



COUNTY OF SAN MATEO
Inter-Departmental Correspondence
County Manager



Date: May 31, 2013
Board Meeting Date: June 18, 2013
Special Notice / Hearing: None
Vote Required: Majority

To: Honorable Board of Supervisors

From: John L. Maltbie, County Manager

Subject: Measure A Report: Library Summer Reading Programs

RECOMMENDATION:

Direct Staff to appropriate Measure A funding of \$328,300 in the FY 2013-14 Recommended Budget and \$206,300 in the FY 2014-15 Recommended Budget to provide supplemental funding to redesign and improve the summer reading programs offered by the 32 public libraries and by the San Mateo County Library bookmobile.

BACKGROUND:

At the February 12, 2013 Measure A Board Workshop, the Board of Supervisors' expressed interest in supporting library reading programs.

Libraries are the center of early literacy and lifelong learning in local communities. They provide a continuum of programs and services that begin in early childhood. Reading proficiency and literacy in children and teens is a strong predictor of educational attainment and future success. To succeed in school and life, children and young adults need ongoing opportunities to learn and practice essential skills. This is especially true during the summer months.

The Peninsula Library System (PLS) is a consortium of 35 public and community college libraries in San Mateo County working together to provide innovative and cost effective service to community members. Public library members include the San Mateo County Library (consisting of the cities of Atherton, Belmont, Brisbane, East Palo Alto, Foster City, Half Moon Bay, Millbrae, Pacifica, Portola Valley, San Carlos, Woodside, and the unincorporated areas of the county), Burlingame, Daly City, Menlo Park, Redwood City, San Bruno, San Mateo City and South San Francisco. The PLS mission is to strengthen local libraries through cooperation, enabling them to provide better service to their diverse communities. All PLS libraries encourage and support lifelong learning and educational achievement by offering annual summer reading programs.

DISCUSSION:

San Mateo County is home to approximately 160,000 children and youth under the age of 18. Despite declining state and local funding, libraries continue to partner with our cities, schools and community organizations to make an impact on children and their families, building critical literacy skills to prepare young children for school and life success.

Studies have shown that children can lose an average of two months of instruction during the summer months, or roughly 22% of what they learned during the school year. In San Mateo County, 42% of the 3rd graders are reading below grade level. This is a significant problem because 3rd graders who are unable to read at grade level are four times less likely to graduate from high school by age 18. According to one researcher, "Summer reading setback is one of the most important factors contributing to the reading achievement gap between rich and poor children".

Students who participate in summer reading programs are more likely to read at their grade level or higher. Last summer, 19,000 or only 12% of all county children and teens are participated in library summer reading programs and on average only 44% completed the program. Redesigning and enhancing Library Summer Reading Programs, especially programs in communities with high levels of students reading below grade level, will both improve reading and skills retention over the summer months which will contribute to better results throughout the school year.

To address summer learning loss among children and teens in San Mateo County, PLS Libraries propose to redesign and enhance their summer reading initiative. The proposal includes redesigning and piloting the new program in communities with low performing schools during the summer of 2014, evaluating the pilot and then modifying the program as needed prior to rolling it out Countywide in 2015.

The new reading program would focus on the following goals and action steps:

1. Increase summer reading participation and completion rates
 - Update and develop a compelling reading program that addresses low participation and completion rates
 - Expand outreach to children and parents in communities with low performing schools
 - Create an appealing campaign and expand marketing using innovative and effective methods
 - Develop an interactive online option that engages children and families, tracks reading progress, and sends program updates
2. Advance literacy and academic performance by engaging children, teens and families in reading and enrichment activities

- Implement updated, evidence based summer enrichment programs with a focus on children who likely suffer from summer reading loss
- Provide incentivized parent/family education workshops regarding the importance of reading
- Elevate the program to a more critical level through the endorsement or requirement of schools
- Expand summer volunteer/mentoring programs such as the Reader Leader program where teens are paired with young children to help improve reading

3. Increase library use

- Increase the collection of summer reading books at all locations and on the bookmobile
- Create and circulate a collection of digital summer reading materials and devices

Over two years, this initiative would allocate \$534,600 of Measure A funds to the Peninsula Library System. The Measure A funds would supplement the current City and Library investment of over \$300,000 for summer reading programs for a total annual investment of over \$600,000 in 2014 and \$500,000 in 2015. As noted above, the 2014 program would include a program redesign as well as pilot launch, tested at community libraries serving neighborhoods with low performing schools and other libraries interested in participating. In 2015, all 32 public libraries and the bookmobile would participate in the program, thereby increasing the participation rate.

Performance Measures

	2013 (expected)	2014	2015
Participating Students	19,000	32,000	48,000
Percent of Total County Students	12%	20%	30%
Program Completion Rates	44%	50%	60%

Results will be tracked to assess the impact of the program, and a final survey of parents will provide information on the percentage that would indicate if their child's interest in reading improved and/or reading level improved during the summer. Ultimately these efforts will decrease summer learning loss and increase children's access to books and interest in reading which should lead to improved school performance.

FISCAL IMPACT:

It is recommended that \$534,600 in Measure A funds be approved to redesign and expand summer reading programs for the next two years. The Measure A funds will

supplement about \$300,000 in summer reading program funds currently provided by the libraries, Friends of the Library and Foundations, and other community donations. It is recommended that \$328,300 be budgeted in FY 2013-14 to redesign and evaluate the program and \$206,300 be budgeted in FY 2014-15 to implement the re-designed program throughout the County.

Measure A Funds recommended in this Report:

Proposal	FY 2013/14	FY 2014/15
Summer Reading Program	\$328,300	\$206,300

Cumulative Measure A funds tentatively approved to date total \$8,767,388 in FY 2013-14 and \$3,043,567 in FY 2014-15 and are itemized below.

Cumulative Measure A Funds tentatively approved to Date:

Proposal	FY 2013/14	FY 2014/15
Library Capital Needs	\$2,000,000	0
Pescadero Area Mobile Health Van	\$551,180	\$402,359
Core Agencies and Thrive One-time Computer software purchase and system development (one-time)	\$300,000	\$25,000
Homeless Outreach Teams (ongoing)	\$150,000	\$150,000
East Palo Alto Homeless Shelter Operating Expenses (ongoing)	\$500,000	\$700,000
Parks Department (Note – One-time capital projects not included in FY 14/15 funding)	\$1,766,208	\$1,766,208
Parks Department Capital Projects (one-time)	\$3,500,000	0
TOTAL	\$8,767,388	\$3,043,567