

First 5 Solano Children and Families Commission

Minutes of Meeting – Tuesday, April 1, 2008, 5:30 PM D.H. White Elementary School 500 Elm Street, Multi-Purpose Room, Rio Vista, CA

Attendance

Commissioners: Dr. Sharon Tucker, Chair; Norma Thigpen, Vice-Chair; Dee Alarcón; Dan Ayala; Stephan Betz; Sheryl Fairchild and Dr. Elaine Norinsky.

Staff/Public: Commission staff and approximately twenty members of the public were present.

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at: 5:47 PM by Chairperson Tucker.

I. Greetings and Introductions

Commissioners and staff introduced themselves.

II. Consent Items

Commissioner Alarcón moved to approve the Commission Meeting Agenda for April 1, 2008. The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Betz moved to approve the Minutes of the March 4, 2008 Commission Meeting with the following amendment: delete the last two sentences under agenda item VII (Evaluation Report). The motion passed unanimously.

III. Rescheduled Consent Items

There were no rescheduled consent items.

IV. River Delta Update

Christina Arrostuto, Executive Director for First 5 Solano, introduced the Assistant Superintendent of the River Delta Unified School District (RDUSD), Robert Hubbell.

Mr. Hubbell introduced the speakers for the River Delta presentation: Aurelio Haro and Kathy Torrez-Lopez from the Migrant Education Program, Araminta Blackwelder of Rio Vista CARE and Holly Pauls, the Courtland Healthy Start Coordinator.

Ms. Pauls explained the background behind the Healthy Start initiative and the geographical boundaries for RDUSD. RDUSD is unusual in that there are parts of three different counties within its boundaries. Approximately 50% of the students in the District live in Rio Vista, which is in Solano County.

Mr. Haro informed the Commission that the population, including children, in RDUSD changes continually based on the time of year. Migrant families arrive in the spring and summer, and then move on when the harvest is over. The Migrant Education Program's "First Teacher" program is home-based. Each teacher employed by this program serves 20 children. Ms. Torrez-Lopez explained to the Commission that the preference is for children to be placed in a center, since that

would provide the best education for that child. However, if that is not possible, employees do home visits and work with the students and parents. Barriers to placing preschoolers in centers include transportation and cost to the families.

Ms. Blackwelder introduced Rio Vista CARE board members and staff to the Commission. The Rio Vista CARE Family Resource Center (FRC) has been a First 5 Solano grantee for over seven years. This has enabled the FRC to reach out to previously underserved and unserved, isolated families in Rio Vista. To date this fiscal year, the FRC has served over fifty unduplicated families, providing services to help families improve parenting skills, become more self-sufficient, become more attentive to their children's health needs and become engaged in school and community activities.

Cheryl Lynn de Werff from the Solano County Office of Education (SCOE) gave the Commission an update on Preschool for All (PFA), including activities in and around Rio Vista. The initiative is currently focused on providing more child care slots and providing educational opportunities for child care providers. Child Development, Inc. is working on bringing 48 child care slots to Rio Vista.

Linda Costlow, principal of D.H. White Elementary school in Rio Vista, informed the Commission that this summer will be the first time the school has a "pre-kindergarten academy". This academy is being partially supported First 5 Solano (Executive Director special projects fund).

Linda VanDeMaele, school nurse for D.H. White Elementary, spoke to the Commission regarding the benefits students have received by visits from the dental van in the past. D.H. White encouraged preschools and parents of students to bring younger siblings not yet in school, which resulted in many children age five and under being served by the dental van in Rio Vista. This year, First 5 Solano is supporting two visits from the dental van.

Lin Batten, Executive Director of First 5 Sacramento, distributed a list of programs and services that First 5 Sacramento helps fund in the River Delta school district, including neighborhood grants and children's health insurance programs. Over the next four years, First 5 Sacramento is focusing on expanding their school readiness programs, including bringing the program to two elementary schools in RDUSD. She also distributed a handout showing the core and optional services that will be available to applicants for school readiness expansion funding.

V. Public Comment

Michael Opredek, Deputy Director of Mental Health for Solano County Health and Social Services, spoke about the Early Childhood Developmental Health (ECDH) Collaborative and the importance of collaboration. Mr. Opredek informed the Commission that the focus is largely on prevention, early intervention and conducting outreach and services out in the community. He also commented in support of Item V11.2 on the Commission agenda. The funding being requested for support of the Early Periodic Screening Diagnosis and Treatment (EPSDT) program in item number VII.2 would enable the program to draw down more state and federal funding by hiring someone to (among other duties) process the necessary paperwork to access funding.

VI. Letters Concerning State Budget and Legislative Issues

1. Proposed Motion: Consider authorizing the Chair to sign a letter to Kim Belshé, Secretary, California Health and Human Services Agency, in support of a rate increase for Partnership HealthPlan, Solano County's medical managed care plan provider.

Discussion: Commissioner Tucker read the motion into the record.

Commissioner Betz moved to approve the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Proposed motion: Consider authorizing the Chair/designee from April 2 – June 3, 2008 to sign letters (concerning FY2007/08 and FY2008/09 State Budget issues and other legislation) which are consistent with the Solano County Board of Supervisors 2008 Legislative Platform.

Discussion: Ms. Arrostuto informed the Commission that due to time constraints with the state budget process, there may not be time to bring each letter to the full Commission as issues arise. This motion would allow the Commission Chair or designee (Vice-Chair Thigpen or Ms. Arrostuto) in the absence of the Commission Chair to sign these letters as they come up.

Commissioner Ayala moved to approve the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

VII. Early Childhood Mental Health

1. Proposed Motion: Consider approval of up to 12 additional months (July 1, 2008-June 30, 2009) of funding for early childhood mental health services to existing providers as follows: Families First, up to \$280,883; Children's Nurturing Project, up to \$102,551; and Child Start Inc., up to \$32,960. Source of funding: Early Childhood Mental Health Initiative funds of up to \$571,650 previously allocated in the First 5 Solano 5-year Program Investment Plan.

Discussion: Commissioner Fairchild inquired as to what the ECDH Collaborative's position is on this item and what impact it might have on existing programs.

Debbi Davis, Executive Director of Children's Nurturing Project and Coordinator for the ECDH Collaborative, informed the Commission that the ECDH group represents over fifty different providers in Solano County. They have agreed that waiting to see if a merge with the MHSA plan is possible is in the best interests of the collaborative. By approving this motion, this will be made possible without interrupting services currently being provided.

Commissioner Betz noted for the record that two of the agencies receiving funding are Medi-Cal certified providers. While he is in support of providing funding to Medi-Cal certified providers, he does not support providing the \$32,000 to Child Start. Commissioner Betz stated that he will support this motion, but stated for the record that this will be the last time he will vote to support non-Medi-Cal certified providers receiving this funding.

Commissioner Norinsky moved to approve the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Proposed Motion: Consider approval of a reallocation of up to \$35,000 from FY2007/08 to FY2008/09, to Solano County Health and Social Services Mental Health, for support of early childhood mental health services through the Early Periodic Screening Diagnosis and Treatment (EPSDT) program.

Discussion: Commissioners Betz and Thigpen recused themselves from the discussion and vote for this item through the end of item VII.B.1 due to conflict of interest.

Ms. Arrostuto reviewed the staff report on this item and asked the Commission to direct staff to take a new look at how the EPSDT services are funded and bring back to the Commission some recommendations on how to strengthen this program in a more substantive way. This allocation will begin to support some administrative processes that have never been funded in the past.

Commissioner Tucker stated that her understanding is that this funding will improve the efficiency of payment of state and federal dollars to the county, which is why she will support it. However, as

programs are designed and funded in the future, these types of clerical needs should be planned and accounted for during the initial design of the program.

Commissioner Fairchild moved to approve the motion. The motion passed with five ayes and two abstentions.

VIII. Committee Meetings

A. Program Committee

There were no action items for the Program Committee.

B. Internal Systems Committee

1. Proposed Motion: Consider approval of changes to the BabyFirst Solano program and funding by up to \$130,500 as outlined in the staff report.

Discussion: Nancy Calvo, Director of Maternal Child and Adolescent Health for Solano County H&SS, informed the Commission that the BabyFirst program is wholly in support of the outline provided by Ms. Shipman in terms of working with the First 5 Solano staff and identifying unspent dollars to a) support the It's About My Baby program and b) fleshing out the BabyFirst Solano budgets and reviewing all the allocations for subcontractors and other items.

Commissioner Ayala moved to approve this motion. The motion passed with five ayes and two abstentions.

Commissioners Betz and Thigpen returned to the meeting.

2. Proposed Motion: Consider approval of a timeline and process for updating the First 5 Solano Long-Term Financial Plan.

Commissioners Alarcón and Thigpen informed the Commission that there was a good discussion on this item at the last Internal Systems Committee meeting and the Committee agrees that this is a very good plan. Commissioner Thigpen mentioned that she specifically requested looking at the Strategic Plan framework to see if there were any areas to which the Commission should specifically direct funding.

Commissioner Betz moved to approve this motion. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Commissioner Fairchild moved to approve a letter signed by the First 5 Solano Chair that addresses issues about First 5 funds and services. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Proposed Motion: Consider approval of the release of the previously allocated \$20,000 for the Co Sponsorship of Conferences and Training/Grantwriting Fund for FY2007/08.

Discussion: Michele Harris, Deputy Director for First 5 Solano, informed the Commission that the Internal Systems Committee met and discussed the report included in the Commission packet. The Committee determined that more discussion by the full Commission was needed regarding the purpose of the fund before the Committee could recommend any changes to the fund.

Commissioner Betz pointed out that this fund is used as a supplement to co-sponsor events, not as the only source of funding. Organizations applying for funding also bring in funds from other sources in the community to pay for these events.

Commissioner Fairchild commented that First 5 might want to consider re-evaluating the grantwriting piece of the fund and looking at whether those dollars were good investments. She also suggested looking at whether or not the fund should provide funds to the same organizations each year.

Commissioners Betz and Norinsky commented that the fund should continue to carry on the way it has been and that the fund is working well.

Commissioner Fairchild commented that it may be too soon to tell whether the grantwriting piece is a sound investment. She asked that the Commission give more time before then reevaluating this aspect of the fund. She agreed with other Commissioners' comments that the fund is working well for the co-sponsorship portion.

Commissioner Betz moved to approve this motion. The motion passed unanimously.

C. Community Engagement Committee

There were no action items for the Community Engagement Committee.

IX. Public Hearing: First 5 California FY2006/07 Annual Report

Proposed Motion: Consider acceptance of the First 5 California Children and Families Commission's FY2006/07 Annual Report, pursuant to Health and Safety Code Section 130150.

Discussion: Norma Lisenko, Community Programs Manager, reviewed a PowerPoint with highlights of the First 5 California Children and Families Commission's FY2006/07 Annual Report.

Commissioner Alarcón moved to approve this motion. The motion passed unanimously.

X. Commissioner Remarks

Commissioner Ayala informed the Commission that on March 14, 2008, he was invited to attend the Kindergarten Registration Health and Literacy Fair at the Veteran's Hall in Dixon. The event was a huge success and included doctors administering 150 immunizations and 180 children registered for kindergarten.

Commissioner Fairchild informed the Commission that Child Haven has a new Executive Director, Jane Johnson. Ms. Lisenko went to Child Haven for a tour and to deliver Kits for New Parents. This reminded Commissioner Fairchild how important it is for Commissioners to do site visits to First 5 Solano grantees. Also, Child Haven is having a fundraiser on April 23 at Ledgewood Creek Winery.

Commissioner Alarcón informed the Commission that she also attended the Kindergarten Registration Health and Literacy Fair at the Veteran's Hall in Dixon. She thanked all the staff who did such a wonderful job on the fair and the school district and high school volunteers.

Commissioner Thigpen attended the Solano County Board of Supervisors meeting this morning and received a resolution for April Children's Month.

Commissioner Tucker presented the First 5 Solano FY2006/07 Evaluation Report to the Solano County Board of Supervisors, who were very impressed with the data contained in the report and presentation. Commissioner Tucker also asked Commissioners to submit their input for Ms. Arrostuto's evaluation by Friday, April 4.

XI. Executive Director's Report

Ms. Arrostuto commented that the Solano County Board of Supervisors commented very favorably on the First 5 Solano FY2006/07 Evaluation Report presented by Commissioner Tucker and Steven LaFrance of LFA Group.

For April Children's Month, the Commission's support has allowed First 5 Solano to print advertisements in local newspapers with information on First 5 Solano grantees and events being carried out to celebrate April Children's Month.

Ms. Arrostuto informed the Commission that Commissioner Gossell has been nominated for the Annual Recognition Award from the Solano County Special Education Local Planning Agency (SELPA) Community Advisory Committee. The awards ceremony will be on April 17th.

XII. Future Agenda Items, Meeting Time/Date/Location

The next regularly scheduled Commission meeting will be held on **June 3, 2008 at 5:30 PM, Health and Human Services Center, Multipurpose Room, 2101 Courage Drive, Fairfield.** Future agenda items include: Presentation by Dr. Ira Chasnoff and the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) Report.

Meeting adjourned at 8:16 PM to the First 5 Solano Results Fair on Thursday, April 24, 2008 at 9:00 AM.

Heather Devaney, Administrative Secretary
Approved: