



California Children and Families Commission Meeting

October 22, 2020

MEETING MINUTES

Agenda Item 1 – Opening Remarks

George Halvorson called the meeting to order at 10:07 a.m.

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

Ex Officio Member Present: Kris Perry

Announcements

Chair Halvorson opened the meeting by mentioning the excellent job the Commission has done in putting early learning and care front and center and making it an important issue, especially now because of the devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Chair Halvorson discussed the importance of every child having books in the home, and how reading in the early years leads to better outcomes later in life.

Camille Maben, Executive Director, First 5 California

Personnel Update

Camille Maben provided an update on staffing that included the following:

- **Rick Espinoza** – Associate Governmental Program Analyst, Contracts and Procurement
- **Simone Afghari** – Staff Services Analyst/Commission Meeting Coordinator, Administrative Analyst

Ms. Maben noted First 5 California (F5CA) is still looking for a Deputy Director for External and Governmental Affairs.

Emergency Supplies Update

Ms. Maben provided an update on F5CA's effort to provide emergency supplies and discussed how the \$5 million allocation for those supplies has been used. Chair Halvorson commented on the branded thermometer, saying this was an excellent idea.

Commissioner Hazan asked about how F5CA is responding to county needs in real-time. She noted this isn't a main function for F5CA and asked who in the California State government should F5CA be in touch with to continue providing for counties' needs beyond the COVID-19 pandemic or the wildfire disasters in the state. Ms. Maben stated F5CA uses surveys to determine county needs, and that staff are looking into other organizations that can take on the task of providing items in the future.

Melissa Stafford-Jones, First 5 Association Executive Director

Ms. Stafford-Jones discussed the importance of taking a look at the overall early learning and care system and how it is affecting families, and what this could mean to change the system to fit the needs of communities. She provided examples from local First 5 partners that have created and used programs to make their communities better by focusing on families in need. Ms. Stafford-Jones noted systems work together to provide change and contribute to well-being.

Advisory Committees

Commissioners stated they would report out during item presentations.

Agenda Item 2 – Public Comment

No public comment.

Action Item 3 – Consent Calendar

MOTION/ACTION: Vice Chair Munger moved to approve the Consent Calendar. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Majors.

VOTE: The motion was unanimously approved by the Commission. Commissioner Davis was absent.

Information Item 4 – Financial Update

Marcia Thomas, Director of Fiscal Services, provided an update on F5CA's financial status.

Discussion

Commissioners discussed the 15% of funds that are typically set aside as reserves. Vice Chair Munger and Member Perry provided a brief explanation for why those reserve funds exist, noting that they were originally created as a way to cope with the Great Recession. Chair Halvorson stated the reserve should be invested in F5CA programs and Member Perry said these funds were meant to be used in emergencies, and that it is appropriate to use the funds when the state is facing a pandemic and historic wildfires. Commissioner Majors cautioned that F5CA should not spend all the money at once because this emergency is going to last a long time, so F5CA needs to be able to respond to needs of families in the coming months, or even years.

Public comment:

Dan Berman, Administrative Analyst with First 5 Humboldt, asked why spending is far under revenue in fiscal year (FY) 2023–24. Ms. Maben responded it's because F5CA doesn't have all of its programs scheduled that far out.

Action Item 5 – Kit for New Parents

Vernettia Syphax, Information Officer I, presented a request for the *Kit for New Parents* of up to \$18 million from FY 2020–21 through FY 2023–24.

Discussion

Commissioners requested information about newborns who will receive the *Kits*, asking specifically about the 40% of newborns who aren't already receiving these *Kits*. Commissioner Hazan emphasized it's more important *who* the *Kits* are going to, and not how many are receiving them. Ms. Syphax responded that F5CA is planning to update the guidelines that determine who should receive a *Kit*. Ms. Maben added F5CA currently knows which organizations distribute the *Kits* on behalf of F5CA, but not which families are receiving them. Chair Halvorson proposed F5CA should make it a goal for the digital *Kit* to reach 100% of California parents. Commissioner Hazan noted she does not want the goal of the digital *Kit* to interfere with making sure the physical *Kit* gets to families who need it. All Commissioners agreed it was important to see *Kits* going to the most vulnerable families first.

Public Comment

Samantha Bond, First 5 Mendocino, mentioned First 5 Mendocino strives to provide *Kits* to prenatal parents, but 100% is a big ask, especially in Mendocino where broadband is hard to come by among lower income households. She emphasized physical items are important for families.

MOTION/ACTION: Commissioner Munger moved to approve \$18 million from FY 2020–21 through FY 2023–24 on the condition the *Kit* will be provided first to lowest income children in California. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hazan.

VOTE: The motion was unanimously approved by the Commission. Commissioner Alvarez was absent.

Information Item 6 – Dual Language Learner (DLL) Pilot Study Update

David Dodds, Deputy Director, Evaluation Office, provided a presentation on the background of the Dual Language Learner Pilot Study.

Karen Manship and Gaby Fain, American Institutes for Research (AIR), presented an update on AIR’s work on the DLL Pilot Study.

Discussion

Commissioner Alvarez opened the discussion by noting it is important to look at this with a well-being perspective, not just education, because children of color often see images of themselves portrayed in media that are not always positive. Commissioners stated they want to make sure lawmakers in California, as well as in Washington DC, are seeing some of the information found in this study.

Debi Silverman, Administrator, Training and Continuous Quality Improvement Office, noted on a local level, counties are taking this information and incorporating it into their Quality Rating and Improvement System and expanding their practices to target underserved populations.

Information Item 7 – Small Population County Funding Augmentation (SPCFA) Update

Debra Silverman, Education Administrator, gave an overview of SPCFA program and explained that Commissioners will hear from small population county executive directors (EDs) about the crucial role local commissions play in their county and successes reaching hardest-to-reach populations.

Nina Machado, First 5 Amador Executive Director, gave history and purpose of SPCFA, noting that Proposition 10 is designed to be a statewide effort that promotes, supports, and improves the early development of children ages 0 to 5 in every county in California. The Act asserts every county has the opportunity to develop a local commission if they are able to meet the goals, objectives, and accountability requirements of the Act. However, the statutory funding alone is insufficient for small population counties to operate a commission and implement effective programs. The F5CA Commission has approved funds for small population counties since its inception, enabling every county to operate a First 5 county commission in order to make Proposition 10 a statewide effort and ensure all children can be served.

Carla Ritz, First 5 Lake Executive Director, gave a snapshot of small population county context, noting that Small population counties reach a greater proportion of children and families in the most marginalized communities compared to medium and large population counties. According to 2018–19 Annual Report data, small population counties reach about

60% of children ages 0 to 5 years with their services. Small population counties also serve a large proportion of traditionally underserved children and families, such as Native American and Hispanic populations.

Karen Pautz, First 5 Siskiyou Executive Director, described small population county First 5s as a backbone and connector of community services. Ms. Pautz mentioned that EDs in small population counties report being able to convene partners and be more nimble than larger counties. Because of the county's small size and multiple roles a small county ED must play, they tend to know key decision makers and influencers in the community. As a result, they build relationships and develop partnerships more easily than larger counties, which enables them to garner the commitment of partners on behalf of young children.

Kim Belshé, First 5 Los Angeles Executive Director, stated the key to an impactful First 5 Network is vibrant small counties. She noted that the network is only as strong as its smallest counties.

Discussion

Commissioner Alvarez opened the discussion by noting costs in urban areas are rising, so many families are moving to rural areas in order to afford the "American Dream." She also mentioned rural areas are often hit hardest in times of crisis. Ms. Machado elaborated on the hardships small population counties face, especially in terms of getting services out to families where there are struggles with transportation and communication. Ms. Pautz stated the power of human connection and mentioned "community is everything" in these areas.

Member Perry pointed out there could be an issue with economic equity, as there is less money spent per child in larger counties, and she noted she would like to see individual child impacts in these programs.

Commissioner Majors suggested the Commission take a look at the infrastructure to prevent staff from having to come to the Commission every time funding is ending. Member Perry noted this infrastructure is what is outlined in the Act. Both Member Perry and Commissioner Hazan agreed they would like to see some creative solutions for administrative efficiencies, so that the executive directors in these counties have sufficient capacity.

Information Item 8 – Smoker's Helpline

This item was postponed to the January 28, 2021, Commission meeting.

Information Item 9 – Book Distribution and Early Literacy Update

Erin Dubey, Education Administrator, provided an update on the book distribution program. The Commission redirected nearly \$1.5 from the Fraser Communications contract to the

book distribution program. Highlights included:

- Approximately an additional 600,000 books will be distributed to 195,000 high promise families.
- Counties with no direct book distribution programs will now also receive books through this program.
- 46 counties are participating in the California Family Book Distribution Partnership. Of those, 36 are receiving direct shipments of books and 10 are expanding their Dolly Parton Imagination Library program.
- Future book acquisition within this project will focus on bilingual titles and content that reflects and affirms the diversity of California’s families and communities.
- Wordless picture books have also been added to the selection. There will be a special wordless printing of “Three Brainy Birds Spreading the Word” book from the Talk. Read. Sing.® campaign.

Sarah Neville-Morgan, Deputy Director CDE, discussed the importance of children reading as early as possible because it leads to greater success in K–12 education.

Discussion

Chair Halvorson stated the effect early childhood education has on future health and emphasized getting books in the hands of young children is foundational to their success later in life.

Information Item 10 – Legislative Update

Alexandra DeCaprio, Legislative Analyst, provided an update on legislative interests for F5CA. Ms. DeCaprio noted that with the bill-signing deadline on September 30, the 2020 legislative season is over. She stated due to the coronavirus pandemic, the Legislature operated on a condensed legislative timeline, maintaining a focus on COVID-19 relief and recovery, and consequently, the number of bills that moved through the legislative process this session was significantly lower than recent years.

Presentation to Chair Halvorson

Staff presented a video with messages of thanks to Chair Halvorson for his time on the Commission.

Public Comment

Renee Fraser, Fraser Communications, discussed the importance of Talk. Read. Sing.®, and thanked George for his leadership and work on the campaign.

Action Item 11 – Adjournment

DISCUSSION: None.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

MOTION/ACTION: Commissioner Alvarez moved to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Majors.

VOTE: The motion was unanimously approved by the Commission.

Chair Halvorson adjourned the meeting at 4:20 p.m.

The next scheduled Commission meeting is January 28, 2021.