



AGENDA ITEM: 8

DATE OF MEETING: January 28, 2016

ACTION: X

INFORMATION: _____

FISCAL YEAR 2014–15 ANNUAL REPORT

SUMMARY OF REQUEST

This is a request for Commission approval of the First 5 California Fiscal Year (FY) 2014–15 Annual Report.

BACKGROUND

The California Children and Families Act of 1998 (Act) states 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:

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 2014–15 Annual Report is organized as follows:

- Brief history of First 5 California, its structure, audit findings, and partnerships
- California State Controller’s Annual Report
- Summary of how First 5 California supports children ages 0 to 5, parents, early learning teachers, and local commission programs
- County Commission Highlights
- Appendix outlining result areas and services

HIGHLIGHTS

First 5 California programs leverage funding, skills, and systems to deliver high-quality services to improve early learning for children ages 0 to 5 most in need. Summarized below are some of the key programs and resources funded by First 5 California, the most prominent of which are its three “Signature Programs.”

Child Signature Program

Built primarily upon the prior success of Power of Preschool (PoP) program and First 5 California’s current partnership with the Educare quality learning model, Child Signature Program (CSP) 1 and 3 were designed to increase the quality of early learning and development programs by implementing three research-based Program Elements:

- Instructional Strategies and Teacher-Child Interactions
- Social-Emotional Development
- Parent Involvement and Support

Both launched in 2012, CSP 1 focuses on supporting existing quality enhanced classrooms that initially participated in PoP, while CSP 2 focuses on providing quality improvement support through training and technical assistance to centers and classrooms in an effort to bring them up to the quality levels of classrooms participating in CSP 1. In 2012–13, every center and classroom in the 34 CSP 2 counties completed a Readiness Assessment (RA) and collected baseline data to determine levels of strength and identify areas for improvement. The Early Learning Systems Specialist (ELSS), a required position funded through CSP 2, is responsible for providing support to classrooms and sites in all aspects of the program.

In FY 2013–14, with assistance from the ELSS, every classroom and some sites used the RA results to complete an Improvement Plan (IP). The IP identifies priority areas for program improvement efforts. The ELSS assisted in the development of the IPs and the coordination and facilitation of training, technical assistance, and other support to classrooms and sites to facilitate quality improvements identified in the IPs. In FY 2014–15, full implementation of IP goals and objectives was underway. The ELSS worked strategically with sites and classrooms to accomplish objectives to improve classroom quality. Professional development and coaching were key areas where efforts were focused along with ongoing collaboration and support to each of the 34 counties that participated throughout the three-year program. As a result, the quality of early learning provided to children enrolled in CSP 2 classrooms was increased.

Launched in spring 2013, CSP 3 allowed CSP 2 counties not currently participating in CSP 1 to apply for two years of Quality Enhancement (QE) funding for classrooms meeting Teacher/Provider Qualifications at the First 5 Quality Level and CSP Baseline

Criteria. The purpose of CSP 3 is similar to that of CSP 1 in terms of Quality Enhancements for qualifying classrooms. CSP is constantly evolving and improving with continuous support for staff, coordinated services for families and children, and strong local partnerships. Program data for FY 2013–14 show CSP 1 and 3 served children at risk of school failure, especially children of low income families. Seventy-nine percent of classrooms were in State Preschool or Head Start programs that enroll children based on income-eligibility requirements. On average, classroom quality was high as evidenced by scores from the Environment Rating Scales (ERS) and Classroom Assessment Scoring System® (CLASS®) instruments. Most classrooms, whether QE or Maintenance of Effort (MOE), met CSP program standards: Environment Rating Scale global scores of 5; and CLASS domain scores of 5 for Emotional Support, 3 for Classroom Organization, and 2.75 for Instructional Support, thresholds of quality that have been shown to impact child outcomes. Further, teachers in both QE and MOE classrooms reported their children made developmental gains as measured by the Desired Result Developmental Profile (DRDP 2010) observational tool.

During FY 2014–15, CSP 1 and 3 included 1,350 classrooms serving over 23,500 children. These classrooms consisted of children with special needs (4 percent), infants and toddlers (4 percent), and dual language learners (58 percent).

Teacher Signature Program

Teacher quality is a key contributor to children’s learning and success. First 5 California’s Comprehensive Approaches to Raising Educational Standards (CARES) Plus program provides early educators with professional education and support designed to help them attain their educational goals. The primary goals of CARES Plus are to:

- Improve the effectiveness of the early learning workforce
- Positively impact the learning and developmental outcomes of young children
- Increase retention of the early learning workforce
- Offer support services and stipends to encourage professional development

Two validated tools are used to measure the impact of specific professional development components on CARES Plus participants:

- The CLASS®. The system consists of online, interactive, multimedia, self-paced courses, along with an assessment tool used to observe teacher-child classroom interactions.

- MyTeaching Partner™. This is an evidence-based professional development tool focused on improving classroom interactions through intensive coaching, classroom observation, and analysis of teaching practice.

Evaluation of the CARES Plus program indicates the program is highly valued by teachers who participated in different program components and that training was associated with improved quality of teacher-child interactions. Among participants surveyed during FY 2014–15, 82 percent found the training to be very useful for their professional development, 78 percent felt the training very much helped them become better teachers, 94 percent thought the program would help them continue in early care and education field during the next five years, and 91 percent believed their CARES Plus experience would have a very positive effect on children in their care. Analysis of CLASS® observation data for FY 2012–13 and FY 2013–14 showed participation in evidence-based professional growth training was associated with improvements in mean scores in the CLASS domains of Emotional Support and Classroom Organization. Participation in one-on-one coaching (MyTeachingPartner™) was associated with improvements in all three CLASS domains (Emotional Support, Classroom Organization, and Instructional Support.)

Parent Signature Program

First 5 California recognizes parents as their children's first teachers. Through the public education and outreach efforts of its Parent Signature Program, First 5 California provides parents with the information and tools they need to raise healthy children who are ready to grow up healthy and thrive in school.

As part of this effort, First 5 California provides information and support for parents and other child care providers through a variety of media in six different languages, reflecting the rich diversity of California's population.

Hands-On Health Express

The Hands-On Health Express is a traveling exhibit van that seeks to educate parents and entertain children with hands-on activities about healthy eating and exercise. In FY 2014–15, the van traveled to more than 145 events and engaged with more than 96,332 people who received a wealth of information and left with First 5 California resources.

Kit for New Parents

The *Kit for New Parents* features a practical guide for a child's first five years, a health handbook, and other information on literacy, learning, child safety, developmental milestones, and finding quality childcare. In FY 2014–15, First 5 California distributed 287,309 *Kits for New Parents*.

Award-Winning Media Outreach: *Talk. Read. Sing.*®

Launched initially in spring of 2014, the first phase of First 5 California's *Talk. Read. Sing.*® media campaign continued through 2015. The purpose of this wide-reaching public education and outreach campaign has been to emphasize the importance of linguistic engagement between parents/caregivers and young children during their first five years of life to foster early brain development. Parents are encouraged to talk, read, and sing to babies and toddlers from the day they are born to foster early brain development and the formation of critical neural connections. The campaign was delivered primarily through television and radio ads, digital and social media, and a dedicated First 5 California Parent Website with information and strategies for parents.

To evaluate the impact of the campaign, approximately 1,000 interviews were conducted. The survey involved the use of both an opt-in panel combined with a population-based panel to increase the generalizability of the findings.

A few key findings included:

- 60 percent of target audience members could recall a First 5 California *Talk. Read. Sing.*® campaign TV ad on an unaided basis or by recognition. A third could recall or recognize a radio ad. Almost two-thirds (64.9 percent) reported either unaided recall or recognition of a TV or radio ad.
- Campaign exposure was associated with an increased propensity to engage in all three behaviors (talking, reading, and singing). This was after the study controlled for other potentially important influences on these behaviors.

Tobacco Cessation

In FY 2014–15, First 5 California contributed \$1.4 million to the California Smoker's Helpline (1-800-NO-BUTTS) to help parents and caregivers stop smoking. The Helpline provided services for 376 pregnant smokers and 6,397 tobacco-using parents and caregivers. This effort also included reaching out to doctors' offices encouraging them to discuss smoking cessation with their clients.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Commission approve the FY 2014–15 Annual Report and its submission to the Governor, the Legislature, and county commissions, as required by statute.

ATTACHMENT

- A. Draft First 5 California Fiscal Year 2014–15 Annual Report