



AGENDA ITEM 9

DATE OF MEETING: January 27, 2010

ACTION: X

INFORMATION:

Annual Report – Fiscal Year 2008-09

SUMMARY OF REQUEST

Staff will present the final draft of the First 5 California Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2008-09 (FY 08/09) to the Commission for review and approval.

BACKGROUND

The California Children and Families Act of 1998 (the Act) states that First 5 California shall:

Conduct an audit and prepare a written report on the implementation and performance of the state commission functions during the preceding fiscal year, including, at a minimum, the manner in which funds were expended and the progress toward, and the achievement of, program goals and objectives.

The Act also states that:

The written report shall include a listing, by category, of the aggregate expenditures on program areas funded by the state and county commissions pursuant to the purposes of this act, according to a format prescribed by the state commission.

The First 5 California FY 08/09 Annual Report is the third Annual Report to contain data collected under the new annual reporting Guidelines introduced in February 2006. The report is organized into four chapters:

1. First 5 California Overview – a brief history of First 5 California, its structure and audit findings, and FY 08/09 highlights
2. First 5 California Services – a summary of how First 5 California supports administration, public education and outreach, and research and evaluation
3. First 5 California Programs – an overview of First 5 California funded programs
4. California County Commission Program Focus Areas – a synopsis of the services provided by county commissions

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Commission approve the draft Annual Report and its submission to the Governor, the Legislature, and county commissions, as required by statute.

HIGHLIGHTS

First 5 California programs fully leverage funding, skills, and systems to deliver high quality services to improve family functioning, early learning, and health for children ages 0 to 5 most in need. First 5 California's Power of Preschool (PoP) program, Comprehensive Approaches to Raising Educational Standards (CARES), and its contributions to the Healthy Families program demonstrate this dynamic.

With funding from First 5 California, WestEd recently completed a report titled *Factors that Influence the School Readiness of California's Young Children: A Needs Assessment* that identifies the gaps that exist between services and the needs of California's most vulnerable children. The study highlights the lack of quality early learning experiences for children ages 0 to 5.

A low percentage of children who are eligible for subsidized early learning programs are actually enrolled:

- Eight percent of children ages 0 to 2 are enrolled
- Thirty-seven percent of three-year-olds are enrolled
- Sixty-five percent of four-year-olds are enrolled

Further, a 2009 RAND study found that only 13 percent of disadvantaged children are enrolled in **quality** early learning programs.

First 5 California's PoP program provides disadvantaged children with free, voluntary, high-quality, part-day preschool to assist them in becoming effective learners. PoP leverages Head Start, State Preschool, General Child Care, and Title I funds and adds quality dimensions related to teacher qualifications and the classroom environment. Thus, PoP builds off the existing system to create an enhanced early learning environment. A FY 08/09 pre- and post-program evaluation of PoP participants using the Desired Results Developmental Profile – Revised (DRDP-R) revealed that the number of children performing at the top level on four domains increased by:

- 737 percent – effective learners
- 561 percent – personally and socially competent
- 358 percent – physical and motor competence
- 589 percent – safe and healthy

Eight of the nine PoP counties provide access to CARES, which is designed to help teachers further their education so that they can meet PoP's rigorous teacher qualifications. First 5 California's CARES program provides early educators with financial

rewards and support so they can attain their educational goals. The integration of these two incentive-based programs, with state and federally funded programs, has created a model program in which the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

First 5 county commissions have also been successful in demonstrating the impact of preschool programs on young children. Orange County uses School Readiness funds to support a preschool program in 13 school districts. Twelve of the 13 school districts used pre- and post-program Desired Results Developmental Profile – Revised (DRDP-R) to evaluate program outcomes. After participation in the program, the percentage of children at the top two levels increased from:

- 3 to 55 percent for Effective Learners
- 5 to 39 percent for Personally and Socially Competent
- 30 to 87 percent for Physical and Motor Skills
- 15 to 75 percent for Safe and Healthy

These two programs highlight the success of First 5 preschool programs on a statewide level and a local level. In addition, the statewide program demonstrates the value of integrating programs to create greater impact. Our aim is to continually expand our reach and provide innovative programs to better the lives of California's youngest children.