



AGENDA ITEM: 12C -3
DATE OF MEETING: January 27, 2010
ACTION: X
INFORMATION: _____

Parent Signature Program

KCET Public Education Partnership and Science Readiness Program

SUMMARY OF REQUEST

This is a request for Commission approval for additional funding over a two-year period in the amount of \$2 million to the KCET Public Education Partnership and Science Readiness show (*Sid the Science Kid*) for the production, outreach, and evaluation of additional episodes. KCET will use the additional funding to produce 26 additional episodes of the series, the outreach efforts to support it, and the evaluation of its effectiveness. First 5 California's proposed additional contribution will go toward the \$12.63 million total amount that is required to produce the new episodes and their associated components. The series will be co-funded by other partners, including the Public Broadcasting Corporation, the Boeing Company, the Rose Hills Foundation, and the Arthur Vining Davis Foundations. This science readiness series is another tool First 5 California will use in its continuing outreach efforts to California's diverse and hard-to-reach populations.

BACKGROUND

In November 2007, the State Commission approved a partnership with KCET to produce, promote, and evaluate the preschool science program, *Sid the Science Kid* (*Sid*). *Sid* is a daily, animated PBS children's television series which began national broadcast in September 2008. One of the series' main goals is to provide educationally sound and effective public media programming to large, diverse, and underserved audiences.

Sid is extremely popular with teachers, parents, and caregivers. It is especially popular with preschool-aged children. Its ethnically diverse characters and science themes are entertaining, and the series effectively promotes exploration, discovery, and the science-readiness of young children by encouraging them to ask questions and to learn about the world around them. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recently used the popular show to promote vaccinations in an effort to help address the recent medical concerns regarding the H1N1 virus.

A diverse viewing audience of more than 40 million California children ages 2-5 watch *Sid* annually. The series airs in every public television market in the country and about 252 million children ages 2-5 watch it nationally. The programs are also supported by an

immersive Web site – with special material for parents and teachers – and an ambitious community engagement program in California and across the U.S.

Based on published data from Nielsen media research, the annual cost to First 5 California to reach the same number of its target audience of parents of children ages 2-5 through paid public service announcements in commercial television network children's shows would have been more than \$1.1 million. The lessons and messages in the *Sid* series have a far greater impact than any brief television spot.

Spanish-language *Sid* episodes began airing in the KCET viewing area of greater Los Angeles on January 4, 2010. The KCET viewing area includes about 50 percent of the state's Latino viewership.

Sid-related products such as videos, toys, and games are now being sold on the retail market. First 5 California receives a percentage of the ancillary market net revenue from those sales.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Commission approve additional funding over a two-year period in the amount of \$2 million to the KCET Public Education Partnership Science Readiness show (*Sid the Science Kid*) for the production, outreach, and evaluation of 26 additional episodes. Thirteen additional episodes for this daily, animated PBS children's television series will be added to the current mix of on-air episodes beginning May 2010; the remaining 13 new episodes will be added beginning May 2011. The additional funding will help extend the broadcast rights for *Sid the Science Kid* from August 2010 to August 2012.

DISCUSSION

Public television is uniquely positioned to address disparities in learning opportunities across different socio-economic communities. Public television reaches a larger percentage of minority and lower-income households through its children's programming than cable TV, the only other television venue where educational programs are broadcast on a regular basis.

The *Sid* series is an effective effort to support critical underpinnings of school readiness. Its focus is on helping children discover the scientific process and learn how to think about getting answers (e.g., observing, measuring, comparing, documenting, guessing, explaining, and working collaboratively). This focus supports what the National Academy of Science identifies as the three most important characteristics of school readiness – intellectual skills, motivation to learn, and strong socio-emotional capacity.

Studies suggest that TV programming content can influence the effects of learning. Preschoolers who watch age-appropriate educational programming demonstrate small

but reliable advantages on measures of school readiness, reading, mathematics, and vocabulary. The *Sid* series effectively teaches and engages young children while providing experiences that support school readiness.

Sid has also proven effective in encouraging parents to watch the show with their children and get involved with them in post-viewing science activities. Nielsen Rating statistics show that adults make up 39 percent of the *Sid* viewing audience, nearly matching the number of children ages 2-5 (40 percent of the total audience) who watch the show. The assumption is that the adults are watching, or co-viewing, with their children.

A show like *Sid* is an important asset for children in underserved communities, and *Sid* is helping to reach more underserved populations. Studies show that children who live in or go to school in poorer neighborhoods spend an average of almost an hour more with media every day than children from wealthier communities. A Kaiser Family Foundation Study found that:

- Children from minority groups (African-American and Latino) spend almost an hour more each day using media, primarily television.
- Despite differences in access, African-American and Latino children spend nearly the same amount of time on computers as Caucasian children.

In the last year, there has been an increase in the number of adults and children who watch the *Sid* series. Following are the latest Nielsen Ratings on makeup of the KCET and PBS viewing audience:

Viewer Demographics	California's PBS Audience for Children's Television	National PBS Audience for Children's Television
Household incomes of less than \$40,000	54%	44% (less than \$40,000)
Education levels of a high school degree or less	56%	49%
Latino Viewers	52%	22%
African-American Viewers	10%	17%
Adults, 18+	39%	43%
Children, 2-5	40%	43%

Research by the Goodman Research Group, Inc., shows that children are learning and retaining the lessons from the series and the Web site. Further, it shows that parents are acquiring the tools they need to talk and engage with their kids about science.

Key conclusions from Goodman Research:

- *Sid* provides content and themes that appeal to both children and parents, encouraging ongoing co-viewing of the program initiated by both children and adults. At least 73 percent of participants felt it was important to watch TV with their children.
- The series successfully offers science learning that is fun and educational for both children and adults. The study showed a 75 percent increase in the number of parents likely to work on science activities with their children after viewing the series.
- The series, modeled on the Preschool Pathways to Science (PrePS) curriculum, bases a week's worth of episodes on a common theme explored through different concepts and incorporates a formula that includes children in the same types of segments in each episode. This format is a useful way to engage and sustain viewers' interest.
- The *Sid the Science Kid* Web site provides a natural extension of the program that serves to maintain and extend the *Sid* learning experience.
- The series successfully models science process skills that children understand, replicate, and can explain.
- The series leads adults to feel more confident in their own science skills and be more supportive of a science-focused home environment. Ninety-three percent of adults in the survey said they felt comfortable participating in science activities with their children.
- In summary, *Sid* fills a gap in children's television programming – especially those in underserved populations – is celebrated for its natural presentation of science, and seamlessly fits in with children's regular viewing.

The series has had a positive impact on parents, children, and teachers and has cultivated a statewide and national following of enthusiastic young “scientists” and their parents across ethnic and cultural lines. *Sid* exceeded expectations in delivering on its promise to provide educationally sound and effective public media programming, especially to large, underserved audiences. Our investment in this series, its Web site, and teaching materials has had a positive impact on traditionally underserved, minority populations with children ages 2-5 in California. Approving funding for the production of additional episodes will continue that trend.

First 5 California receives recognition as a sponsor of the series at the beginning and end of each episode. That recognition, according to KCET, is a reminder to everyone on the series that they have a special obligation to be educationally sound in every way, and to reflect California's diverse society with special emphasis on children and families who would not be exposed to science learning in other ways.

Approving this funding request will help First 5 California further Strategic Plan Strategy 3.3: “Organizational Profile – Through alliances and partnerships, increase First 5 California's organizational profile.”

IMPACT ON OTHER PROGRAMS

The primary impact on other First 5 California programs will be promotional.

- A *Sid* walk-around character and cut-out figures of *Sid*'s preschool playmate characters were developed for use at local events in conjunction with the First 5 California *Hands on Health Express* mobile van. The *Sid* characters create focus, interest, and excitement among young children and their families who visit the van.
- Collateral materials featuring the *Sid* character were developed, including tip sheets on science experiments, fact sheets, and *Sid* workshop activity materials, with First 5 California prominently displayed as a sponsor.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

Description of Alternative 1

The State Commission decides not to partner with KCET in funding the 26 additional episodes of the *Sid* series.

Pros

- The State Commission saves \$2 million.
- No State Commission staff time will be spent managing the KCET contract or coordinating with KCET staff on the project.

Cons

- First 5 California loses the opportunity to maintain its role as a state and nationally recognized leader of innovative, early childhood education programs.
- The quality of the series could potentially be weakened.
- First 5 California loses an opportunity to continue meeting Objective 3.3.2 of the Strategic Plan by January 2011: "Reach 70 to 75 percent of the media market through a partnership with public television."
- First 5 California will not receive a percentage of the ancillary market net revenue for those episodes it does not financially support, or for related marketing materials.

FUNDING REQUEST FISCAL DATA

Title of Request:	Science Readiness Program			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Contract <input type="checkbox"/> Program Disbursement <input type="checkbox"/> Special Disbursement	
Amount of Current Agreement:	Up to	\$4,000,000	Expenditures to Date:	\$4,000,000	
Current Term of Agreement:	July 18, 2008	Through	June 30, 2010		
		Fiscal Year Detail			
		FY 10-11	FY 11-12	FY __-__	FY __-__
New Amount Requested:	Up to	\$2,000,000	\$1,000,000	1,000,000	
Total Amount of Agreement:	Up to	\$6,000,000			
Percent of Available Fund Balance Affected by Agreement		.01%	.01%		
Proposed Funding Term:	July 18, 2008	Through	June 30, 2012		
First 5 California Account Name:	Mass Media Communications	Account Number	0631	Fund Availability Confirmed	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes By: Sandy Beck
Statutory Purpose: Health and Safety Code 130105(a)(1)(A)	Six percent shall be deposited in a Mass Media Communications Account for communications to the general public utilizing television, radio, newspapers, and other mass media on subjects relating to and furthering the goals and purposes of this act, including, but not limited to, methods of nurturing and parenting that encourage proper childhood development, the informed selection of child care, information regarding health and social services, the prevention and cessation of tobacco, alcohol, and drug use by pregnant women, the detrimental effects of secondhand smoke on early childhood development, and to ensure that children are ready to enter school.				
Do our funds leverage others?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes (explain) <input type="checkbox"/> No	Commission Funds	Leveraged Funds	Total Funds	
		\$6,000,000	\$16,630,000	\$22,630,000	
First 5 California's investment in the Science Readiness Program represents 27% of the total costs of the program. The remaining investment in the program is funded through other corporations and non-profit organizations including PBS, Boeing, Rose Hills Foundation, Arthur Vining Davis Foundations.					
Key Deliverable Descriptions				Deliverable Date	
26 new, 30-minute educational programs on Science Readiness.				13 episodes by June 30, 2011 and 13 episodes by June 30, 2012	
Underwriting credit that includes First 5 California recognition before and at the end of each program.				Continuing as long as series is aired.	
Character Usage and Ancillary Use License.				Immediately upon approval of contract.	
Parent, caregiver, and educator outreach and Series evaluation.				Per agreed Workplan.	