

Item 5

*Strategic Plan Discussion: Approve
Vision, Goals, and Target
Population*

FIRST 5 LA

SUBJECT:

First 5 LA 2015-2020 Strategic Plan: Focusing for the Future

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve proposed First 5 LA vision, target population, ultimate impact, and goals statements, as discussed at the May 19th Program & Planning Committee Meeting/Special Meeting of the Commission and endorsed by Commissioners.

BACKGROUND:

First 5 LA's next strategic plan will bring greater focus and clarity to First 5 LA's role and impact on the lives of LA County's very young children and their families. The Commission has begun to make a number of important policy decisions that will help guide the strategic planning process and inform the final plan. The following are key milestones that have been reached thus far in the planning process.

Adoption of First 5 LA's Strategic Imperative

On April 10th, the First 5 LA Commission adopted a strategic imperative to anchor the planning process and determine what success means for completing the plan. The three elements of the strategic imperative are:

- Maximize return on the Commission's future investments to achieve mission and greatest possible impact for children 0-5 and their families
- Determine a clear, well-defined focus for First 5 LA
- Align goals to long-term financial projections and strategy

Approval of Home Positions of Levers for Impact (strategic choices)

To achieve this strategic imperative, the First 5 LA Commission on May 8th approved positions on a number of critical strategic choices. These choices - or "levers"- were selected because they represent important options available to the Commission for how it chooses to do its work so that it may maximize its impact on the lives of L.A. County's children. The Commission's decisions – or "home positions" - are:

- The activities First 5 LA supports will generally focus on prevention.
- The activities First 5 LA supports will primarily focus on the systems and policy change.
- The activities First 5 LA supports will generally seek to have a broad impact, affecting large numbers of people.
- The activities First 5 LA supports will include components to strengthen families and, whenever possible, will include components to improve community capacity.
- First 5 LA will identify and scale evidence-based practices to achieve its strategic goals and outcomes.
- First 5 LA will engage partners in sustainability and scalability at the earliest possible stage of designing and engaging in any given approach to impact.

Introduction of the "Framework for Impact": A Key Component of the Strategic Plan

An effective strategic plan will include a set of components that together help to communicate the change an organization seeks to make and how the organization will use its fiscal and non-

fiscal resources to influence that desired change. For First 5 LA, the Strategic Imperative and the Levers for Impact are two important building blocks for the plan; however, the plan will also include decisions and choices relative to mission and values for the organization, a “Framework for Impact” or Theory of Change, and finally specific strategies and objectives for achieving the overall change the organization wants to accomplish during the five year strategy cycle. The mission and values components will be discussed further at the June 30th Board retreat. At the May 19, 2014, Program & Planning Committee Meeting/Special Meeting of the Commission, Commissioners were introduced to the concept of a Framework for Impact or Theory of Change for this plan. Informed by home positions on the Levers for Impact (approved at the May 8, 2014 Commission meeting), the Framework for Impact describes the specific change First 5 LA intends to achieve in the lives of children 0-5 and their families in Los Angeles County and articulates how First 5 LA will go about creating that change. Once the Framework for Impact is developed, the Commission will need to identify specific strategies and objectives for the FY 2015-2020 planning cycle. These strategies and objectives are to describe the major initiatives the organization will need to undertake between 2015 and 2020 in order to advance the goals and outcomes identified in the Framework. This work is expected to occur in August and September 2014. The entirety of these various components of the plan will be presented to the Commission for approval in November 2014 as a final strategic plan product.

DISCUSSION:

The primary components of the Framework for Impact presented to Commissioners at the May 19th Program & Planning Committee/Special Meeting of the Commission include the following:

- Defining a **vision statement** for the organization. The vision statement describes the type of future First 5 LA envisions for young children and their families. It is expected that First 5 LA will contribute to this future along with others working to advance the well-being of young children.
- Determining the **ultimate impact** of First 5 LA’s work. The ultimate impact is the aspirational, high-level statement of what First 5 LA aims to achieve through its work. It serves as a single ‘north star’ to which all work must ultimately be aligned and expresses the intended result of all investments and efforts.
- Articulating **goals**. Goals clarify the areas of work First 5 LA will focus on to advance progress towards the ultimate impact. The goals are informed by research, evidence, and First 5 LA organizational experience. They represent broad statements about the desired change First 5 LA would like to see for children.
- **Prioritizing outcomes**. Identifying and prioritizing outcomes for each goal area allows First 5 LA to begin specifying the measurable components of each goal that First 5 LA will hold itself accountable for affecting.
- Outlining **pathways to change**. Pathways identify the most effective way First 5 LA will contribute to creating change in the priority outcomes. These pathways are based on the organization’s unique value add and core strengths, and reflect First 5 LA’s philosophy of how change happens.
- Defining the **target population** for First 5 LA’s work. The target population identifies the people who ultimately benefit from First 5 LA’s work.

Commissioners were asked to review language proposed by Learning for Action (LFA) and staff for the vision statement, ultimate impact, goals and target population. The proposed language sought to bring greater clarity to First 5 LA’s existing statements or articulate a position when it did not exist – as was the case with the target population and ultimate impact components of the framework. The suggestions presented to Commissioners for discussion were informed by

research, experience, and best practice examples from other county First 5's and strategic funders.

The Commissioners' discussion on each of these components brought to light important considerations that helped to influence their final recommendations. Some of the points discussed for each element of the Framework for Impact are presented below:

- **Vision:** Commissioners acknowledged the fact that First 5 LA is part of a larger ecosystem responsible for creating a positive future for young children. Therefore, they did not believe the vision statement should include a specific reference to the organization. First 5 LA's role in contributing to this vision for children will be described in the mission statement, which will be discussed later during the June 30th Board retreat.
- **Ultimate Impact and Goals:** Commissioners reviewed findings from LFA's analysis of First 5 LA's current investments relative to the four goals outlined in the 2009-2015 Strategic Plan. This analysis revealed several challenges associated with the current set of goals, with which the Commissioners agreed. These findings include: (1) the current goals are not structured in a way that provides focus and coherence for F5LA's investments; (2) there are currently funded programs that do not contribute to any of these goals; and (3) the goals are disconnected from each other (i.e. there is no overarching focus that holds together the individual goals).
- **Target Population:** Commissioners acknowledged that a target population statement has never been formally adopted as policy for First 5 LA causing persistent questions over the years about whether or not First 5 LA should serve all children in LA County equally, focus its resources on at-risk populations, or balance investments between the broader population and those at higher risk. Because clarity on target population is important in setting the stage for decisions about First 5 LA's future strategy and associated resource allocations, the Commission agreed a target population statement was needed and that it should include families as well as children.

The following table summarizes the original proposals shared with Commissioners as well as the language Commissioners recommended be submitted for approval by the full Board.

Summary of May 19th Program & Planning Committee Meeting/Special Meeting of the Commission Recommendations

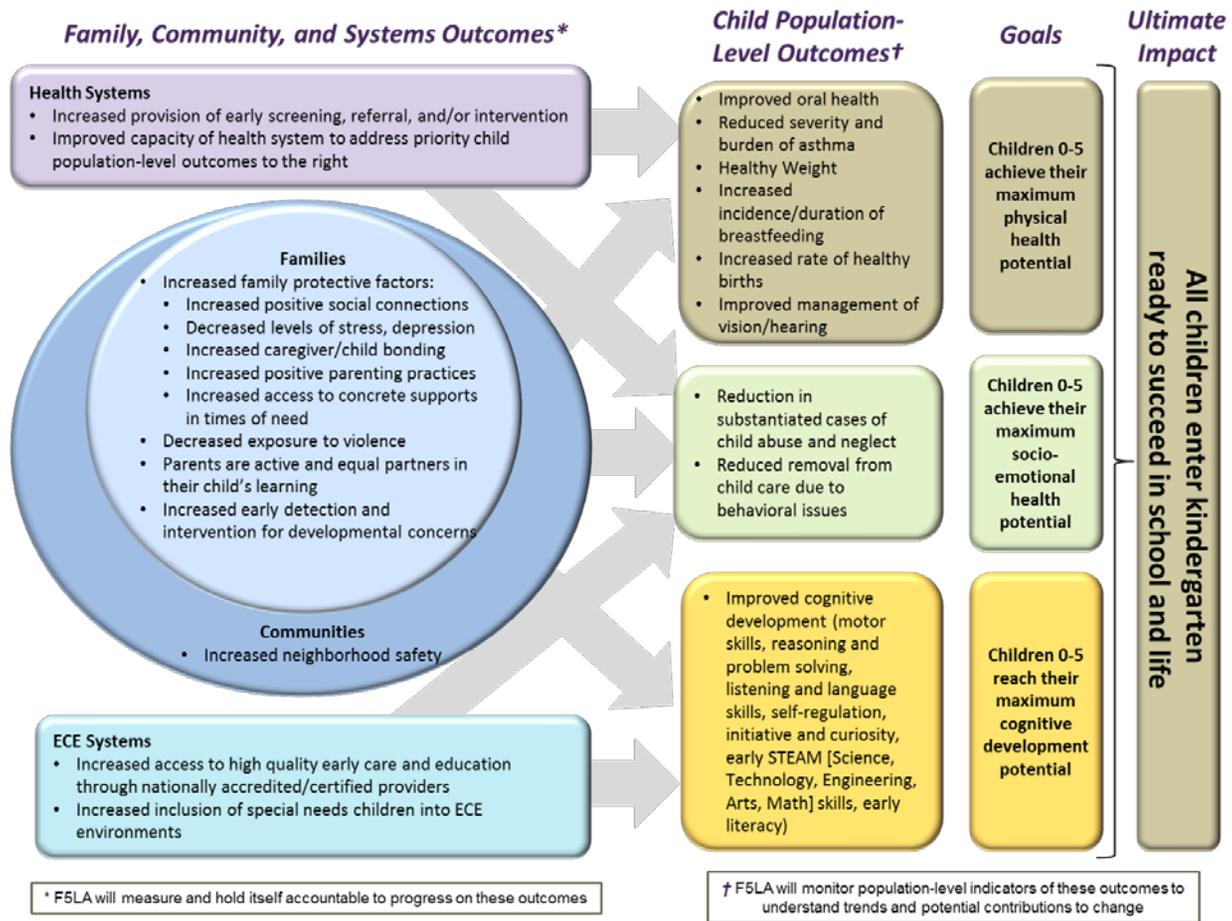
Item	Current Statement <i>Source: First 5 LA's Strategic Plan FY 2009-2015</i>	Proposed Refined Language	Commission Recommended Language
Vision	First 5 LA is committed to creating a future throughout Los Angeles' diverse communities where all young children are born healthy and raised in a loving and nurturing environment so that they grow up healthy, are eager to learn and reach their full potential.	First 5 LA contributes to a future throughout Los Angeles' diverse communities where all young children are born healthy and raised in a loving and nurturing environment so that they grow up healthy, are eager to learn and reach their full potential.	Throughout Los Angeles' diverse communities, all children are born healthy and raised in a loving and nurturing environment so that they grow up healthy, are eager to learn and reach their full potential.
Ultimate Impact		Children enter kindergarten ready to succeed in school and life	Children enter kindergarten ready to succeed in school and life
Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children are born healthy • Children maintain a healthy weight • Children are safe from abuse and neglect • Children are ready for kindergarten 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children 0-5 achieve optimum physical health • Children 0-5 achieve optimum socio-emotional health • Children 0-5 reach optimum cognitive development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children 0-5 achieve their maximum physical health potential • Children 0-5 achieve their maximum socio-emotional health potential • Children 0-5 reach their maximum cognitive development potential
Target Population		First 5 LA will work on behalf of all children 0-5 in Los Angeles County, but will prioritize children who experience significant risk factors in relation to achieving optimum physical health, socio-emotional health, and/or learning.	First 5 LA will work on behalf of all children 0-5 and their families in Los Angeles County, but will prioritize those at risk in relation to achieving their physical health, socio-emotional health, and/or learning potential.

At the May 19th Program & Planning Committee Meeting/Special Meeting of the Commission, Commissioners also began the process of identifying outcomes for each goal area. The outcomes are to represent measurable changes in knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, practices or neighborhood conditions that First 5 LA could potentially hold itself accountable to affecting. Commissioners were asked to complete this work in small groups, while community members present at the meeting were given the option to complete this exercise as their own group. The following questions were used to help guide the process to identify potential outcomes:

- What are the most pressing needs in Los Angeles County in relation to this goal (according to the environmental scan and other relevant data sources)?
- What does the research tell us about the most effective ways to advance progress on this goal?
- What do we know from our professional experience about what works to address this goal?
- What do the home positions on First 5 LA's levers for impact suggest about the outcomes we should prioritize in this goal area?

Recommendations developed by the small groups were then shared with the full Committee and the public. The graphic presented below summarizes the initial list of potential outcomes generated by Commissioners. LFA and staff have categorized the outcomes by the level at which the change would occur. For example, there are a set of 'child/population-level' outcomes and 'family, community, and systems-level' outcomes. The child-level outcomes represent change First 5 LA wants to see for children in LA County, but will not hold itself directly accountable for because First 5 LA is only one of many actors contributing to these outcomes. First 5 LA will, however, monitor these population-level indicators to better understand trends for children's health and well-being, and analyze these trends relative to the investments the Commission has made. Family, community, and systems level outcomes represent change First 5 LA is intended to directly affect due to the organization's mandate outlined in the original proposition; therefore the organization will measure and hold itself accountable for making progress towards these outcomes. The child population-level outcomes correspond to the goal areas, while the family, community, and systems-level outcomes are more cross-cutting in nature.

Initial outcomes identified by Commissioners at May 19 Special Commission meeting



At this early stage in the outcomes development process, there are several important observations that should be noted as the process moves forward.

- Many of the outcomes depicted on this initial visual still need significant attention in terms of clarification and development. For example, the outcome, “Increased access to high quality early care and education through nationally accredited/certified providers” under ECE systems is very broad and needs to be articulated in more specific terms in order to provide meaningful direction.
- The outcomes currently listed under socio-emotional health potential do not specifically call out parents being their child’s first teacher, the intention to improve parental knowledge and skills, or the interest in addressing the emotional harm or scarring that could occur to a child experiencing some kind of trauma. These are other areas of work First 5 LA Commissioners have expressed interest in supporting; therefore, subsequent work with Commissioners to finalize the list of outcomes must address these additional potential outcomes.
- The child/population-level outcomes are not currently constructed in a parallel way. For example, the cognitive development outcomes are articulated at the individual child level, while the outcomes for physical and socio-emotional health are more appropriately articulated at the population level.
- Finally, it will be necessary to collect additional data on the policy and funding landscape to get an even clearer picture of the highest potential areas for First 5 LA to have meaningful impact (e.g. it may be that a large funder has recently invested significantly in a collaborative effort aimed at obesity prevention, which would greatly mitigate the need for First 5 LA to take on a significant role in this area).

Members of the community present at the May 19th Program & Planning Committee Meeting/Special Meeting of the Commission expressed their observations related to the outcomes. For example, they noted the cross-cutting nature of the outcomes relating to families and communities. They commented that the very different nature of some of the outcomes (from systems-level all the way down to individual child level) could create challenges around both measurement and attribution to First 5 LA. They also observed that the protective factors are potential cross-cutting outcomes that could help affect change for each of the goal areas.

Next Steps:

Approval of the recommended vision, target population, ultimate impact, and goals statements for First 5 LA represent important inputs into the development of the strategic plan. These key components of the Framework for Impact will be included in the strategic plan, along with the Strategic Imperative and home positions for the six levers for impact. Together, they articulate formally adopted policy positions and intent for the organization’s work going forward.

At the upcoming June 23, 2014, Program & Planning Committee Meeting/Special Meeting of the Commission, Commissioners will continue their deliberation of the preliminary list of outcomes included in this memo. To help further focus the outcomes First 5 LA will hold itself accountable to affecting, staff and Learning for Action will present to Commissioners additional criteria to facilitate discussion, including a review of the policy and funding landscape for each of these goal areas and an assessment of the availability of indicators to measure the proposed outcomes. Community and staff perspectives on this list of outcomes will also be shared. A survey was released to these stakeholders on May 28, 2014, with the intent of gaining feedback about how the outcomes could be prioritized, what additional outcomes may be missing under each goal area, and the ways in which First 5 LA could potentially achieve these outcomes.

Once a revised list of outcomes is generated by Commissioners on June 23rd, staff and Learning for Action will begin to engage Commissioners around “pathways for change”, which is terminology being used to describe specifically how First 5 LA will contribute to creating the change embodied by the priority outcomes. These pathways will be informed by the organization’s unique value add and core strengths, and will reflect First 5 LA’s philosophy of how change happens.

At the June 30, 2014, Board Retreat, Commissioners will be asked to make final recommendations on the pathways for change and finalize all other aspects of the Framework for Impact. The Board Retreat will conclude with the development of recommendations for the mission and values statements for the plan.

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Board Action Taken:

Approved: Yes No Further Discussion

Referred to Committee/Work Group: _