

Date: September 26, 2024

Time: 4pm – 6pm

Location: City Hall – Hearing Room 2

Attendees:

Commissioners: Edgar Rodriguez-Ramirez, Jessica Jung (D-2), Kym Johnson (D-4), Lange Luntao, Melanie Moore, Priya Jagannathan, Rickey Jackson (D-3)

Staff: Jennifer Cabán, Nayeli Bernal

Presenters:

- Oakland Promise: Lauren Reed, Veena Pawloski
- First 5 Alameda County: Laura Schroeder, Vanessa Cedeño
- City of Oakland Head Start: Diveena Cooppan
- Oakland Unified School District: Jessica Cannon

Agenda Items:

1. Welcome

2. Roll Call

- Meeting called to order at 4:07pm.

3. Review of Agenda

- The meeting Agenda and Community Agreements were reviewed and affirmed.

4. Open Forum (Non-Agendized Items)

- No public comments.

5. Commission Minutes (July and August)

- Commissioners reviewed the minutes for the July and August Commission meetings. Commissioner Johnson motioned to approve both sets of minutes; Commissioner Rodriguez-Ramirez seconded. Motion unanimously approved.

6. Accountability Officer Memo

- The Accountability Officer (AO) highlighted that the RBA presentations were a significant milestone for the Oakland Children's Initiative. The focus of the meeting was to review the first full year of results-based accountability (RBA) measures for the early education and college access funds of the initiative to build shared understanding of the data infrastructure and the complexities both funds. The AO also underscored the importance of transparency, data

reporting, and accountability as core to the initiative, and that the feedback from the July retreat meeting had been incorporated into the presentation.

7. FY23/24 Results-Based Accountability Measures – Implementation Partner Presentations

- **College Access Fund Presentation** (Oakland Promise/Veena Pawlowski and Dr. Lauren Reed):
 - Key takeaways included increased service reach, positive impact of services, focus on serving people most impacted, data and infrastructure development, scholar persistence and completion, and expanding collaboration. FY24 highlights included:
 - 692 babies were enrolled in the Brilliant Baby program, 1627 students signed up for the K2C scholarship, and 1170 12th grade scholarships were awarded.
 - Families and students have reported positive signs of impact as a result of the services provided such as better work-life balance, covering essential expenses like housing and emergency costs, and reduced financial stress.
 - The Initiative is effectively serving those most impacted by structural barriers to education, including students who are traditionally underrepresented.
 - Significant effort has been invested in building and scaling data infrastructure, which is critical for monitoring and evaluating the impact of the programs. This includes enhancements to the enrollment systems, data collection, and analysis strategies.
 - The Initiative has deepened engagement with its partners across the city, prioritizing collective impact and building out partnership work. In FY 2024, nearly \$3 million was awarded to local partners, which has enabled further growth in outreach and support services for Oakland families.
 - Questions from Commissioners included:
 - **Mentorship and Persistence:** Commissioners asked about the role of mentors in the program and how they impact student persistence in post-secondary education. The response clarified that while not all students receive a mentor, there is a recruitment goal for more mentors, and some students may choose not to have a mentor if they already have other support systems.
 - **Comparison to Other Initiatives:** Commissioners asked why Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) was used as a

comparison for program effectiveness rather than peer organizations, like other College Promise programs. The response explained that while OUSD is used for context, there are plans to create a more refined comparison by developing a matched sample of students with similar demographic profiles.

- **Reaching Eligible Students:** Commissioners asked how many eligible students were being reached by programs and expressed interest in knowing how many students in OUSD and charter schools are not yet being served. They were particularly curious about how many K-8 students had been missed out on scholarships and program participation.
 - **Long-Term Outcomes and Completion Rates:** Commissioners inquired about the persistence data and the six-year college completion rates, and if the higher persistence rates seen in more recent years could be leading indicators for potentially higher six-year completion rates in the future.
 - **Program Alignment and Family Engagement:** Commissioners asked about the alignment between various Oakland Promise programs (like Brilliant Baby and K2C scholarships) to ensure that families feel supported throughout the continuum of services. The inquiry also touched on how families are being carried from one program to another and how data on family participation across multiple programs is tracked. This was addressed by discussing both programmatic and data-driven efforts to ensure seamless transitions and tracking across programs.
 - **Diversity of Enrollment:** Commissioners requested to see a breakdown of how many students come from district versus charter schools and whether the enrollment from these sectors was proportional to their overall student populations in Oakland.
- **Early Education Fund Presentation** (First 5 Alameda County/ Vanessa Cedeño and Laura Schroeder; City of Oakland Head Start/Diveena Cooppan; Oakland Unified School District/Jessica Cannon):
 - Key takeaways included holistic systems building, enrollment challenges and progress, increased capacity and program quality, facilities and capital improvements, serving vulnerable populations, workforce stability and growth, equity and enrollment gaps, and data and infrastructure development. FY24 highlights included:
 - The initiative successfully created 155 additional free and subsidized slots for children and improved the quality of

facilities and workforce development. For example, 374 children were served in improved early education spaces.

- Significant investments were made in staff training, with 30+ hours of professional development provided per staff member.
- Safety enhancements and playground upgrades were a major focus to ensure children are in safe, high-quality learning environments, with investments in ADA compliance and other quality upgrades.
- The initiative successfully reached children from low-income families, with approximately one in three Oakland children ages 3 to 4 benefiting from programs funded by the Early Education Fund. The program prioritized underserved communities, including a focus on geographic areas and racial demographics that align with high-needs populations.
- Building robust data systems was essential for tracking progress, ensuring quality, and measuring outcomes. However, challenges in securing comprehensive data sharing agreements and capacity within system partners (OUSD, City of Oakland Head Start) posed difficulties in scaling up data collection and analysis. There were plans to improve this infrastructure in the coming year to streamline data reporting and reduce administrative burdens.

○ Questions from Commissioners included:

- **Enrollment and Capacity:** One of the key concerns was around the enrollment rate and the overall capacity of the early education system. Commissioners wanted to understand why the enrollment rate remained at 74% and what specific challenges were contributing to the under-enrollment. They were particularly interested in the strategies to increase enrollment to reach the target of 90%, as well as how family navigators were playing a role in addressing these challenges.
- **Geographic and Racial Equity:** Commissioners sought clarification on how the initiative was ensuring that children from high-need zip codes and underserved racial groups were being reached effectively. Specifically, there were questions about the disparity in enrollment rates for Black/African-American children, and how First 5 was addressing these gaps through outreach and program adjustments.
- **Workforce Stability:** Questions were raised regarding the retention of early childhood educators, particularly about how First 5 and its partners planned to maintain or improve the retention rate. Commissioners were interested in understanding more about the specific supports provided to staff, including the role of professional

development and whether additional measures were needed to retain educators, especially given workforce challenges in the early childhood education sector.

- **Facilities Improvements:** Commissioners asked about the impact of facility improvements on both enrollment and the quality of care. They sought clarification on the types of capital improvements being made, how many sites benefited from these improvements, and whether there were plans for additional facility upgrades in the coming years to support more children and improve the learning environments.
- **Data Collection and Sharing:** There was significant interest in the data infrastructure and the challenges in collecting and reporting data across multiple public systems (Oakland Unified School District, City of Oakland Head Start). Commissioners asked about the data-sharing agreements and how First 5 planned to address the gaps in data collection, particularly in tracking individual-level outcomes for children across different programs. They also inquired about how the data would be used to inform future planning and improvements in the initiative.
- **Holistic Family Engagement:** Some Commissioners raised questions about family engagement and how the initiative was ensuring that families were supported in a holistic way, especially when transitioning from one early education program to another. They were curious about how family navigators were supporting parents and whether there were additional resources or strategies planned to help families overcome barriers to enrollment and participation in early education programs.

Wrap-Up & Next Steps

- Meeting adjourned at 6:05pm.