- Be licensed, registered or approved by the SC Department of Social Services
- Enroll income eligible four-year-olds living in one of 37 South Carolina school districts
- Have been in legal operation for a period of one year or more, with no serious regulatory violations
- Utilize an approved, research-based preschool curriculum
- Maintain a classroom of at least 10, but not more than 20 four-year-old children
- Employ a lead teacher and an instructional assistant meeting specified qualifications

Approved providers may be eligible for up to **\$10,000** in materials and equipment grant funding, **\$4,218** per eligible student served, and **\$550** per student in transportation funding.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT WHETHER YOUR PROGRAM IS ELIGIBLE, VISIT
WWW.SCFIRSTSTEPS.ORG/4K.HTM

In an effort to personalize provider recruitment, First Steps employed a temporary staff member throughout the spring and summer of 2015 charged with making personal contact, via telephone with immediate e-mail follow-up, with eligible providers. This staff member served as a personal guide to the process, introducing the First Steps 4K program to providers, providing application materials, alerting providers to the informational calls and webinars and connecting interested providers with regional First Steps 4K staff prepared to provide on-site technical assistance.

Through these personal contacts, First Steps was able to both attract enthusiastic new providers, but also learn more about the reasons some providers choose not to participate. As described above, some themes related to the choice of non-participation of certain programs emerged, with individual programs expressing reservations due to:

- Philosophy (religious or philosophical grounds for wanting to remain separate from a state-funded program),
- Lack of Classroom Space (either due to physical capacity or current paid enrollment)
- Insufficient center enrollment (ability to serve 10 four-year-olds in a classroom),
- Curricular preferences (desire to continue with their own classroom curriculum, rather than a research-based curriculum approved by the state),
- Insufficient funding (state rate insufficient to meet standards or less than current tuition).

Despite the challenges cited by some, these recruitment efforts have collectively demonstrated their success, with significant growth documented in both years of geographic expansion (where this growth has been greatest) and in non-expansion years as additional providers continue to come on line.

First Steps' 4K Impact:		
PROGRAM YEAR	# OF CHILDREN	# OF PROVIDERS
2006-07 (FY 07)	309	40
2007-08 (FY 08)	482	48
2008-09 (FY 09)	459	40
2009-10 (FY 10)	524	39
2010-11 (FY 11)	549	36
2011-12 (FY 12)	577	43
2012-13 (FY 13)	601	42
2013-14 (FY 14)	1,402	93
2014-15 (FY 15)	1,916	151
2015-16 (FY16)	2,653*	185*
GROWTH SINCE FY13:	340%	340%

STUDENTS:

As with providers, First Steps' student enrollment has seen terrific growth. In addition to a parent web portal and the recruitment of students by individual providers themselves, First Steps has utilized numerous methods of promoting student recruitment in recent years, ranging from color signs for use at each center to targeted radio advertising.



By far, the program's most successful recruitment method, however, has taken the form of a collaborative effort between First Steps and the SC Department of Social Services. Using DSS' TANF and other client databases, DSS supports First Steps each year with the generation of a client data set comprised of low-income DSS clients residing in eligible districts likely to have children in the program's age-range. This data is shared

with a third-party mailing house, who direct mails postcards provided by First Steps to eligible families.



**SIGN UP TODAY FOR THE
2015-2016 SCHOOL YEAR**

Limited spaces are available in your area.

SC First Steps is excited to offer you the opportunity to enroll your eligible child into a quality 4K program this upcoming school year. Our network of more than 150 private, faith- and community-based preschool providers across the state are trained to excel in preparing your child for school success.

To qualify for the 2015-16 school year, your child must:

- Be 4 years old on or before Sept. 1, 2015,
- Be eligible for the free- or reduced-price lunch program or Medicaid, AND
- Live in one of the 64 qualifying school districts.

For more information or to find a quality 4K provider in your area, visit www.SCFirstSteps.org/4K or call our toll free number to speak with a 4K representative today.

www.SCFirstSteps.org/4K | Toll Free: 877-621-0865



4. In response to the subcommittee’s request for information regarding the adequacy of the \$4,218 student tuition amount established by the SC General Assembly, First Steps offers the following:

It is clear that while the state’s public and private 4K providers are ostensibly provided the same tuition amount - \$4,218 per year – a significant disparity exists between the public resources actually available to public and private 4K providers.

School district classrooms exist within facilities entirely underwritten - in one form or another – by the taxpayers of South Carolina. Everything from their physical facilities and utility costs, to classroom materials, technology and personnel expenditures are supported by the state. And while the General Appropriations Act technically provides \$4,218 per public school student, data suggests that South Carolina’s school districts draw substantially from public (non-4K) resources to underwrite the true costs of these classrooms. As a frame of reference, a classroom of 20 students at \$4,218 per child generates total classroom funding amount of \$84,360 – less than the cost (salary and fringe) of staffing these classrooms with a teacher and instructional assistant – much less with instructional materials and other associated costs. For this reason, school districts are routinely called upon to supplement this funding with additional public resources, be they local tax dollars, federal Title One or other.

Audited expenditure data provided by the SC Department of Education on January 8, 2016 suggests that in 2014, school districts participating in the CDEPP expansion averaged \$5,632 in direct spending per child on staffing and equipping these classrooms. This figure, which entails the public, per child expenditure of \$1,414 (33.5% more) more that appropriated by the state, does not include the ancillary expenditures associated with facilities, utilities, technology or other forms of support.

The experience of participating private providers is just the opposite, with the student tuition provided by First Steps constituting the only public funding available to underwrite the participation of these students. These providers must privately underwrite their buildings, utilities, personnel and all associated business costs. Where local school districts supplement this \$4,218 per child from other taxpayer-funded sources, private 4K providers are not only expected to cover the entirety of their classroom costs with this amount, but must also return a portion of this revenue to the state in the form of property and other taxes.

While required by law to be increased by the annual rate of inflation, the \$4,218 tuition amount has remained essentially stagnant over the program’s ten year history. First Steps recommends that a private 4K tuition amount totaling at least \$5,632 – along with the exploration of associated tax breaks to participating providers - would be a fair and equitable solution, with this amount to be indexed annually to the public schools per child spending during the prior year.

5. In response to the subcommittee’s request for preliminary data from the Teaching Strategies GOLD, First Steps presents the language and literacy baseline data included below. This data reflects the assessment’s first (fall) administration and should be considered a pre-assessment of the knowledge and skills of students entering the program, not an outcome measure of progress attributable to their enrollment. First Steps also plans to administer the GOLD to all students at Mid-Year and Year End.

Table 1: Language by Program

Program Name	Below			Meeting			Exceeding		
	Count	%	Mean	Count	%	Mean	Count	%	Mean
FirstSteps	861	46%	33.3	952	51%	47.9	40	2%	52.3

Table 2: Literacy by Program

Program Name	Below			Meeting			Exceeding		
	Count	%	Mean	Count	%	Mean	Count	%	Mean
FirstSteps	573	34%	24.1	1017	60%	46.0	92	5%	56.4