COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:
Commissioners:
Michael Antonovich (Chair)
Nancy Au (Vice Chair)
Jane Boeckmann
Jonathan Fielding
John Hatakeyama (Alternate)
Neal Kaufman
Corina Villaraigosa
Carolyn Wilder

Ex-Officio Commissioners:
Jacquelyn McCroskey
Matt Rezvani
Deanne Tilton

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:
Ex-Officio Commissioners:
Harriette Williams

STAFF PRESENT:
Evelyn V. Martinez, Executive Director
Victor Abalos, Director of Communications
Anthony Bellanca, Director of Finance
Lisa Brabo, Director of Grants Management
Armando Jimenez, Director of Research & Evaluation
Teresa Nuno, Director of Planning & Development
Maria Romero, Executive Assistant

LEGAL COUNSEL:
Craig Steele, Attorney-at-Law

CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL
1. Chair Antonovich called the meeting to order at 1:47 p.m.

CONSENT CALENDAR: (Items 2 – 3)
2. Approval of Commission Meeting Minutes – January 9, 2005
   M/S (Jonathan Fielding / Jane Boeckmann)  APPROVED AS RECOMMENDED
3. Approval of Monthly Financials
   M/S (Corina Villaraigosa / Jonathan Fielding)  APPROVED AS RECOMMENDED

COMMISSION: (Items 4-11)
4. Announcements by the Commission Chair
   RECEIVED
In addition to general announcements, Chair Antonovich commented on the following issues.

- **Obesity/Diabetes:** March is National Nutrition Month and it provides us with an opportunity to focus attention on how we feed our children. About 1 in 3 children in California are overweight or at risk of being overweight and that raises their risk for many health problems. Type 2 diabetes, which used to be a disease only diagnosed in adults, is now being found in children as young as four. High blood pressure and high cholesterol levels are also showing up in young children. At First 5 LA, we encourage parents and providers to take action to help our children have a healthy weight. Good nutrition and physical activity can make a big difference.

- **Dental Health:** “Mommy, It Hurts to Chew,” is the title of just-released survey with disturbing results about the state our children’s dental health. The study, conducted by the Dental Health Foundation, surveyed kindergarten and third-grade children throughout California and identified tooth decay as a significant problem. In fact, by third grade, it affects almost two-thirds of children in this state. The Dental Health Foundation called it an epidemic and concluded that more than half of the kindergartners and more than 70% of the third-graders have untreated tooth decay.

This problem is more than a health issue. Kids with serious tooth decay are often in pain and can’t concentrate. They are more likely to miss school and get poor grades. The survey went on to say that treatment is a good solution, but prevention, especially early prevention, is the best solution. Dental health coverage comes with First 5 LA’s Healthy Kids insurance but we want parents and child care providers to know it’s never too early to start teaching children good dental hygiene habits.

5. Executive Director’s Report

**RECEIVED AND FILED**

In addition to the written report, Executive Director Martinez commented on the following Commission-related issues.

- **State-Wide Audit Request** – State elected officials (Senator Cox and Assemblymember Frommer) are requesting an audit on the spending practices and contracting procedures of the California Children and Families Commission (First 5 California). The members are interested in determining whether First 5 California ensured proper use of the State’s assets. The State Auditor estimates that this audit will require approximately 1,810 hours of audit work at a cost of $153,850, plus travel expenses.


First 5 LA has received copies of the 2004-2005 First 5 California Annual Report submitted to the Legislature and Governor. The report is available on the statewide
7. Approval of a Total Allocation in the Amount Not-to-Exceed $840,000 from the School Readiness Initiative Program Funds to be Used for a Small County Augmentation During a Period of Four Fiscal Years: 2004-05, 2005-06, 2006-07, 2007-08

First 5 tax revenue is distributed to each county based on county birthrates. In order to ensure that each county receives enough funds to provide a basic level of services, the smallest county disbursements are augmented such that no county receives less than $250,000 per year. Historically, First 5 California has provided the funds needed for the augmentation.

On May 20, 2004, the State Commission approved State funding for the Small County Augmentation Project for an additional four years, starting Fiscal Year 2004-05. The State Commission approval included a stipulation that the larger counties fund 20% of the cost of the augmentation through redirection of state matching funds from future allocations to the larger counties. The amount of local funding required per fiscal year will be apportioned to the 27 largest counties based on county birthrates. The birthrates used to calculate tax revenue in the fiscal year the funds were disbursed will be used, and the State Commission has determined that School Readiness is the initiative from which the funds will be drawn. County Commissions can backfill the allocation taken from the School Readiness Initiative for small county augmentation so as to prevent negative impacts on school readiness services.

Commissioner Villaraigosa inquired if it was known how the State Commission came to the decision about having the larger County Commissions fund 20% of the augmentation cost for the Small and Rural County Commissions. Director Brabo commented that the State Commission did not provide specific criteria used to come to this determination.

Chair Antonovich stipulated that the First 5 LA Commission will proceed with the allocation if all other large counties contribute their portions as well.

M/S (Jonathan Fielding / Nancy Au) APPROVED AS RECOMMENDED

8. UPDATE: School Readiness Initiative (SRI) Sunsetting Process

The School Readiness Initiative engages families, community members, and educators in the important work of preparing children, birth to age five, for elementary school. This initiative adopted the National Education Goals Panel definition of school readiness: (1) children ready for school; (2) schools ready for children; (3) family and community supports; and, (4) services that contribute to children’s academic success. This initiative has a focus on communities with low-performing schools as measured by the Academic Performance Index (1999).

Each school readiness program is comprised of five “essential and coordinated” elements: (1) Early Care and Education [ECE]; (2) Parenting and Family Support Services [PFS]; (3) Health and Social Services [HSS]; (4) Schools’ Readiness for
Children/School Capacity [SC]; and, (5) Program Infrastructure, Administration, and Evaluation [PIA].

This initiative is a partnership with First 5 California. The State provides a 1:1 match for program services, thus $67 million has been provided by First 5 LA for service grants and $67 million has been provided by First 5 California – totaling $134 million. First 5 California also provides implementation funds for the operation, planning, development and implementation efforts of First 5 LA. These funds total $1.3 million and are not required to be matched by First 5 LA.

On February 7, 2006, Commissioner Liaisons for the School Readiness Initiative Sunsetting Process met and reviewed preliminary materials developed by staff. After review and discussion, the Commissioner Liaisons made the following recommendations:

1. Delay submitting any applications for school readiness funds to First 5 California until the second round due date, which is January 2007. Funding would be effective July 1, 2007.

2. Provide bridge funding for the three (of 42) grantees that do not have enough grant funding to maintain services until July 1, 2007. First 5 California is not providing such bridge funding, thus the approximately $600,000 needed to prevent gaps in services will be allocated from First 5 LA’s original investment of $67 million. These funds are not eligible for First 5 California 1:1 match.

3. Utilize the additional planning time to: a) more fully consider how the School Readiness Initiative can most effectively coordinate with new services such as universal preschool, and b) look more closely at the outcomes of school readiness services.

Given these recommendations, the following revised timeline was developed:

- May, 2006: Meeting with Commissioner Liaisons to review revised materials.
- June 8, 2006: First 5 LA Commission Meeting–Formal consideration of refunding the sunsetting School Readiness Initiative.
- July/August 2006: If the First 5 LA Commission refunds the School Readiness Initiative, apply criteria to determine which existing grantees are eligible for continued funding.
- September 2006: Release the Request For Funds to eligible current grantees.

Commissioner Rezvani expressed concern about data collection regarding the School Readiness Initiative. Commissioner Rezvani questioned the feasibility of collecting data over the next four years when, in fact, data was not collected during the past four years.

Director Jimenez responded that the data collection was impacted by what was commonly referred to as the “domains of data evaluation.” Under the domains of data evaluation, data is collected on: (1) program performance [i.e., programmatic
deliverables, legal and contractual compliance]; (2) levels of outcome [i.e., child-based, family-based, school-based, and community-based]; and, (3) strategic domain. With respect to the School Readiness Initiative, there were variations in the engaging of schools since not all schools were funded for the full four years.

Commissioner Wilder suggested that each of the grantees be asked for goals so that an evaluation could be developed based on such goals.

9. **UPDATE:** Universal Preschool Research Advisory Committee Meeting

Director Jimenez reported that on March 7th and 8th, First 5 LA and Los Angeles Universal Preschool (LAUP) hosted the first meeting of the Universal Preschool Research Advisory Committee. The Research Advisory Committee brought together 20 individuals representing a range of national and local early childhood research experts including technical expertise regarding many of the most significant state and national preschool evaluation efforts.

Director Jimenez welcomed Dr. John Love, Co-Chair of the Research Advisory Committee. Dr. Love shared feedback from the two-day meeting proceedings with the Commissioners. Dr. Love conveyed the excitement that was evident among the Advisory Committee members to have the opportunity to be a part of such an esteemed group of colleagues and to work on such an important task. After two days of meetings and discussion, several key themes emerged such as (1) the need to consider long-term as well as short-term evaluation studies, and (2) the need to begin the collection of child level data through a management information system. To accomplish the monumental task of the Advisory Committee, it was agreed that small workgroups would be established to focus on specific areas of expertise. These workgroups would meet more frequently than the Advisory Committee meeting as a whole, which will meet two to three times per year.

10. **UPDATE:** New Schools/Better Neighborhoods (NS/BN)

Director Nuno welcomed and introduced David Abel, NS/BN Chair. Mr. Abel and his NS/BN team provided an update report on the activities of the New Schools/Better Neighborhoods (NS/BN) pilot project.

Initially, the NS/BN pilot project was approved by the Commission in June 2002 as part of the 1999-2000 Strategic Plan. This three year (August 1, 2002 - July 31, 2005) pilot planning project was to allow NS/BN to serve as an intermediary that would bring school districts together with community stakeholders to create multi-use public school sites in communities with great socio-economic need. The three year period of First 5 LA funding committed NS/BN to the development of seven to nine multi-use public school sites with full day preschool facilities and, where feasible, family resource centers via the creation of a Master Plan. In June 2005, the Board approved an additional one year period of funding to the Strategic Partnership. This additional period included the completion of the existing scope of work in addition to identifying and facilitating a process to secure existing sites located in high need areas that increase the number of child care and preschool slots.
NS/BN will continue to focus on improving the coordination and integration of health, safety and early learning services at the community level promoting place-based strategies. In addition, NS/BN will continue to build collaborative partnerships leveraging both financial and social capital, as well as increase the knowledge of the potential impact of place-based strategies through the NS/BN evaluation.

11. Public Comment

    None.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 3:34 p.m.

The next Commission meeting is scheduled for:

    March 9, 2006 at 1:30 p.m.
    Multi-Purpose Room
    750 N. Alameda Street
    Los Angeles, CA 90012

Meeting minutes recorded by Maria Romero.