



**Commission Meeting
MINUTES**

Monday, February 6, 2017, 6:00 pm
1485 Civic Court, Suite 1200
Large Conference Room
Concord, CA

1.0 Call to Order and Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 6:08 PM.

Chairwoman Kathy Gallagher began the meeting with introductions from all attendees.

Commissioners in attendance were: Maria Fort, Barbara Cappa, Gareth Ashley, John Jones, Dr. William Walker and Kathy Marsh, interim director for the Children & Families Services.

Alternates present were: Lee Ross and Katharine Mason.

Absent were: PJ Shelton, Marilyn Lucey, Matt Regan, Supervisor Federal Glover, Supervisor Candace Andersen and Wanda Session.

2.0 Public Comment

First 5 Center Directors Natalie Webster (Delta First 5 Center in Brentwood) and Maya Gutierrez (Monument First 5 Center, Concord) reported that both their centers created community awareness meetings called "Circles Of Hope" in response to the current political climate. The meetings provide families with accurate information to help alleviate speculation and fear. Many families have concerns about immigration and about their children's overall emotional and physical well-being at home, schools and in public. Some of the meetings included presentations from the Concord Police Department who explained what they do to protect the community, as well as Catholic Charities, providing information on "Know Your Rights" and how to protect themselves and their families.

Kathy Gallagher thanked both for their report and mirrored the ongoing concerns in the County. She reported that as the director of our county's Employment & Human Services Department (EHSD), she has been made aware that families are choosing to leave the county and/or discontinue their benefits based on fear. The fear of having their immigration status compromised is the primary reason. Having more organizations such as the First 5 Centers take the lead and partner with other agencies is helpful for getting accurate information to the community.

3.0 Approval of Consent Calendar

A motion was made by Maria Fort and seconded by Dr. William Walker to approve the consent calendar.

AYES: Maria Fort, Barbara Cappa, Gareth Ashley, John Jones, Dr. William Walker and Kathy Marsh, interim director for the Children & Families Services.

NOES: None

ABSTAIN: None

Motion was **APPROVED**.

5.0 Presentation of Conflict of Interest laws pertinent to Commissioners and staff

Chief Assistant County Counsel Mary Ann Mason presented the current laws addressing conflict of interest for members of public agencies and commissions. She explained the Political Reform Act and how it helps prevent public officials from using their official positions to influence governmental

decision-making and outlined the types of interests that could be a basis for a conflict. She also updated the Commission and staff on Government Code 1090. She discussed what it means to recuse, described how to recuse, and noted when a disclosure is required.

Executive Assistant Alex Khu informed the Commission that he will help them to file their Form 700s by April 3, 2017.

6.0 Presentation of early findings from the 2016 Kindergarten Readiness Assessment

Sean Casey introduced Lisa Colvig-Niclai and Kim Carpenter, from First 5's evaluation contractor, ASR. We commissioned ASR in 2016 to carry out our first Kindergarten Readiness assessment process, using methodology they have employed in numerous counties across California. We see this first round as a chance to see what we can learn from the process and how we can tweak it if necessary for future rounds in more districts.

Lisa Colvig-Niclai gave the report of the principal findings. The purpose of the assessment is to profile readiness among kindergarteners in Contra Costa County and create a better understanding of the factors that influence readiness.

This is the first year of assessment and the focus was on schools in First 5 service areas. ASR conducted the study in three districts (Antioch Unified, Mt. Diablo Unified and Pittsburg Unified), at 19 schools. These schools tended to have lower 3rd grade reading proficiency and higher poverty rates relative to other schools in their respective districts. One teacher from each school used the Kindergarten Observation Form to assess students in their class at the beginning of the school year. Additionally 71% of parents completed a Parent Information Form which provided data on additional family and child factors often associated with Kindergarten readiness.

The study found that 32% of the children assessed scored as "Fully Ready" while 35% were identified as "Partially Ready" and 33% "Not Ready".

The assessment identified the following factors associated significantly with readiness in the 19 schools:

- Health & Well-being: Children whose teachers say they come to school hungry, tired, or sick on at least some days were less ready than those who do not.
- Age: Older children were more ready
- Child Concerns: Children whose parents reported fewer concerns for their child's behavior or needs were more ready.
- Family Characteristics: Children whose mothers had more than a high school education, family income at least \$35,000 and who came from multi-parent households had higher readiness.
- Parent Support Activities: Children of parents who participated in activities for support and information (e.g. home visits from a nurse or community worker, First 5 Centers, books, parenting websites) were more ready.
- Gender: Girls were more ready than boys.
- Formal ECE: Having attended a pre-K program (e.g. family child care, center-based program or Transitional Kindergarten) was related to higher levels of readiness.

Lisa responded to numerous questions from the Commission regarding the findings and the methodology. Staff will continue to work with ASR to analyze the data in greater detail.

7.0 Policy and advocacy report

Beginning this month, the Commission will have a standing item on the agenda on its Advocacy and Policy activities. Sean provided the following updates

Governor's budget:

The Governor released his initial 2017-18 budget a few weeks ago, which many people consider even more of a placeholder than usual because of possible shifts in federal spending in multiple areas. Two things stand out for First 5. First, the Department of Finance projects a 17% drop in Prop 10 revenue in the next fiscal year due to the recently passed \$2.00 cigarette tax. Although the tax initiative included a backfill provision for Prop 10 and others, it will not go into effect until the 2018-19 year when it is applied retroactively for the previous year. This means that we will have a one-time revenue dip of around \$1 million next fiscal year with the following year returning to our previously projected levels. Fortunately, we have budgeted conservatively the last few years, and revenues have been slightly higher than projections, so our overall spending for this strategic planning period should remain as anticipated.

The Governor has also proposed a “pause” in the four-year plan agreed to in this year’s budget to increase spending for child care early education by \$750 million. This means that \$226 million slated to be added to early education in FY 2017-18 is now on hold. The Governor claims concern of a potential drop in state revenues. The LAO is more optimistic about the overall revenues for the state, and advocates are clamoring for reinstatement of the promised child care expansion dollars.

Advocacy Day:

Among those advocates were 100 First 5 Commissioners and staff last Tuesday at the First 5 Association’s annual Advocacy Day at the Capitol. I am happy to say we were well represented, by Commission member Lee Ross and by staff Tracy Irwin, Sarah Crow and I. Unfortunately, the Assembly Democrats chose that day for their annual retreat, but we had good meetings nonetheless with the staffs of Assemblymembers Tim Grayson, Jim Frazier, Tony Thurmond and Catherine Baker, and Senator Steve Glazier. Senator Nancy Skinner was the sole member we were able to meet with. With my First 5 Association colleagues, we met with Senate President Pro Tem Kevin De Leon’s staff and with Glen Price, State Education Superintendent Tom Torlakson’s Chief of Staff.

The Association held a reception the night before for members of the legislature and friends that was extremely well-attended – Tony Thurmond represented Contra Costa in the crowd. We honored Assemblymember Adrin Nazarian for his championship of legislation last term that corrected the Board of Equalization’s handling of Proposition 10 revenues.

Thurmond bill:

Speaking of Tony Thurmond, he has agreed to carry a bill for Contra Costa that will provide more flexibility in the handling of state funds coming to our county each year for early learning programs. Called a Child Care Subsidy Pilot, it is modeled on similar efforts being implemented in San Mateo, San Francisco and Alameda Counties. Like those bills, our pilot would maximize allocated funding to provide more children with quality child care and increase stability of child care placements for children. We would have more flexibility in determining eligibility standards and reimbursement rates as well as the opportunity to transfer funds among participating state contractors to ensure that all contracted funds are expended in the year. Last year, Contra Costa County left over 7% of its total state contracts on the table at the end of the year, a figure that is expected to rise. Our Early Learning Leadership Alliance has been working with Thurmond’s staff on the bill language. It may be introduced later this week.

Other items:

Two weeks ago members of our Community Engagement Groups joined a march at the County Administration to voice their concerns about the Sheriff's involvement in ICE activities, recently recounted in the East Bay Express and others. They joined other social justice groups making their voice heard on this growing concern in our community.

On February 8, the Board of Supervisors will consider a proposal by the Sheriff to apply for state funds to expand the West County jail. According to the proposal, \$15 million from the County's reserve fund would be used to meet the requirements for a local match. Operation of the new facility is pegged at over \$5 million annually. This poses an opportunity to speak up about public investment priorities and how investments in early childhood have been shown to reduce involvement in the criminal justice system.

Lastly, at our retreat in October, I said that I would return with a summary framework for our advocacy activities. As you can hear, we've been busy in this arena, and a lot is happening very quickly. I plan to take a little more time with staff to create this framework and will discuss it with you at our April meeting. In the meantime, we have formed an internal Advocacy Team that is planning a convening this spring for our contractors and other agencies serving children as a call to action to support families who feel threatened in the current political climate. You will be hearing more about this.

8.0 Executive Director's Report

Sean circulated a sign-up sheet for Commissioners to participate in upcoming site visits being arranged by the Grants and Contracts department.

He also formally introduced Sarah Crow, recently hired as First 5's new Strategic Information and Planning Manager. She was previously with the Opportunity Institute where she developed the agency's policy reports and advocacy efforts. Before that she spearheaded Next Generation's policy work on early education and programs affecting working families. And she is no stranger to the public sector either, have spent 8 years at the San Francisco Human Services Agency conducting strategic planning efforts, working on program design and evaluation and developing communication efforts. We are very happy to have her with us. She will be a great addition.

9.0 Communications

Kathy Gallagher noted that there are two articles included in the packet this month:

- Over 1.2 Million California Children Eligible for Subsidized Child Care Did Not Receive Services From State Programs in 2015, California Budget and Policy Center
- State must make early education a top priority, Kim Belshe and Camille Maben

10.0 Commissioner F.Y.I. Updates

John Jones announced that the Contra Costa Child Care Council is hosting the 23rd Annual Early Learning Conference, training for Child Care Providers called "Recognizing Trauma: The Art of Helping One Another Heal" on Saturday March 25, 2017 at DVC in Pleasant Hill.

<https://www.cocokids.org/learning-institute/training-conferences/>

11.0 Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 7:25 PM