

State of Texas
County of Bexar
City of San Antonio



Meeting Minutes
City Council B Session

City Hall Complex
San Antonio, Texas 78205

2021 – 2023 Council Members

Mayor Ron Nirenberg

Mario Bravo, Dist. 1 | Jalen McKee-Rodriguez, Dist. 2
Phyllis Viagran, Dist. 3 | Dr. Adriana Rocha Garcia, Dist. 4
Teri Castillo, Dist. 5 | Melissa Cabello Havrda, Dist. 6
Ana Sandoval, Dist. 7 | Manny Pelaez, Dist. 8
John Courage, Dist. 9 | Clayton Perry, Dist. 10

Wednesday, May 4, 2022

2:00 PM

Municipal Plaza Building

The City Council convened a regular meeting in the Norma S. Rodriguez Council Chamber in the Municipal Plaza Building beginning at 2:12 PM. Interim City Clerk Debbie Racca-Sittre took the Roll Call noting a quorum with the following Council Members present:

PRESENT: 11 – Nirenberg, Pelaez, Courage, Bravo, Perry, McKee-Rodriguez, Rocha Garcia, Viagran, Castillo, Cabello Havrda, Sandoval

ABSENT: None

ITEMS

1. Pre-K 4 SA program overview and briefing on the Pre-K 4 SA FY 2023 Annual Operating

Budget for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2022. [Alejandra Lopez, Assistant City Manager; Sarah Baray, Ph.D., CEO, Pre-K 4 SA]

City Manager Erik Walsh introduced the Item and gave a brief history of the Pre-K 4 SA Program (Program) and introduced Dr. Sarah Baray, Chief Executive Officer of the Program. Baray provided some statistics, enumerated the five strategic goals of the Program and announced that the Program was expected to expand in the 2022-2023 school year to serve 3-year-old children since the Texas Education Agency had expanded access to 4 year-old children at the Independent School Districts. Baray described the structure of family income eligibility, outreach initiatives, and engagement with families of pre-kindergarten age children not enrolled in the Program. Baray presented information on the quality of education provided by the Program and credentialing of Child Development Associates. Baray provided an overview of partnership and grant opportunities.

Baray presented a budget history from FY2020 through FY2023 including expenditures, revenue amounts and sources. Baray went into detail regarding the FY2023 proposed Budget which had been approved by the Pre-K 4 SA Board.

DISCUSSION:

Mayor Nirenberg opened the discussion by noting that the Program was living up to the promises made to voters and was pleased to see that the Program was expanding to 3-year-olds. Mayor Nirenberg requested information on the University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) Report and the Urban Education Institute Report and asked that Baray ensure that a longitudinal study of the impacts of the program on participant outcomes was performed.

Councilmember Cabello Havrda supported expansion of the program to 3-year-olds and suggested that she would like to see all 3-year-olds in San Antonio participate in pre-kindergarten programs. Councilmember Cabello Havrda recommended partnerships with child development centers and more outreach for parents of 3-year-old children. Baray confirmed that Pre-K 4 SA was working on those partnerships and outreach.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez wanted to ensure robust outreach to families most in need. Baray stated that adding new positions requested in the FY2023 budget would help them accomplish expanded outreach. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez suggested tapping into the free backpack drive program offered by his Council District Office to provide outreach. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez requested a “heat map” of where families lived that were enrolled in the Program and suggested an interactive tool to help families find services. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez asked Baray to describe efforts to provide support for teachers.

Councilmember Viagran recognized Council District 3 Board appointee Joseph De La Garza, Jr. Councilmember Viagran recommended outreach to daycare centers near the southside Pre-K 4

SA Center and wanted the Program to be inclusive. Councilmember Viagran asked how often the state updated the income models. Baray said that they were updated annually but were only statewide, not local. Councilmember Viagran recommended planning for increased future enrollment due to the higher level of births during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Councilmember Castillo noted the positive statistics and program benefits for children who had participated in the Program.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia asked for a meeting with Baray to discuss the best ways to assess progress made by participating children using the UTSA Early Education Institute key indicators. Councilmember Rocha Garcia recommended outreach at Trader's Village in addition to their outreach at Pica Pica Plaza and recognized the partnership with Texas A&M San Antonio for teacher training. Councilmember Rocha Garcia asked for a confirmation of the number of school days.

Councilmember Sandoval recommended that COVID-19 cleaning procures remain in place. Baray confirmed that the protocols were in place and that the children were healthier because they had learned good hygiene behaviors. Councilmember Sandoval requested a review of the expenditures for FY 2021 and 2022. She noted that operational systems and services were budgeted at zero and were proposed at \$2 million for FY 2023. Baray explained that the budget had been restructured and had added another budget line item.

Councilmember Courage noted that Head Start Program already served 3-year-olds and asked how many 3-year old's were expected to enroll and whether siblings and second year students would be prioritized. Baray explained that most families did not qualify for Head Start and two-thirds of the enrollment would continue to be 4-year-olds with priorities for siblings and second year students. Councilmember Courage requested information on the financial eligibility for families, the tuition-based program for higher income families and comparisons of funding sources for other providers such as early childcare centers and school districts. Baray responded to Councilmember Courage's questions during the meeting. Councilmember Courage recommended adding more assistance to early childcare centers so they could provide high quality care using some of the net ending balance.

Councilmember Pelaez referred to a longitudinal study by economists to determine the impacts of pre-kindergarten education and noted that the impact was not seen on standardized tests, but the positive impact was seen on behavioral outcomes and the likelihood of attending college.

Councilmember Pelaez recommended a longitudinal study to be conducted on the Pre-K 4 SA participating children. Baray stated that UTSA was already studying their students and the first year Pre-K 4 SA students were currently in the sixth grade. Baray added that the economic impact and

return on investment for the Program was \$52 million over the past 8 years.

Councilmember Perry asked if the State program's eligibility was the same as Pre-K 4 SA. Baray stated that the State's eligibility was more restricted, did not always offer a full-day program, and did not meet the quality of Pre-K 4 SA because they had larger class sizes with fewer teachers and did not meet other national standards and measures. Councilmember Perry requested the final report of the benefits and costs of Pre-K 4 SA from December 2019 and metrics that compared with public schools' pre-kindergarten programs. Baray stated that research was being performed now to measure the Program. Councilmember Perry expressed concern regarding the net ending balance and questioned the revenue estimates.

Councilmember Pelaez requested more information on the training provided to Pre-K 4 SA teachers. Baray explained teacher training and noted that teachers were paid during training.

Councilmember Viagran was pleased with the partnerships Pre-K 4 SA had with the southside school districts. Councilmember Viagran recommended that City employees with 3 and 4-year-olds be encouraged to participate in the Program and suggested specific outreach to City employees.

Councilmember Perry requested comparison of outcomes from the Pre-K 4 SA Program versus the public school programs as their programs progress.

City Manager Walsh expressed his support for the work of the team at Pre-K 4 SA.

2. Briefing on the SA: Ready to Work program, the updated Fiscal Year 2021 through Fiscal Year 2027 Financial Forecast, and the SA: Ready to Work Fiscal Year 2023 Annual Operating Budget. [Alejandra Lopez, Assistant City Manager; Michael Ramsey, Executive Director, Workforce Development Office]

City Manager Walsh introduced the Item and reminded the City Council of City partnerships and subcontracts with many organizations City-wide. City Manager Walsh introduced Director of Workforce Development Mike Ramsey who briefed the City Council on the FY2023 proposed Ready to Work Budget. Ramsey began with an overview of the history and components of the program and provided a timeline for enrollment and services. Ramsey described the line items in the proposed FY2023 expenditure budget and provided a financial forecast for FY2021-2027. Ramsey presented information on the various contracts and recommended amendments.

DISCUSSION:

Mayor Nirenberg noted that the budget was expected to be approved by City Council at A Session on May 19, 2022. Mayor Nirenberg supported adding funding to emergency assistance

using the increased revenue. Mayor Nirenberg stated that the work would have attention and scrutiny, but he had high hopes for its success. Mayor Nirenberg thanked the SA Ready to Work Advisory Board, particularly Councilmembers Rocha Garcia and Pelaez for serving on the Advisory Board.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia recommended more grass-roots outreach and recruitment, requested a copy of the revised contract with the marketing firm, and recommended advertisements in Spanish.

Councilmember Pelaez expressed his support for the Program and asked for clarification on wrap-around services. Ramsey stated that wrap-around services were expected to help participants connect with resources and provide other supportive services to reduce barriers.

Councilmember Pelaez requested that the Program provide outreach to the Battered Women's Shelter. Councilmember Pelaez recommended utilizing social media influencers to assist with outreach and encouraged media outlets to sign the Ready to Work Pledge.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez recommended that the Program help with the shortage of teachers by encouraging training in the Education field. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez recommended helping participants seek education beyond a bachelor's degree by providing information and referrals. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez suggested that best practices by one partner should be shared with others to better improve outcomes.

Councilmember Cabello Havrda recommended specific outreach to special needs populations and Veterans as well as working with Specialty Courts. Councilmember Cabello Havrda requested the metrics for each phase of the Program and requested the plan for dashboard data. Ramsey stated that the dashboards would be posted on the website by June 2022.

Councilmember Cabello Havrda noted that the wraparound services were key to make participants successful but wanted more tracking of the needs. Councilmember Cabello Havrda recommended outreach targeting small businesses.

Councilmember Viagran supported more outreach in Spanish. Councilmember Viagran noted the needs of individuals that did not have access to internet service and recommended libraires and Senior Centers for outreach because they had online access. Councilmember Viagran recommended a regular check in at the Economic and Workforce Development Committee to monitor the progress of the Program.

Councilmember Bravo expressed support for training in renewable energy jobs and other in-demand industries. Councilmember Bravo recommended additional support in emergencies, perhaps for loans.

Councilmember Castillo asked if the Restore Education ARPA Request overlapped with their SA Ready to Work Contract. City Manager Walsh stated that staff would ensure that there was no duplication. Councilmember Castillo supported funding to help participants obtain their General Equivalency Diploma (GED).

Councilmember Courage suggested that \$15 per hour was becoming the entry wage for many jobs that did not need job training and recommended raising the wage commitments for employers participating in the Program. City Manager Walsh added that the original voter proposition stated the minimum wage was \$15 per hour but assured the Councilmember that the wages would be much higher.

Councilmember Perry noted that the number of participants had decreased and requested a cost per individual participant for the program. Councilmember Perry expressed concern that the voters were not getting what was promised and suggested that the additional revenue should be used to serve more participants. Councilmember Perry requested Program metrics to be collected and reported regularly.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez recommended a survey of employees about what they expect from employers since there was currently a labor shortage.

Councilmember Viagran wanted the program to look at improving the lives of women heads of households and to bring families out of poverty. City Manager Walsh agreed that the program's intent was to impact those in poverty the most.

Councilmember Pelaez suggested connecting with the Court system for outreach and working with Judges. Councilmember Pelaez pointed out that small businesses could participate in the program in many ways. Councilmember Pelaez reminded the business community that Ready to Work was for in-demand jobs and some industries such as hospitality could participate in jobs that required higher education type training.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia recommended more focused efforts related to On-the-job Training which might extend to the hospitality industry. Councilmember Rocha Garcia recommended more outreach to African Americans, single mothers, and grandparents raising grandchildren.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mayor Nirenberg stated that there would be no Executive Session held today and that Items on the Executive Session agenda would be addressed at the A Session on May 5, 2022.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:48 PM.

Approved

Ron Nirenberg
Mayor

Attest:

Debbie Racca-Sittre
Interim City Clerk

DRAFT