

Dillon County First Steps
Tuesday, October 26, 6 pm – Brandi's Banquet Hall, Dillon

Objective:

- MS to speak briefly (5 min) at Dillon County First Steps Partnership Board annual meeting. MS to stress the importance of early childhood education.

Logistics:

- MS will arrive at 6 pm to meet and mingle, and then speak at about 6:15 or 6:20.
- Dr. Daniel Blue, chairman of Dillon County First Steps, will introduce MS
- MS will speak from a podium into a PA
- After MS speaks, program will continue and MS will depart

Audience:

- About 150 will be present – First Steps board members, local municipal officials, area childcare providers, Chamber of Commerce representatives.
- Light media presence possible

Attachments:

- Talking Points
- Program
- Bullet Points from NGA report on early childhood education

Additional Information Requested by MS – The Facts on First Steps:

- General appropriations remained constant this year at \$18.1 million. However, the agency received NEW money for FY '05 from the Education Lottery with the conditions that the funds be matched with \$3 million in new private cash or in-kind contributions. All of this match money will serve at-risk kids directly with no administration costs.
- **This represents an increase of 16% in funding from the state and a 33% increase when matched dollars are included.**

(public/private)

Talking Points:

- TY – for what everyone here does in getting our children ready to succeed. If we're going to move forward as a state from an economic development standpoint, we have to have students ready to compete in a knowledge based economy
- To do that, we have to make a difference in kids' lives early

1. Starting early is good for the kids --

- National Trend – folks are recognizing the importance of early learning (From US News and World Reports) –
 - In 1990 there were only about 50 children's museums in the U.S. with programs specifically designed for kids up to 5; today there are more than 200, and nearly 50% of the 20 million children who visit these museums each year are under 6.
 - They--and their parents--are being wooed by exhibits that reflect the latest thinking on how to help children develop cognitive and physical skills. "Studies show that learning doesn't start at 5 but as soon as a baby opens her eyes," says Alison Gopnik, author of *The Scientist in the Crib*. "The very idea of having early-childhood museums is a consequence of that research."
- In the 21st Century, knowledge is power -- Recent article in Newsweek: (quotes and info from Newsweek article, "Your Child's Brain.")
 - "It is the experiences of childhood, determining which neurons are used, that wire the circuits of the brain as surely as a programmer at a keyboard reconfigures the circuits in a computer. Which keys are typed – which experiences a child has – determines whether the child grows up to be intelligent or dull, fearful or self-assured, articulate or tongue-tied."
 - Studies also show that when children's neural circuits aren't stimulated before kindergarten, they aren't going to be what they could have been. There are even better "windows" for stimulating and encouraging growth in certain parts of the brain.
 - Math and Logic – Birth to 4 years
 - Language – Birth to 10 years
 - Music – 3 to 10 years

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(Not and)

2. Starting early is good for the state / region

- The Federal Reserve Bank (Minneapolis, December 2003) argues:
 - "...that in the future any proposed economic development list should have early childhood development at the top. The return on investment from early childhood development is extraordinary, resulting in better working public schools, more educated workers, and less crime."
 - States with higher graduation rates and post-secondary school graduates post higher per capita incomes (we're currently next to last in graduation rates, and 80% the national average in per capita income). Children who come to school ready to read by Kindergarten are more likely to succeed in later primary years, middle school, and are more likely to graduate
- Our entire economic development strategy for the state is built around notion of growing small business / entrepreneurs
- To do that, education is key – what you folks are doing is playing a critical role in that

3. Tonight is about Celebrating Partnership

- Early childhood takes a committed team effort from everyone here – state, local leaders, local educators, business community, faith based community
- Before children are in Kindergarten, they are either at home, in private child care, or in school-based settings – efforts on each of those fronts are key
- Particularly in times of scarce resources, this is a great example of coming together with admittedly scarce resources at the state level – strong, public-private partnerships are the key.

(D-idea / D chair) – (Suzanne Devining)

1. child – (competitive)

2. what works – (D-idea / D chair)

3. partnership – (public/private)

Dillon County First Steps Partnership Board

Annual Meeting

Reception/Photo Opportunities

5:30-6:00 PM

Opening Remarks.....Ms. Brenda Arnette
Annual Meeting Committee Chair

Introduction of Dignitaries and
Annual Meeting Committee.....Ms. Brenda Arnette
Annual Meeting Committee Chair

Welcome.....Dr. Daniel W. Blue, Jr.
Executive Director

Special Guest.....Honorable Mark Sanford
Governor, South Carolina

Mistress of Ceremonies.....Chair Tanya S. Page
Dillon County First Steps Board

Purpose of First Steps.....Honorable Jackie Hayes
SC State Representative

Prayer.....Rev. Hazel A. Wilson
Faith & Hospitality Committee Chair

Dinner

Dillon High School Jazz Band.....Mr. Adrian Wright
Director

Awards.....Mr. Gerald Fogle
Annual Meeting Committee
Superintendent D. Ray Rogers, Dillon School District II
Ms. Betsy Finklea, Editor The Dillon Herald

Special Recognition.....Ms. Willie D. McQueen
Annual Meeting Committee

Countdown To Kindergarten.....Ms. Suzanne McLaurin
Ms. Page Spivey

The need for 4-K and what First Steps
funding means to Education.....Dr. John Kirby
Latta School District III Superintendent

Motion to Approve
New Officers.....Mr. Eugene Paige
Election Committee Chair

Motion to Approve
Signature Authorization.....Ms. Brenda Arnette
Annual Meeting Committee Chair

Closing Remarks.....Ms. Brenda Arnette
Annual Meeting Committee Chair

Closing Prayer.....Rev. Hazel A. Wilson

Annual Meeting Committee
Ms. Brenda Arnette, Committee Chair
Mr. Art McMillan
Mr. Timmie Faulk
Mr. Gerald Fogle
Ms. Millie M. Odom
Ms. Willie D. McQueen

Dillon County First Steps
Board Members

Ms. Brenda Arnette	Ms. Evelyn McBride
Ms. Kitty Arnette	Ms. Yolanda McCormick
Ms. Frances Baker	Ms. Annette McDowell
Ms. Myra Bethea	Mr. Art McMillan
Mr. Victor Blue	Ms. Willie D. McQueen
Ms. LaTonya Cousar	Ms. Priscilla Morrison
Ms. Agnes L. Ellis	Ms. Ruthabell Nance
Mr. Timmie Faulk	Ms. Millie M. Odom
Mr. Gerald Fogle	Ms. Tanya S. Page
Ms. Vickie D. Ford	Mr. Eugene Paige
Ms. Lula Greer	Mr. Leroy S. Rowell
Mr. Randolph Gurley	Mr. Willie D. Sneed
Mr. John Harlow	Ms. Georgie Thomas.
Ms. Gail Manning	Rev. Hazel A. Wilson

Staff

Dr. Daniel W. Blue, Jr
Ms. Angela Coward

Partners

Dillon County Chamber of Commerce
United Way
Child Care Centers
Head Start
School Districts
State Department of Education/Early Childhood
Education
The Faith Community



Getting children ready for school.

*Dillon County First Steps
Partnership Board*

Annual Meeting

*Tuesday, October 26, 2004
6:00 P.M.*

*Brandi's Banquet Hall
Dillon, South Carolina*

From NGA task force
on early childhood development
(MS is a member)

- The first years of life are a critical time for development of the basic skills that children will need for success in school and in life.
- It is no secret that an achievement gap in K-12 education continues to exist along socioeconomic and racial and ethnic lines in this nation, despite the best intentions of educators, policymakers, parents, and communities.
- National data now show, however, that this achievement gap exists before kindergarten entry and persists as children continue through school.
- Fortunately, early intervention and supports can help close the gap before it starts to widen.
- A decade of work by such expert panels as the National Education Goals Panel and the National Research Council has brought the research and policy community to consensus on a framework for school readiness.
- The National Governors Association Task Force on School Readiness, of which I am a part, will shortly be releasing a policy agenda for how state policymakers can create an infrastructure under which school readiness can be achieved for all children.
- In South Carolina, we have that infrastructure. We call it First Steps, and it is our primary advocate for school readiness as well as the primary coordinator of services.
- Nationally it is understood that statewide efforts for school readiness can be best supported by building a coordinated infrastructure for services and decision-making.
- First Steps works with the national program Head Start to bring together and leverage federal, state, and local dollars to create an infrastructure to best serve our state.
- This is a network in which you share a vital part.
- Historically, both the American public and the education community have viewed education as beginning at school entry. But increasing awareness that children begin learning at birth is casting a new light on the roles and responsibilities of families, communities and schools.
- Before the age of three, a child's brain grows with remarkable speed, laying the foundations for developing the skills and competencies that children will need for success in school and in life.
- Nationally, schools can provide leadership by adopting a definition of learning that begins at birth and identifies the key roles that families, early care and education providers, K-12 educators, and other community partners play in supporting our youngest learners.
- Research demonstrates that high-quality comprehensive services for at-risk families with young children can improve children's life outcomes.
- Specifically research shows that children who attended high-quality early childhood programs show a reduced need for special education, improved high school graduation rates, fewer arrests, and higher earnings than children who did not receive a high-quality early childhood experience.

- Governors and states can promote the readiness of schools by aligning state early learning standards with K–3 standards.
- In South Carolina, we are taking that several steps further by advocating a P-16 streamlined alignment of standards. Thus, putting us nationally on the cutting edge of supporting our communities and children.