COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:
Commissioners:
Nancy Au (Vice Chair)
Jane Boeckmann (left @ 3:30 pm)
Jonathan Fielding (Alternate)
Neal Kaufman
Carolyn Wilder

Ex-Officio Commissioners:
Jacquelyn McCroskey
Matt Rezvani
Deanne Tilton
Harriette Williams

COMMISSIONERS EXCUSED ABSENT:
Commissioners:
Michael Antonovich (Chair)
Marvin Southard
Corina Villaraigosa

STAFF PRESENT:
Evelyn V. Martinez, Executive Director
Anthony Bellanca, Director of Finance
Yolanda Bosch, Director of Contracts & Legal Compliance
Lisa Brabo, Director of Grants Management
Nancy Fareed, Acting Director of Public Affairs
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. Commissioner Au (Vice Chair) called the meeting to order at 1:43 pm.

CONSENT CALENDAR:  (Items 2 – 3)
2. Approval of Commission Meeting Minutes – September 14, 2006
   M/S (Neal Kaufman / Jane Boeckmann)  APPROVED AS RECOMMENDED
3. Approval of Monthly Financials
   M/S (Jonathan Fielding / Jane Boeckmann)  APPROVED AS RECOMMENDED

COMMISSION:  (Items 4-14)
4. Announcements by the Commission Chair
   RECEIVED
5. Executive Director’s Report

**RECEIVED AND FILED**

Executive Director Martinez highlighted the following Commission-related issues from her written report:

- **First 5 LA Fellowship Program**: Three doctoral students will represent the first class of Fellows for First 5 LA beginning October 2, 2006. Susana Halpine, assigned to Public Affairs, Christine Ong, assigned to Research & Evaluation, and Jeong-Kyun Choi, assigned to Planning & Development, will spend the next ten months working on specific projects that will advance the vision and mission of the Commission as well as sharpen the Fellows’ skills and experience.


Director Bellanca shared copies the Financial Statements and Independent Auditor’s Report for FY 2005-2006 with Commissioners. He reported that the auditors have given First 5 LA an unqualified opinion meaning that, in their opinion, the Financial Statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Commission as of June 30, 2006 and the changes in the financial position for the year ended June 30, 2006.

**M/S (Jonathan Fielding / Jane Boeckmann) APPROVED AS RECOMMENDED**

7. Approval of the 2005-06 Annual Report to First 5 California (State Commission)

Acting Director Fareed reported that each year staff prepares two versions of the Annual Report: 1) a report to the State Commission that provides fiscal and programmatic information in response to a Commission-designated template, and 2) a “user-friendly” report that is distributed to all First 5 LA stakeholders and includes the Commission’s annual financial report, as well as significant activities and accomplishments for the year.

**M/S (Jonathan Fielding / Neal Kaufman) APPROVED AS RECOMMENDED**

8. Approval of the Sunsetting of the New Schools/Better Neighborhoods (NS/BN) Strategic Partnership with a No-Cost Extension for an Additional Two and a Half Months Beginning October 1, 2006 and Ending December 15, 2006 to:

A. Finalize its collaboration with LAUP on the activities specified in the 2005-2006 Preschool Sites Project scope of work, including a quality case study report synthesizing the approach and lessons learned; and,

B. Scale down budget expenditures and strengthen its sustainability plans.

*Commissioner Kaufman recused himself from participating in the discussion of the New Schools/Better Neighborhoods (NS/BN) Strategic Partnership due to a conflict of interest. Commissioner Kaufman left the room and was not present during the discussion and vote.*
Director Nuno reported that the NSBN strategic partnership with First 5 LA is sunsetting in September 2006 and therefore, the sunsetting review process has been completed. This process considers the partnership’s intended objectives in relation to the Commission’s current strategic plan and its programmatic and fiscal priorities.

The sunsetting process involves two phases: (1) Compliance and (2) Alignment with Programmatic and Fiscal Policies. The compliance phase reviews whether the strategic partner has been in compliance with First 5 LA’s financial and programmatic policies throughout the term of the contract, as determined by the budget, progress reports, site visit notes, evaluation, contract agreements, discussions and correspondence between NSBN and LAUP. The second phase reviews how closely the initiative/strategic partner aligns with First 5 LA’s Revised Programmatic and Fiscal Policies adopted in November 2005.

Based on the sunsetting review process, staff and Commissioner Liaisons are recommending that NSBN be provided a no cost extension for an additional two and a half months, up to December 15, 2006, to finalize their work on the Project. This extension will allow NSBN time to finalize and deliver all of the required deliverables per their Scope of Work, including a case study report that synthesizes the approaches and lessons learned from this project. Additionally, this extension will allow time for First 5 LA and NSBN staff to transition partnership activities and for NSBN to address sustainability considerations.

Commissioner Boeckmann made a motion for discussion in which staff were requested to include the role of NS/BN in the Prenatal through Three Focus Area.

Commissioner Au responded that the Commission was not ready to talk about the Prenatal through Three Focus Area at this juncture. Staff are scheduled for a formal presentation regarding the Prenatal through Three Focus Area at the Commission meeting of November 9, 2006 where the proposed framework will be presented for approval. Commissioner Au commented that the particular motion being made by Commissioner Boeckmann was not appropriate at this point in time.

Commissioner Fielding commented that the motion simply asks staff to consider NS/BN as part of their thought process in bringing forward a Prenatal through Three framework. The motion is not asking for anything to be done specifically at this point except for staff to include NS/BN in their consideration.

Commissioner Au stated that she was not clear on how this new proposed motion would fit with the staff recommendation at this time of looking at NS/BN’s project status. Commissioner Au further stated that a more appropriate forum for the type of discussion being requested through Commissioner Boeckmann’s motion would be at the Planning Committee meetings where the conversation can center on NS/BN and all other existing initiatives to see how the Commission could capitalize its investments without recreating them in the community. The Commission would be able to further enhance and incorporate a range of potential stakeholders and partners toward the new direction the Commission will be taking, especially as it relates to the Prenatal through Three Focus Area. In this context, the proposed motion would be more appropriate.

Commissioner Au commented that in focusing on the recommendation on NS/BN, a decision needed to be made of whether or not the Commission was going to support the staff recommendation regarding NS/BN.
Commissioner Fielding commented that he appreciated the layout of some of the issues but found difficulty in figuring out what moderate alignment meant and what the expectations were that were noted. Commissioner Fielding further commented that the goals may not have been as clearly defined as they should have been. He said that he was not entirely clear on what the expectations were from the Commission to NS/BN. Staff responded that a Memo of Understanding (MOU) outlining six objectives was established between LAUP and NS/BN for the purpose of preschool site development. These objectives were at the center of the sunsetting review process along with an assessment of alignment to the Commission’s new funding priorities.

Furthermore, Commissioner Fielding asked for more information regarding the collaboration between LAUP and NS/BN.

In regard to collaboration efforts between LAUP and NS/BN, Dion Jackson, LAUP Vice President of Business Development, reported that the model developed at this point by NS/BN was good model if Proposition 82 would have been passed. If this had occurred, LAUP would have been able to implement the model since it would be purchasing land for preschool sites. Since Proposition 82 did not pass, LAUP must be conservative in their approach and have now chosen to enter into 7-year lease agreements with current child care providers.

Commissioner Au commented that the process up to this point had been agonizing and this is why there are many unhappy individuals at the meeting. However, the unfortunate reality is that the Commission does not have a bottomless money bag. All of the Commission’s dollars have been allocated and some tough decisions will need to be made.

Director Nuno commented that the reason for moderate alignment was a result of the NS/BN completing some of their deliverables in some areas as defined in their scope of work.

Executive Director commented that it was important to note that the recommendation before the Commission was a joint recommendation from staff as well as the Commissioner Liaisons who provided input throughout the internal review process.

Commissioner Au stated that based on the Commission’s fiscal reality, there may come a time in which although programs or initiatives may have a high rating of satisfaction, the Commission may not have the fiscal resources to continue funding. This is why the concept of sustainability is embedded in all of the programs and initiatives that the Commission currently funds.

Commissioner Williams commented that she was part of the three sunsetting review meetings convened to address this issue. She reminded Commissioners that NS/BN was a pilot project that had been recommended for sunsetting twice before. Commissioner Williams further commented that this issue seemed to be very emotional but it was a pilot project and such types of projects do come to an end.

Commissioner Fielding stated that he realized that NS/BN was not an initiative but was trying to think of alignment not only with LAUP but what NS/BN could be doing with the Commission’s current priorities such as placed-based efforts where a lot of services and social networking takes place at particular neighborhoods. In prior conversations, the Commission has agreed that such places for social networking are at schools. NS/BN is an organization that tries to find ways to
leverage existing sites with some of the new resources and there is an unprecedented amount of money that the school system must contribute toward the development of these sites. If it were not for this type of intervention, the school systems would not be able to identify all the roles that are critical for such sites. Commissioner Fielding expressed his concern about sunsetting, not so much about the LAUP issue, but whether there is going to be enough capacity left within the organization to leverage the huge number of dollars that are in the LAUSD and other County school systems that serve as the focal point of placed-based efforts.

Commissioner Au commented that the Commission was not quite ready to lock in any commitment in terms of the Prenatal through Three Focus Area or the Open Grantmaking. This would be terribly irresponsible of the Commission to make such a commitment and then not be able to fulfill it. The Commission needs to be disciplined and focused on the staff recommendation. This does not exclude NS/BN from funding opportunities that may become available in the future.

Staff noted that once the NS/BN deliverables were completed and submitted to the Commission, this would be acknowledged as such.

Executive Director Martinez clarified that NS/BN was a contractor and not a grantee. A contractor is a subject matter expert providing an expertise that in-house staff does not have whereas a grantee is funded to provide services to the community. Furthermore, due to State-wide regulatory legislation, the Commission must go through a competitive bidding process for the selection of new contractors.

Commissioner Au commented that the initial investment was a good model and reminded Commissioners that the staff recommendation pertained to the status of their contract in providing for a no-cost extension for NS/BN to complete the deliverables identified in their scope of work.

M/S (Carolyn Wilder / Nancy Au) APPROVED AS RECOMMENDED

Roll Call Vote of Members Present:

Nancy Au: yes
Jane Boeckmann: yes
Jonathan Fielding: yes
Carolyn Wilder: yes

MOTION CARRIES: 4-0-0

9. Approval of the Revised Evaluation and Accountability Framework and of an Allocation of up to $1.4 Million Over Two Years from Evaluation Funds for Implementation of Commission-level Evaluation with a Focus on Placed-Based Evaluation

Director Jimenez reported that the accountability framework described in First 5 LA’s current five-year strategic plan contains four levels of accountability. The first three levels, namely County, Goal (Initiative) and Grantee, comprise the core elements of a results-based accountability system. The fourth, Commission-level accountability, is intended to capture how the Commission is doing more globally in terms of building capacity, improving systems, leveraging social and financial capital and advocating on behalf of children and families.

To date, much of First 5 LA’s evaluation work has focused on the first three levels of accountability and less on the fourth level. The evaluation work thus far has
focused primarily on tracking population-based indicators of children’s well-being, answering questions about the process and outcomes of specific initiatives, documenting grantee and contractor compliance, and supporting continuous quality improvement. These efforts are critical to help the Commission make initiative-specific decisions and to help First 5 LA staff manage and support grantees and contractors. However, they do not address the important questions regarding the Commission’s impact across initiatives and focus areas and within communities. While Commission Level Accountability addresses these broader questions, the details of how it will be implemented were not fully articulated in the strategic plan.

The Revised Framework articulates the methods and resource implications of each of these three purposes and highlights the need to strike a balance among them in a way that is tailored to each initiative. Each initiative or project will include components of oversight and compliance, program and organizational improvement, and assessment of merit and worth and the relative emphasis on each component will change depending on the initiative, its scope, and its maturity.

The Revised Framework also further refines our approach to Commission-level Accountability. This fourth level of accountability focuses on global questions about First 5 LA’s impact from the vantage point of specific communities where a critical mass of First 5 LA funds has been invested.

Commissioner Kaufman stated that he had no objections to the proposed Revised Framework and would move forward with its approval on the condition that the fourth level be further discussed and approved by the Commissioner Liaisons.

M/S (Neal Kaufman / Carolyn Wilder) APPROVED AS RECOMMENDED

10. Approval of Oral Health and Nutrition Expansion and Enhancement Project Multi-Strategy Framework with an Allocation Not-to-Exceed $10 Million with funding as follows: 60% From Open Grantmaking, 30% from Capacity Building, and 10% from Policy; And, Authorize Staff to Negotiate Contracts and Grants Necessary for Project Development and Roll Out

Director Nuno reported that the Oral Health and Nutrition Expansion and Enhancement Project Multi-Strategy Framework is based on an assessment of best practices and an identification of how First 5 LA could potentially leverage and maximize existing ongoing efforts to improve nutritional and oral health outcomes for children and their families.

The issues affecting children’s nutrition and oral health outcomes are complex and varied, supporting the need for First 5 LA to focus on developing partnerships with other organizations, leveraging existing efforts and prioritizing strategies to address these issues. The proposed framework includes Access – Direct Services, Public Education, Policy and Advocacy to strategically address the areas that strongly emerged from the expert panels, stakeholder discussions and literature reviews. A multi-strategy framework will allow First 5 LA to focus on: Access-Direct Services for the community that address need and strengthen parent, provider and community capacity; Public Education will address the need to increase the messaging around communicating the importance of oral health and nutrition for optimal child development; and Policy and Advocacy related policy agenda development and convenings will address the need to affect these issues more broadly in terms of addressing systems and related policies that underlie these issues.
The strategies to improve the nutritional status and oral health of children and their families presented as part of this framework intend to integrally focus on the emergent areas found to be both critical and feasible. The proposed framework is intended to provide the Board with a scope of potential activities to be rolled-out incrementally to achieve First 5 LA’s oral health and nutrition objectives. The development and roll-out of these strategies involve short term, intermediate and long term activities to build upon and coordinate both the work of First 5 LA and other agencies, which will require a phased-in approach to execute.

**M/S (Jonathan Fielding / Jane Boeckmann) APPROVED AS RECOMMENDED**

*The order of the action items was changed. Item #12 was discussed before Item #11.*

12. Approval of an Allocation in the Amount Not-to-Exceed $75,000 to Complete Testing of the Prenatal Through Three Focus Area

Director Nuno reported that in order to ensure that implementation of the Prenatal through Three two-pronged approach is successful the Commission and its partners must effectively engage key stakeholders, including families and community leaders. The Prenatal through Three team recommends that a timely set of qualitative research strategies be utilized to test the concepts outlined in the approach. This testing will inform continued refinement and implementation of the focus area, as well as marketing and messaging strategies.

**M/S (Jonathan Fielding / Carolyn Wilder) APPROVED AS RECOMMENDED**

*(Due to another commitment, Commissioner Boeckmann left the meeting at 3:30 pm and meeting quorum was lost.)*


Graciela Italiano-Thomas, LAUP Chief Executive Officer, reported that LAUP set a number of ambitious goals for itself last year, but perhaps none loomed as large as their commitment to support the operation or development of 10,000 preschool spaces by June 2006. LAUP has met and slightly exceeded this goal. LAUP pursued this goal through two major pushes: (1) completion of Early Launch programs, which started in March 2005, and, (2) the initiation of a second funding round in January 2006.

Dr. Italiano-Thomas commented that Early Launch programs are supporting quality preschool programs for more than 5,000 children from all over Los Angeles County. LAUP will continue to fund and support these providers in the coming fiscal year. As a result of Early Launch implementation without a targeted investment to create new preschools in underserved communities, it became clear that there was simply no way communities in the “Hot Zones” would ever begin to catch up to the rest of the county. It also became clear that areas beyond just the original 16 “Hot Zones” were in desperate need of preschool facilities.

Furthermore, Dr. Italiano-Thomas reported that County-wide, there are not enough licensed preschool spaces to serve even half of our 4-year-olds, but availability varies widely zip code by zip code. LAUP identified 34 communities...
that have significant numbers of 4-year-old children without access to preschool. LAUP’s Board directed staff to plan and execute a second round of funding focused on bringing these 34 communities to parity with the rest of the county with respect to availability of preschool. The Board also authorized $42.7 million (of LAUP’s $101 million total FY 2005-06 budget) to be dedicated to creation of new preschool capacity in these areas of greatest need. The results of this second round of funding are extraordinary, and are not yet complete. As of June 30, 2006, LAUP had committed to contracts with 42 existing center providers (providing operating funds to open new classes in rooms that previously stood empty), 20 Family Child Care providers, and 70 new facilities projects. Once up and running, these projects will serve an estimated 5,300 children, a 100% increase in LAUP-supported spaces, and, more to the point, a dramatic increase in the availability of preschool in many of the county’s most underserved areas.

The Universal Preschool Master Plan exhorted LAUP to be inclusive of all children in Los Angeles County, and to build on the existing diverse provider supply. As LAUP’s first program year came to a close, it is hard to imagine a more diverse pool of participants (providers, children, families) than those involved in LAUP. Children participating in LAUP are from diverse backgrounds given the local population’s incredible array of cultures, languages, income levels, ethnicities, and countries of origin. LAUP cannot claim to have reached such a diverse group deliberately; none of the programs have been selected because of the race or income of the children served. Still, the heterogeneity of this population emphasizes the need for preschools to understand their communities when striving for quality.

Dr. Italiano-Thomas stated “that LAUP has been challenged to develop a universal preschool program while it rolls that program out, and while it builds the organizational infrastructure to support that program. Some have likened this to setting sail while still building the boat. Others prefer the metaphor of a road being built as we walk it. We knew the destination, but the course was up to us. In truth, LAUP has relished this challenge, as it has allowed LAUP to create its own environment—an environment in which we can be passionate about our work.”

After the formal presentation, Commissioners made the following statements:

- Commissioner McCroskey expressed concerns about the depth of data being collected on the children being served by LAUP and inquired what were LAUP’s plans for data collection.

- Commissioner Fielding echoed Commissioner McCroskey’s concern and stated that data collection was fundamental to the mission of LAUP. He requested that LAUP provide a progress report and timetable for the future collection of data on the children being served by LAUP.

- Commissioner Kaufman asked for further clarification and definition of the health and wellness approach reflected in LAUP’s proposed scope of work. He commented that this approach should be more comprehensive as health and wellness is more than the provision of health insurance.

- Commissioner Kaufman inquired if LAUP has explored “dual language” programs that would teach foreign languages to English-speaking children? If parents understood that learning a second language by age five has
important benefits for brain development, they could see the benefits of enrolling their children in programs with children of Spanish-speaking or Asian language-speaking parents, which could result in a significant social paradigm shift. Also, Commissioner Kaufman asked if any of the LAUP inclusive programs were ready to serve as models for the rest of the county.

- Commissioner Kaufman also commented that it is important for Commissioners to understand how LAUP is leveraging the First 5 LA funding, as they decide how to best support LAUP in the future. Specifically, Commissioner Kaufman asked what has LAUP done to leverage financing from other sources and ensure that LAUP is making the best use of funding received from First 5 LA. Specifically, Commissioner Kaufman wanted to know if a plan existed to compel providers who are solely funded by LAUP to find other sources to supplant LAUP funding in the future.

- Commissioner Au also commented that in light of the failed proposition (Proposition 82), was there a plan if full public funding was not available. Commissioner Kaufman asked how LAUP was planning to proceed with sustainability since the failure of Proposition 82 could be seen as a measure of public support.

Commissioner Au requested of Dr. Italiano-Thomas that progress updates be provided to the Commission at the next Commission meeting scheduled for November 9, 2006 on all the “pending” and “delayed” items noted in the Scope of Work for FY 2005-2006, and to respond to the questions posed by Commissioners.

Due to lack of quorum, this item was continued to the Commission meeting scheduled for November 9, 2006.

13. UPDATE: Prenatal Through Three Focus Area Investment

Due to the length of the Commission meeting, it was determined that the following written report would suffice as an update on the progress of the Prenatal through Three Focus Area.

Director Nuno reported that in November 2003, the Commission approved $105 million for the development of the Prenatal through Three Focus Area Investment. In February 2005, the Commission approved the Implementation Plan outlining investments across four components: 1) data; 2) direct services; 3) capacity strengthening; and, 4) policy. These four components have been integrated into a cross-cutting approach to optimize the development of pregnant women, babies and toddlers. In November 2005, the Commission approved an additional allocation of $20 million raising the total focus area funding to $125 million. At the same time, the Commission approved its Revised Programmatic and Fiscal Policies of the Next Five Strategic Plan. These revised policies have increased the Commission’s emphasis on the Prenatal through Three population, influencing the Community Capacity Strengthening, Systems Improvement, Data and Policy investments, as well as other initiatives (i.e. Healthy Births). Further, these new policies direct First 5 LA toward a Place-Based evaluation strategy, for which the Baby Zone concept is well designed.

In May 2006 the Commission approved the two-pronged Baby Zone and Policy Agenda approach. This two-pronged approach integrates the four components, while outlining both universal and place-based strategies for investment in the desired results and outcomes for this population.
The vision of the Prenatal through Three Focus Area is to optimize the early development of children in Los Angeles County from the prenatal stage through age three. The purpose of the Prenatal through Three Focus Area is to increase the number of children who achieve appropriate social, emotional, cognitive, language, physical and motor developmental milestones to the best of their potential. The attached document expands on the previously approved “ABC’s of Baby Zones” and outlines strategies and capacity building activities proposed to achieve implementation of the approach, as well as the desired outcomes and results for the focus area.

14. Public Comment

    David Abel, New Schools/Better Neighborhoods
    Ken Knott, Lennox School District
    Dan Knudsen, Lutheran Community Service Network

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 4:40 pm.

The next Commission meeting is scheduled for:

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

Meeting minutes recorded by Maria Romero.