



**California Children and Families Commission Budget Retreat Meeting #2
July 23, 2020**

This meeting is a continuation of the June 22, 2020, California Children and Families Commission Budget Retreat Meeting #1.

MEETING MINUTES

Agenda Item 1 – Opening Remarks

George Halvorson called the meeting to order at 10:10 a.m. and informed Commissioners that the meeting will resume where the discussion ended on June 22, 2020, at the first Budget Retreat.

Commissioners Present: George Halvorson
Molly Munger
Monica Fitzgerald
Mayra Alvarez
Shana Hazan
Jackie Majors

Commissioners Absent: Muntu Davis

Ex Officio Member Present: Kris Perry

Chair Halvorson opened the meeting by discussing the inequities in the health care system that often lead to higher instances of illness and death for minority groups, and how it all affects early childhood brain development, citing that children who are behind by age 3 are more likely to suffer from illnesses later in life that are currently shown to worsen the effects of COVID-19. Chair Halvorson emphasized the care put into the first 3 years of life impacts the rest of children’s lives. He concluded by noting it is imperative that the Commission look back at the intent of the Act to ensure children are ready to enter school, and the work being done uses outcome-based measurements.

Announcements:

Camille Maben, Executive Director, First 5 California, introduced Marsha Bedwell, former General Counsel at California Department of Education, as First 5 California's new attorney to replace Frank Furtek.

Agenda Item 2 – Public Comment

Chair Halvorson opened the floor for public comment.

Melissa Stafford Jones, Executive Director, First 5 Association, remarked that county commissions have stepped up even more to help families through the coronavirus through pop-up childcare, delivering supplies, family support, and so much more. She also spoke on the inequities brought on by COVID-19, and how the crisis has racial and economic impacts even more than before. Ms. Stafford Jones noted that because of this crisis everyone continues to face, coordination and collaboration between counties, agencies, and health care partners are more important than ever to help families through this time.

Agenda Item 3 – First 5 California Proposition 10 and Fiscal Discussion

Aaron Price, President, Glen Price Group, gave an overview to the Commission of the budgets and expenditure activity for each fund account (Mass Media Communications, Education, Child Care, Research and Development, Unallocated, and Administration), showing an overall decrease in expenditures going into fiscal year (FY) 2023–24, and an increase in funds that are under consideration.

Member Perry asked about why expenditures drop drastically in the Child Care account in FY 2023–24, and Ms. Maben explained it is because IMPACT sunsets. Member Perry also asked about the Research account and suggested F5CA think more broadly about how these funds could be used. She suggested that it might be good to partner with other agencies to help with administrative work, since the Administrative account dollars are low.

Chair Halvorson asked about the total population served through programs such as IMPACT, and if the number of children receiving help is optimal, or if the program is currently underserving the population. Staff stated F5CA is working to focus on the subset of families that need the most help, rather than trying to serve all 300 million children in California. Commissioners Munger and Hazan agreed and emphasized it should be about serving the people who need the most help, not necessarily casting a wider net. Commissioner Munger then reminded the group that the intent should be for continuous improvement, and First 5 needs to keep learning and evolving.

Jamiann Collins-Lopez, Information Officer I, provided an overview of the media contract and the Talk. Read. Sing.[®] campaign. Member Perry asked about the timeline for starting a new Request for Proposals (RFP) so there is no gap after the current contract expires. Ms. Collins-Lopez noted staff will come to the Commission in August to ask for a new 3-year contract with the RFP being released before the end of the calendar year.

Member Perry remarked it would be good to involve stakeholders in developing the scope of work, without releasing details to the public.

Member Majors mentioned she would like to see the results showing 90 percent of those surveyed recognize the Talk. Read. Sing.[®] campaign. She stated she wants to see the data to support the message is reaching hard-to-reach populations. She notes that while all California children are important, lower income children and families definitely need the help of the Commission more. Commissioner Hazan agreed with Commissioner Majors and added that's it is important to take a look at not just if people are recognizing the message, but if they are changing behavior based on the message. Commissioner Alvarez acknowledged the importance of books but emphasized that black and brown families are struggling with issues far beyond a lack of books.

Oscar Ramirez, Information Officer I, gave a brief overview of the current public relations (PR) contract. Commissioner Alvarez asked at what point F5CA could add other topics to the PR strategy, such as vaccinations, screenings, wellness visits, citing the fact that there is no child health campaign right now. Mr. Ramirez mentioned that while current topics are set, things can be added. Member Perry remarked the Commission needs to focus on becoming an aggregate of information for families, so they can have access to everything they need, as there is no other place where resources are dedicated to something like this. She also pointed out that it should be a requirement that RFP applicants show extensive experience in working with the families First 5 California is trying to reach. Commissioner Majors mentioned when there is implicit bias and racism in a system or a society, the Commission needs to be very careful about research. She also agreed with Member Perry that the organizations F5CA works with should have a rich, diverse staff that properly represents the populations F5CA is trying to reach.

Alex DeCaprio, Legislative Coordinator, gave an overview of state and federal advocacy. Chair Halvorson emphasized this is extremely important work, mainly because many congressional staff do not understand the importance of early learning and care. Commissioner Alvarez mentioned the Commission might be looking at a major difference at the federal level if there is a change in administration and asked if there is any "scenario-planning" taking place in case that change happens. F5CA staff responded by saying they are looking at expanding federal engagement and currently developing transition plans. Member Perry remarked the Commission would like to be involved in these discussions.

Commissioners agreed they would like to continue partnering with Educare, despite no longer funding it, because it is important national network, and First 5 should find what pieces are scalable and replicable.

Commissioner Alvarez asked about the advocacy data communication tools. Mr. Ramirez provided an overview of the work F5CA is doing with the California Budget and Policy Center.

Discussion of Ideas and Additional Work

Commissioners expressed interest in discussing learning readiness as not only literacy for 5-year-olds, but also the social-emotional aspect of learning readiness. Commissioner Fitzgerald mentioned the Commission needs to make sure it has an anti-racist agenda, and it is important to deconstruct what learning readiness means, as it is often constructed to normalize dominant culture. Commissioner Munger noted she is interested in programs that lift up families and bring people together to combat isolation.

Ms. Maben asked Commissioners if there are any specific programs they would like to see for direct services. Member Perry brought up that First 5 used to do more work in direct services, but later moved to advocacy and system building, and suggested that now during the pandemic, it might be a good idea to go back to direct services to ensure families and child care providers receive the services they need. Debi Silverman, Education Administrator, Program Management, responded by speaking about the dual language learner and Small Population County Funding Augmentation programs, and how these direct services have pivoted to support families even more now during the pandemic. Ms. Stafford Jones followed up on Member Perry's comments about direct services to mention that systems change work and direct services are connected through counties and larger organizations. She added that the pandemic is the new reality, and that it frames the context of the work they do.

Mr. Price opened the floor to suggestions for next steps. Commissioner Alvarez suggested First 5 collaborate with the Mental Health Services Commission to address trauma families are facing. Commissioner Majors stated families are not resisting help or services, but they want to know what to do with the materials they receive. She emphasized First 5's supports need to be palpable, and that a trauma-informed space is really important right now. Commissioner Hazan remarked the Commission needs to be thinking about parents and families, and that some interventions may need to be parent focused. Commissioner Munger agreed and added the Commission needs to think about all of this in the context that families are isolated at home due to COVID-19.

Next Steps

Chair Halvorson put forth the idea of a collaboration that F5CA steers and leads regarding books and literacy. Commissioner Fitzgerald mentioned she would like to hear from local commissions and how they are defining learning readiness. Commissioner Munger agreed and noted reading is important because in the past, the right to read was a key element of structural racism. Commissioner Majors added the Commission needs to stop talking about black and brown families as a deficit, and to stop repeating data that may not be accurate, that puts them in a bad light.

Commissioner Hazan added a final note that First 5 needs to better emphasize the assets of black and brown families in some way going forward.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

First 5 Fresno County Executive Director Fabiola Gonzalez applauded the Commission's focus on equity. She mentioned she works with other local commissions to address issues that impact some of California's most vulnerable families, including connecting them to wrap-around services, healthy food options, and Best Babies Zone.

First 5 Monterey Executive Director Francine Rodd spoke to the Commission about looking at learning readiness in a different way, and mentioned it should think of REDI (race, equity, diversity, and inclusion).

Monique Segura, liaison for the California Teachers Association (CTA), spoke to the Commission about getting books to children, as CTA is very interested in that work. She mentioned she would love to see a campaign around text messaging to parents, since that is the best way to engage with families.

Action Item 4 – Adjournment

DISCUSSION: None.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

MOTION/ACTION: Commissioner Munger moved to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hazan.

VOTE: The motion was unanimously approved by the Commission.

Chair Halvorson adjourned the meeting at 2:10 p.m.

The next scheduled Commission meeting is August 19, 2020