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Minutes: Children and Families Commission Meeting

Meeting Date and Location March 03, 2021
3:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

This meeting utilized the "ZOOM" conferencing platform pursuant to the provisions of the Governor's Executive Order N-29-20 dated March 17, 2020, which suspends certain requirements of the Ralph M. Brown Act.

VIDEO

Join Zoom Meeting
<https://zoom.us/j/95996428084>
Meeting ID: 959 9642 8084
Passcode: 195365

AUDIO (must dial in to hear and speak)
1-669-900-6833

Meeting ID: 959 9642 8084
Passcode: 195365

One tap mobile
+16699006833,,95996428084#,,,,*195365# US (San Jose)

Pledge of Allegiance The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Chair Thomas.

Swearing-in Ceremony – Supervisor Joe Baca, Jr.

Special Presentations Swearing Out Ceremony – Commissioner Corwin Porter, Public Health Director

Maternal Health Network presentation by Lisa Watson, Client Services Manager, Social Entrepreneurs, Inc.

Conflict of Interest Disclosure Commission members shall review agenda item contractors, subcontractors, and agents, which may require member abstentions due to conflict of interest and financial interests.

A Commission member with conflicts of interests shall state their conflict under the appropriate item and abstain or recuse from that item, as appropriate. A Commission member may not participate in or influence the decision on a contract for which their abstention or recusal has been recorded.

For conflicts requiring recusal, the Commissioner must log out of the Zoom meeting and then log back in after the discussion and vote has taken place on the item for which there is a conflict. For conflicts requiring abstention, a Commissioner should not participate in the vote or discussion but may remain logged into the Zoom meeting.

Attendees

Commissioners

- Joe Baca, Jr.,
- Jorge Escalante
- Margaret Hill
- Gary Ovitt
- Corwin Porter
- CaSonya Thomas
- Elliot Weinstein, M.D.

Staff

- Karen Scott, Executive Director
 - Ann Calkins, Executive Assistant
 - Traci Homan, Business Support Manager
 - Alejandro Gutierrez-Chavez, Staff Analyst II
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Changes to the Agenda

None

Report - Executive Director, Karen Scott

Legislative Updates

I would like to commend Chekesha Gilliam, the County's Government Relation Analyst for providing an excellent, comprehensive report on issues that are relevant to First 5.

The First 5 Association, on behalf of the First 5 (F5) Network, has signed on to an important Advocacy Letter, which aims to preserve preventative health care.

- #1 -To ensure that Prop 56 incentive payments, which support well-child visits, developmental screenings, pediatric specialty care, and trauma screenings, continue beyond next year's budget, we joined advocates to request that the suspension language be removed, not just delayed. Without action, Prop 56 incentive payments will be suspended by Fiscal Year 2022-23.

Policy & Advocacy Updates

In alignment with our Whole Child/Whole Family framework, the Association has signed onto three Budget Coalition efforts:

#1 - the EITC Coalition to expand tax credit benefits for ITIN filers (estimated to reach 500,000 children),

#2 - the ECE Coalition Budget request to significantly support the child care field,

#3 – An emerging group of health advocates promoting continuous Medi-Cal coverage for children 0-5 and 12-month coverage for women postpartum.

Last year, the F5 Network worked diligently on the Vape Tax when it was introduced as a budget proposal. The proposal did not include Prop 10 and threatened to further

reduce funding to our critical infrastructure. We advocated that Prop 10 entity along with an equivalency of 15 percent tax revenue be added into the language. The proposal did not move forward.

On February 10, we learned that Senator Caballero would be reintroducing the Vape Tax. While we do not have a bill number, the F5 Network/Association has taken a support position on the Vape Tax given the bill language we have seen. The bill will do the following:

- Assess an additional point of sale percent-based tax on vaping products -- the exact percentage is still to be determined and will be blank for introduction.
- Dedicate funding as follows
 - 15% to early childhood/ Prop 10
 - 26% to Public Health/ Prop 99
 - 59% to health care/ Prop 56
- Create the *Health Careers Opportunity Grant Program*, which Assemblymember Arambula is championing. That program would support medical professionals serving underserved individuals and underserved areas and would be funded through the 59 percent to Prop 56, with the exact amount yet to be determined.

Since the percentage of tax is not yet defined, we currently do not have estimates on revenue generation for Prop 10 Early Childhood Systems. We will know additional information once the bill is amended with more detail. We are working with Sen Caballero's office on these details.

Senate Bill 246

This bill was introduced by Senator Connie Leyva as the Child Care Stabilization Formula and the First 5 Association/Network has taken a support position. With SB 246, Senator Leyva proposes legislation that creates a single regionalized state ECE reimbursement rate system for childcare, preschool, and early learning services.

Currently, the ECE system uses two different reimbursement rate structures for early learning services: the Regional Market Rate (RMR) accounts for regional economic factors and is used to reimburse providers meeting Title 22 standards, while the Standard Reimbursement Rate (SRR) is applied statewide and is used to reimburse centers meeting Title 5 standards (which also meet Title 22 standards). As a result, the many early learning services and programs are not reimbursed at levels to adequately address the cost of providing quality care.

Specifically, the bill:

- Directs CDSS to develop, or hire a contractor to develop, a modernized reimbursement formula based on the components outlined in the state's Master Plan for Early Learning and Care, including, but not limited to, adjustments for market, program quality, child needs and characteristics, and state of emergency declarations by January 1, 2024.
- Requires the department to adopt an interim standard reimbursement rate based on the 2018 regional market rate survey by January 1, 2022.
- Creates a short-term crisis adjustment factor of 1.5 to compensate providers during a declared state of emergency.

- Creates a quality adjustment factor and explicitly notes that providers, regardless of setting, that meet quality standards receive said factor, including Family Child Care Home Networks.

As additional Background information: First 5 Association, alongside a number of First 5 county commission and ECE partners, supported SB 174 (Leyva) in 2019-20, which was held in the Appropriations Committee largely in anticipation of the Master Plan report. The current version of the bill looks very similar, with the addition of the "crisis factor", which creates the mechanism to provide additional funding relief to providers during a state of emergency -- this is applicable in our current public health crisis, but would also be applied to future disasters.

Our analysis shows that this bill will be critical to stabilizing the childcare field and providing additional resources to providers already operating on the thinnest margins. Inadequate reimbursement rates is limiting child care access, especially for children of color who remain on waitlists for available care. Additionally, the ECE Coalition budget letter previously mentioned and that was signed on to by the F5 Network, identified reimbursement rate increases and reform as a central issue for stabilizing the field and nurturing relationships between provider/caregivers.

This bill will be heard in the Senate Education Committee next Wednesday, March 10th. First 5 Association is seeking input on local plans of Counties related to the Federal COVID-19 Fiscal Relief Funds to Local Governments. The COVID Federal Relief package is moving through Congress and it is anticipated a final package will be determined by mid-March. The proposal includes several provisions related to early childhood priorities that the Association has advocated. It also includes a local fiscal relief fund that would provide support to counties and cities, as described on CSAC's website. All counties would receive funds under the proposed provision.

Some County Commissions, especially those that were successful in working with their counties to utilize CARES Act funding to support child care needs in particular, are initiating discussions within their Counties, e.g. with the CAO's office or Public Health, about the potential to dedicate some of the new COVID Relief Funds to early childhood given the significant impact on young children and families and the critical need to address that impact as part of the community and economic recovery, potentially utilizing funds to support key early childhood systems such as child care, mental health supports, and Help Me Grow.

If there are any Commissioners who are involved in this process, please contact me with any guidance and direction for any action that should be taken, all which will enable me to tell our story and share our approach from San Bernardino County.

Save the Date

The annual First 5 Advocacy Day event is scheduled for April 27, 2021 and will be virtual. The 2021 First 5 Advocacy Day is a great opportunity to meet with our lawmakers and emphasize the importance of prioritizing young children and families in all aspects of the state policy.

In addition, there will be a celebration known as *Dia de los Ninos/Dia de los Libros*, (*Children's Day/Book Day*), an event to celebrate early literacy, love of books, and dual language learners of all backgrounds. This virtual event is scheduled for April 30.

F5SB will be planning virtual legislative meetings for April 27. If any Commissioner would like to be part of any of the meetings/celebration, please contact Ann to assist you with registration and coordination.

REDI – Race Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

First 5 Association has embarked on a strategy to recognize, embrace and respond to issues of Race, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, whose acronym is REDI. This strategy will reach throughout our network, and throughout our work serving children and families in the State of California. Each region was asked to appoint a representative to work with consultants, to analyze data, to provide local input, etc. Ronnie Robinson, First 5 Staff Analyst II, was affirmed as our REDI representative for all Southern Region Counties.

In addition, in order to obtain perspectives from a varied pool of knowledgeable stakeholders at the County level, our consultants will be interviewing our very own Cindy Faulkner, Dr. Amy Van Schagen, Assistant Professor from CSUSB, who is involved with our Quality Start San Bernardino Consortium, and James Moses, our F5 Advisory Committee Vice-Chair.

Commissioners, if you have any questions about any specific topic discussed here today or not, please contact me and I will research and/or share.

**Advisory
Committee
Report**

Advisory Committee Chair Gary Ovitt reported that the Advisory members met on January 19.

At that meeting, James Moses was re-elected as the Committee's Vice Chair. Members engaged in listening and discussion on eleven agenda items from the following categories: evaluation, mental health services, family support services, early care and education, and implementation updates of the First 5 Strategic Plan.

Thirteen presenters offered information, PowerPoint presentations and various graphics on topics ranging from: Screening, Assessment, Referral and Treatment (SART) and early intervention services, Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), home visiting coordination, family resource centers, Family Community Support Partnership expansion, family childcare apprenticeship and "Barriers to Bridges". "Barriers to Bridges" is a program developed by Cal State San Bernardino to support child care providers and center-based teachers in the community who have experienced barriers such as computer and tech skills, not feeling comfortable in a classroom setting and financial assistance and would like to either attend higher education for the first time or return after having already taken some courses.

The next Advisory Committee meeting is March 23, 2021.

Item No.	CONSENT
1	Approve Minutes of January 6, 2021 Commission Meeting. Motion by Commissioner Hill and seconded by Commissioner Weinstein to approve the Consent Item. Pursuant to Government Code section 54953 (b)(2), a roll call vote was called as follows: Commissioner Baca, Jr.: Aye Commissioner Escalante: Aye Commissioner Hill: Aye Commissioner Ovitt: Aye Commissioner Porter: Aye Commissioner Weinstein: Aye

	Without further comment or objection, motion carried by unanimous vote.
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Item No.	DISCUSSION
2	<p>Approve and authorize issuance of a Request for Qualifications for an Auditor (RFQ 21-03) to conduct and prepare an annual audit and report of First 5 San Bernardino's financial statements for Fiscal Years 2020-2025. (Presenter: Debora Dickerson-Sims, Chief Financial Officer, 386-7706)</p> <p><u>Discussion</u> None</p> <p><u>Public Comment</u> None</p> <p>Motion made by Commissioner Weinstein and seconded by Commissioner Escalante to approve Item 2. Without further comment or objection, motion carried by unanimous vote.</p>

Item No.	INFORMATION
	<p>Receive information on First 5 San Bernardino's Changing Landscape: Impacts and Opportunities 2020-2021 Report. (Presenter: William Kariuki, Staff Analyst II, 386-7706)</p>
	<p>Receive information update on Prop 10 and Prop 56 revenue for Fiscal Year 2020-2021. (Presenter: Debora Dickerson-Sims, Chief Financial Officer, 386-7706)</p>
	<p>Receive information on approval of employment contract entered into by the County of San Bernardino upon request by the Children and Families Commission Executive Director for Arminda H. Loewenstein to provide services to the Children and Families Commission as an Accountant II effective February 13, 2021 through February 12, 2024. (Presenter: Karen E. Scott, Executive Director, 386-7706)</p>
	<p>Receive information on the cooperative agreement with Community Action Partnership of San Bernardino County to receive funding for \$16,500 to implement the California's Earned Income Tax Credit project and develop a partnership with United Way of California. (Presenter: Karen E. Scott, Executive Director, 386-7706)</p>

Public Comment None

Commissioner Roundtable

Supervisor Baca, Jr. expressed his pleasure to be serving on the Commission and is looking forward to working with each Commissioner. Supervisor Baca, Jr., commented positively on EVALCORP’s changing landscape report. Regarding kids transitioning back to school, he hopes this is something that can be addressed soon (socio-emotional issues, behavior, mental health) especially with the County’s plans to open the Preschool Services Department (PSD) and F5SB will consider partnering with PSD. The Supervisor was also glad that babies were included in the state legislation and hopefully this is an opportunity to increase revenue for First 5.

Commissioner Hill stated she misses seeing First 5 staff and her fellow Commissioners. Dr. Hill welcomed new First 5 staff member, Hope Loewenstein and Supervisor Baca, Jr. Dr. Hill wished Corwin Porter the best as he is leaving the Commission. Dr. Hill commented that the presentations made today were very good and thanked the staff for their continued good work and diligence in producing each month’s Zoom Commission meetings.

Commissioner Escalante was happy to see everyone and welcomed all who are new to First 5.

Commissioner Ovitt welcomed Supervisor Baca, Jr and Ms. Loewenstein. Mr. Ovitt appreciated today’s presentations and looks forward to meeting up with everyone again in person. Mr. Ovitt also stated he is glad that the important work of First 5 is still getting accomplished and is pleased to be a part of it.

Commissioner Porter appreciated the privilege and opportunity to serve on the Commission. Mr. Porter stated there is great work that is being done for the children in our communities throughout the County. Mr. Porter thanked and wished everyone well as they continue to make a difference for children and their families.

Commissioner Weinstein welcomed Supervisor Baca, Jr., and Ms. Loewenstein. He commented that his wife is a teacher and has been concerned about returning to school for in-person teaching. He stated a survey was conducted at his wife’s school and only half of the parents wanted their children to return to school. Commissioner Weinstein stated there is still a lot of concern in the community and hopefully we can find some information to help people understand what is going on.

Chair Thomas mentioned that possibly by April 3rd the County of San Bernardino will be well within the red tier. Chair Thomas suggested for staff’s consideration that the next Commission meeting be a possible hybrid meeting with socially distanced public in-person opportunities and still allow on-line participation in an effort to return to our traditional way of meeting.

Next Meeting *Wednesday, April 7, 2021 - 3:30 p.m.*

Attest

CaSonya Thomas, Chair

Ann M. Calkins, Commission Secretary

