



Legislation Text

File #: 18-0877, **Version:** 1

Recommendation to receive and file the Citywide Strategic Plan on Early Childhood Education from the Health and Human Services Department. (Citywide)

In 2016, the City of Long Beach established the Early Childhood Education Program (ECEP), which was housed within the Health and Human Services Department (Health Department). The ECEP works to organize and support existing Citywide efforts to address and improve the City's capacity for early child care and education, and is staffed by a part-time coordinator, which is structurally funded through the General Fund. Additionally, the Health Department has leveraged staff who are covered by other funding sources to provide expertise across other social and health determinants of success in early childhood.

During the first few years of life, 700 new neural connections form every second, laying the foundation for future learning, behavior, and development. Experiences in the early years are critical in predicting life-long success, where children who have secure attachments, language-rich exposure, and safe, healthy homes are more likely to have lifelong success. Investments in early childhood education (ECE) help reduce the achievement gap, reduce the need for special education, increase the likelihood of healthier lifestyles, lower the crime rate, and reduce overall costs to society. In fact, every dollar invested in high-quality early childhood education produces a 7-10 percent return on the investment.

In 2017, the Health Department set out to develop a new five-year Citywide Strategic Plan for Early Childhood Education, to include young children living in all parts of Long Beach. The Health Department engaged the Long Beach Unified School District (LBUSD), the Long Beach Early Childhood Education Committee (LBECE Committee), City Council members, parents, ECE professionals, community partners, and young children through 22 focus groups and 19 key informant interviews to develop the goals, objectives, and actionable activities in this plan. The Long Beach Early Childhood Education Strategic Plan (Plan) highlights the work that is occurring now in Long Beach, identifies the needs that exist, and pursues focused interventions to close the gaps. This Plan utilizes an interdisciplinary, cross sector approach to ensure that young children in Long Beach are healthy, safe, and have equitable access to early educational opportunities.

The Plan identifies seven goal areas and aligns 87 strategies that focus on the current strengths of the community, consider the whole child, and ensure that all children and their families receive the respect and opportunities they need to succeed. The seven goal areas are:

1. Support and Build Strong Resilient Families;
2. Increase Access and Affordability of Infant Through Pre-K Early Care and Education

Services;

3. Support the Development of a Stronger Early Childhood Workforce;
4. Improve Quality Programs and Services for Birth to Age 8;
5. Ensure Children in Long Beach Live, Learn, and Play in Safe, Healthy and Accessible Environments;
6. Promote Partnerships to Address Access to Quality Basic Needs and Services; and,
7. Strengthen Alignment of Existing Governance Structure and Early Childhood Support Systems.

The Plan provides a cohesive strategy for the City's early childhood efforts, which include collaboration across departments, LBUSD, the LBECE Committee, and other ECE programs that work with young children and families throughout Long Beach. The Plan serves as a visionary document and does not yet include any direct funding. The Plan will be used to guide the work of the ECEP, establish an ECE Plan Oversight Committee to ensure community and parents work together to achieve the Plan's objectives, and to seek funding to implement the strategies. The creation of this Plan was partially funded through a Pacific Gateway Workforce Innovation Network (PGWIN) grant, received from U.S. Department of Labor.

This matter was reviewed by Deputy City Attorney Linda T. Vu on September 7, 2018 and by Revenue Management Officer Geraldine Alejo on September 10, 2018.

The Plan is intended to be an ongoing effort over the next five years with the understanding that the Plan will be regularly evaluated and communicated over that timeframe.

The total cost to develop the Plan was \$108,345, of which \$57,000 was funded by the PGWIN grant for the consultant hired to develop the Plan, and by \$51,345 in-kind services (focus groups, translation and various expertise services, and printing costs) from the Health Department. There is no fiscal or local job impact associated with this recommendation. The Plan is a visionary document with no direct funding to implement the recommended strategies. The work done throughout the Plan process will become the basis for future grant funding requests as the City seeks grants for these and other citywide priorities.

Approve recommendation.

KELLY COLOPY
DIRECTOR
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

APPROVED:

PATRICK H. WEST
CITY MANAGER