



AGENDA ITEM 12B  
DATE OF MEETING January 27, 2010  
ACTION:   X    
INFORMATION: \_\_\_\_\_

**Teacher Signature Program:  
Comprehensive Approaches to Raising Educational Standards (CARES) Plus and  
Infrastructure Investments**

**SUMMARY OF REQUEST**

First 5 California staff request Commission approval of the Teacher Signature Program, to be known as Comprehensive Approaches to Raising Educational Standards (CARES) Plus, and critical supporting infrastructure investments. This request consists of:

1. CARES Plus funding for three fiscal years starting in FY 10/11 including:
  - a. Stipends/incentives and educational support services to participants;
  - b. A web-based workforce registry to ensure accountability; and
  - c. Technical assistance to programs.
  
2. Infrastructure including:
  - a. A competencies-based career pathway and certification system; and
  - b. Higher education system reform challenge grants.

**DISCUSSION**

**Critical Need**

While awareness about the importance of early learning, the impact of high-quality early learning programs on school readiness, and the value of teacher education to the quality of early learning programs was increasing,<sup>1</sup> the educational level of the early learning workforce was decreasing.<sup>2</sup> A 2006 study of the California early learning workforce revealed that only slightly more than half of teachers in early learning programs had earned any kind of postsecondary degrees; only one-quarter had a Bachelor's degree.<sup>3</sup> Unfortunately, younger members of the workforce were even less educated. Fewer than two-fifths of early learning center teachers had been at the same job for five years or more. One reason for these statistics is the level of compensation—the highest-paid

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<sup>1</sup> Whitebook, M. Early Education Quality: Higher Teacher Qualifications for Better Learning Environments—A Review of the Literature, Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, 2003

<sup>2</sup> Herzenberg, S., Price, M, and Bradley, D., Losing Ground in Early Childhood Education, Economic Policy Institute, 2005

<sup>3</sup> Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, and California Child Care Resource and Referral Network, California Early Care and Education Workforce Study, 2006, Highlights, July 2006

teachers with Bachelor's degrees in early learning programs earned about only two-thirds as much as public school kindergarten teachers.<sup>4</sup>

**Building on a Proven Model – First 5 California's CARES Program**

From FY 00/01 through FY 09/10, a First 5 California matching-funds program with 44 county commissions, called the Comprehensive Approaches to Raising Educational Standards (CARES) Program, was created to address an urgent need to improve the quality and stability of the early learning workforce. CARES gained recognition by national organizations including Head Start, Zero to Three, and the Center for Law and Social Policy as a model for increasing the quality and stability of the early learning workforce. CARES increased professional development activity and educational levels among a large and varied group of early childhood educators, improved the retention of the workforce, and strengthened county-level professional development infrastructures.

Lessons learned from the past nine years of CARES highlight the core elements necessary for a successful workforce development program:

- Stipends to incentivize early educators to increase their education and professional development
- Advisement to help participants negotiate the maze of educational requirements
- A Professional Development/Educational Plan
- Increased accountability and intentionality
- A user-friendly, competencies-based Career Ladder

CARES provided approximately 86,948 incentives and/or stipends to early learning educators during the life of the program. In FY 07/08, more than 12,800 early educators received support services from the program. Approximately 300 of the 9,000 CARES participants obtained higher education degrees, over 1,340 participants obtained a Child Development Permit, and an additional 1,400 advanced up a level of the permit. In the five program years from FY 03/04 through FY 07/08:

- 1,092 CARES participants earned Associate's degrees
- 1,316 earned Bachelor's degrees
- 190 earned Master's degrees

First 5 California's 2004 evaluation of CARES found 96 percent of participants still working in the early childhood education (ECE) field 12 months after joining the program, and 93 percent remaining 18 months later. Participants were more than twice as likely as non-participants to remain in the same child care center over a two-year period. A FY 07/08 survey of CARES participants revealed high levels of satisfaction with the program, with participants reporting that it had increased their commitment to stay in the field and contributed to their career advancement.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

### **CARES Plus**

The proposed CARES Plus Program will be an integrated professional development system designed to support the education, professional development, and preparation of an effective, well-compensated workforce and moves participants along a revised career ladder. Building on the success of its predecessor (CARES) and continuing the successful partnership with California Department of Education, Child Development Division's (CDE/CDD) AB 212 Program, CARES Plus will focus on ensuring quality early learning programs for children ages 0 to 5 and their families by increasing the education, professional development, and retention of the early learning workforce. CARES Plus will continue to provide incentives/stipends, academic supports, higher education articulation, and clearer career pathways that will support participants to obtain their degrees in early childhood education as well as technical assistance to local CARES Plus programs. For further detail, see Exhibit 1.

Drawing on lessons learned from the original CARES Program, CARES Plus will include a movement toward a systems approach at both the state and local levels. The original CARES Program revealed statewide limitations, including the need to revise the current Child Development Permit to a competencies-based career ladder. As we move toward a systems approach, CARES Plus will require participants to move up a revised competencies-based career ladder and require programs to support services that increase participant success. These are important steps toward expanding quality early learning programs for California's youngest children and supporting the requirements of a professional development system and higher teacher requirements in the proposed Early Learning Challenge Fund (ELCF). See Exhibit 2.

Accountability for CARES Plus would occur through the development of an Early Learning Workforce Career-Ladder Registry (Registry) that builds off the original CARES Database. A centralized database, the Registry would provide information regarding members of the early learning workforce and would monitor participants' progress. Information regarding educational milestones, employment, certification, and work history will be included in the database that is intended to move beyond CARES Plus and into state-wide adoption and support the workforce piece of the future Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) data system as well as link to K-12. As part of the workforce system, the Registry will capture approved course work, trainings, and trainers.

Implementing the CARES Plus Program will allow First 5 California to build on the organizational infrastructure and positive momentum already created by the development of CARES Programs throughout the state to:

1. Systematically enhance the educational and professional development level of the workforce through increased education and professional development across the entire continuum – from informal family, friend, and neighbor (FFN) caregivers to teachers – thereby supporting quality for children ages 0 to 5 regardless of care setting; and
2. Build toward a well-educated and culturally and linguistically diverse workforce that can support the proposed Power of Preschool/Child Signature Program, position

California for federal funds, and adopt recommendations from the Governor's newly enacted California State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care (ELAC) and the Early Learning Quality Improvement System (CAELQIS) Advisory Committee.

Additionally, CARES Plus will address early learning, higher education systems reform to create the programs and opportunities needed by the local workforce. Components of CARES Plus will also address course content to reflect the Early Learning Competencies (due in June 2010 from a joint project by the CDE/CDD and First 5 California) as well as infuse current research and knowledge of cultural and linguistic diversity.

### **Infrastructure Investments**

In order to effectively facilitate the development of a professional development system and increase efficiencies of participants' movement up career and educational pathways, First 5 California staff determined there are several critical infrastructure pieces needed:

**Competencies-Based Career Pathway and Certification System:** Through a partnership with the CDE/CDD, the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, and other stakeholders, use the soon-to-be-released Early Educator Competencies to develop a competencies-based career ladder, and then align and revise the current certification system. Once this component is finalized, CARES Plus participants will be required to demonstrate progress up the new career ladder and participate in the system.

**Higher Education Quality Pathway Partnerships:** Establishes five to eight higher education, regional pilot programs (consortiums of CARES programs, community colleges, California State University, University of California, community-based organizations, and local educational agencies). These partnerships will work to facilitate the recruitment, training, and professional development of an expanded pool of qualified early learning educators. Partnerships will create the programs and opportunities needed by the local workforce and address articulation and higher education pathways, course content, and student readiness and support issues that interfere with student success in obtaining degrees in early childhood education or related fields. Funded partners will create curriculum and course content to reflect the Early Educator Competencies as well as infuse content with current research and knowledge of cultural and linguistic diversity.

### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

First 5 California staff recommend the Commission approve the proposed CARES Plus components. CARES Plus is designed to provide the foundation for enhancing the success of CARES in order to recruit, retain, and support a highly-qualified and well-compensated early learning workforce in California and position California to access federal funds. First 5 California requests Commission approval of the proposed program elements to support CARES Plus, including the Early Learning Workforce Career-Ladder

Registry, technical assistance to programs, and two one-time infrastructure investments starting July 1, 2010, through June 30, 2013.

1. **First 5 California CARES Plus** - Up to \$12 million annually for the first two years and then \$11 million for year three.
2. **Competencies-Based Career Pathway and Certification System** - Up to \$1.5 million annually for three years.
3. **Higher Education Quality Pathway Partnerships** - Up to \$7 million annually for three years.

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

Over the 8.5 years of CARES, from July 1, 2000 – December 31, 2008, (FY 09/10 expenditures are not yet available), total state expenditures to counties were \$50,227,533, and \$174,033,294 local dollars were leveraged. Local match was a program requirement and will continue to be a component of CARES Plus. Additionally, in order to leverage proposed federal funds, statewide professional development systems and data collection are necessary.

## **ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED**

### **Alternative**

Do not authorize funding approval for CARES Plus.

### **Pros**

- Maintains higher level of available annual revenue.

### **Cons**

- Does not continue and build upon the momentum from the original First 5 California CARES Program.
- California not positioned to be competitive for federal funds.
- Lack of adequate state funds available to help workforce component of the future QRIS.
- Difficult to find qualified early learning teachers for early learning programs including Power of Preschool and future Child Signature Program.

## **EXHIBITS**

- Exhibit 1, Teacher Signature Program: Comprehensive Approaches to Raising Educational Standards - CARES Plus
- Exhibit 2, Student Aid Act – Early Learning Challenge Fund (ELCF)

**FUNDING REQUEST FISCAL DETAIL**

Title of Request:		Comprehensive Approaches to Raising Education Standards (CARES) Plus Funding				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Contract <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Program Disbursement <input type="checkbox"/> Special Disbursement	
Amount of Current Agreement:	Up-to	N/A		Expenditures to Date:	N/A		
Current Term of Agreement:	N/A		Through	N/A			
				Fiscal Year Detail			
				FY 10 - 11	FY 11 - 12	FY 12 - 13	FY __ - __
New Amount Requested:	Up to	\$35,000,000	\$12,000,000	\$12,000,000	\$11,000,000		
Total Amount of Agreement:	Up to	\$35,000,000					
Percent of Available Fund Balance Affected by Agreement		.33%	.04%	.29%	.05%	.26%	.02%
Proposed Funding Term:	July 1, 2010		Through	June 30, 2013			
First 5 California Account Name:	Child Care		Account Number	0636	Fund Availability Confirmed	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes By: Sandy Beck	
	Research and Development			0637			
Statutory Purpose:	<p>Health and Safety Code 130105(a)(1)(C) and 130105(a)(1)(D)</p> <p>Three percent shall be deposited in a Child Care Account for expenditures to ensure that children are ready to enter school and for programs relating to child care, including, but not limited to, the education and training of child care providers, the development of educational materials and guidelines for child care workers, and other areas described in subparagraph (B) of paragraph (1) of subdivision (b) of Section 130125.</p> <p>Three percent shall be deposited in a Research and Development Account for expenditures to ensure that children are ready to enter school and for the research and development of best practices and standards for all programs and services relating to early childhood development established pursuant to this act, and for the assessment and quality evaluation of those programs and services/</p>						
Do our funds leverage others?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes (explain) <input type="checkbox"/> No	Commission Funds		Leveraged Funds		Total Funds	
		\$30,000,000		To Be Determined		To Be Determined	
Leveraged Funds will be based on \$30 million of the total authority for CARES Plus. The \$2 million in FYs 2010-11 and 2011-12 and \$1 million in FY 2012-13 will be committed to development and maintenance of the Early Learning Workforce Registry.							
Key Deliverable Descriptions						Deliverable Date	
Early Learning Workforce Registry - to track the educational and professional progress of the early learning workforce. The Registry would place workers on the career ladder to monitor movement of participants and create a space to obtain accurate and up-to-date data on them as well as linking to the fuller Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS) and the Child Signature Program.						June 30, 2012	
Compensation Incentives/Stipends – to support the recruitment and retention of a highly qualified, well-compensated and diverse early learning workforce						Ongoing	
Advising and Supports - to assist early learning students with navigating the higher education system. Advising participants in order to obtain a degree and credentials. Supports include links to financial aid, tutoring, homework assistance, practicum placement, etc.						Ongoing	
Coaching and Mentoring – support hand-on practicum for early learning higher education students.						Ongoing	

**FUNDING REQUEST FISCAL DETAIL**

Title of Request:	Competencies-Based Career Pathway Certification System Funding				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Contract <input type="checkbox"/> Program Disbursement <input type="checkbox"/> Special Disbursement	
Amount of Current Agreement:	Up-to	N/A	Expenditures to Date:	N/A		
Current Term of Agreement:	N/A	Through	N/A			
		Fiscal Year Detail				
		FY 10 - 11	FY 11 - 12	FY 12 - 13	FY __ - __	
New Amount Requested:	Up to	\$4,500,000	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,00	\$1,500,00	
Total Amount of Agreement:	Up to	\$4,500,000	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,00	\$1,500,00	
Percent of Available Fund Balance Affected by Agreement		.03%	.04%	.03%		
Proposed Funding Term:	July 1, 2010	Through	June 30, 2013			
First 5 California Account Name:	Education	Account Number	0634	Fund Availability Confirmed	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes By: Sandy Beck	
Statutory Purpose: Health and Safety Code 130105(a)(1)(B)	Five percent shall be deposited in an Education Account for expenditures to ensure that children are ready to enter school and for programs relating to education, including, but not limited to, the development of educational material, professional and parental education and training, and technical support for county commissions, in the areas described in subparagraph (A) of paragraph (1) of subdivision (b) of Section 130125.					
Do our funds leverage others?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes (explain) <input type="checkbox"/> No	Commission Funds		Leveraged Funds		Total Funds
		\$4.5 million		Potential Federal Funds		To Be Determined
Explanation: This statewide Competencies-Based Career Pathway Certification System positions California to be competitive in leveraging potential federal funds.						
Key Deliverable Descriptions					Deliverable Date	
Develop an early learning workforce career ladder based on the Early Educator Competencies					June 30, 2013	
Revise the current certification system					June 30. 2013	

**FUNDING REQUEST FISCAL DETAIL**

Title of Request:	Higher Education Quality Pathway Partnerships				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Contract <input type="checkbox"/> Program Disbursement <input type="checkbox"/> Special Disbursement	
Amount of Current Agreement:	Up-to	N/A	Expenditures to Date:	N/A		
Current Term of Agreement:	N/A	Through	N/A			
		Fiscal Year Detail				
		FY 10 - 11	FY 11 - 12	FY 12 - 13	FY __ - __	
New Amount Requested:	Up to	\$21,000,000	\$7,000,000	\$7,000,000	\$7,000,000	
Total Amount of Agreement:	Up to	\$21,000,000	\$7,000,000	\$7,000,000	\$7,000,000	
Percent of Available Fund Balance Affected by Agreement		.15%	.17%	.13%		
Proposed Funding Term:	July 1, 2010	Through	June 30, 2013			
First 5 California Account Name:	Education	Account Number	0634	Fund Availability Confirmed	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes By: Sandy Beck	
Statutory Purpose: Health and Safety Code 130105(a)(1)(B)	Five percent shall be deposited in an Education Account for expenditures to ensure that children are ready to enter school and for programs relating to education, including, but not limited to, the development of educational material, professional and parental education and training, and technical support for county commissions, in the areas described in subparagraph (A) of paragraph (1) of subdivision (b) of Section 130125.					
Do our funds leverage others?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes (explain) <input type="checkbox"/> No	Commission Funds	Leveraged Funds	Total Funds		
		\$21 million	Potential Federal Funds	To Be Determined		
Explanation: This Higher Education Quality Pathway Partnerships position California to be competitive in leveraging potential federal funds.						
Key Deliverable Descriptions					Deliverable Date	
Integration of Early Educator Competencies by higher education					June 30, 2013	
Integration of Infant/Toddler Preschool Foundation by higher education					June 31, 2013	
Reports on education pathway					Ongoing	
Articulation agreements					June 31, 2013	
Reports on student achievement					Ongoing	



**TEACHER SIGNATURE PROGRAM**

**Comprehensive Approaches to Raising Educational Standards - CARES Plus**

The Comprehensive Approaches to Raising Educational Standards (CARES) Plus is an integrated professional development system that supports the education and preparation of an effective, well-compensated, and diverse workforce. Through the provision of incentives, academic support, higher education articulation, and an Early Learning Workforce and Career-Ladder Registry, CARES Plus will increase the number, quality and retention of California’s early learning workforce while ensuring accountability. Building on the success of its predecessor CARES and AB 212, CARES Plus focuses on ensuring quality early learning programs for children 0 to 5 and their families by increasing the education, professional development and retention of the early learning workforce while providing participant supports and ensuring accountability.

**Guiding Principles**

- ❖ Ensure recruitment and retention of an effective workforce by supporting a well-compensated staff with incentives and support services
- ❖ Increase the qualifications and education of the early learning workforce
- ❖ Create and support a competencies-based career ladder and certification system\*
- ❖ Support a culturally and linguistically diverse workforce
- ❖ Promote high standards and strong accountability (program evaluation and monitoring)
- ❖ Support coordination of local, regional and statewide resources\*
- ❖ Emphasize integrated systems of supports
- ❖ Build on the successes of CARES and AB 212 and support links to future statewide QRIS
- ❖ Align with federal guidelines to promote California’s competitiveness for federal funds\*

**Program Elements**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Advising and supports to navigate the higher education system</li> <li>❖ Coaching and mentoring</li> <li>❖ Compensation incentives/stipends</li> <li>❖ Competencies-based course content*</li> <li>❖ Competencies-Based Career Pathway*</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Early Learning Workforce Career-Ladder Registry*</li> <li>❖ Higher education articulation</li> <li>❖ Integration of Early Educator Competencies*</li> <li>❖ Integration of Infant/Toddler Preschool Foundations*</li> <li>❖ On-going professional development</li> </ul> |
|---|---|

**Accountability**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Audit program expenditures</li> <li>❖ Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS)*</li> <li>❖ Assess progress towards meeting Measurable Program Goals (MPGs)*</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Early Learning Workforce and Career-Ladder Registry*</li> <li>❖ Connection with the California Longitudinal Teacher Integrated Data Education System (CALTIDES)*</li> </ul> |
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**Potential Applicants May Include**

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|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ California Commission on Teacher Credentialing</li> <li>❖ California Department of Education</li> <li>❖ California Department of Social Services</li> <li>❖ CARES administrators</li> <li>❖ CDD-Funded Contractors</li> <li>❖ Child Care Agencies</li> <li>❖ Community-Based Non Profits</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ County Offices of Education</li> <li>❖ First 5 County Commissions</li> <li>❖ Foundations</li> <li>❖ Higher Education Institutions</li> <li>❖ Local Child Care Planning Councils</li> <li>❖ Local Education Agencies (LEA)</li> <li>❖ Resource and Referral Agencies</li> </ul> |
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\*New component not originally in CARES

**The Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act**  
*A Landmark Investment in America's Economic Future*

**PREPARING THE NEXT GENERATION FOR A LIFETIME OF SUCCESS**

A key piece of President's Obama's education agenda is supporting comprehensive and effective early learning programs for children from birth to age 5. The first five years of a child's life has a lasting impact on their learning, health, and behavior. Economists, business leaders, and child development experts agree that smart investments in early education are vital if we want to close the achievement gap and ensure our children are well prepared to thrive in school and in life.

Nearly 12 million children under age 5 regularly spend time in child care arrangements and children with working mothers spend on average 36 hours per week in such settings. But currently there are no federal quality standards for child care and families are left with a patchwork system of child care with mediocre quality. Our children deserve and need better. By 4 years old, children from low-income families are already 18 months behind most other 4 year-olds. From the start, education reform should include early learning, or we miss out on 5 critical years. A comprehensive range of high quality early learning opportunities from birth through age 5 is necessary to give children what they will need to grow and succeed.

To ensure more kids reach kindergarten ready to succeed, the Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act includes an Early Learning Challenge Fund to increase the number of low-income children in high quality early learning settings. Specifically, the legislation will:

**Invest \$1 billion each year in competitive grants to challenge states to build a comprehensive, high quality early learning system for children birth to age 5 that includes:**

- ✓ **Early learning standards reform.**
- ✓ **Evidence-based program quality standards.**
- ✓ **Enhanced program review and monitoring of program quality.**
- ✓ **Comprehensive professional development.**
- ✓ **Coordinated system for facilitating screenings for disability, health, and mental health needs.**
- ✓ **Improved support to parents.**
- ✓ **Process for assessing children's school readiness.**
- ✓ **Use data to improve child outcomes.**

**Transform early learning programs by insisting upon real change in state standards and practices:**

- ✓ **Build an effective, qualified, and well-compensated early childhood workforce** by supporting more effective providers with degrees in early education and providing sustained, intensive, class room focused professional development to improve the knowledge and skills of early childhood providers
- ✓ **Best practices in the classroom** by implementing research-based early learning standards aligned with academic content standards for grades K-3.
- ✓ **Promote parent and family involvement** by developing outreach strategies to parents to improve their understanding of their children's development.
- ✓ **Fund quality initiatives** that improve instructional practices, programmatic practices, and classroom environment that promote school readiness.
- ✓ **Quality standards reform** that moves toward pre-service training requirements for early learning providers, and adopting best practices for teacher-child ratios and group size.