



AGENDA ITEM: 7  
DATE OF MEETING: January 23, 2014  
ACTION:   X    
INFORMATION:           

## **EDUCARE PARTNERSHIP TIME EXTENSION**

### **SUMMARY OF REQUEST**

First 5 California staff requests Commission approval to extend the funding authority approved by the Commission in April 2010 to provide \$6 million to support the establishment of several Educare early learning and development programs, or Educare Schools, in California for Fiscal Years (FY) 2011-12 through 2013-14.

In 2010, the Commission effectively joined a public-private partnership, including the Buffett Early Childhood Fund and the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, to establish several Educare early learning and development programs 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 requests a three-year extension to use the remainder of the original \$6 million request (\$5.8 million) beginning in FY 2014-15 to support the operational costs of two Educare programs and evaluation. This funding commitment would establish the needed state public dollars for the partnership and is necessary to leverage over \$20 million in a private capital campaign led by 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 prenatal through age 5 and their families. Educare Schools, 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 with a high school diploma. Teachers with a Master's Degree in Early Childhood supervise all classrooms. In addition, each Educare School employs family support staff and social workers to ensure 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. Twenty schools are currently located in twelve states and Washington, D.C. These schools comprise the growing consortium known as the Bounce Learning Network.

Each Educare School 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 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 change.

Educare is built on four 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 Schools 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 by measuring progress toward fully implementing Educare's core features and assessing ultimate impact with young children and families.

The early results demonstrate Educare is effective. Data from Educare programs in twelve sites (Central Maine, Chicago, Denver, Kansas City, Miami, Milwaukee, Oklahoma City, Omaha [two sites], Seattle, and Tulsa [two sites]) reveal promising results in preparing at-risk children from ages birth to five for later academic achievement.

### **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 Educare sites 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. At this point in time, only two sites, Los Angeles and Santa Clara, have successfully completed this rigorous assessment project and have begun to establish a school.

### **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.

Educare schools around the country may also serve other purposes in the community. A school may function as a demonstration site, provide observation rooms for student learning, forge strong partnerships with local universities and community colleges, or provide a model in the design of a Quality Rating and Improvement System.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **First 5 California Request for Authority, No Additional Funds**

The vision of Educare is in direct alignment with First 5 California's Strategic Plan and was incorporated into 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 (i.e., increasing access to quality programs to help narrow the achievement gap and to attract additional funders to the early childhood education conversation.) Educare is also complementary to the federal Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge grant in which First 5 California plays a leadership role.

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 help California join other states' leaders in the field of early learning and development.

Due to several delays in the planned implementation, construction, and opening of two Educare Schools in California (Los Angeles and Silicon Valley-Santa Clara) the present funding authority approved by the State Commission in 2010 is expiring June 30, 2014. This action is a request for a time-only extension of the current funding commitment. It would continue First 5 California's participation and commitment to this important public/private partnership with the two planned Educare Schools.

### **Strategic Plan**

The draft First 5 California Strategic Plan (Agenda Item 8, January 2014) includes several objectives that support the direction of investing in Educare. The strategic framework and special priority areas (SPAs) and goals have already been adopted by the Commission and include "Support children prenatal through age 5 by providing culturally and linguistically effective resources, knowledge, and opportunities. . . ." and "Build public engagement in, investment in, and support of the optimal well-being and development of children prenatal through age 5, their families, and communities."

## **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends the State Commission approve the extension of First 5 California's role as a public funder in the public-private Educare Quality Early Learning Model and invest up to \$6 million (\$5.8 million remaining) over three years to support the development, operation, and evaluation of Educare Schools in California.

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

This investment requires up to \$5.8 million of First 5 California funds and leverages a potential of over \$20 million in private funds for capital development in addition to ongoing annual private and public funds (federal funds, state and county). The remainder of First 5 California's funds (\$5.8 million) will begin to be utilized in FY 2014-15 and will be expended only after private funding has been committed. Our commitment will continue planning and implementation activities that are needed before the programs can be operational, as well as a small portion of the first two years' beginning operations costs.

Educare annual operating budgets range from \$2.6 to \$4.8 million. Each Educare facility serves at-risk children prenatal through age 5 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