



**COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES**

**March 17, 2022**

Commissioners Present: Bruce Stenslie, Matt LaVere, Christine Walker, Michael Gollub, Barbara Marquez-O’Neill, Robert Levin, Barry Zimmerman, Rachel Champagne, Cesar Morales

Staff Present: Petra Puls, Jennifer Johnson, Alma Perez, Lilia Gurrola, Heather Guerrero, Sam McCoy, Jhoelle Aspuria-Arca, John Anderson, Amy Cook, Grace Montejano, Shelby Ferns, Christina Saenz, Blanca Morales, Janet Fleming, Tyla Adams, Andrew Huizar, Jimena Hernandez, Teresa Gutierrez, Jared Martin, Lauren Arzu, Marilyn Rincon, Nancy Uribe, Daisy Gomez

Public Present: Elizabeth Szczepanek, Liz Bruce, Chrystal Tipping, Tania Magana, Alicia McFarland, Aysha Mehdi, Blanca Fernandez, Leticia Zamora, Regan Bynder, Sandybell Romero

**OPENING**

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

Chair Stenslie opened the meeting at 1:01 p.m., reminded attendees how to participate via public comment, and gave attendees the opportunity to introduce themselves.

**2. Adopt a Resolution for Commission to Continue to Hold Virtual Meetings due to COVID-19 Emergency**

Chair Stenslie stated that virtual meetings have been held in response to Governor Newsom signing an Executive Order. According to Assembly Bill No. 361, local agencies and boards are permitted to hold virtual meetings through January 1, 2024. He detailed the conditions that must be met in order for virtual meetings to occur.

Commissioners will be asked to verify monthly that they see a need for continued virtual meetings.

Petra and the Commissioners discussed potentially holding future Commission meetings in-person and implementing a hybrid model (with in-person and virtual meeting elements blended). Commissioner Levin went over the presence of COVID-19 in the county’s sewage water and gave a brief update on the case, positivity, and hospitalization rate of COVID-19 in Ventura County.

**A motion was made by Commissioner Gollub, seconded by Commissioner Marquez-O’ Neill, to adopt a resolution authorizing F5VC to allow Commissioners to participate via teleconference so long as such actions comply with AB 361. The motion passed unanimously.**

### **3. Approval of Minutes from February 24, 2022 Commission Meeting**

Commissioner Gollub commented that he would like to request a revision to the February 24, 2022 Commission meeting minutes. This revision includes correcting a comment Commissioner Gollub made on page three of the minutes under item #7. The correction is to specify that Commissioner Gollub inquired at what percentage do developmental disorders occur in the pre-natal and post-natal phase. Commissioner Gollub discussed information found on the topic of developmental disorders.

**A motion was made by Commissioner LaVere, seconded by Commissioner Levin, to approve the minutes from the February 24, 2022 Commission Meeting. The motion passed with Commissioner Champagne abstaining.**

### **4. Agenda Approval and Review of Commission Packets**

Petra provided an overview of regular and supplemental packet items, noting materials were sent via email and are posted on the F5VC website.

**A motion was made by Commissioner Barbara, seconded by Commissioner Zimmerman, to approve the agenda. The motion passed unanimously.**

### **5. Public Comments/Correspondence**

There were no comments from members of the public.

### **6. Presentation: First 5 Parent Leaders of Ventura County – Liz Bruce, Jimena Hernandez, Tania Magaña, Aysha Mehdi and Chrystal Tipping**

Jimena Hernandez opened the First 5 Parent Leaders of Ventura County (PLVC) presentation and introduced each Parent Leader.

Chrystal Tipping gave an overview of the PLVC and its activities. Chrystal shared the impact COVID-19 had on the PLVC. Chrystal explained how the implementation of virtual meetings allowed Parent Leaders to conduct their October 2020 virtual summit, connect, and continue their work.

Aysha Mehdi went over her background and reasons for participating in the PLVC. Aysha shared a personal story from a mother who had experienced postpartum depression. Aysha noted that participation in the Parent Leader October 2020 summit empowered mothers to share their stories and assist one another.

Chrystal gave a summary of the events the Parent Leaders conducted, participated in, and plan to do. Chrystal shared that the Parent Leaders graduated from a six-week Community Organizing and Family Issues (COFI) training session and showed images of the virtual ceremony. Chrystal talked about the goals set by the PLVC and how they have been working towards achieving this. These goals include connecting with more parents, promoting F5VC resources, and assisting struggling families. To achieve these goals, the PLVC created a bookmark promoting NfL and F5VC services.

Liz Bruce shared an image of the English and Spanish PLVC bookmark. Liz gave an overview of the bookmark's functionality and design. Liz noted that the bookmark contains a positive quote to connect with parents. Liz shared an image of the QR code found on the bookmark that gives parents access to the F5VC parenting website page. Elements of the F5VC Talk. Read. Sing. campaign were incorporated in the PLVC bookmark along with the F5VC phone number. Liz explained that the colored crayons on the bookmark symbolize cultural diversity in early childhood education. Liz gave a summary of the resources parents will have access to using information found on the PLVC bookmark.

Blanca Fernandez, Leticia Zamora, and Tania Magana discussed the distribution of the bilingual PLVC bookmark. Tania shared a personal story about her experience handing out the PLVC bookmarks. Tania went over the different locations for bookmark distribution including local libraries, schools, and churches.

Sandybell Romero explained the purpose behind the creation of the bookmark and message the PLVC wishes to share with their community.

Jimena concluded the PLVC presentation and thanked the Commission once again for listening.

The Commissioners thanked the PLVC for sharing their story and doing significant work in the community.

### **CONSENT AGENDA**

#### **7. Receive and File the First 5 Ventura County Financial Statements as of December 31, 2021**

#### **8. Ratification of Committees**

**A motion was made by Commissioner Morales, seconded by Commissioner Walker, to approve the consent agenda. The motion passed unanimously.**

### **REGULAR AGENDA**

#### **9. Report of Committees**

##### **a. Administration and Finance**

##### **i. Recommendation to update the Policy Platform**

Tyla Adams introduced the proposed Policy Platform for 2022. Tyla reviewed the proposed updates to the Policy Platform, including: specifying advocacy for adverse childhood experiences (ACEs); broadening the types of harmful substances to be avoided; expanding language around the prevention of childhood poverty, abuse, and neglect to reflect a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion; and adding language on identifying additional revenue streams under the item on investing in early childhood.

**A motion was made by Commissioner Gollub, seconded by Commissioner LaVere, to update the Policy Platform. The motion passed unanimously.**

**ii. Progress Report**

Jennifer Johnson gave an overview of the topics discussed at the March 2022 Administration and Finance Committee meeting. Jennifer noted that the Committee has recommended maintaining funds in the Ventura County treasury pool for FY 2022-23.

**10. Overview and Discussion of Universal Preschool/Universal Transitional Kindergarten –Commissioners Morales, Champagne, Walker**

Commissioner Morales presented an overview on Universal Preschool/Universal Transitional Kindergarten (UPK) as well as California’s efforts to support the roll out of UPK. Commissioner Morales shared California’s vision statement and goal one of the Master Plan for Early Learning and Care (MP). Commissioner Morales explained the MP, approaches implemented to support UPK and 4-year-olds in California, and noted that 4-year-olds are able to attend both transitional kindergarten (TK) and preschool.

Commissioner Morales discussed California’s transitional kindergarten history from 2010 to 2022. Commissioner Morales stated that by the 2025-26 school year, all 4-year-old children will be able to enroll in TK. He shared that school districts in Ventura County have been looking to adopt early TK to serve as many students as possible.

Commissioner Morales shared that approximately 345,000 additional children in California could be served under the TK movement. Issues related to teaching credentials may need to be addressed in order to successfully implement universal TK.

Commissioner Morales stated that, of the 3 million children (under the age of 5) in California, only 37% were enrolled in TK or the California State Preschool Program. He also noted that 81% of California’s 3 million 3-year-olds were not served in licensed preschool spaces. Due to this, California has one of the largest achievement gaps in the US.

Commissioner Morales cited information related to Ventura County’s K-12 education in the 2021 State of the Region Report. He emphasized that Ventura County ranks second in the most rapidly declining student population within the state of California. He shared that the county’s total student enrollment is projected to decrease annually through 2031. He expressed that, despite the pandemic serving as a factor for this enrollment decline, it continues to be an alarming issue.

Alicia McFarland detailed the terminology associated with UPK. Alicia provided an in-depth perspective surrounding the UPK delivery system. This delivery system includes programs such as Head Start, before/after school, and childcare centers.

Alicia presented the California Education Department Code 8281.5 and went over Focus Areas A, B, C, D, and E of the UPK plans that school districts are required to complete.

UPK outreach, public engagement, and feedback collection will be performed in the Spring of 2022. Alicia noted that UPK draft plans will be presented to school boards by June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2022 and submitted to the state sometime in July 2022.

Alicia displayed a chart indicating the birth date cut-offs that will be used for transitional kindergarten (TK) and early TK programs. Alicia addressed the demand for teachers in the TK system. She stated that 11,000 to 16,000 new TK educators will be needed in the state of California. Candidates that meet TK teaching requirements include current credentialed and early educators as well as new teacher applicants.

Alicia explained further requirements needed to work as a TK teacher. As of August 1, 2023 TK teachers with multi-subject teaching credentials will need to fulfill 1 of the 3 additional childhood education elements to continue teaching in the 2023-2024 school year. The state will invest funds to address the increase in workforce demand.

Alicia shared that the VCOE has been holding convenings in order to support local education agencies. and thanked Petra for her participation as a panelist and for her continued support. Resources for local education agencies have been posted online via Padlet, Tiny URL, and the VCOE TK webpage.

Petra stated that F5VC has created and funded 1,400 preschool spaces in Ventura County. Through partnership with community-based organizations and school districts, these spaces have been transformed into sustainable state preschool and head start spaces. Petra expressed that the two-year preschool transition funding approved by the Commission allowed the state to follow through on its promise of UPK. Petra thanked Alicia and Commissioner Morales for their insightful presentation.

Petra invited Commissioners Champagne and Walker to speak on the challenges and opportunities as they prepare for UPK.

Commissioner Champagne shared that individuals in the early learning field have concerns about UPK. These concerns include classroom sizes, curriculum, and serving whole families. Commissioner Champagne expressed that low-income families are predominantly served and inquired as to where their children will be during school holidays and breaks, and before/after the traditional school day. Early Care Providers (ECPs) do not have the tools or resources to serve children from 0 to 3 years of age. Commissioner Champagne stated that ECPs will require facilities and teachers to sustain a program for this age group. Commissioner Champagne noted that Catalyst Kids also maintains before and after school care.

Commissioner Walker questioned if school districts are prepared to serve the needs of children who are turning 4 years old. Commissioner Walker agreed that there will be many issues around appropriate space for these programs.

Commissioner Morales stated that, with the current declining enrollment rate, early TK expansion is perceived as a way to maintain staff and avoid layoffs. Additional professional development and support will be needed for teachers. Commissioner Morales reflected on past experiences pertaining to the need to hire more staff in support of teachers and giving supervisors more training.

Alicia commented on challenges with obtaining accurate enrollment projections for UPK.

Commissioner Levin inquired if decreased enrollment rates will have an impact on classroom space. Commissioner Walker shared how the Port Hueneme School District utilizes available space as a result of declining rate of student enrollment for extending the Kindergarten instructional day. Commissioner Champagne stated that future TK classrooms must take into account bathroom and playground requirements and adjustments. Commissioner Morales shared that special needs student programs must also be brought into the conversation surrounding space as these programs are also present on campus.

Commissioners discussed how the Commission and F5VC can assist with the roll out of UPK.

## **11. Report from Executive Director – Petra Puls**

Petra introduced three new hires- Daisy Gomez, Marilyn Rincon, and Nancy Uribe.

Petra gave an update on the NfL program noting that the NfL has transitioned to in-person PACT classes. Petra went over the newest NfL locations and partnership with WIC. WIC's messaging platform has been utilized to promote the NfL program. This has been an excellent way to engage with new families in the community.

Petra gave an update on the bilingual Discovery Nights hosted by Wonderschool and on distributions rates of New Parent Kits.

Petra went over advocacy updates including Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting, ARPA submission, and SB 951 (Durazo) Increasing Wage Replacement Rates.

Petra shared an update on community initiatives and stated that F5VC did not receive a response during its latest Request for Proposals for a consultant to conduct parent focus group and engagement activities.

Petra provided an update on the transition to the Commission approved database platform, Apricot 360. She reported that in the past several months, F5VC has begun implementing this platform and training NfL staff.

Petra shared a press release from F5CA, announcing the appointment of Jackie Thu-Huong Wong as First 5 California's Executive Director.

Petra mentioned upcoming events and shared images of NfL staff participation in a recent Nyeland Covid Clinic.

## **12. Commission Member Comments**

Chair Stenslie thanked staff for their tireless efforts during the pandemic.

## **13. Next Meeting**

Thursday, April 21, 2022, VIRTUAL/IN-PERSON (To observe or participate in the meeting conducted viaZoom, please contact First 5 Ventura County at [assistant@first5ventura.org](mailto:assistant@first5ventura.org) at least one hour prior to the start of the meeting for registration information).

#### **14. Future Meetings**

Thursday, May 19, 2022, County Office of Education, 5100 Adolfo Rd., Camarillo  
Thursday, June 16, 2022, County Office of Education, 5100 Adolfo Rd., Camarillo  
Thursday, July 21, 2022, County Office of Education, 5100 Adolfo Rd., Camarillo  
Thursday, August 18, 2022, County Office of Education, 5100 Adolfo Rd., Camarillo  
Thursday, September 15, 2022, County Office of Education, 5100 Adolfo Rd., Camarillo  
Thursday, October 20, 2022, County Office of Education, 5100 Adolfo Rd., Camarillo  
Thursday, November 17, 2022, County Office of Education, 5100 Adolfo Rd., Camarillo  
Thursday, December 15, 2022, County Office of Education, 5100 Adolfo Rd., Camarillo

The meeting was adjourned at 2:58 p.m.