July 28, 2016

SUBJECT **DUAL LANGUAGE LEARNER PILOT** **Strategic Priority Area 1. Children and Families:** Support children prenatal through age 5 and their families by providing culturally and linguistically effective resources, knowledge, and opportunities for them to develop the skills needed to achieve their optimal potential in school and life. **Goal 1.2. Early Learning:** Children birth through age 5 benefit from high-quality early education, early intervention, family engagement, and support that prepares all children to reach their optimal potential in school and life. **Activities:** Develop and implement a DLL pilot building on existing research and best practices with input from and in collaboration with the First 5 Association, First 5 county commissions, and other partners. Evaluate the effectiveness of the pilot to share and disseminate scalable aspects of the model.	☒ Action ☐ Information

SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE

In a rapidly globalizing and increasingly multi-cultural world, the value of bi- and multilingualism cannot be overstated. California has both an opportunity and an obligation to cultivate and develop this asset across our incredibly diverse state. To do this effectively, we must examine recent findings around language development and brain science, and couple this with research, demonstration, and innovation around the pedagogical, engagement, and training models that best support dual language learners (DLLs), their families, educators, and caregivers.

Through investment in a DLL Pilot, First 5 California (F5CA) has the opportunity to identify effective strategies that support dual language development across early learning settings, engaging families to support their children's dual language development, and delivering effective professional learning opportunities so educators, caregivers, and program administrators can effectively support the learning and development of young DLLs. F5CA will share and promote the findings of the pilot

broadly, across California and the nation, promoting far-reaching scalable and implementable support for addressing this critical area of need.

RECOMMENDATION

F5CA staff recommends the state Commission approve a five-year investment of up to $20 million in the DLL Pilot from Fiscal Year (FY) 2016–17 to 2020–21.

BACKGROUND OF KEY ISSUES

Examining the Need

Evidence indicates supporting bilingualism from the earliest moment yields wide-ranging benefits. These benefits include cognitive and social advantages early in life, with later benefits including increased long-term employment opportunities and competitiveness in the workplace.[1] Further, brain science increasingly demonstrates children are capable of learning more than one language at the same time, and developing bi- or multilingualism is easiest at young ages.[2] Research also indicates children who are continuously exposed to more than one language from a young age have increased grey matter density and more efficient synaptic connectivity in regions of the brain associated with language processing. These benefits translate to increased memory, attention, and other executive functions.[3] Research further indicates children who are DLLs may be better at self-regulation and have fewer behavior problems, with advantages in social-emotional skills persisting into elementary school.[4] Not only are these critical benefits, but some studies indicate the extent of these benefits is greatest for children exposed to two languages before the age of five.[5]

Although the research is clear, our current system does not support DLLs to realize all the benefits described above. Some recent studies indicate that, on average, DLLs enter kindergarten behind their peers, particularly in the areas of language, literacy, and mathematics. Research also finds increasing disparities in academic achievement between DLLs and their English-as-a-first-language counterparts as children progress through their educational careers, including high school and college drop-out rates.[6]

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[1] Callahan, R. M., & Gándara, P. C. (Eds.). (2014). The bilingual advantage: Language, literacy and the US labor market (Vol. 99). Multilingual Matters.
[2] HHS (2015) Presentation Summary for Supporting Children with Disabilities Who Are Also Dual Language Learners. Retrieved from http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/teaching/practice/docs/dd-webinar-05-2015-Followup.pdf
[3] Kaiser, A., et al. (2015). Age of second language acquisition in multilinguals has an impact on grey matter volume in language-associated brain areas. Frontiers in Psychology, 6, 638.
[4] August, D., & Shanahan, T. (2006). Developing literacy in second-language learners: Report of the National Literacy Panel on language-minority children and youth. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
[5] Mechelli, A., Crinion, J. T., Noppeney, U., O'Doherty, J., Ashburner, J., Frackowiak, R. S., & Price, C. J. (2004). Neurolinguistics; Structural plasticity in the bilingual brain. Nature, 431.
[6] Espinosa, L. M. (2013). PreK-3rd: Challenging common myths about dual language learners: An update to the Seminal 2008 Report. New York, NY: Foundation for Child Development.

California is well poised to develop and cultivate bi- and multilingualism by supporting young DLLs. In California, 60 percent of children birth through age five live in a household speaking another language or English and another language (2014 California Health Interview Survey). This compares with 22 percent of children nation-wide.[7] The DLL population is the fastest-growing demographic in our state. Nevertheless, strategies to effectively engage and support DLLs in early learning and care settings are lacking, as are effective professional development and engagement strategies for educators, administrators, and families. The U.S. Departments of Health and Human Services and Education, in the recent *Policy Statement on Supporting the Development of Children who are Dual Language Learners in Early Childhood Programs* notes, "The lack of proven instructional practices and evidence-based models that effectively support the development and learning of children who are DLLs is also a contributor to the achievement gap."[8]

The sheer number of DLLs in California, coupled with the urgent need for deeper learning on effective pedagogical strategies to support these children, makes this a critical investment area for F5CA.

DLL Pilot: Opportunity and Intent

As early learning programs serve a more diverse population of children, early educators, caregivers, and administrators face specific pedagogical and leadership challenges. Educators and caregivers need adequate professional development and training focused on proven, effective strategies to successfully support multilingual and multi-cultural groups of children and to effectively engage their families. As part of this support, young DLLs need instruction and assessment in their home language so early childhood educators can fully understand what DLLs know and are able to do. However, lack of bilingual staff, limited access to other adults who speak the home language, and lack of valid and reliable assessment tools create a barrier to effective instruction and assessment. Finally, early learning programs need tools and strategies to value and support the professional learning and pedagogy described above.

F5CA developed a DLL Pilot Logic Model and Evaluation Questions to provide guidance and direction for the pilot project (Attachment A). The logic model outlines F5CA's opportunity to accomplish the following:

- Build a heightened level of awareness and responsibility for early learning professionals to implement culturally and linguistically responsive practices while engaging families

- Identify scalable, effective, high-quality supports and services specifically designed for young children who are DLLs so they thrive in early learning settings and beyond

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[7] Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics. (2015). America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-being, 2015. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.
[8] "Policy Statement on Supporting the Development of Children who are Dual Language Learners in Early Childhood Programs." U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. U.S. Department of Education. 2016. https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ecd/dll_policy_statement_final.pdf

- Develop and disseminate targeted messaging through F5CA's *Talk. Read. Sing.*® campaign, Trusted Messengers campaign, and the F5CA parent website to increase families' understanding of the benefits of bilingualism and biliteracy, encourage language preservation, and provide resources and activities to optimize their home language

DLL Pilot Description

F5CA intends to create an immediate and long-term impact for DLLs and their families that will align with efforts to educate and inform early childhood programs, caregivers, and families about the benefits of bilingualism and biliteracy. This immediate work will provide positive messaging to the public at large. This asset-based messaging will be complimented by the implementation of DLL Pilot activities. Information gleaned from DLL Pilot activities throughout the four-year implementation period will be incorporated into the current First 5 IMPACT training and technical assistance, including coaching institutes, so benefits can be shared across all 58 counties.

<u>Public Messaging</u>

F5CA proposes an immediate focus on positive public messaging about the benefits of bilingualism and biliteracy to change the paradigm from a deficit-based view of bilingualism to an asset-based view for the individual, family, and society. Targeted messaging will be embedded in the DLL Pilot to encourage language preservation, and increase family, early educator, and community members' understanding of the benefits of bilingualism and biliteracy.

<u>DLL Pilot Activities</u>

Another part of this work will be the development and release of a Request for Proposals (RFP) upon approval of the request to fund F5CA's DLL Pilot. The DLL Pilot will identify equitable and effective culturally and linguistically responsive strategies to better support young DLLs. The DLL Pilot will focus on the following priority areas while ensuring they are scalable and implementable across California's multilingual early learning settings:

- Culturally responsive effective teaching strategies, curricular approaches, and professional development to promote dual language acquisition, and optimize home language

- Proven practices to empower and partner with families of DLLs

- Appropriate child and program assessment tools to better support children who are DLLs

- Messaging will be incorporated within all sites

Required Partners

Through this work, F5CA will engage partners such as the First 5 Association and county commissions, local county office of education and school districts, institutions of higher education, early learning sites, community-based organizations, and other stakeholders to emphasize the collaborative effort necessary to support young DLLs, their families, their early learning educators, and programs. Sites selected must be participating in First 5 IMPACT.

SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS COMMISSION DISCUSSION AND ACTION

During the April 2016 Commission meeting, Commissioners expressed an interest in shifting the paradigm to address the benefits of bilingualism and to convey learning more than one language is an asset to individuals, families, and our society.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

F5CA anticipates investing in three to five pilots across the state. The anticipated investment for the DLL Pilot is approximately $20 million over five years (FY 2016–17 through 2020–21) while requiring local investments to leverage state funds. The funding allocation of $20 million would be from F5CA's Research Development account ($16 million) and the Education account ($4 million). The funds from the F5CA DLL Pilot will support two key areas with the following funding approximations:

1) DLL Pilots in several counties and/or regions, $14 million

2) Analysis, evaluation, and resource development, $6 million

ATTACHMENTS

A. Logic Model and Key Questions

B. Dual Language Learner Pilot Power Point