



County of San Mateo

Inter-Departmental Correspondence

Department: COUNTY MANAGER

File #: 18-959

Board Meeting Date: 10/23/2018

Special Notice / Hearing: None
Vote Required: Majority

To: Honorable Board of Supervisors

From: John L. Maltbie, County Manager

Subject: Board of Supervisors' Response to the 2017-2018 Civil Grand Jury Report, "Spotlight: Early Learning Gets A Big Lift."

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the Board of Supervisors' response to the 2017-2018 Grand Jury Report, "Spotlight: Early Learning Gets A Big Lift."

BACKGROUND:

On August 2, 2018, the 2017-2018 San Mateo County Civil Grand Jury issued a report titled "Spotlight: Early Learning Gets A Big Lift." The Board of Supervisors is required to submit comments on the findings and recommendations pertaining to the matters over which it has some decision making authority within 90 days. The Board's response to the report is due to the Honorable V. Raymond Swope no later than October 31, 2018.

DISCUSSION:

The Grand Jury made ten findings in its report. The Board responses follow each finding and the eight recommendations that the Grand Jury requested that the Board respond to within 90 days.

FINDINGS

Finding 1:

As of 2015, approximately 50 percent of the county's third graders were not reading at grade level. For English learners, racial minorities, and economically disadvantaged children, that percentage decreases dramatically.

Response:

Agree.

Finding 2:

Children who are not reading proficiently by third grade have difficulty with later school success and are four times more likely to drop out of high school than peers who maintain grade level

achievement.

Response:

Agree.

Finding 3:

The Big Lift is an early learning initiative that incorporates evidence-based teaching approaches and learning strategies called “the four pillars:” (1) high-quality preschool, (2) summer learning, (3) reduction of chronic absenteeism, and (4) family engagement to support learning. These strategies are included in the program throughout its duration.

Response:

Agree.

Finding 4:

The Peninsula Partnership Leadership Council (PPLC), comprised of the County Board of Supervisors, the San Mateo County Office of Education, and the Silicon Valley Community Foundation, developed the Big Lift initiative to improve reading proficiency of participating third graders to 80 percent.

Response:

Agree.

Finding 5:

The 2017 BELL assessment showed that grade K-2 who attended Big Lift summer learning programs demonstrated a net gain of up to 3.5 months in pre-reading/reading skills.

Response:

Agree in part: Assessment data from the end of the Inspiring Summers program shows that scholars gained an average of 1.5 months of reading skills.

Finding 6:

The RAND assessment found that Big Lift preschoolers were significantly more likely than demographically similar children, who went to no preschool at all, to score in the kindergarten-ready range.

Response:

Agree in part. In addition, when comparing demographically similar children, Big Lift preschoolers were more likely to be kindergarten-ready than children who did not go to preschool at all. Big Lift preschoolers and non-big Lift preschoolers were equally likely to start school kindergarten-ready.

Finding 7:

In June 2018, San Mateo County and the Big Lift were recognized by the Learning Policy Institute as a model for the state for their efforts to improve early childhood education.

Response:

Agree.

Finding 8:

The Big Lift is funded by several sources. The County of San Mateo has pledged a total of \$20 million in Measure K sales tax monies, \$7.5 million has been received from the Social Innovation Fund (along with matching funds from participating school districts), and individuals, corporations and non-profits have donated approximately \$2.2 million in other grants. Big Lift funding is now secured through Summer 2018, but another \$11.4 million must be raised to support the pilot program to completion in 2020.

Response:

Agree. Funding for the Big Lift has been appropriated through June 2019.

Finding 9:

Planning for the continuation of the Big Lift beyond 2020 must begin now. It will take at least two years to extend and expand the program if/when the proof of concept is evidenced.

Response:

Agree.

Finding 10:

San Mateo County stands to benefit from the full completion of the five-year Big Lift pilot program in 2020.

Response:

Agree.

Acceptance of the report contributes to the Shared Vision 2025 outcome of a Collaborative Community by ensuring that all Grand Jury findings and recommendations are thoroughly reviewed by the appropriate County departments and that, when appropriate, process improvements are made to improve the quality and efficiency of services provided to the public and other agencies.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no Net County Cost associated with accepting this report.