



**Agenda Item No. 2
September 7, 2011 Meeting**

DATE: August 18, 2011

TO: Children and Families Commission of Orange County

FROM: Michael M. Ruane, Executive Director

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael M. Ruane", is written over the printed name in the "FROM:" field.

SUBJECT: Promise Neighborhoods Early Learning Strategy

SUMMARY:

In 2010, The Bridgespan Group assessment provided a strategy for restructuring the Commission's portfolio of early learning investments to increase focus on evidence based strategies and outcomes, with a primary focus on measurably reducing the achievement gap that exists in Orange County. One of the four components of this recommendation was to focus on "place" by supporting community approaches to increase academic outcomes. This staff report provides an update on the Commission's continued support to improve educational outcomes at a high-need area within the Santa Ana Unified School District. The Commission, in partnership with THINK Together, Santa Ana Unified, and several public and private funders and community agencies is supporting another application under the U.S. Department of Education Promise Neighborhoods program.

Place: Support Community Approaches to Increase Academic Outcomes

Place-based strategies recognize that intensive efforts are required in high-need communities to address the multiple and significant challenges that disadvantaged children face in high need communities that may inhibit their health and school success. The Commission's work in engaging in this multi-sector work was recently highlighted in "Helping Communities and States Spread and Scale Up Integrated, Place-Based Initiatives for Children". This brief was developed through the Children's Outcome Project, a project supported by Nemours Foundation and The California Endowment.

Promise Neighborhoods

Promise Neighborhoods is a competitive funding opportunity overseen by the U.S. Department of Education. The vision of this program is that all children and youth growing up in Promise Neighborhoods have access to great schools and strong systems of family and community support that will prepare them to attain an excellent education and successfully transition to college and a career. Communities would achieve this goal by implementing a continuum of solutions that addresses neighborhood challenges and improves outcomes for children and youth. A rigorous and comprehensive strategy to improve schools is a key component of the project along with leveraging existing resources to promote a sustainable model.

Last year, Orange County's non-profit, government, philanthropic, education and health stakeholders came together to identify one priority Orange County site for a Promise Neighborhoods planning grant. Although Santa Ana was not selected as one of the 21 federally

funded grants under the Department of Education Promised Neighborhoods Program, the application was highly competitive receiving an average score of 93, and ranking in the top 35 of the 339 applications submitted. The Commission led the development of the application and program design for birth through kindergarten services. Despite the lack of federal funding, this past year, the planning group continued its work to design a plan to implement the model in one of the neediest areas of the County.

A new Promise Neighborhoods funding opportunity was released this summer and Commission staff has worked with the Santa Ana Unified School District, THINK Together and others to develop a responsive application (Attachment 1) for project implementation funds. Consistent with the terms of prior Commission authorization a letter of support was provided and Memorandum of Understanding was signed to confirm that the Commission would provide the cash match commitment of \$50,000 if the federal grant funds are awarded. Funding is available in the FY 2011/12 proposed amended budget. The match commitment also includes in-kind contributions from existing funded programs in the area including early learning and school readiness programs, and home visitation services.

A component of the grant application is the development of a neighborhood health center in Santa Ana, at a strategic location such as a school, to offer comprehensive and integrated health and educational services for students and their families. This is consistent with the Commission's priority to integrate health and educational services.

STRATEGIC PLAN & FISCAL SUMMARY:

The proposed actions have been specifically reviewed in relation to the Strategic Plan and are consistent with Early Learning and Capacity Building goals, among others. The proposed matching fund contribution in the amount of \$50,000 is available in adopted Budget. The specific allocation would be reflected in the FY 2011/12 Budget Adjustments presented at a subsequent Commission meeting.

PRIOR COMMISSION ACTIONS:

- September 2010 – Received update on Federal grant proposals and awards
- July 2010 – Received The Bridgespan Group Early Learning Portfolio recommendations

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Receive status report on Promise Neighborhoods Early Learning Portfolio Implementation Strategy.

ATTACHMENT:

1. Promise Neighborhoods Funding Opportunity

Contact: Alyce Mastrianni

Promise Neighborhoods Funding Opportunity

Funding	<p>Congress has appropriated nearly \$30 million to support a new set of planning grants and implementation grants. The U.S. Department of Education plans to award 4-6 implementation grants of approximately \$4 to \$6 annually. The grant period is 3 years with the potential for 2 additional years, bringing the total funding opportunity to approximately \$30 million. Additional funds may be awarded by the Department of Justice for plans that implement community safety strategies.</p>
Match	<p>The match amount for implementation applicants is 100% of the grant award, which also includes federal, state, public and private sources, and 10% of which must come from private sources.</p>
Santa Ana Promise Neighborhoods Partners	<p>Key Partners in Application:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -THINK Together (lead agency) -Santa Ana Unified School District -Children and Families Commission of Orange County -The California Endowment/ Santa Ana Building a Healthy Community Initiative -KidWorks -Santa Ana College -Neighborhood residents and other community partners
Proposed Project Focus Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Strengthen early childhood learning network -Increase learning time at Spurgeon Intermediate -Provide parent supports throughout the age continuum -Establish a Teen Health Center at Valley High School -Strengthen transition from Spurgeon Intermediate to Valley High School
Timeline	<p>Summer 2010: Community partners identified area of highest need and selected one site as priority for application</p> <p>FY 2010-11: Planning group continued to meet to work on: <i>Parent Engagement</i>— draft a common vision and goal for family engagement <i>Service Integration</i>— prioritize academic, community support and health services for the birth through career continuum <i>Data Integration</i>— map current data systems and capacities within collaborative agencies and explore strategies to effectively share data</p> <p>FY 2011-12: July 7– Application released December 31, 2011– Awards announced</p>

