



County of San Mateo

Inter-Departmental Correspondence

Department: COUNTY EXECUTIVE

File #: 22-272

Board Meeting Date: 4/19/2022

Special Notice / Hearing: None
Vote Required: 4/5ths

To: Honorable Board of Supervisors
From: Michael P. Callagy, County Executive
Subject: California Natural Resources Agency Grant Funding for The Big Lift

RECOMMENDATION:

Recommendation to:

- A) Adopt a resolution authorizing the acceptance of unanticipated revenue from the California Natural Resources Agency in the amount of \$1,000,000 for The Big Lift and authorizing the County Executive, or designee, to execute the grant agreement; and
- B) Approve an Appropriation Transfer request (ATR) authorizing the transfer of unanticipated revenue to The Big Lift in the amount of \$1,000,000.

BACKGROUND:

In 2012, the Peninsula Partnership Leadership Council (PPLC) - a coalition of government, education, nonprofit, foundation, and business leaders in San Mateo County - launched "The Big Lift" to significantly improve children's third grade reading proficiency through strategic, thoughtful, evidence-based investments in early learning and education. The Big Lift is a collective impact collaborative led by three agencies - Silicon Valley Community Foundation (SVCF), the San Mateo County Office of Education (COE), and the County of San Mateo (County).

The Big Lift focuses on seven San Mateo County communities where third grade reading proficiency score are close to or below the County average. Communities are defined by school district boundaries and include the following school districts: Cabrillo Unified, Jefferson Elementary, South San Francisco Unified, San Bruno Park Elementary, La Honda-Pescadero Unified, Redwood City, and Ravenswood City.

The Big Lift is based on evidence-based interventions including:

1. A comprehensive school readiness strategy focused on high-quality preschool for 3 and 4-year olds that leads to an aligned and sequenced set of high-quality learning experiences in kindergarten through third grade; and

2. A focus on reducing chronic absence in the early grades; and
3. Developing inspiring summer learning opportunities that enable children to maintain their academic and developmental gains; and
4. Supporting parents and caregivers as children's first and most influential teachers to provide rich learning environments in the home.

DISCUSSION:

The Governor has included \$1 million in grant funding for The Big Lift in the FY 2021-22 State budget. The grant is to be administered through the California Natural Resources Agency. In order to qualify for the grant funding, the County must submit a Project Information Package, including a resolution from the Board of Supervisors authorizing the acceptance of the grant funding.

The County proposes to spend the \$1 million on the following:

1) Inspiring Summers Expansion - \$700,000

The Big Lift Inspiring Summers Program is a well-established learning loss preventive intervention that aims to serve just over 1,200 rising kindergarten through third grade kids annually. Key elements include providing a full-day program for four weeks that involves three hours of literacy with a credentialed teacher in the morning, mid-day mindfulness activities, and afternoon STEAM activities. In addition to academic enrichment activities, the program provides breakfast, lunch and activities that engage families to support their children's learning in the home and connect them to community resources.

In Summer 2021, The Big Lift continued to provide a safe in-person program compliant with state and local COVID-19 regulations, even utilizing on-site nurses in 2020, to ensure the health and safety of children, families, and staff. The program met a critical need for student learning and enrichment early on in the pandemic, and resulted in an average 1.5 months of reading gains during the program.

In response to the pandemic-related need for additional learning supports and the demand experienced in summer 2021, The Big Lift's goal is to increase enrollment by 300 spaces.

2) Implementation of Reading Corps - \$300,000

Reading Corps is an evidence-based intervention under which AmeriCorps members work fulltime in preschool classrooms to assist teachers in creating literacy rich environments and ensure that the core pillars of early literacy instruction are happening. Through a combination of whole group, small group and one-on-one support, the following core pillars of early literacy development - as established by the National Early Literacy Panel - are addressed: 1) Oral language, conversation and comprehension, 2) Vocabulary and meaning, 3) Book and print concepts, 4) Phonological memory and awareness, and 5) Alphabetic principle and knowledge. Children are identified for small group and one-on-one support via a member-administered, research-based, developmentally appropriate early literacy assessment.

Reading Corps members receive multiple levels of support, including coaching and mentoring implementation to ensure fidelity to the curriculum and program model. Members are directly observed by both an internal and master coach, using a standardized observation tool to provide corrective feedback. In recent meta-analysis of high-dose tutoring, Reading Corps' impact on

kindergarten reading was among the largest of any impacts in the 96 programs studied, at 1.06 standard deviations.

The Big Lift's goal is to support a minimum of 15 Reading Corps members in Big Lift preschool classrooms for 9-10 months beginning in Fall 2022 and would serve approximately 360 kids.

The Big Lift is currently funded mostly by **Measure K**, with in-kind support from County staff, the County Office of Education, the San Mateo County Libraries, and from donations accepted through the Silicon Valley Community Foundation. This one-time grant funding from the State will allow for the aforementioned additions to the program without needed additional resources from the County, specifically **Measure K** funding.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no impact to the General Fund associated with accepting this grant funding.