



AGENDA ITEM: 9
DATE OF MEETING: April 21, 2010
ACTION: X
INFORMATION:

EDUCARE – A PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP TO NARROW THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP

SUMMARY OF REQUEST

First 5 California staff requests Commission approval to join a public-private partnership, including the Buffett Early Childhood Fund, the David and Lucile Packard Foundation and possibly The California Endowment, to establish three to four Educare early childhood centers in California. Educare is a nationally recognized model proven to significantly narrow the achievement gap for the most vulnerable children before they start school. Staff also requests an investment of up to \$2 million a year for three years beginning in Fiscal Year 2011-12 to support Educare programs and evaluation. This funding commitment would establish the needed state public dollars for the partnership and is necessary now to leverage a \$40 million private capital campaign led by our philanthropic and business partners

BACKGROUND

“These public-private partnerships are the only way we’re going to get there. If we continue to point fingers, if we continue to work in silos – when adults fight, kids lose. It takes adults putting egos aside, putting aside historical differences, and saying, ‘Let’s figure out a better way to do it.’ This – Educare – is a better way to do it and it’s starting to become a real national model.”

-U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan

Educare – What is it?

Educare is a state-of-the-art, evidence-based, full-day and full-year program being built across the country for at-risk children 0 to 5 and their families. Educare Centers, where infants and toddlers form roughly a third of the enrollment, are designed to meet the needs of today’s families who are making the transition from welfare to work and are recipients of a mix of Head Start, child care, and preschool services. Each classroom provides a Bachelor-degreed teacher, an assistant teacher with at least an Associate degree, and an aide from the community. All classrooms are supervised by teachers with Masters Degrees in early childhood. In addition, each Educare Center employs family support staff and social workers to ensure that each family’s comprehensive needs are addressed.

Educare provides quality learning environments to help its students arrive at kindergarten healthy and ready to learn. The Buffett Early Childhood Fund and the Ounce of Prevention Fund joined forces in 2000 to work with local public and private partners in communities across the country to establish Educare schools. These schools comprise the growing consortium known as the Bounce Learning Network.

Each Educare Center in the Bounce Learning Network is a unique public/private partnership that embarks on a new way of doing business. Educare provides the comprehensive early learning services to at-risk children and families that science tells us are necessary in order to narrow the achievement gap beginning at birth. Yet Educare has a larger end game, which is to better prepare all at-risk children for success in school and life by intentionally serving as a catalyst for broader local change.

The power of the Educare Model is due largely to the combination of these core features functioning together in a comprehensive, intentional, and sustained way to achieve a high quality early childhood program that helps children grow up safe, healthy and eager to learn. Educare is a new way of doing business when it comes to preparing very young children growing up in low-income families for success in school and life.

Educare is built on four (4) major premises. It is:

- A **partnership** between the private and public sectors to create a high-quality, birth-to-five program that achieves higher levels of quality.
- A **place** that nurtures early learning, is a beacon of hope for the community, and sends a firm message that we must invest in early childhood – because children are born learning.
- A **platform for change** with each Educare school serving as a “showroom for quality” and a catalyst to drive broader policy and systems change statewide and nationally.
- A **program** to prepare young, at-risk children for school by implementing the approaches and practices that science tells us are necessary to help young children grow up safe, healthy, and eager to learn.

Does Educare Work?

Perhaps some of the most powerful effects of Educare come in the form of data. The Frank Porter Graham Institute at the University of North Carolina is overseeing the national evaluation of the Educare Centers in the Bounce Learning Network. In addition, each Educare site hires a local evaluation partner. The evaluation is documenting implementation and outcomes of Educare programs – measuring

progress toward fully implementing Educare's core features and – assessing ultimate impact with young children and families.

The early results reveal that Educare is working. Early data from Educare programs in six cities – Chicago, Denver, Milwaukee, Omaha, Seattle and Tulsa – reveal promising results in preparing at-risk children from birth to five for later academic achievement.

Why Is It Important?

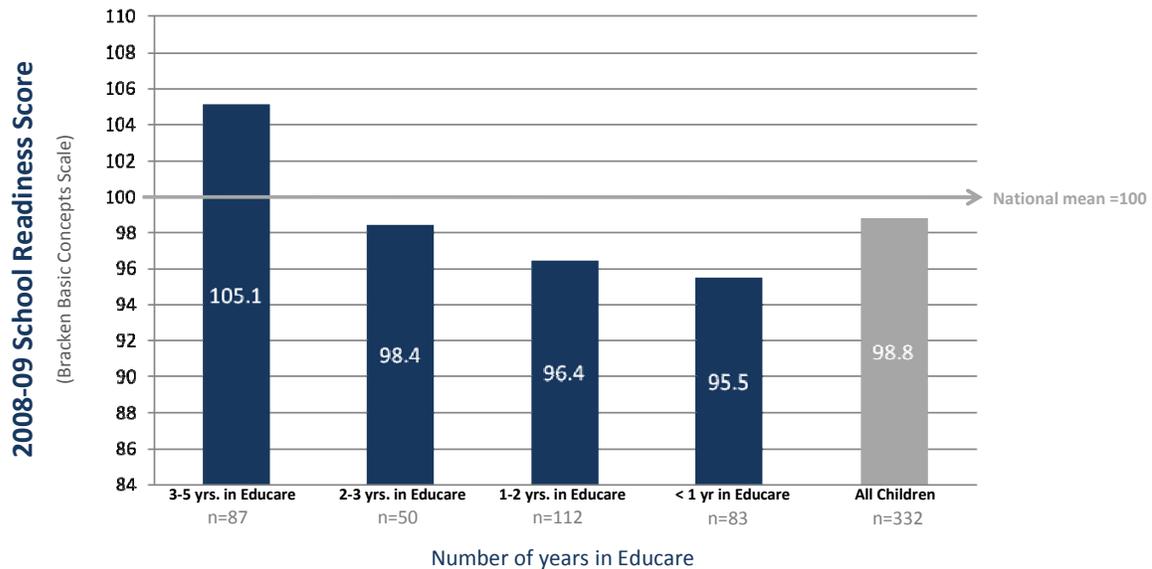
Comprehension of concepts, such as colors, letters, shapes, sequence, and self-awareness, are important early learning skills for classroom success. Children from high-risk populations, such as those served by Educare Centers, typically score far below the national average and are usually developmentally several months behind their more advantaged peers.

The Earlier the Better

While all children are positively impacted by Educare, those who enter the program at an early age receive the greatest benefits. Evaluation data show that more years of Educare attendance are associated with better school readiness and vocabulary skills. Children who begin the Educare program earlier in life score better on measures of school readiness – with those kindergarten-bound children who joined Educare between birth and 2 years-old **exceeding the national average by 5 points**. This pattern persists even after controlling for risk factors, such as maternal education, race and teen parent status.

At-risk children who receive five full years of Educare enter school on par with their more advantaged peers. In other words, Educare children who receive the full five-year “dosage” start kindergarten – as rigorously measured by the Bracken school readiness instrument, the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test and other normed assessments – on a level playing field rather than already behind. Starting early matters! This is especially true with dual-language learners, California's largest demographic.

School Readiness: Children who spend more years in Educare emerge better prepared for kindergarten



Ounce of Prevention Fund 1/22/2010

6-Site 2009 Data – Adjusted Means. Source: Yazejian, N. & Bryant D.M. (2009). Promising early returns: Educare implementation study data, March 2009. Chapel Hill: FPG Child Development Institute. Note: This sample includes English-speaking children only.

Public/Private Partnerships

Private dollars build the building, but that does not begin until an Educare contract is signed to create the operating budget through cross-organizational partnership. The facility intentionally is designed to rival corporate child care centers in quality, thus leveling the playing field across economic lines in the same way public school kindergartens attempt to do.

The building also serves as a catalyst: school districts, state and local governments, and Head Start/Early Head Start grantees must be willing to blend multiple public funding streams into one facility and forge a plan for working together. Only through collaborative partnership can there be an operating budget robust enough to support certified teachers, low child/staff ratios, and small class sizes. Private dollars, such as those from private foundations and corporations, supplement the publicly funded operating budget with gap funding to reach the Educare-levels of quality that research science shows is needed.

Anchor funders for Educare Centers in other communities include the Buffetts in Omaha, the Buffetts and the Richard and Ethel Herzfeld Foundation in Milwaukee,

businessman and philanthropist George Kaiser in Tulsa, the Chambers Family Fund in Denver, the Inasmuch Foundation in Oklahoma City, the United Way of Miami-Dade, the Gustafson Family Foundation in West DuPage, Illinois and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation in two Washington State communities.

Packard Educare Feasibility Study

The David and Lucille Packard Foundation funded WestEd to conduct a two-phase feasibility study of Educare in California. WestEd developed site selection criteria based on the Educare framework and initially explored the possibility of an Educare site in 11 California counties. The initial phase of the research focused on county capacity including Early Head Start/Head Start presence and capacity, school district receptivity and the potential of land acquisition preferably adjacent to an elementary school. Phase-two research focused on private funding possibilities, a connection to the political and business climate to address greater policy change and school superintendent commitment levels.

WestEd is now beginning to develop the planning grant Request for Proposals with Packard and additional resources from the Bounce Learning Network. Packard anticipates that planning grants will be announced in June 2010 and the funded counties will move into a planning phase that includes working with the local county commissions. The selection process was designed to ensure that Educare centers will be located in geographically diverse regions of California and that the programs will be located in areas that ethnically represent California's diverse population.

State Stories - Demonstrating Evidence-Based Practice and Leading Programmatic Changes

Educare is intentionally designed to "radiate out" into the community, to transform practice and to help build a more skilled early childhood workforce. It is a multiplier with regard to advocacy for high quality early childhood education and also with regard to greater workforce development in the larger community. For example, Educare of Miami-Dade also offers a complete resource library and trainings for parents, teachers, providers and business leaders. By doing so, Educare can model best practices and deepen the skills necessary to improve the quality of programs available to children. The resources, education and training provided by Educare benefits over 5,000 adults and 80,000 children annually. Educare of Miami-Dade's Early Childhood Program Administrator's Institute has benefited approximately 20,508 children in its two-year run alone. Similarly, Educare of Denver is situated adjacent to the Clayton Institute and Training Center. This allows the campus to serve as a robust demonstration site for teacher education, leadership development, coaching and consulting, parent engagement and program evaluation to improve the quality of early childhood services throughout Colorado.

More recent Educare schools are also designed to include observation rooms off the classroom spaces that allow for interns, practicum students, other providers, and visitors to experience firsthand what effective early learning looks like and what infants, toddlers, and preschoolers need to succeed. Partnerships with local universities and community colleges, such as in Maine and Arizona, further bring the student into the day-to-day work of Educare, giving them the oft-missing opportunity to hone their skills in a high quality birth-to-five environment.

Furthermore, the work of the public-private partnership behind Educare of Central Maine has been a model for bottom up-top down communications about how best to improve the early childhood systems in the state, using Educare of Central Maine as a demonstration site. There are also efforts underway to incorporate some components of the Educare model into the top rating of Maine's Quality Rating and Improvement System.

DISCUSSION

First 5 California Authority

The vision of Educare is in direct correlation with the First 5 California's strategic plan and the development of its Signature Programs. Educare sites would create a tangible and observable effort that encapsulates everything First 5 California is trying to accomplish – quality programs to help narrow the achievement gap – and to attract other funders to the early childhood education conversation. Educare is also complementary to two other efforts First 5 California plays a leadership role in: the Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC) and the Early Learning Quality Improvement System (ELQIS) Advisory Committee.

Once implemented, Educare will:

- Serve the needs of California's most vulnerable children and families.
- Connect First 5 California to a nationally recognized early childhood education strategy and program.
- Implement the elements of effective early childhood education that are supported by substantial research and practice.
- Create the type of early learning elements that will leverage federal funding and once again make California a leader in the field of early learning and development.

Strategic Plan

The First 5 California 2008 Strategic Plan includes several objectives that support the direction of investing in Educare:

Strategy 1.4 – Early Care and Educational Development: Facilitate and support early care and educational development for all children 0 to 5.

Objective 1.4.2 – Participate as a partner in a statewide effort to increase quality, access and/or availability of early care and education, such as preschool, infant/toddler, or school readiness programs.

Strategy 2.2 – Seed Innovative Pilot Programs – Invest in demonstration projects promoting systemic change.

Objective 2.2.1 – Research and recommend innovative pilot projects such as increasing quality preschool spaces, Children's Zones, and Educare sites and school-based health centers.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the State Commission approve First 5 California's role as a public funder in the public-private Educare Quality Early Learning Model and invest up to \$6 million over three years to support the development, operation and evaluation of three to four Educare Centers in California.

FISCAL IMPACT

This investment requires up to \$6 million of First 5 California funds and leverages a potential of between \$30 to \$40 million in private funds for capital development in addition to ongoing annual private and public funds (federal funds, state and county). First 5 California's funds will not begin to be utilized until FY 2011-12 and will be expended only after private funding has been realized. Our commitment will launch the private capital campaign that is needed before the programs can be operational.

Educare annual budgets range from \$2.6 to \$3.6 million. Each Educare facility serves at-risk children from birth to 5 years and their families. First 5 California funds would contribute to bridging the gap between current quality and funding levels and the higher level of quality to be reached by Educare programs.

These funding streams may include:

- ▶ Federal Head Start/Early Head Start
- ▶ U.S. Department of Education—Title I and Even Start
- ▶ Federal Child Care and Development Block Grant
- ▶ State education dollars
- ▶ First 5 county commissions
- ▶ Local school district dollars
- ▶ Parent co-payments
- ▶ Private sector support

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

Description of Alternative 1

Approve a lower funding amount for Educare.

Pros

- Funds could be used to support other core services.

Cons

- May not be enough public funds to fully launch Educare in California or leverage private dollars.

Description of Alternative 2

Do not approve the funding request.

Pros

- Funds could be used to support other core services.

Cons

- Educare may not materialize in California to serve those in greatest need, as well as the early care and education community.
- Lose opportunity to lead effort to leverage millions in private funding to support critical issues.

FUNDING REQUEST FISCAL DETAIL

Title of Request:	Educare Funding Approval				<input type="checkbox"/> Contract <input type="checkbox"/> Program Disbursement <input checked="" 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 13 -14
New Amount Requested:	Up to	\$6,000,000	\$0	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000
Total Amount of Agreement:	Up to	\$6,000,000	\$0	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000
Proposed Funding Term:	July 1, 2011		Through	June 30, 2014		
First 5 California Account Name:	Education		Account Number	0634	Fund Availability Confirmed	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes By: _____
Statutory Purpose: Health and Safety Code 130105(d)(1)(B)	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 materials, 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	
		\$6,000,000		\$30 to \$40 million	\$35 to \$46 million	
Explanation: An investment of \$6 million of state First 5 California funds has the potential to leverage between \$30 to \$40 million in private funds for capital development. In addition, ongoing annual private and public funds will be leveraged from this initial First 5 California investment.						
Key Deliverable Descriptions					Deliverable Date	