



EARLY CHILDHOOD COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION 20180411-6b

Date: April 11, 2018

Subject: Recommendations for high quality child care and Pre-K 3 investments in the Fiscal Year 2018-19 City of Austin budget.

Motioned By: Member Aletha Huston

Seconded By: Member Rebecca Harrison

Recommendation

The Early Childhood Council endorses and recommends Council action on all items for Council Consideration included in the High Quality Child Care and Pre-K 3 Report developed in response to Council Resolution 20170928-057. This recommendation is for Council to include all four funding items for Council consideration in the Fiscal Year 2018-19 City of Austin budget.

Description of Recommendation to Council

Council passed Resolution No. 20170928-057 which requested information on twelve separate deliverables related to community data, equity gaps, and potential policies and resources that could provide opportunities to expand existing affordable high quality child care services and access to Pre-K.

As part of the response process to this resolution, Austin Public Health convened a Quality Child Care and Pre-K 3 Resolution Work Group which was comprised of local community experts on high quality child care who worked together with City staff to gather and compile community wide data and provide input on policy, best practices, and funding priorities. Additionally, the Work Group developed four categories of items for Council Consideration.

Consideration: Leverage up to \$112,000 in State funding per classroom per year by investing in one-time startup costs associated with setting up new Pre-K 3 classrooms, including up to eight classrooms in Austin Independent School District and up to 3 classrooms in Pflugerville Independent School District. Continue to invest in the expansion of Pre-K 3 by exploring opportunities with these and other school districts for similar investments in future budget years (\$176,000 based on \$16,000 in one-time costs per classroom, with up to 32 children served per classroom for half-day curriculum).

Background: According to the Texas Education Agency (Appendix Y - Pre-K Partnership Implementation Guide), “it is estimated that only 5 out of 10 children enter Texas kindergarten classrooms ready to learn and be successful in school. Therefore, half of our youngest learners may not have the ability to follow routines or multistep directions, sustain attention to a task, hold a book, identify letters and sounds, sequence ideas, take turns or sit up during circle time. Pre-kindergarten programs are vital for developing these skills and more.”

AISD has been able to open up Pre-K 3 classrooms with assistance from outside funders that have provided the start-up cost for the classrooms. Approximately \$16,000 per classroom includes expenses related to furniture, manipulatives, and curriculum. In order to continue to expand Pre-K 3 classrooms, AISD relies on funders for these startup costs. Each classroom provides half day services for 2 classes of 16 students each. Each student

enables school districts to draw down \$3,500, for a total potential of \$112,000 in state leveraged funds per classroom.

In discussions with some of the school districts fully or partially within the City of Austin including Austin, Del Valle, Manor, Pflugerville, and Round Rock, the only school districts that have capacity to expand Pre-K 3 in the near future that also have classroom space that can be made available include Austin Independent School District for up to eight classrooms and Pflugerville Independent School District for up to three classrooms. The City of Austin could enter into a partnership with these school districts to fund the one-time start-up costs for those eleven classrooms for a total of \$176,000.

Surrounding school districts have seen an increase in enrollment, which creates a challenge for available classroom space and staff capacity to expand programs or create new programs. In future years, there may be opportunities to expand the City's partnerships with Austin and/or Pflugerville Independent School Districts, and/or enter into a partnership with Del Valle, Leander, Manor, and/or Round Rock Independent School Districts to expand availability of Pre-K 3 services for Austin children and leverage additional state funds.

Consideration: Leverage up to \$280,000 in State funding and expand community-based Pre-K partnerships that could serve up to 80 children in high quality centers. Partner with Texas Association for the Education of Young Children (TAEYC) to provide scholarship funding for eligible child care and Head Start teachers to earn Texas State Teacher Certification through the Alternative Teaching Program (ACC, Huston- Tillotson, Region XIII Service Center). (\$41,800 annually with 5 student participants)

Background: In order to increase access to high quality Pre-K programs, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) allows districts to partner with organizations and private providers for community-based Pre-K partnerships in high quality settings. These partnerships allow the district and community partners to utilize available per student ADA state funding. Currently AISD partners with several NAEYC accredited child care centers, TRS 4 Star Centers, and Child Inc. Head Start centers for community-based Pre-K partnerships using a contract for educational services model. In this model, the community partner provides the Pre-K services on site which requires the center to employ a teacher with a Texas EC-6 Teacher Certification. For each eligible student enrolled in Pre-K 3 or Pre-K 4 in the classroom, the AISD/Center Partnership is able to access and pull down the State allocated ADA funding for Pre-K students of approximately \$3,500 per student annually. In current agreements for these partnerships, AISD keeps 20% of the funding and the centers providing education receive 80% of funds for qualifying students. Most students concurrently qualify for child care subsidy funding which is matched to cover a full day of care. Not all students in the classroom must qualify or be enrolled as concurrent AISD Pre-K students – the state funding is only allocated for those who are eligible and enrolled through the school district. Classrooms can vary from as few as 1 to as many as 16 students that qualify for free public Pre-K.

This partnership model is effective in expanding access to high quality Pre-K, especially for families who need full day care. It also allows districts to expand Pre-K enrollment without the burden of additional facilities and other expenses that challenge their ability to expand. In addition, the state funds leveraged into the community child care centers can be used to invest in quality initiatives including, but not limited to increasing compensation to staff whose wages fall drastically below their counterparts in public schools. TEA states that these partnerships raise the quality, capacity and continuity for the early childhood education community as a whole.

The greatest barrier to expanding community-based Pre-K partnerships is the lack of State certified educators working in child care programs. The wages of teachers in local child care center averages \$11.39 per hour. Therefore, few certified teachers that meet the high quality standard educational requirements choose employment in these settings.

However, there are often center staff who have Bachelor's Degrees in fields other than child development who have chosen to teach in the child care centers. Alternative Certification Programs offer the opportunity for such staff to earn a teaching credential while concurrently teaching in the community-based program, leveraging available state funding. Alternative Certification involves evening and weekend coursework and a paid internship with supervision as well as passing certification exams, and can typically be completed in 18-24 months. Scholarship funding for alternative certification not only elevates the quality of early childhood education in centers but also provides access to state Pre-K funding that will continue beyond the certification program once they have a credential. Under the current pilot program, scholarship recipients have committed to employment for at least 18 months after their certification.

Teachers enrolled in Alternative Certification programs can complete their paid teaching internships within their centers of employment while concurrently providing Pre-K instruction to enrolled students. Therefore, during the year of paid teaching internship, the return on the investment of this scholarship is up to \$3,500 per student enrolled (if enrolled for the full year). Essentially, as long as at least 4 students are enrolled in a class per Alternative Certification Candidate, the return on the investment covers the cost of the scholarship (at approximately \$10,000 per student).

In 2017-2018 this is approximately \$3,500 per student. Under the current contract, the Center receives 80% of this funding and AISD keeps 20%. As of 1/30/18, there are 201 Pre-K 3 and Pre-K 4 students enrolled through community-based Pre-K partnerships in either licensed child care centers or Head Start (Child Inc.) centers which is leveraging \$703,500 in state funding.

A pilot program of 5 candidates is currently in place through partnership with TXAEYC, Workforce Solutions Capital Area, and United Way for Greater Austin. Results of this pilot can be used to help refine candidate and center criteria for scholarship funding. To date, three of the five candidates have earned their probationary certificate and have invoiced to pull down AISD funds to date.

Budget:

The budget below is for the current pilot program. There are additional supports beyond certification program tuition costs including paid release time for observations and study, support from a professional staff counselor from TXAEYC T.E.A.C.H. program. This model has been utilized in supporting staff to pursue AA and BA degrees through the T.E.A.C.H. program nationally and locally for nearly 7 years. It also requires accountability and investment from the child care center of employment as well as the teacher candidate.

Pilot Program Budget	
Administrative Costs	750
Personnel	2000
Other (Lease, Utilities, Insurance, Accounting, Professional Development)	2360
Miscellaneous (printing, phone, fax, web support, postage, licensing, supplies, travel, outreach/recruitment, advisory)	1800
Total Non-Scholarship Expenses	\$6,910

Tuition/fees	25000
Materials/Books	600
Travel	1875
Certification Testing and Fees	400
Release Time/Student Teaching	3500
Bonuses	2000
Total Scholarship Expenses	\$33,375
TOTAL PROGRAM EXPENSES	\$40,285

Consideration: Invest in a partnership with the Austin Community College Child Care and Development Department to accelerate child care teachers through the CDA Preparation Certificate to improve quality of child care services for approximately 280 children (\$137,600 annually with 20 student participants).

Background: The ACC Child Care and Development Department is proposing an accelerated schedule for the CDA Preparation Certificate. Students will be able to take two courses per semester and complete 19 credit hours within one academic year to receive a certificate. Students will have access to technology, tutoring, college services, and study time while being on campus for a full day per week. The benefits of offering this degree through an accelerated schedule format (two courses/one day per week) is to eliminate barriers to degree completion. Some of the major barriers identified by students to successful completion are transportation to campus (multiple trips & traffic), access to internet and technology (computers, printers), extended study time, academic support/tutoring, leaving work to attend class, attending school in the evenings during family time, and access to child care during evening class times. This certificate requires strict attendance to meet the required CDA training hours. Students who are funded through sponsorship will have a mandatory on-campus schedule on class day totaling 8 hours. Students attending classes will not lose wages or leave days because a substitute teacher will be provided to the child care center in which the student works. Employers will have continued coverage for the child care classroom without disruption to the workplace. Students completing this degree will receive a Level I Certificate and will have completed the training hours required for a CDA. All courses articulate into the Child Development Associate Degree should the student continue their education goal.

CDA Preparation Certificate Degree Plan (19 Credit Hours)

- CDEC 1354 Child Growth and Development
- CDEC 1311 Educating Young Children
- CDEC 1419 Child Guidance
- CDEC 1321 The Infant and Toddler
- CDEC 1318 Wellness of the Young Child
- CDEC 1341 CDA Preparation for Assessment

Estimated cost for the Certificate

- Tuition total: **\$1860.00** (in-district tuition)
- Textbook approximation: **\$1080.00**
- Incentive for degree completion: **\$100.00 (optional)**
- Substitute teacher: \$96/per day (approximate \$12/hr) **\$3840.00**

TOTAL COST per teacher: \$6880.00

Consideration: Economic Development Department and Austin Public Health should work with United Way for Greater Austin, Early Matters Greater Austin, and other community partners to understand and define the needs for a consultant to study potential incentive programs and public

private partnerships that could be effectively implemented in Austin around quality child care (Estimated \$75,000 for consultant cost)

Background: As discussed in the context provided by the Economic Development Department included in the section regarding Deliverable 5 of this report, Economic Development Department and Austin Public Health could work with United Way and other community partners to understand and define the needs for a consultant to study potential incentive programs and public-private partnerships that could be effectively implemented in Austin around quality child care. The Work Group believes that a community-defined scope of work for a consultant to explore could yield a framework for a program that would incentivize local employers to either provide high quality child care on site, or provide subsidies for their employees that need child care.

The Early Childhood Council recommends the City Council include all four funding items for Council Consideration developed by the Work Group that are included in the High Quality Child Care and Pre-K 3 Report developed in response to Council Resolution 20170928-057 as part of the Fiscal Year 2018-19 City of Austin Budget.

Rationale:

The Work Group that developed these items for Council consideration included representation from the Early Childhood Council, and the Early Childhood Council received updates throughout the process regarding development of the items. It should be noted that services for Pre-K 3 will be provided to those deemed eligible, which includes children unable to speak English, educationally disadvantaged (those eligible to participate in free or reduced-rate lunch program), homeless children, children of members of the armed forces, children in the custody of the Department of Family and Protective Services, with the full list of eligible criteria here: <https://tea.texas.gov/ece/eligibility.aspx>. These funding items have the potential to improve school readiness and greatly expand access to affordable and high quality early care and education, which is aligned the goals of the Early Childhood Council and would benefit the community as a whole.

Vote

For: Members Alvarez, Burson-Polston, Conlin, Harrison, Hill, Huston, and Wren

Against: None

Abstain: None

Recuse: Chair Elsner

Absent: Vice Chair Sanchez and Members Garcia, Paver, and Semple

Attest: *[Staff or board member can sign]*

Lawrence Elmer, Chair, Early Childhood Council