



MarinKids
Opportunity Around Every Corner

July 22, 2014

Marin County Board of Supervisors
3501 Civic Center Drive
San Rafael, CA 94903

SUBJECT: Update Regarding Marin Strong Start Initiative

REQUEST: Ongoing Board support for Marin Strong Start Expenditure and Funding Plan

I. Proposed Marin Strong Start Ballot Measure Language:

“To support underserved children with local funds the State cannot take away, shall Marin County:

- *Increase the number of children attending preschool/prepare children for success in school;*
- *Expand afterschool/summer learning programs for reading/writing/math achievement;*
- *Provide affordable childcare for infants/toddlers/young children;*
- *Expand healthcare for underinsured children;*
- *Support early identification of physical/developmental/emotional issues,*

By enacting a one-quarter percent sales tax for 9 years, with independent oversight and annual audits?”

II. MARIN STRONG START BACKGROUND

Marin Strong Start is a grassroots and grasstops effort grounded in an abiding commitment to improving equity of opportunity for all children in Marin to succeed in school and have a strong, healthy start in life. (MarinKids acts as the staff to the Initiative.) The work to develop a proposed ballot measure began more than four years ago and was preceded by organizational commitments from First 5 Marin, MarinKids and the Child Care Commission begun years prior. (See Appendix 1, Section V for a description of the significant milestones in the development of the proposed Initiative.) Extensive research, community engagement and significant deliberation shaped the recommendations in the Expenditure Plan presented to the Board of Supervisors at the June 10, 2014 of the Board of Supervisors. (Expenditure Committee List provided in Appendix 5.)

The priorities and programs in the Expenditure Plan were selected after a thorough review of local data demonstrating needs and gaps and decades of research on child development. The Expenditure Committee reviewed successful, evidence-based models and gathered input from local experts, consumers and providers on the most effective means for public investments to have the greatest impact on achieving durable, positive outcomes for all children, particularly children who are economically disadvantaged and lack access to services that we know are critical to success in school and for healthy lives. The plan offers a distinctive alignment of two public agencies and supports leveraging resources for children with other key funders.

The plan has garnered extraordinarily strong community support and a very positive reaction from the Marin County Board of Supervisors. Our coalition has met each and every challenge placed before us in moving this exceptional and meaningful measure forward for our children. Since the June Board meeting, the Marin Strong Start Coalition has continued to gain significant momentum and promised endorsements from community members, leaders, educators, business, community organizations, philanthropy, the League of Women Voters, local jurisdictions and school boards. A finance committee is ready to move forward to raise funds to support the campaign and a broad team of volunteers is poised to implement an aggressive field campaign. **Our Coalition members are aligned, enthusiastic and ready to work hard to succeed at the ballot box.** (See Appendix 3 for a partial list.)

The proposed measure would provide approximately \$10 million dollars annually and serve hundreds if not thousands of children each year with needed services. The plan would also address the impact of poverty on children and their families. Aimed directly at providing equitable opportunities for children to succeed in school and have healthy lives, the plan could address gaps and resulting disparities in outcomes for Marin children such as these listed below:

- *While preschool prepares children for school, one out of every four children in Marin does not attend preschool. (American Community Survey, US Census 2010)*
- *At a cost of about \$13,000 per year for a full day program, preschool is out of reach for many families where 33.5 percent of children live at or below 300% of the Federal Poverty Level with an annual income at or below \$71,550 for a family of four. (US Census)*
- *By 3rd grade, 65 percent of economically disadvantaged children in Marin do not read at grade level compared to 22 percent of children who are not economically disadvantaged (determined by eligibility for free or reduced meals). (California Department of Education, Star Test English Language Arts, 2013)*
- *In 2012, only 31 percent of children who reported needing help for emotional or mental health problems received counseling. (www.kidsdata.org)*
- *Among children ages 1-18 living at or below 200% of poverty in Marin, 43 percent have never seen a dentist (Family Outcomes Project, UCSF)*
- *Among low-income children enrolled in the California Health and Disability Program in 2010, 28.9 percent of children 2-5 years of age in Marin are overweight or obese. (Family Outcomes Project, UCSF)*
- *The cost of childcare is prohibitive for many families in Marin – contributing to unemployment, underemployment and poverty. Costs for full time care range from: Birth – 2 years of age = \$17,244; 2-5 years of age = \$13,212; School age = \$9,948. (California Department of Education)*
- *At least 427 children (ages 0-4) from low-income families are on the waitlist for affordable care. (Marin Child Care Council)*

III. Additional Information: Impact of State Budget Changes and Voter Survey

At the June 10 meeting, Board members requested information about the impact in Marin of California state budget legislation to improve preschool access and early care and the proposed strategies included in the Marin Strong Start Initiative and that we conduct a tracking poll to ascertain impact of recent elections on voter willingness to support the proposed measure.

A summary comparison of the state budget allocations and the potential impact on Marin County children as well as the relationship to Marin Strong Start's proposed allocations for preschool and child

care has been provided to the Board and is attached below as Appendix 2. Two factors will be evident in the summary: (1) The budget allocation structures proposed by the California state legislature align with the key components of the Marin Strong Start Expenditure Plan by building on existing systems and targeting low income children; (2) However, In the next fiscal year, **funding for Marin children will be very modest** – only targeting families at 196% of the Federal poverty level as opposed to children at 300% of the Federal poverty level supported in Marin Strong Start. As a result, this budget change might add approximately 60 children to subsidized preschool in Marin. These new slots also would be eligible for the quality enhancements provided through Marin Strong Start as described in the Expenditure Plan. It is not clear how successful further expansion of the childcare and preschool strategies will be at the state level in subsequent years, but these additions to the state budget will not cover the cuts made in childcare over the past several state budget cycles.

Furthermore, the Marin Strong Start Expenditure Plan has built in flexibility to capitalize on any potential funding to support the initiative's aims. For example, a primary goal of Marin Strong Start is to assure access to preschool to low-income 3 and 4 year-old children, as research indicates is most beneficial for school readiness of this population. If state or federal funds were to become available for preschool for four year olds, the Marin Strong Start program would expand to serve three year olds with family incomes up to 300% of the Federal Poverty Level. Once this is achieved and if funds are available, the program will expand to accept children at all socioeconomic levels. It is unlikely that state funds in the future will match the needs of families for affordable childcare. Any additional funds allocated by the state would be added to our pool of funds for qualified families on the wait list.

In June, the Board also requested a follow-up tracking poll be conducted following the June election. In order to conduct the voter survey, MarinKids, with privately raised funds, contracted with Godbe Research. The poll tested voter support for the features of the measure and the likelihood of passage among likely November 2014 voters. In addition, the poll tested the potential for success if another countywide tax measure appeared on the same ballot. Poll results indicate that with a robust campaign Marin Strong Start would succeed in November 2014. However, the results also show that having two competing countywide special tax measures sharing the same ballot would make it highly unlikely for either measure to succeed.

IV. Our Decision and Request for Continued Support

With the Board's decision to place the MERA parcel tax on the ballot in November, we are removing our request to have the Board place the Marin Strong Start measure on the ballot in November 2014. While our recent polling clearly shows that the Marin Strong Start measure can achieve 66.7% support under the right circumstances, this however, does not appear to be that circumstance.

Our decision, while not easy, reflects the collective wisdom of our voter research professionals, our experienced campaign consultants, and our coalition membership, many of whom have extensive experience on local electoral campaigns. Given the time, resources, thoughtful engagement and planning needed to develop a plan that could change the trajectory for so many children in Marin, we are disappointed that we cannot begin now. However, none of us stand to benefit from an unsuccessful election.

Instead, we are ready to look ahead to the next opportunity to bring this important measure to the ballot and achieve voter approval. Specifically, we ask for the Board's commitment to hold a place on the 2016 general election ballot for Marin Strong Start and to help our coalition raise awareness of the critical need for investments in impactful programs for children in Marin.

We also ask that you work with us in the meantime to help address the needs of our most vulnerable and impacted children. As we wait another 2 years for the services proposed in the initiative, each year at least 930 children will not have access to quality preschool, 230 children and their families will not have access to affordable childcare, others will not have access to needed dental and mental health services and many children will not be identified and receive early intervention services to prevent more costly problems later or be provided academic supports that can prevent school failure.

Our Coalition continues to grow and our momentum is strong. Our commitment to securing a stable funding stream for Marin's children is unwavering. Polling clearly shows that this measure can and will succeed at the polls under the right circumstances. We respectfully ask for the Board to put our kids first and work with us to achieve this goal.

Respectfully submitted,

Jenny Callaway, on behalf of MarinKids and the Marin Strong Start Coalition

Appendix I

V. Key milestones in efforts to bring this effort to the ballot thus far included the following:

2007-2008 Marin Child Care Council and First 5 Marin began consideration of strategies to find sustainable funding for children services in Marin County.

2008 MarinKids Leadership Committee adopted a Strategic Plan that targeted development of a publically funded investment fund to address inequities in educational opportunities, healthcare access and health and wellness for all children in Marin.

2009 Parent Voices decided to explore the potential to fund access to affordable child care through a ballot measure.

In 2010, Marin Child Care Council, First 5 Marin, MarinKids, Community Action Marin, Marin Child Care Commission, Parent Voices and Youth Leadership Institute formally agreed to work together to explore the feasibility of establishing a dedicated local funding stream for children's services. They began researching such measures throughout the country, reviewing local data and examining potential priorities for public funding.

In 2010 MarinKids presented data to the Board of Supervisors demonstrating the disparities in outcomes for children with inequitable access to services and supports due to poverty needed to be ready for school, able to learn and be healthy. MarinKids Leadership Committee urged the Board to consider supporting publically funded efforts to improve early access to educational services and supports.

In 2012, an informal community survey of 1800 community members implemented by Parent Voices with support from MarinKids indicated that residents would support a children's fund and be willing to pay an additional local sales tax to support a fund. The survey explored priorities such as healthcare access, preschool, childcare and other issues pertaining to the welfare of children and youth.

In December 2012, MarinKids presented data to the Board of Supervisors that demonstrated the growing divide between children in Marin who are doing well and those who are not. The Board responded by adding a fourth "E" for education to their core

In June 2013, MarinKids retained Godbe Research to conduct a formal community survey. The survey focused on four types of high impact children's services that might be funded. They included 1) health care, 2) affordable childcare, 3) preschool education, and 4) extended learning/afterschool programs. Survey results indicated that roughly 67 percent of voters were likely to approve a one-half percent special sales tax.

Ongoing throughout 2014, the originating Coalition significantly expanded its base of support to include dozens of parents, community members and organizations. Over the past months, Coalition members have been conducting outreach to community members and potential consumers, key community groups, business leaders, city councils and school boards, and engaging additional partners around the public planning process for a dedicated children's fund. In March 2014, upon the recommendation of the Marin County Board of Supervisors, a Marin Strong Start Expenditure Committee was selected to draft a proposed Expenditure Plan. (A list of Committee members is provided at the end of this document.) MarinKids has provided staff support to the Committee working with a small team of consultants. The purpose of the Expenditure Plan was to provide a clear framework for allocating projected local tax revenues from the measure, including program allocations and an administrative framework to implement the Initiative.

Throughout April and May, the Expenditure Committee met to develop the plan, holding full committee meetings and meetings of four workgroups charged with bringing program priorities and expenditure recommendations to the full Committee. The workgroups included Expenditure Committee members as well as additional experts and members of the community. A separate workgroup provided recommendations on administrative and management structures. In addition, the Expenditure Committee sought input from the Marin Strong Start Coalition members on guiding principles for developing the plan and the subsequent draft plan. Guiding principles proposed by the Coalition included equity of opportunity for all children, targeting resources toward children where family economics reduce opportunities, building upon and leveraging existing structures and resources, integrating systems, and building for accountability, durability and flexibility over time to meet changing circumstances such as availability of state or federal funds for some program elements. (See Appendix 2 for complete list.) In addition, the Expenditure Committee reviewed the current tax base and determined an appropriate level of funding for this initiative

In April, MarinKids contracted with Godbe Research on behalf of the Expenditure Committee to conduct a series of three *focus groups* with residents from a range of jurisdictions, ages and political affiliations. Key findings included, the following:

- All areas of the measure, preschool, healthcare, childcare and afterschool/extended education were seen as important with preschool and healthcare most often highlighted.
- A strong majority of the participants agreed that funds should expand resources for children from poor to lower-moderate income families - children with the greatest need.
- In an informal survey of participants, a strong majority (72%) agreed they would support a publicly funded measure with these priorities.

In June 2014, the Coalition presented the Expenditure Plan to the Board of Supervisors.

June – July 2014, Coalition continued to mobilize to prepare for a campaign.

Appendix 2: California's FY 14-15 State Budget Agreement on Early Education and Implications for the Marin Strong Start Initiative

Overview

On June 23, the Governor signed California's FY 14-15 state budget with roughly \$260 million in additional support for early education and child care services statewide. While many of the allocation and implementation details are still being determined, these changes are in three primary areas -- 1) expanded preschool access, 2) increased provider reimbursement rates, and 3) additional quality supports and system development. Below is a brief discussion of the implications of these changes on the Marin Strong Start Initiative, a proposal to increase the local sales tax in Marin County to support an array of services for young children. While the budget agreement is consistent with Marin Strong Start's overall approach and important in strengthening early learning and child care programs statewide, the state agreement provides only a moderate service increase. See the attached table for a comparison of key elements of the FY 14-15 state budget agreement and the Marin Strong Start Initiative.

Expanded Preschool and Child Care Access

The state budget provides an additional \$87 million to increase early education/child care slots in the state. The budget expands California State Preschool Program (CSPP) by roughly 10% or 11,500 new slots statewide. While it is not clear how much of this funding would be awarded to Marin, an estimated 680 preschoolers are served in CSPP countywide currently; thus, a 10% increase would serve 68 children. Additionally, the state budget also augments general child care and Alternative Payment child care subsidies by roughly 1,500 slots statewide. Marin's share of these funds cannot be estimated. Families with children participating in all of these state programs must meet the income eligibility criteria of 70% of the state median income or 196% of the federal poverty level (FPL).

In comparison, the Initiative initially aims to provide all low income or moderate-low income four-year olds with part-day preschool. The Initiative's expenditure plan includes funding for 482 new four-year olds at or below 300% of the FPL and enhanced services for an additional 456 already in the program. It also provides funding for 200 part-day preschool participants to receive full day services.

Increased Provider Reimbursement Rates and Preschool Fees

The state budget includes \$49 million statewide to support a 5% increase in the standard reimbursement rates (SRR) for center-based state contractors. The regional reimbursement rate (RMR) for Alternative Payment subsidies have also been increased with an augmentation of \$19 million statewide although the specific changes for Marin have not yet been determined. The budget also repeals all State Preschool Program family fees with an allocation of \$15 million statewide.

Additional Early Learning Quality Supports and System Development

The state budget provides \$85 million statewide to support quality improvements. Of this, \$50 million establishes a dedicated funding stream for local consortia developing quality rating and improvement systems (QRIS) as part of California’s Race to the Top (RTT) federal grant. While not a local RTT participant, the county is unlikely to receive direct funding from this augmentation. However, Marin is located in the San Francisco RTT region and has been tracking their QRIS work.¹

The state budget also includes \$35 million in one-time funding for preschool and kindergarten teacher training as well as facility expansion and improvements.

Flexibility in Marin Strong Start Initiative to Capitalize on Additional Funding

Marin Strong Start has flexibility to expand services to additional children should state funding become available. For example, should the state decide to fund all 4 year olds to attend preschool, then Marin Strong Start could fund low to moderate income 3 year old children to attend preschool as research shows is beneficial for school readiness. Under the current state budget allocation, the approximately 60-68 4 year-old children that could be included in state subsidized preschool programs would receive quality enhancements through the Initiative for those slots to enable participation in the overall Marin strong Start Initiative.

Summary tables are provided below:

¹ For the last several years, Marin has actively worked on improving quality in targeted early education sites through the ECE Quality Improvement Project (ECE QIP) administered by the Marin County Office of Education and funded by the Marin Community Foundation. The ECE QIP is guided by quality standards that are consistent with the proposed statewide QRIS framework.

**Comparison of Marin Strong Start Initiative with
FY 14-15 Approved State Budget Expenditures in Early Education**

Program Area	Marin Strong Start (MSS)		FY 14-15 Approved State Budget	
	<i>Program Element</i>	<i>Impact in Marin</i>	<i>Program Element</i>	<i>Impact in Marin</i>
Quality Preschool: <i>Expansion</i>	<p>MSS initially provides part-day preschool for all four year olds at or below 300% of federal poverty level (FPL) or \$71,550 for a family of 4.</p> <p>Three year olds at or below 300 percent of FPL will be added as funding allows.</p> <p>Children of all income levels will be eligible as funding allows.</p>	<p>Will initially serve 938 children or 33.5% of all 4-year olds in county. Total costs for estimated at \$4 million.</p>	<p>Proposes to serve additional four year olds at or below 70% of state median income (equivalent to 196% of FPL) or \$46,896 for a family of 4 with expansion of California State Preschool Program (CSPP) and Transitional Kindergarten (TK)</p> <p>Allocates \$70 million in expansion funds statewide to support 11,500 new CSPP slots.</p> <p>No new funding for Transitional Kindergarten although the existing program remains. TK teachers must meet new teaching requirements.</p>	<p>To be determined. State income eligibility for CSPP remains at roughly 196% of FPL while MSS is 300% of FPL. By June 2015, CDE must establish criteria to prioritize full-day, full-year services.</p> <p>Any additional state CSPP funding received may enable MSS to extend services to income eligible three-year olds.</p> <p>No impact on TK access. In FY 13-14, 300 children were enrolled in TK in Marin County.</p>
Child Care: <i>Expansion</i>	<p>Provides wrap-around services for part day preschool participants.</p>	<p>200 four-year olds in part-day preschool will receive full-day wrap-around services. Estimated cost is \$1.4 million.</p>	<p>Expands General Child Care and Alternative Payments by \$17 million to support 1,500 additional slots statewide.</p>	<p>To be determined.</p>

Program Area	Marin Strong Start (MSS)		FY 14-15 Approved State Budget	
Quality Preschool: <i>Infrastructure and Supports</i>	Provides quality infrastructure and supports (i.e. coaching and training) for participating preschool programs.	Roughly \$800,000 has been budgeted to provide quality supports for preschool providers in MSS.	Includes \$50 million annually in Early Learning Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) block grants for local county consortia. An additional one-time allocation of \$35 million for quality improvement teacher training and facility expansion projects.	To be determined. Funds will be granted based on county's portion of total CSPP slots statewide. Marin is in the SF region and has tracked their QRIS development. It is likely that funds will go to SF on behalf of the region. To be determined.
Quality Preschool: <i>Rate Increases And Fees</i>	Not applicable	Not applicable	Provides 5% increase in Standard Reimbursement Rates (SRR) for center-based contractors. Adjusts Regional Market Rates (RMR) for alternative payment providers. Eliminates family fees for California State Preschool programs.	

Appendix 3



COALITION LIST

Canal Youth & Family Council

Community Action Marin

First 5 Marin

Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Marin

Latino Council

League of Women Voters of Marin County

Marin Child Care Commission

Marin Child Care Council

MarinKids

Parent Voices

United Way of the Bay Area

Youth Leadership Institute

Margaret Ballou, Women's Commission

Barrie Becker, Youth Safety Partners

Christa Brown, United Way of the Bay Area

Mary Jane Burke, Superintendent, Marin County Schools

Liz Burns, Community Action Marin

Maribeth Bushey, San Rafael City Council

**Jenny Callaway, Expenditure Committee Chairperson, Former Trustee, San Rafael City Schools,
MarinKids**

Carol Campbell

Susan Christman, Trustee, Larkspur-Corte Madera Unified School District

Cindi Clinton, Trustee, Novato Unified School District

Shalee Cunningham, Superintendent, Novato Unified School District

Mike Daly, Chief Probation Officer, Marin County

Jan Le Torre Derby, Marin County Office of Education

Peggy Dodge, College of Marin, Early Childhood Education

Michelle Fadelli, First 5 Marin, MarinKids

Aideen Gaidmore, Marin Child Care Council

Patty Garbarino, Marin County Board of Education, Marin Sanitary, San Rafael Chamber of Commerce

Carlos Garcia-Bedoya, PhD, Parent Voices

Susan Gilmore, North Bay Children's Center

Marcia Hagan, League of Women Voters

Liz Hall, Marin Organizing Committee

Sara Jones, Director, Marin County Free Library

Pat Kendall, San Rafael Citizen of the Year, 2013

Dana King, Chair, MarinKids
Laura Llerena, Marin Organizing Committee
Johnathan Logan, Marin City Community Services District
Sally Matsuishi, Next Generation Scholars
Sheri Mowbry, Trustee, Tamalpais Union High School District
Cynthia Murray, North Bay Leadership Council
Laurie O'Hara, Marin Child Care Commission
Cheryl Paddack, Novato Youth Center
Jennie Pfeiffer, Trustee Bolinas Stinson Unified School District
Tom Popenuck, SEIU
Iga 'Jade' Prospero, Parent Voices
Heather Ravani, Marin County Health and Human Services
Amy Reisch, First 5 Marin
Curtis Robinson, MD, Marin Community Foundation, Marin County Board of Education
Juan Rodriguez, Principal, Venetia Valley K-8, First 5 Marin
Bob Rosenberg, Marin County School Volunteers
Marian Schinske, NovatoSpirit
Deborah Schoenbaum, Youth Leadership Institute
Maureen Sedonaen, Goodwill SF-Marin-San Mateo, Youth Leadership Institute
Marianne Slattery, Marin Head Start
Sparkie Spaeth, Marin County Health and Human Services
Karen Spicer
Susan T Sutton
Kathleen Tabor, MarinKids
Heather Tadlock, Parent Voices
Gail Theller, Community Action Marin
Dr. Shirley Thornton, Sausalito Marin City School District
Sharon Turner, Marin City Youth
Kara Verner
Christina Warren, UC Berkeley
Mike Watenpaugh, Superintendent, San Rafael City Schools
Kevin Wright
Cecilia Zamora, Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

Additional members joining daily.....

Appendix 4



MARIN STRONG START EXPENDITURE MEMBERS

Carlos Garcia Bedoya, Parent Voices

Mary Jane Burke, County Superintendent of Schools

Liz Burns, Community Action Marin

Michael Daly, Chief Probation Officer, County of Marin

Aideen Gaidmore, Marin Child Care Council, Marin Child Care Commission

Pat Kendall, Kaiser Permanente

Stephanie Moulton-Peters, Mayor, Mill Valley

Cynthia Murray, North Bay Leadership Council

Heather Ravani, Marin County Health and Human Services

Amy Reisch, First 5 Marin

Curtis Robinson, MD, Board Member: Marin Community Foundation and Marin County Schools

Juan Rodriguez, Principal, San Rafael City Schools

Maureen Sedonaen, Goodwill Industries

Staff: Kathleen Tabor, MarinKids