In the Matter of:
FIRST 5

COMMISIONERS' MEETING
March 04, 2013

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FIRST FIVE COMMISSIONERS' MEETING

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

MONDAY, MARCH 4, 2013

REPORTED BY:

Heatherlynn Gonzalez,

CSR No. 13646
(At 2:35 p.m. the meeting was called to order.)

MR. RIDLEY-THOMAS: Thank you very much.
We appreciate your presence at this special meeting of First 5 LA.

Madam Secretary, if you will call the roll.

(Roll called.)

MR. RIDLEY-THOMAS: Thank you very much.

This meeting today is to follow up on a suggestion that was made in the last meeting to focus in a concentrated way on Best Start.

And I think it's important that we turn our attention to what kind of impact that we seek with this program. The outcomes, not only the measure of our progress, the timelines, and the work associated with meeting our goals.

The funding requirements say there's a range of things for us to understand and know. I think it should be appreciated that there are varying degrees of knowledge about the great -- the work that's being done or intended through Best Starts.

And our attempt is -- in the full light of day -- to do two thing, minimally.

One, clarify whatever outstanding questions there might be as a Board; and, two, arrive at some level of
consensus.

With that, I'm going to ask our executive
director if she would take it from there. And see if we
can't proceed to her remarks.

And before you know it, it will be 4:30, at which
time you will be giving -- give a release to leave the
premises.

Thank you very much.

MS. BELSHE: Thank you. Mr. Chair.

With that giant clock ticking over our heads, I
wanted to open up today's board meeting and set the stage
for a couple of presentations and issues we're going to be
grappling with.

And as the chairman said, today's meeting follows
on last month's discussion when the Board received an
overview and history of the Best Start initiative. And
the organization shift to replace a strategy, status of
our implementation of Best Start with a particular focus
on community capacity building strategy, some initial
lessons learned, and then some identification of
overarching questions.

You all provided direction to the staff that we
convene a special committee regarding Best Start to work
through the critical questions that are essential to
moving the Best Start initiative forward. Such as the
questions that Chairman Ridley-Thomas began last month's meeting, and the questions he returned to just now. Which is in terms of the impact we seek, the outcomes that we endeavor to achieve through our identified strategies, how we will measure progress, the time line associated with meeting our goals, and the financial requirements to make progress.

Today's meeting has two principle agenda items. First is the next step of what the chair characterized at our last meeting as a deliberative and iterative process to work through these critical questions that are necessary to move Best Start forward effectively and successfully.

And so towards that end today we're going to begin with a presentation by our Director of Research and Evaluation, Armando Jimenez, and he's going to walk through what we characterize as a logic model which we believe as I noted -- I just want to say -- provides a framework for lifting up critical issues and working through them to resolution.

We begin with the logic model in part because the Board directed staff -- and this precedes my joining the organization last summer -- the Board did direct the staff to do some development of a logic model to advance the need that the Board articulated, which was to further
define the priorities and outcomes for Best Start, to
further refine the strategies and priorities, and to
identify the measures for measuring and reporting back on
progress.

So what we're going to hear from Armando is
following up on the process that he and others have
undertaken including members of the board to help inform
the development of that logic model.

I want to underscore an important point that our
discussion here is not about whether or not Best Start is
moving forward. It's a discussion about how to move
forward with Best Start as effectively and successfully as
possible.

So in that regard, I think this time-bound
inquiry that the Board has begun has embarked us upon is
an opportunity to affirm or adjust the desire-specific
outcomes associated with Best Start. It's an opportunity
to affirm or adjust First 5 LA's adopted strategies. And
it's an opportunity to affirm or adjust the role we as an
organization play towards achieving those goals as well as
strategic partnerships required for us to execute the
strategies and achieve long term results for young
children and their families.

So that's the first and the major part of our
conversation today. The second piece is we'll be
presenting options for providing interim support to the 14
Best Start communities.

The review and assessment of the key questions
about Best Start will be as the chair said last month
deliberate and iterative. But I know we also share a
sense of urgency in terms of moving to resolution as
quickly as possible.

But even with that sense of urgency, it will take
a little bit of time. And so given that Best -- First 5
LA support of our Best Start community partners expires at
the end of this month, we wanted to tee up for the Board's
consideration of options to providing interim -- or what
we characterize as interim support for the next three to
six months pending the Board's review and consideration of
the future direction of Best Start.

So those are the two agenda items. And with
that, I will ask Armando Jimenez to walk us through the
Power Point. We'll go over some slides rather quickly.
And linger more purposefully and deliberately on others.

MR. RIDLEY-THOMAS: Purposeful lingering. I like that
formulation. Thank you, Ms. Belshe, for that
alliteration.

MS. BELSHE: What alliteration?

MR. JIMENEZ: Thank you, Mr. Chair,
Commissioners, and members of the public.
It's nice to see so many members of the community and members of our partners in terms of doing the work here.

And today the presentation -- although at some points may get somewhat conceptual and a little academic, I ask for your patience, because I believe it's an important step for us on the pathway towards a shared vision, common understanding, and more specifically, an agreement on our goals and outcomes. And to find a place that we can all seek clarity, both as staff and the community.

Our goals today are to develop a common understanding of what a logic model is and is not, and how it can be used as a decision making tool. I will be moving through that one somewhat quickly because of most of are you aware of what a logic model is.

Primarily this topic -- our goal today is to identify critical questions around Best Start. And then I will hand off to Marsha Ellis to talk about a providing and understanding of next steps internally within First 5 LA, and externally within the Best Start communities.

Again, I have provided a definition -- there are many definitions of logic models. I found one that I particularly find very useful and is a clear and concise definition of what a logic model is, and I encourage you
at some point if you ever need to refer back to it, it's here for you. I won't spend much time going through it.

Basically, a logic model has various elements.

Again, these are descriptions of some of the common elements of a logic model, although they are not always required, every single one of these elements.

Primarily you will see logic models that include activities, outcomes, and impact.

The logic model is characterized by several elements, and you'll see here listed are some of the element of a logic model.

I'd like to emphasize what I feel are one of the most important elements, and that's the last bullet here is best used backwards starting from outcomes.

A while ago as a graduate student, I had a course in evaluation theory, and one of the assignments was to actually develop a program and a corresponding evaluation.

And so I immediately struggled trying to figure out what I need to do. So the first thing I did was go see the office -- professor at office hours.

And when I met with him, I said, "Well, I'm having a difficult time starting."

And very quickly he looked at me and he said, "Begin at the end."

And I looked -- obviously I looked somewhat, you
know, confused and he said, "Begin at the end with the outcomes." He said, "You don't want to find yourself in a situation where you have programs in search of outcomes. You want to find yourself in a situation where you have clear outcomes that are in search of strong strategies."

And at the time, I was more concerned about writing it down because I was sure it was going to be on the exam. But I remember that interaction very clearly and that has stuck with me and it actually has played out in my career, not only at First 5 LA but before that.

In terms of what a logic model is not, as again it's not the recipe for how we move forward with any particular program. It doesn't tell you the cost needed, the time, or the resources required to move forward.

But also something very important to note is generally a logic model does not do a good job of describing the complexity of what exists in reality. We have communities that are a mix of very complex systems and structures and individuals and families and all these -- these things working together. A logic model does not demonstrate the interactions between those.

The other thing I'd like to note is, like anything else, a logic model is something that should be revisited. Conditions change. The environment changes. The context changes. And, therefore, we should reassess a
logic model when it's developed.

In terms of background, in the summer of 2012, we actually were directed to further define and refine the outcomes and the priorities and measure -- identify measures of success and to track progress towards that success for Best Start.

Staff conducted a comprehensive literature review of evaluation studies conducted on Place Base interventions. And we wanted to let you know that we included studies both nationally and internationally. Although we did our best to stay grounded within the peer review literature, we did include studies that were produced and provided by foundations and other programs that were on their websites that were not necessarily published in the peer reviewed literature. But we found them useful as well.

MR. RIDLEY-THOMAS: Citations might be useful for the Board's consideration in that regard

MR. JIMENEZ: Fine.

MR. RIDLEY-THOMAS: Thank you.

MR. JIMENEZ: We also built upon the literature used to develop a 2009-2015 strategic plan. We did not start exactly from zero. We'd also like to add that we met with several of the commissioners here. And I'd to thank all of the commissioners who took the time and
effort to meet with us and provide us with some valuable
input and feedback as how we went forward with this
process. Thank you very much.

One of the things I'd like to highlight in this
review are some themes that emerged from the literature.

One important thing that we want to note very,
very quickly is that we found no literature that shows a
Place Based intervention that led to child and family
outcomes at the population level, specific to all four of
First 5 LA's goals. So the magic recipe for First 5 LA
with regard to our four goal areas does not exist in the
literature.

Another important theme is place is commonly
defined as a neighborhood, much smaller in size than many
of the efforts that we are engaging in today.

Another theme is most Place Based efforts have a
comprehensive vision and approach to make improvements for
the entire age spectrum as opposed to a specific segment
of the population.

The last thing that was highlighted in the
literature review was about intentionality. And let me --
I'd like to read something from one of the articles that I
think expresses this very clearly.

It says where community interventions have
invested in intentional program effort, they were able to
count program successes and improved outcomes.

   Community change efforts that did not make
deliberate investments or assume that investments in one
domain would have spill over effects in others did not
improve outcomes.

   Even when an intervention aims to increase a less
tangible outcome, such as social capital or organizational
learning, investments must be intentional and not simply
the hoped for byproduct of other strategies.

   Again, as -- as -- in addition to what was
highlighted in the article that was submitted with your
packet, we found many of the articles we reviewed provided
some commentary on community-based change strategies that
required much more -- longer time frames for them to see
changes, and that the efforts couldn't be -- and shouldn't
be rushed to meet a predetermined time frame. And also
that the evaluation efforts should really be explicit
about the longitudinal perspective of what happens in an
intervention.

   The last major theme that I think is -- is -- is
very important to me as a person working in evaluation is
specificity of outcomes, and I'll get to more about that
later on in the presentation.

   For our review, we wanted to make sure we were
grounded in clear definitions. We use definitions that we
actually found at the promising practices network Web site which is operated by the Rand corporation and is an extremely useful Web site which describes programs that work for children and families and use these criteria To be able to distinguish between proven, promising, and theory related programs. I've listed them here. We use that to guide our process in the literature review and the logic model development.

So, before I begin, it's critical to state that the logic model I'm about to describe here is a reflection of what we saw coming out of a literature review and our best attempt to visualize it or to characterize it in a visual way.

I wanted to make clear that this is not staff's recommendation for what the Best Start logic model should be. That logic model will emerge from key decisions made by the commission and series of meetings with staff and the communities.

We started with -- there are three primary strands of literature that we reviewed. One being the intensive home visitations family strengthening.

I wanted to remind the commission that at the January board meeting you received a comprehensive update on our family strengthening work by Barbara and the program development department. The presentation
highlighted our work on welcome baby but also mentioned our future efforts to implement the intensive home visiting programs specifically healthy families, America, parents as teachers, Safe Enough, or Triple P.

Our literature was based on those intensive home visiting models. And here's what we found. The intermediate outcomes were the types that we've been often highlight and desire for programs. Primarily being parental practice improvements and changes of behavior in families with children zero to five.

And again we've characterized these as proven because of the rigor of the evaluations done was extremely high.

It's also important to note that these studies also found long-term improvements and changes in two of our specific outcomes or goals. That is safe from other abuse and neglect, and ready for school.

When we reviewed the literature we did not find relationships between interventions on home -- home intensive home visiting and outcomes related to being born healthy or low birth weight and maintaining a healthy weight.

I wanted to note also that proven does not necessarily mean guaranteed. We found several studies which showed there was no effect when an intervention was
implemented for these specific programs. We found that a significant number that were, but I just wanted to also note that we found several that did not have an effect.

It's also important to note that the two outcomes you see related to intensive home visitation were primarily found among groups of program participants. To assume that these changes would happen at a population-based level would require that a significant number of new moms received the services in these communities. And that's an important assumption to keep in our minds.

The next strand of literature relates to capacity building. And these are the types of strategies that relate to the resident based organizing community capacity building and organizational capacity building.

I'd like to remind the commission that at the February meeting you received an update on the community capacity building efforts of Best Start. These are non-service related strategies that focus on building community capacity and tapping into and harnessing the existing human social, and organizational capital of communities and it's extremely powerful resource that given operating and other demands has demonstrated significant impact in changing the way governments work.

Among other efforts antipoverty and housing
improvement efforts, we did find the limited number of studies that did show changes in some of the neighborhood outcomes listed in the model in which you'll see here in a second. But what I wanted to note is that all of the intermediate outcomes are those that most of us refer to as protected factors.

Improving a family's ability to connect in the community to build the social relationships needed to be able to thrive with their child. These are the types of outcomes that many of our programs desire.

And again, I wanted to make the distinction between promising and theoretical. The evidence we found was primarily descriptive based on case studies and qualitative research. We found no major quantitative or efforts to randomly place people in communities to demonstrate the outcomes.

And again, we did find in several cases the -- an observed neighborhood level outcomes which you see at the far right. The strategies described here are very broad and we did not see a particular program model when used to improve the outcomes described here.

The last strand is actually what we call efforts to improve the built environment. And we did find significant literature on the built environment and there's a growing body of research in this area beginning...
to show relationships between efforts to improve the built
environment and health promotion behaviors and health
outcomes. In addition there's exciting work in the area
of health impact assessments which offers a means of
identifying potential health effects associated with the
built environment.

The strategies can be indirect when community
members influence building of infrastructure to promote
positive outcomes and as you see here one of the
connections is between those families that are engaged in
work as -- in an effort improve the infrastructure that
would help promote healthy behaviors another strategy is
more direct when funders explicitly fund the building of
structures that promote positive outcomes.

As a commission we've engaged in some of these
efforts with the top parks and trails and other county
wide efforts. Probably one of the most significant areas
of this literature review was, as I mentioned at the
beginning, the lack of a relationship between
interventions that relate to capacity building, and
evidence that there are improvements at the population
based level with child and family outcomes.
And as a result, if you see that the arrows from the
neighborhood outcomes and also the intermediate outcomes
to the blue or upper level strategies, what we call
theory. And in this case, these are only theoretical relationships -- and this is important to understand, is that in that several situations this commission invests in these types of strategies may not see child and family level outcomes manifested in the time frame that we're interested in looking in, but will only see changes at the intermediate level and neighborhood level.

Ultimately this brings us to the overarching questions that in order to move forward we need to grapple with and ultimately answer. And the first one is what is First 5 LA's definition of success for Best Start and what is the impact we seek. And I'd like to be specific in providing an example.

Imagine characterizing success in this way, as an example, Best Start will be successful when we show a 50 percent reduction in the number of children ages three to four that are considered obese. This can be compared to how we normally characterize change or how we would describe our outcomes for example in the past we've stated we will reduce childhood obesity or even more vague statements like we will improve the health and well being of children zero to five.

With regard to success, specificity matters. Outcomes. Well, First 5 LA's engage only in work to advance all four of our goals or activity that advances a
subset of these goals.

   Based on the research and based on the effort to
look at the relationship between the strategies and the
outcomes, it is clear that only two outcomes based on our
efforts to move forward with home intensive home
visitation there is evidence to suggest those can be
changed. The other two outcomes the relationships are
only theoretical.

   Evidence and this is important for all of us to
consider but what level of evidence is needed today guide
and inform First 5 LAs work to achieve these goals.

   I think it's important to note that many
foundations, government, and other programs have invested
in Place Based efforts with the same knowledge of this
data and this research and knowing that many of the
relationships are theoretical and they are moving forward
with their investments we ourselves as a commission in our
portfolio have invested in both a mixture of evidence
promising and theoretical based inventions.

   I'd also note intermediate outcomes and
evaluating progress. This is important to provide the
commission with ongoing reports as to our progress and
also ongoing reports to the community. For their progress
in moving forward with Best Start and achieving our
outcomes.
Again, I bring up the whole issue of intentionality. How will we balance the need for Best Start efforts to be organic and community driven with the need for First 5 LA to be explicit about strategies that we have a reasonable expectation that will lead to outcomes. This was a question also introduced to us in the early part of the development of our Place Based work when Dr. Ross spoke to the commission and talked about the need to make sure that we find an equilibrium between organic community driven efforts and also evidence and what we know works.

We have to answer the resource question of time and money. And this is something that everyone is interested in. And ultimately our discussions with the other programs also need to reflect our need to be realistic about sustainability for Best Start.

Finally what is First 5 LAs -- what role do we play to achieve our intended goals? Looking in the literature, they did not explicitly define the role of the funder or the role of the change agent. But I would imagine that they vary from simply being a funder all the way to completely engaged in the community work itself. I'm going to pass it on to...

MS. ELLIS: Good afternoon. Our suggested approach for board engagement includes having a number of
special commission meetings such as the one today
dedicated to addressing specific Best Start questions.

For the second meeting we would suggest questions
related to success outcomes, and evidence.

Meeting 3 would entail a discussion of
intermediate outcomes and evaluating progress.

And then for the fourth meeting that we're
proposing we hope to join resources we require to support
Best Start and sustainability. We also have a suggested
approach for community engagement.

The objectives here are to keep the community
partnerships informed and engaged and to gather their
thoughts and perspectives on overall questions regarding
Best Start. On some of the current communication methods
that we use to keep our communities informed that we hope
to continue with are using the Best Start communities
websites, e-mail communication, announcement at
partnership meetings, and we regularly update a list of
frequently asked questions.

We also hope to create opportunity for our
leadership to engage with the community partnership
leadership groups on a regional basis. And staff will
continue to have ongoing conversations with the Best Start
community partnerships as well leadership groups.

For next steps we would like to come to an
agreement on a schedule for special commission meetings. This is important because as we engage the community partnerships we need to be mindful that it takes time to pull communities together.

We also will move forward with the engagement activities that I have listed previously for the community partnerships and we hope to secure some support to facilitate the Best Start review process to help us accomplish all that we need to do over the next few months. That's it.

MR. RIDLEY-THOMAS: All right. Thank you very much.

Persons wishing to be heard by way of public comment? Then I think we should have an opportunity for the board to propose questions that would be appropriate to members of the staff and the executive director so that we can move our efforts forward.

First we'll hear from Alejandra Castillo, secondly David Gutierrez.

In that order, please come forward.

MS. CASTILLO: (Through interpreter) I'll be translating for Alejandra.

Good afternoon. My name is Alejandra Castillo. I live in the Best Start metro LA community. I am a mother of three boys, two with special needs. I am a
member of the Best Start metro LA community guidance body. I am also a parent coach at the metro regional center and I am on the parent policy counsel at the Hope Street family center.

As of today we have not had the opportunity to know or be part of the funding recommendations regarding school readiness and family literacy in the metro LA community.

We are the pilot community for Best Start and have been working to achieve the four goals, and parent priorities for the past four years.

Recently we had the privilege to present a few of our achievements to Kim Belshe and the First 5 LA staff.

As a mother and community member we thank you for the opportunity to share. We hope that this direct communication will continue including -- continue and include being a part of the decisions on how Best Start metro LA will proceed being part of the transparent process will give us time to organize and contribute to assure that the decisions are better and more effective for our community.

Thank you for the opportunity for allowing us, the parents to continue to be part of decisions that impact our community.

MR. RIDLEY-THOMAS: Thank you for your testimony.
Next speaker, please.

MS. GUTIERREZ: Good afternoon, everyone. My name is Daisy Gutierrez and I'm a mother of three kids. I'm representative of Best Start LA and I represent my community ambassador. I'm also representative of the patient person of community guidance body in metro LA. And I'm the -- presently I'm the vice chair from the CGB from the Best Start metro LA too.

I'm going to speak in Spanish. Because my English, not so much.

(Through interpreter) First I would like to say thank you for the opportunity to be in front of you and to share my comments. As Armando Jimenez mentioned earlier all the communities are different.

And in reference to all the communities being different there is not one way to do the work in Best Start metro LA and Best Start metro LA has always been intentional in the way that we reach our goals.

As residents and parents we have -- that we are, we have the experience and values to guide our process. The opinions and suggestions of paired fathers and mothers have always been valued and have guided Best Start metro LA over the past four years.

The capacity of parents has improved. This is
what has enabled me to stand before you. The CGB would
like to share it's recommendations of how to continue Best
Start metro LA, based on our experiences and knowledge as
mothers, fathers, and representatives of agencies and
members of the community.

We ask that -- please, that you support us as
allies in this process.

I'm going to share about my -- I bring my two
years old kid. I left my other boy in my house. That
eight years old told me last night, "mom, you help
everyone in the community helping the schools, friends.
Why don't you help us as the kids. Why don't you tell
them that help us with my brother that he can continue.
He's supposed to say they have four goals so he can be in
one of the goals he can be in the four. I can be too."

I didn't say last -- when he has the same age I
didn't involve in this -- this community. Now I'm
involved and I say please, please think about the kids.
Think about the communities. Think about -- we live
there. We know them. We have the necessities.

Thank you.

MR. RIDLEY-THOMAS: Thank you very much for your
comments. Now the Board will be able to pose questions on
part one of today's presentation and Professor Belshe,
that would be appropriate to please do so.
MS. AU: Well, I think that there's a little bit of history that needs to be shared here and then lead to some clarification. And I -- I think that for myself I need to have some clarity as well regarding the other commissioners on this board.

When Best Start was first thought about and agreed to, it was really a product of the program planning committee, and I'm looking at Dr. Kaufman and Dr. Fielding.

And at first, Best Start was to be our -- our effort to test out Place Based approaches and originally it was to be five communities. One in each of the supervisorial districts. But many of the concerns and conversations that led the program planning committee to decide on the Place Based approach and the five communities also were present in our strategic planning process which occurred subsequent to the program planning committee's decision to test out the five Place Based approaches.

And when we had finalized our strategic plans, it became clear to the staff that -- that many of the conversations and the conclusions and the decisions the community -- the commission had come to was -- how should I say? It was similar to and even almost exactly the same as the conclusion that we came and reached through our
program planning committee. And that's how the original five communities expanded to the 14.

Somehow in that transition, in my head, I began thinking about the new strategic plans as Best Start expanded and almost you could say on steroids because it really -- it really embraced more of that comprehensive approach which we -- we -- we conclude -- we came to some realization that Place Based also needed to be supported by a county-wide approach. That it wasn't just the core in terms of family strengthening. But it also meant community capacity building, but it also required policy changes, systems changes, and broader county wide approaches.

So in my head Best Start embraced not just Place Based work, and not just family strengthening work, but also county-wide approaches as well.

But when I hear Armando's -- I'm getting all my names all mixed up here -- Armando's presentation, I'm not clear as to whether or not it also addressed what in my in my head was the family strengthening the community capacity building as well as the county wide policy and system changes as well.

So I -- I just want to pose that question. Number -- you know,

MR. RIDLEY-THOMAS: Let's get a response to that.
MR. DELGADO: You're correct. This description is a literature review of what exists for Place Based efforts.

The second part of the discussion which really is what we do forward is to what extent do we integrate the county-wide strategies and how explicit and intentional do those strategies need to be to support the fortune of Place Based interventions.

In addition, are there any considerations for the additional work that we do as a commission to enhance the four goals in the Place Based efforts.

Those are all of the other things that we have funded as a commission. This purpose, or this discussion was simply what we found in the literature and we found no literature that had Place Based interventions supported by policy efforts, public education, data systems integration the strategies that we as a commission have identified to provide that support. We did not find any literature that had that model or framework.

MR. RIDLEY-THOMAS: I'm going to ask a question about your review of the policy laden documents and to what extent they are in alignment with what we described as Best Start.

MR. JIMENEZ: Very much so. In fact, one of the key alignments was the consideration of the lessons
learned in the article that was described talked about the need for long term commitment. For Place Based efforts to take hold and take root and to actually utilize the -- the resources both existing resources from a service level but most importantly the resource that's are described by people, those require significant amount of time and that was noted in -- in the article that was -- was submitted to the commission why place matters.

It's also important to note that several of these had several dimensions of looking at systems change and environmental change and others that are in alignment with what we found in the literature was well.

So there was a significant amount of alignment between what was described in the article and what we found in the literature.

MR. RIDLEY-THOMAS: All right. So you want to pick up the balance of the answer to your question in part two of the presentation, Commissioner Au. Because otherwise I'm going to move around to another members of the commission.

MS. AU: Absolutely. And I would like that. But I would like to have the commissioners at least have some conversation around whether or not when we think about Best Start are we thinking about not only family strengthening community capacity but also the county wide
approach. And for me that would be helpful. And then we can move to the next question which is more about focusing in on the Place Based.

MR. RIDLEY-THOMAS: Noted. Additional questions? Dr. Southard.

MR. SOUTHARD: Armando, I thought the focus on the logic model was particularly helpful for us in moving forward and. I'm wondering if you have plans to engage for that logic model development other efforts that have started to -- to come to the fore since we put Best Start in place.

So, for example, for the implementation of health reform one of the things that's happening is that the mental health public health departments are looking at help neighborhood as strategy for the implementation of health reform.

It seems to us that doing that in conjunction with already existing efforts like endowments efforts like First 5's efforts might be a way of bringing them together but I think it only happens if -- if the logic model is made clear so it's not just a stew of different activities.

So I think getting a clear logic model and then having that able to be partitioned out to others will be a very valuable step so I guess that's more of a suggestion
than a question.

And then the second one is as you look at these, would you also take a look at the effects of trauma on communities because one of the things that I've seen pretty significant literature on is that merely witnessing violence has a negative effect on those who happen to witness it.

So a kid who sees a shooting in the neighborhood that he's not involved in has a much worse life outcome than the next door neighbor who everything is the same except that he didn't happen to see the shooting. And those changes in community outcomes and ways of intervening if we can build those in I think it would be very powerful.

MR. JIMENEZ: Thank you.

MR. RIDLEY-THOMAS: Additional questions or comments at this point? Thank you.

MS. TILTON: Just to add to Dr. Southard's comment, I think it's important to remember that it's very hard to be neighborly if you're afraid to walk out your front doors. And so I think with everything that we do, we need to remember that law enforcement plays a very important and positive role especially in terms of the community policing or the community involvement that makes families feel safe and it's not as thought as so much as
prevention and warm and fuzzy. But it's really a
important part of assuring that -- that a neighborhood is
able to interact with itself.

MR. RIDLEY-THOMAS: All right. Sir.

MR. KAUFMAN: I was struck by one comment you
made. Actually many comments, but one I wanted to ask you
about.

You said that the research to define Place Based
strategies as small neighborhoods rather than the size of
our 14 communities.

Is that a fatal flaw? Are we trying to use
methodology that this commission called Place Based
strategy for something that's really not a place but just
happens to be a geographic area? Should we divide those
into smaller ones and do one at a time within eventually
getting to all parts. Is it ten times the size or each of
the 14 smaller neighborhoods?

Please elaborate on that comment.

MR. JIMENEZ: The literature -- what we found is
that primarily these Place Based efforts were groups of
census blocks or blocks and not at a level in which you
have, you know, literally hundred or 120,000 residents but
much smaller in size.

Although the literature does not say that there
was a threshold, my just initial thought is that for Place
Based efforts and size it's an issue of biting off more than you can chew as opposed to what the literature says. But again most of these efforts that were described in literature were much smaller in size.

And again, I think there was a -- assumption in many of these that they were hopeful to have them scaled or moved further out. So one neighborhood would move to another and to another overtime. But they started much smaller.

MR. KAUFMAN: Right. But even those were across the entire age continuum. And so there's two parts to the size. One is the geographic size and the other is the target population.

I presume we selected a larger geographic area with a target prenatal to five population which ended up being about the size of the number of individuals but we spread that across the larger population and so does that make it so that we're --

MR. JIMENEZ: I didn't see any specific records necessarily to any population based size issues of the ones we're facing. It was primarily geographic.

MR. KAUFMAN: And Sure Start in England has communities much much smaller than ours focusing primarily focusing on young children; correct?

MR. JIMENEZ: Yes.
MR. KAUFMAN: I guess that's an important decision we need to continue to make. We have clearly made it in the past. We'll have to reaffirm that issue of target population target size. Obviously, that then leads to different strategies, different tactics, different approaches.

MR. RIDLEY-THOMAS: On that very point, I want to make sure that we are comparing apples to apples. It is not at all a surprise to anyone as it relates to literature review that LA county will be viewed as anomalous. To the extent that is the case, one has to ask the question to what extent is the literature sufficiently applicable to our experience in terms of numbers in terms of our geography, our demographics. How helpful is the literature in terms of the drill down to like communities? Like experiences?

I think we really do need to be guided by that set of concerns the theoretical obviously has a role to play but when it comes to the question of our real life experiences in this space, what are the learnings what are the instructions what are the insights that we can gain that help us refine and improve the program as we intend.

It seems to me that the literature may be falling short to some extent within that regard. Therefore, again, the board would benefit from citations of the
literature review.

Dr. Swilley.

MS. SWILLEY: Well, along that same line, I think it's good to reiterate that the lack of evidence doesn't suggest that the larger population cannot be served by the things we're doing and -- and I think it just critical that we do the research on any things that we initiate. We may be the first ones to present the information.

MR. RIDLEY-THOMAS: Certainly it would reflect our reality more accurately.

MR. FIELDING: I fully concur with Neil that the research is really smaller -- it's really more neighborhood. We're using communities as a very general term for everything, that people don't mind what a typical community is and some would be small and some would be big.

But I think most of the research is on those that would be called neighborhoods than anything else. And so in addition to the questions that have been raised by Dr. Swilley and the chair, I think the question is does that suggest if we're using a bigger area, we have to think of subunits strategies as opposed to a more homogenous strategy for the entire area.

The other question I have is related to Nancy's comments and that is the logic model which is I think
very, very nicely done. It would be important to add to this logic model the other components.

Now, I think the other components aren't just in support of Place Based. I think we -- modification we made broadly we're trying to get impacts all through the county. But I think adding them to this logic model even though it may make us a little dizzy would be -- would be -- would add value. Because I could see where you could see where they fit. You could see where they're synergistic. You could see where there are gaps.

MR. JIMENEZ: Could I make a comment to the chairs?

MR. RIDLEY-THOMAS: Sure.

MR. JIMENEZ: I would agree wholeheartedly that there were no studies that we found that had -- that diversity of geography the diversity of population and the diversity of both social and political issues that we express and find here in LA county with regard to our Place Based efforts. The other comment is that what we --

MR. RIDLEY-THOMAS: Does that then call into question the efficacy of literature review? I'm trying to get somewhere here.

MR. JIMENEZ: And I think it brings up an important question. I think it brings up caveats of the work.
MR. RIDLEY-THOMAS: Okay.

MR. JIMENEZ: And it does suggest certain strategies the relationships between strategies and outcomes, but clearly it probably does not reflect the whole entire effort around Place Based and what it could be which I think is something that this commission needs to address in moving forward. What is our approach to Place Based based on what we understand in the literature?

The other issue that we could not find that may be related to the size is that we were not aware of the funding that was available to do the work. Some of those efforts may have been limited by the funding that they had.

MR. RIDLEY-THOMAS: That's another important feature, the resources. I mean, this has a direct bearing on the capacity of the entities that we are partnering with to do this work. It has a direct bearing that is funding does has a direct bearing on capacity and obviously then the projected outcomes; so I think you're identifying very important and addressed the report is locking in on this. Very important aspects of where the deficits are in the literature in terms of how instructive it may or may not be, in Dr. Swilley's point, the extent to where our work may be cut out for us in terms of what we may want to ultimately contribute to a literature
review as to a successful quote unquote Place Based approach.

I know another hand wanting to be heard at some point. Let's figure out if we can get to Commissioner Au's question about the county-wide implications as she has indicated that being a third piece of the work that she at least thought would be engaged.

Other questions or comments? Sir.

MR. DENNIS: The only thing I would add is that there are other Place Based initiatives in this state through California community foundation as well as the endowment, and I think what would help the discussion is where are they in that progress are they communities similar to ours.

Are they looking at the same metrics as we are? Or are they just, like, totally different? And that would -- I mean that would help in some of this discussion. I mean, because as the chair suggests, then when we look at communities outside of California there may be stark differences but there are Place Based initiatives right here in California that if they don't have formal evaluation they do have some sort of progress with regards to what has happened thus far, and I think they're a little ahead of us as far as the process is concerned.

MR. RIDLEY-THOMAS: Executive Director, perhaps
those specific initiatives and State of California ought
to be those that we are drawing on for additional
learnings pursuant to Commissioner Dennis's intervention?

   All right. Other questions or comments for staff
on part one of our presentation today? 3:35. Going once
going twice.

   Professor Belshe, you want to give us a little
wrap up on this portion?

   MS. BELSHE: Yes, sir. Thank you Armando for
your presentation, for the good engagement and clearing of
commissioners.

   A couple of observations I would share. One is
you, I think, Armando walked us through the major themes
from the literature not as evidence to not move forward
but rather to help inform our thinking about how we can
maximize our ability to be successful.

   And as, Neil, you and other commissioners have
noted, what we're finding from the literature does call
out some important questions for us to move forward.

   The value of a logic model as Armando articulated
is being clear about where we want to end. You know,
bringing specificity to the outcomes we seek and moving
backwards from there.

   And so the overarching questions that the chair's
identify that we identify and identified last month and
again today really do reflect those threshold questions and so what we have suggested as a road map forward and we will look at does it require two meetings three meetings obviously we all share a sense of urgency.

But our intent is to move forward a deliberative, iterative process but one that is time bound. And our intent is to take a crack at the first couple of questions and pose them, identify options for the Board's considerations, provide data and information from the research from other experience who help inform Board consideration of those options, provides some analysis about trade offs, and then make a recommendations so these are critical issues for this organization to lift up to engage in to wrestle with and hopefully achieve consensus to move forward.

It's going to take a little bit of time. But we bring urgency as we know all members of the Board does, because this is an investment of your time. But also importantly an investment in on the part of our community partners.

As Marsha indicated we are eager to not only be hearing from and engaging to the Board, we also want to get out and hear from our Best Start community partners, and the same questions we're grappling with here over the course of the next couple of meetings are the very same
issues we want to be meeting with our community partners around as well. And then bring that learning back to you will all to help further inform the key questions that we've presented here.

So we will wrap up this piece of the agenda unless commissioners have anything further to say.

MR. RIDLEY-THOMAS: I want to make sure we have a relatively exhaustive round of questions on this piece, because this is an attempt to push towards clarity.

Now, I don't know that we can fully embrace clarity in the context of one setting, but this ought to have far reaching implications for moving us in that direction so if there are question that commissioners may have following this presentation, it would certainly be appropriate to formalize those questions and get them to the attention of the executive director for further distillation.

Dr. Fielding.

MR. FIELDING: Yes, I think that -- just to remind you of that request, I think one of the things that -- that's really important -- because we have questions about the external validity of the research that's been conducted so far is to be very clear in moving back from the outcomes whether the intermediate changes you would like to see. So we have an early-warning system if you
will for things that's are not going well and, you know, early system to identify thing that are going well and to suggest that we probably as in much of this research would need some mid course direction.

So we don't want to have too much -- I mean, we need structure because we need clarity but we also need to have flexibility all the time because we may see intermediate steps that are not consistent with our efforts and aren't going to lead in a reasonable logical way to the outcome.

MR. RIDLEY-THOMAS: That's to the point. Well made. But the clarity that needs to be brought to bear is of a policy nature, at least initially; so that we at least have the policy formation situated in such a way that staff has a clear sense of what the Board is thinking, and prepared to embrace and that's of a dialogical nature.

Obviously, we want input from staff as to how this should ultimately take shape, and part based on the experiences that have already taken the life of best starts to date. But clearly there's a fair amount of work to be done.

So the notion of flexibility is always useful in my mind, Dr. Fielding, but it needs to be in the context of the projected goals objectives and outcomes otherwise
you have a fair amount of improvisation freelancing et
cetera. That doesn't really get us to where we might wish
to be now. One of the important considerations that was
embedded in my query regarding the literature review
relates precisely to the issue of the diversity of the
various 14 areas that we are talking about.

Therefore, not only the demography of those areas
but in fact the sociology of those areas such that you
cannot expect what goes on in Long Beach to mirror that of
what goes on in Pacoima, unless you have a clear sense of
the range of issues from a cultural perspective, a
historical perspective, a range of issues of that sort.

It would seem to me that flexibility ought to be
informed by the range of experiences at that level. But
all of that has to be what in the context of what are the
defined goals, objectives and outcomes must be.

Commissioner Boeckmann, thank you. You've been
patient.

MS. BOECKMANN: Always. I was just wondering how
Best Start relates to LA Up? Are they doing the same
thing?

MR. RIDLEY-THOMAS: Okay.

MS. BOECKMANN: And is there any kind of
relationship there? Or do we --

MR. RIDLEY-THOMAS: The question that
Commissioner Boeckmann posed is relationships between Best Starts and LA Up.

Executive Director, you may wish to respond to that.

MS. BELSHE: LA Up is a part of our organization's prior strategy plan, and support extends for a number of additional years. I think the current grant is slated to expire in about '16 or '17.

So at one level, they're unrelated to the extent the new strategic plan from moved to a grant making initiative grant base, focus on the 14 Best Start communities with the complementary county wide strategies that we talked about, did reflect movement in a different direction.

On the other hand, our LA Up early childhood education programs are all over LA county, and I haven't memorized the map, but I think there is a particular LA Up sides, 14 Best Start communities. So there's an overlap in the geography, overarching goals for our Best Start communities to work in partnership with communities school readiness.

So while the two programs have been on different tracks relative to prior strategic plans and current strategy plan, there's an overlap in terms of where services are provided as well as overarching objectives.
And Antonio, you want to add anything to that?

MR. GALLARDO: I think what we're doing as a staff is as a community partnership continue to work in advancing their priorities is trying to come up with opportunities to link with LA Up and any other existing investments that we have throughout the county.

MS. BELSHE: And that's a very important point that one of the Board's considerations when it made the move that it did a number of years ago to a Place Based strategy was a reflection -- reflected a belief that given the concentration of Best Start, excuse me, First 5 LA resources in particular communities with a lot of need that there was an opportunity to really better integrate and leverage those investments certainly our LA UP investments are an important part of that.

MR. RIDLEY-THOMAS: Clearly a point that needs to be revisited. I take note of the fact that we have approximately 45 minutes remaining for part 2 of the discussion.

Please, members of the commission, for additional questions to the staff for further looking at, as has been proposed, there will be other opportunities for us to engage at this level.

Dr. Kaufman.

MR. KAUFMAN: I'm processing this question.
Armando, in terms of the logic model, is there an assumption that there should be more conversations to refine -- I have some wonky little things to talk about, and then slightly more conceptual that the whole group doesn't need to hear, and for others, might we need to lock this down at some point and say this is the logic model? Did you expect that today as a vote? Did you expect it to come back to us sometime as a vote, Armando?

MR. RIDLEY-THOMAS: And if you did Armando, it won't happen.

MS. BELSHE: Lost your chance, Armando.

MR. JIMENEZ: No. The single most important decision -- and this is my sense for the commission debate -- immediately and in the future meeting is to decide upon the outcomes that Best Start needs to make sure happen. The change.

Upon that decision, I -- I believe that there would be an opportunity for staff to present both strategies that are potentially linked showing promise or even theoretically related or having some evidence showing changes in those specific outcomes the commission wants but also the integrate issues that have been brought up by Commissioner Au and also to show alignment with other efforts that Commissioner Southard mentioned; so what I imagine is that what would transpire and what would result
would be something very different from what the -- we
found in the literature.

But the most important thing is for us to decide
upon the outcomes both long term and intermediate
outcomes.

MR. KAUFMAN: Is that supposed to happen in the
next meeting on those four that were listed as first? And
the next meeting, that should be focused and is there a
liaison group that goes over that with staff or staff
bring it to the full commission?

The process is really my question.

MS. BELSHE: It's our recommendation that given
the importance of this issue for the Board as a whole, as
well as engagement and interests of the broader community,
that these issues be grappled with as in context of this
Best Start special committee of the Board.

We further would recommend that the next meeting
be focused exactly on the issue that our director research
evaluation is focusing on which is what are the specific
goals we seek to advance through our Best Start
investments and try to really then begin to drill down to
some of these critical issue that will flow from that.
But our recommendations would be that our work would be
done in context of the goal.

MR. KAUFMAN: So if we have Best Start liaison
Nancy, Tony, and Dwayne.

Would they be informing that prior?

MR. RIDLEY-THOMAS: Dr. Kaufman, we're going to continue to do as much of this as we can. As a, quote unquote, "Committee as a whole," to keep everybody in it just as explicit as possible.

The objective here is to kick off a policy -- a policy clarifying process vis a vis Best Starts. It is further to cause of the create an opportunity for the entire Board to get on the same page by participating in the definition or the redefinition of what we mean by Place Based et cetera.

So there has been a proposal on the part of the staff to have several meetings some of which will be for the entirety of the committee of the whole. Others will be in a different format.

But I think there will be enough dialogue between the staff and the Board such that we can all begin to get on the same page. So the function significantly as a committee of the whole special committee.

All right, Dr. Fielding.

MR. FIELDING: Just a few more comments. One is that no matter what we choose, we need to be sure we have a baseline. And many things we'd like to look at we don't have any baselines for. So either we have to add that to
what we want to do or we have to decide to choose something else, or we have to be willing to say we don't really know how much progress we've made, which I think is not consistent with what we're trying to do.

Secondly, we need to have a kind of recording or reporting of what is exactly happening in the communities. Often times with this research even in the neighborhood based research that Armando looked over, there is not a clear definition of what actually occurred within that neighborhood or community. And that -- that's not going to work at all.

Third, I think it's important to have criteria for the outcomes. And -- and I think that if we can agree on those criteria and we have talked about them in the past so I think we could revisit that and go over what we've talked about in terms of measurable the fact that they're measured over what time frame do we expect. We expect the impact is going to be on the whole group or less of or subsegment of the group, all these thing kind of things, I think, would be particularly important and then whatever we do.

I guess the one other thing I would say is we need have to have a clear sense of what we do is leverageable and sustainable. Because if we can do a lot of the things we can reach our great outcomes we could
reach all of those goals and then funding declines as it inevitably will that could all break. And that would be a terrible waste.

MR. RIDLEY-THOMAS: On that note, let's move to the next portion of our presentation today.

MS. BELSHE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And I'd like to invite our director Marsha Ellis back up to walk us back through a briefer presentation that speaks to our suggested approach for providing some interim support for our Best Start communities pending this deliberative iterative exploration we spent the past hour talking about.

Marsha.

MS. ELLIS: Thank you. There are three goals for today's presentation. One, to share why we believe it is important for the Board to consider providing interim support to the communities as it goes through it's review process for Best Start.

Two, we hope to -- what we hope to achieve in the communities as a result of interim support.

And, three, to present to the Board options for interim support and provide a staff recommendation.

I'd like to first begin with setting the context for interim support over the past two years of implementation. We've had experience in the 13
communities as well as lessons learned from metro LA which is the pilot Best Start community that would help to shape how Best Start moves forward.

From day one parents, residents, and community stakeholders have been actively engaged in Best Start and are committed to ensuring the success of their communities.

Today -- and you've heard this stat before -- over 5,000 community members have participated in our activities and events and staff has conducted coordinated and facilitated over 300 meetings in the 14 communities. This includes partnership meetings, leadership group meetings, as well as work groups and task fork forces.

Last summer the Board directed staff to define -- to define desired outcomes refine priorities and identify measures and tools to track progress associated with Best Start. This was voted in the development of the draft Place Based logic model which Armando presented earlier.

In July of 2012, the Board approved funding for three components of the community plans which includes communication, partnership support and evaluation. That -- that support was extended in November 2012, and is scheduled to end on March 31st.

Staff recently provided two important updates to the Board on Best Start implementation. At the January
commission meeting staff presented on family strengthening which include welcome baby and home visitation. That presentation was followed by one in February on community capacity building and at the February meeting Board decided to engage in a special process to come to consensus on issues related to Best Start. Today is first of several special meetings occurred to -- planned to occur over the next few months. And on March 14 staff will bring a Board action item to the commission regarding interim support. There are a number of important goals that we're trying to achieve by providing interim support. One of the goals is to allow work in the communities to continue uninterrupted while the Board goes through this process. Interim support would also help us to maintain activities that are currently underway in the community.

Some of these activities are related to strengthening the community partnerships and others are specifically designed to strengthen community capacities or support the capacities which you learned more about in February. Those are related to community engagement, leadership, infrastructure, and investment. I'm going to walk through two options for interim support but you should know that staff reviewed a range of
other options. From suspending all support to the Best Start communities to moving full speed ahead with the community plans.

Staff considered both of these options premature considering the Board's current review process for Best Start.

So the first option is to approve continuing support for three components that were approved in July of 2012.

Again, these components are communication, partnership, support and evaluation. The total requested funds under option one is $1.2 million or $85,000 per community. And this would be for six months.

Examples of communications work includes providing support for community events and First 5 LA educational campaigns. For example, in the Broadway/Manchester community they recently supported the opening of two parks that resulted from our community investment departments 50 Parks Initiative.

They conducted outreach, provided a speaker at the events and also help to arrange for translation.

In Panorama City that community partnership designed and implemented a health and fitness event called Get Up and Move featuring nutrition and fitness activities provided by local community organizations.
Over 600 children and parents participated in that event.

And in Metro LA, the community partnership developed a short video telling the story of Best Start Metro LA from the community members' perspective.

Partnership support includes trainings and workshops for partnership members as well as logistical support. Some of the examples of trainings and workshops that have been conducted across the communities include decision making models, power dynamics, conflict resolution, and public speaking.

Training topics are elevated by the community members themselves commission staff as well as contractors that are providing support to the partnerships.

Examples of logistical support include transportation, and child care for meetings, and simultaneous interpretation. Simultaneous Spanish translation is provided for most larger partnership meetings.

In Long Beach we also provide interpretation for monolingual speakers and in Lancaster we provide American sign language.

With regard to evaluation, each community is responsible for conducting a community-level evaluation which helps to document and evaluate community specific
activities.

   A benefit of option one is that it maintains at same level of resources in the communities while the Board engages in it's review of Best Start. A disadvantage of option one is that it limits the opportunities for communities to apply skills and capacities that they have developed over the past two years another disadvantage to approving option one is that it can also raise concerns in communities about First 5 LA's commitment to Best Start which could lead to community disengagement and participant attrition.

   Option 2 outlines the targeted community capacity with investment. The total requested over six months is 2.1 million dollars, or $150,000 per community.

   Option 2 builds upon option 1, but it takes it a step further by providing resources to complete a community capacity building assessment and implement community based action research or C bar.

   One of the underlying purposes of our place based strategy is for First 5 LA to help parent and community stake holders strengthen their skills and relationships, networks and systems so they are better able to advocate for resources.

   As we have learned from our previous investments providing direct services alone is not enough to sustain
the outcomes we seek for children and families.

In addition to building the capacities of parents and residents First 5 LA will work with organizations in the communities to help them improve the quality of their services, attract other funding sources and become the advocate for policies relating to young children and families.

Over the past two years the commission staff has done capacity building work with regard to helping the community partnerships but we have not done a targeted approach around building the Board for capacities.

The next phase of our work needs to focus on building the community cap avenues primarily in the areas of community leadership, infrastructure, and investment.

The purpose of the community capacity building assessment is to provide an in depth profile that would inform the partnerships of the communities assets where additional capacity building efforts may be necessary. To provide -- and to provide baseline data for priority outcomes and community level capacity.

In terms of C bar, it is a type of research that involves community members as active participants the goal of C bar is to combine knowledge with action to achieve a social goal.

Unlike traditional research where community
members are often the research subjects or advisory gate keepers with C bar the community members are key drivers from the point of determining the research project to disseminating the findings.

In February, our staff had the opportunity to hear metro LA present on a C bar project around child care and one of the take-aways was that these parents are empowered, armed with data, and ready to be advocates for their children.

A few of the advantages for approving option 2 are that communities will be able to utilize build, develop, and strengthen over the past two years. There would be support for conducting a baseline assessment related to community leadership infrastructure and investment and again, with a baseline assessment, the commission will have a tangible way of determining if Best Start is helping the communities advance in the four core capacities.

Option 2 also helps to build momentum in the community while the Board engages in its review process.

One con to call out with regard to option 2 is that some of the activities such as C bar and conducting the community capacity building assessment may take longer than six months to implement in some of the communities.

Staff recommends option 2 as it best advances our
goals of providing interim support over the next six months pending the Board's review and assessment of Best Start supports activities that are underway in the communities, strengthens the community partnerships and strengthens the communities by establishing baseline in the four core community capacities.

In terms of next steps we are eager to have your feedback on the goals for interim support as well as the two options that I presented and we will use that feedback to develop a recommendation for the March 14 commission meeting.

MR. RIDLEY-THOMAS: All right. Thank you very much for your presentation.

We do have persons who wish to be heard and we will call upon them now. Yvette Pineda, Sandra Sorrano, Greg Overdorff, Rosie Pike, Carmel -- I think it says -- she says she's a student. And family literacy is the organization.

Forgive me for not being able to make out your name. I'd rather give you the opportunity to pronounce it so that I won't butcher it. And then Diane Gaspar.

Please proceed.

MS. PADINA: Good afternoon, Commissioners. My name is Diana. I'm the executive director of North Valley Caring Services. We're located in the San Fernando Valley
and we're family friends and neighbors. And we are part of Best Start community in Panorama City.

I just want to encourage that Best Start support current First 5 investment community agencies have the infrastructure needed to provide much needed services in the community.

Some services already being provided through family literacy and through family friends and neighbors which has the home visitation model.

I understand that at some point Best Start staff would like to step back and let the community lead. Why not contract community agencies to continue and oversee this work. Provide the facilities organize the community provide the administrative oversight to ensure outcomes are being met.

By supporting community organizations through Best Start you're establishing a way for this work to continue in the long term and you will be supporting your current investments.

Thank you.

MR. RIDLEY-THOMAS: Thank you.

MS. SERRANO: Good afternoon. My name is Sandra Serrano. I believe the letter that some of you already heard in the budget finance committee meeting but, I want to say that we're going to share at this meeting
I live at the Best Start metro LA area and I am a member of the community guidance Best Start LA. I'm also a member on the early attachment counsel at Hope Street Family Center.

I'm here today to request that you continue to provide funding for the school readiness and the family literacy program that serve the Best Start community.

I believe that our community guidance body was not frequently aware that staffing our community school readiness with Family literacy programs were being considered. These proposed cuts that many families would lose services.

I don't believe our C G B has had any input into these decisions. The school readiness program operated hospital and Hope Street Family Center is an outstanding program. It provides much needed early head start programs to our community comprehensive and environmental mental assessment mental health counseling prepared to education for children and special needs. Over 15 percent of our children served by school readiness are children with special needs at hope street. School readiness services provided by Hope street are very important to our community and we want them to continue.

Also I believe that it would be a good financial
decision to continue to provide many with school readiness. This is because the money that First 5 provides is used as a match for federal early head start funds. So for every 20 cents the First 5 gives us we're able to ask for $1.00 from Washington D.C. The school readiness money that First 5 provides allows us to receive over $1,000,000 from Washington. Without it, the school readiness funds from First 5 -- without the funds from First 5 we could lose this million dollars and even more importantly the services that are provided.

I also very much support the planning committees' recommendation to continue to provide funding for family literacy. This is also, as I say, a much needed program in our community and I urge you to consider continued funding for all the programs.

We know that the value literacy has tremendous benefits for children and parents is a good investment.

MR. RIDLEY-THOMAS: We're going to ask you to conclude.

MS. SERRANO: Sorry?

MR. RIDLEY-THOMAS: We're going to ask you to conclude.

MS. SERRANO: Thank you.

MR. RIDLEY-THOMAS: Thank you for your testimony.

MR. OVERDORFF: Hello. My name is
Rick Overdorff. I am a resident of the Antelope Valley. I was a guidance body member for Lancaster and Palmdale. I have advocated for Best Start when it was just called Place Based funding. I've been around for a long time with this issue.

I have been a strong supporter of Best Start. But I have to tell you and I -- and I don't want to be nothing but negative but I think there's some information that you need to know about.

First off, let's speak positive. I am a director of a family literacy program and my people the people that are families within our program received a great opportunity to use this as a forum for leadership purposes and it was very successful for that. It was a very good thing for us.

However, first off, I didn't get this e-mail until this morning at 9:30, so I didn't know about this meeting until the last minute.

I -- I come from the A V. I think we need to work -- have a little bit more notice there. There were several items that we think was necessary. We need to see -- we need to see more -- we need so to see funding for -- for program that are going to help our people and our community. I'm speaking not for just myself, but many people in the A V that express the same concern. They
want to see services and there -- I don't feel capacity building and communication right now is the answer to keeping our leadership and our families involved in the A V.

We try to advise -- I have -- I have some background in leadership and some background in organizational government, we try to advise some of our people with Best Start about things like rules and regulations, and what else.

Anyway -- but this -- we didn't get a response from them that would be helpful in organizing in a way that worked. It's the best I can say.

Our staff, my staff at the program has spent countless hours, countless all for free our families have been involved as I said before. Most of the people are very concerned that there just hasn't been anything done.

There's been promises made about funding for programs. The first one was something to the tune of $7,000,000 per program. The second one was like $1.7 million per program. And then we supplied all of the information, and we did -- we selected programs, and we submitted them. And that was canceled or denied or whatever you want to call it.

And so people are a little upset and concerned about this.
MR. RIDLEY-THOMAS: I'm going to ask you to conclude.

MR. OVERDORFF: I'll be finished very quickly. But I think please do not take my word for anything. Check it out for yourself. Ask people. Thank you.

MR. RIDLEY-THOMAS: Thank you for your testimony, sir.

Next speaker, please.

MS. PIKE: Good afternoon. My name is Rosey Pike. I represent the adult division with the Los Angeles Unified school district and I want to start off by saying thank you again for supporting our family literacy program this year.

Everything I'm hearing today complicates a very tough decision to make always about funding. I just want to mention that the adult divisions family literacy programs, not only the programs that you're funding directly from adult division but the community based organizations that are collaborate with the adult division that we support offer a component that's vital and that is adult education.

Parents need adult education to learn English to learn how to support their children to get their GEDs and high school diplomas and to get career training. And without that, it doesn't matter how much we're educating
families on healthy babies. If they don't have jobs, how
do they support the food for their children? How do they,
you know -- how do they help their children in school?
We're doing all of that.

And I don't think you've done such a great job at
starting such a great program the adult division is barely
hanging in there again for another year. We started two
years ago with a 50 percent cut again this year with
another 50 percent cut.

But we're -- our family literacy programs
survived because of you. And I think this is a tremendous
help that you've given us, and I'm just asking that
besides the Best Start community programs which would
include three of our family literacy. Only three. That
you consider continuing the collaboration you have with us
it's such a great partnership we have a strong executive
director this year for adult education he seems very
supportive of the family literacy programs this year.

Looks forward to continuing them next year
assuming we get the funding.

MR. RIDLEY-THOMAS: All right.

MS. PIKE: So please take that into account.

MR. RIDLEY-THOMAS: We thank you for your
testimony.

Next speaker, please.
MS. GARCIA: Hi. Good afternoon. My name is Carmen Garcia.

MR. RIDLEY-THOMAS: Would you lower the microphone so we can hear you, ma'am.

MS. GARCIA: My name is Carmen Garcia. And I'm from San Pedro. I'm -- and -- I am a program for family literacy. And I was so sad about the -- just the idea to the program cut a little because I guess that you -- what I study with my kids and all the families that are in the program can agree with me that we live so much with the kids and I -- I it's amazing how -- how everything can have with the kids.

It's amazing the stricter we are making with our kids because all things we -- we hear from there is for our kids I feel so proud when I see and I can read to my daughter and I can hear my daughter. And work to them. I'm sorry.

MR. RIDLEY-THOMAS: No problem.

MS. GARCIA: And I just -- I'm just want to say that a budget cut hurts all of our kids and I want to say thank you for the program. And encourage you to continue with this program. And -- and thanks for everything and bless you.

MR. RIDLEY-THOMAS: Thank you for your testimony.

Next speaker, please.
MS. GASPAR: Good afternoon, First 5 commissioners and staff.

I am Diane Gaspar, the community health services chief at Los Angeles LA biomed, a nonprofit agency that serves as the lead agency for the south Los Angeles best babies collaborative. Which is one of the B B Cs funded under the healthy first initiative and on behalf of our collaborative we ask that you be strategic in incorporating the investment you have made in best babies collaborative to support the Best Start communities.

The funding extension being proposed and we thank you for that for the B B Cs by the commission would be an ideal time to identify the best strategies on how the B B Cs can effectively support the Best Start communities. The B B Cs have been serving high risk clients who reside in the Best Start communities for over the past seven years.

It is hoped that the capacity building and the highly trained staff that have resulted can continue to support the Best Start communities. Over the past two years, we have documented some of the clients' stories on our program through the use of digital stories which are first person recorded stories with photos of people who have volunteered to create a story in their own words regarding the experience they've had on the program.
And the five client stories that I have on this DVD I have two only one for the chair and one for Kim Belshe. But I will be happy to make additional copies for every single commissioner here and I just wanted to share -- just a couple of the things that are also in the Best Start communities Dina who's story on here a teen who overcame post partum depression with the help of the program Brooklyn a pregnant woman who had substance abuse program when she was pregnant she overcame her substance abuse with the help of the program and delivered a healthy baby; and Bianca a teen who completed our program after two years and not only did she graduate but she pursued higher education and she breast fed her baby for one year while on the program.

And there's several others on the DVD, too; so in summary we ask that you be strategic in incorporating the investment that you have made over the past seven years in the best Start and the best babies collaborative in order to continue to support the Best Start communities. Thank you the very much.

MR. RIDLEY-THOMAS: Thank you very much.

Final speaker, please.

MS. MARA: Good afternoon. I apologize, I think I was actually supposed to speak after item two, but my little sheet didn't get turned in.
My name is Kate Mara. I'm an attorney with the Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles, and I have the pleasure of serving as a cochair of the leadership Best Start Long Beach.

Long Beach, as I'm sure you're aware, is an incredibly diverse community.

We began this process in 2011 as a disparate group of agencies parents and residents united around a common goal. That goal became our vision statement.

Central Long Beach is a community where babies, children, and their families are healthy and safe with a passion for life and learning.

In the almost two years since then we have done a lot of work and we've come a long way. We've broke into work groups around each of the four goal areas and also around the selection of a home visitation program family strengthening services and community capacity building. We reviewed research on best practices and data specific to our community.

After over 100 meetings and thousands of hours of work by our members we completed our year one plan and presented it to our partnership for approval in late April of last year.

I'm happy to say that the vote to approve our plan was a unanimous one. We then submitted our plan to
this commission for approval.

In central Long Beach we've come a long way. For almost a year we have continued to meet while waiting for a decision from all of you. We do this because we know that we've built something bigger than the sum of its parts and frankly bigger than Best Start.

While waiting for approval of our plan we have transformed our meetings from a vehicle to develop our plan to a forum for community education and capacity building with the assistance of the amazing Best Start staff.

And here I have to give a shout out to Ruben and Freddy, who's in the room, and Linda who unfortunately is not here.

We've conducted trainings at our partnership meetings around each of the goal areas and the related resources that are available in our communities. We've conducted a four-hour communications training for members of our partnership and we also have an intensive messaging training scheduled for March 22nd.

In addition we've formed a new home visitation collaborative and a child abuse and family violence collaborative in Long Beach.

That being said we're strongly committed to moving forward with our plan. And we ask that you trust
our knowledge of our community and support our efforts to make our plan a reality.

Thank you.

MR. RIDLEY-THOMAS: All right.

Madam Executive Director.

MS. BELSHE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I want to just offer a quick clarifying comment for the Board before inviting Board feedback to the recommendation pending.

First off, there's two issues that will be coming to the Board at your next full meeting -- I know we're spending a lot of time together -- on Thursday March 14. So I want to clarify that there's two funding-related decisions that we have before you.

Number 1 is whether or not to provide some level of interim support for the 14 Best Start communities pending Board review determination and consensus on Best Start strategic intervention. That was the subject of Marsha Ellis's presentation and the issue that we'd like to get some initial feedback from you on to help inform the final recommendation that will come to the board for decision making on March 14.

The second set of issues that's will come to the Board on the 14th is whether or not First 5 will continue to support a handful of grants that are slated to expire at the end of this fiscal year.
And as we shared with the programming and planning committee last Thursday morning. And which we shared with the budget and finance committee this afternoon, we have brought forward a framework for decision making to help inform Board's consideration on whether or not to support these expiring grants criteria that are grounded Number 1, Whether or not there's a Sustainability plan and secondly whether or not there is a relationship to the work that is unfolding in Best Start.

So two separate but related decisions. Today is not a decision making conversation. It's really to help inform the final recommendations we'll be bringing forward to the Board related to this first question. Whether or not to provide interim support for the 14 Best Start Communities which is slated to expire at the end of this month as the Board engages in the process to bring greater strategic direction and consensus to our Best Start communities.

MR. RIDLEY-THOMAS: All right. Questions or comments on part 2 of our presentation today? Being informed by the fact that we will have another opportunity this was essentially to give us a lot to think about over the next week or so and then ultimately make our determination Commissioner Au.

MS. AU: I --
MR. RIDLEY-THOMAS: Did I see another hand?
Commissioner, please.

MS. AU: I guess I'm concerned about the presentation from the gentleman from Antelope Valley, from A V. And I think this speaks to some of the missteps that have taken place in previous times in terms of our implementation. And I want to be -- I want us to be clear that even as we talk about the continuation of the interim funding, we're not talking about funding for direct services.

And I think that it was a lot of the disservice in terms of the communications that went out to communities during those initial Best Start conversations or presentations especially when $7,000,000 were thrown out there and 1.7 million.

Please, just to be clear, this was not something that the Board of Commissioners had authorized, and I'm feeling quite concerned and upset that is there is still this perception or this understanding on the Best Start community folks that participated in the early organizing work that there was an expectation that the communities would be seeing initially $7,000,000 and then subsequently 1.7 million.

And I want that to be cleared up today.

MR. RIDLEY-THOMAS: Well, now, Commissioner Au,
if you are trying to clarify an expectation that moves
from 7 million to 1.4 million --

MS. AU: 1.4.

MR. RIDLEY-THOMAS: Yeah. If you wish to clarify
that in one meeting, I would suggest that we not set that
expectation.

You'll probably have to have several meetings to
solve that is what I'm saying.

MS. AU: Yes. I guess at least for today.

MR. RIDLEY-THOMAS: It is on the record.

MS. AU: That we're not talking about these
dollars going out for direct services because the
commission has not really weighed in on that question.

MR. RIDLEY-THOMAS: Yes.

MS. AU: And at least that communication should
go out to communities. And so they're not waiting for --
with un-- unrealistic expectation and become disenchanted
and we will lose their valuable partnership. Because they
truly are valuable.

MR. RIDLEY-THOMAS: Yes. At least that was
communicated.

(Interruption from audience.)

MR. RIDLEY-THOMAS: Valid concerns and there is a
reason for operating with this level of transparency so
that all can be party to our deliberations.
You need to take your seat, sir.

(Interruption from audience.)

MS. AU: This is what I'm concerned about.

MR. RIDLEY-THOMAS: It's not what I'm concerned about. There -- there's an orderly way to be heard here.

Thank you very much, Commissioner Figueroa-Villa.

MS. FIGUEROA-VILLA: I -- I just wanted some clarity because staff is recommending option 2. Are all 14 Best Start programs at that point to receive option 2? Or can we -- is option 1 -- are they ready for one because option 2 -- I think -- how did you assess that they're all ready for option 2, I guess to make it simple.

MS. ELLIS: Well, all of the communities have varying levels of capacity and readiness; so usually when we present an option for funding it's up to a certain amount.

So some of the communities, for example, have already done their initial C bar orientation, are ready to begin further work with the C bar technical provider to do that work.

Some communities may take a bit longer. They may want to focus on further building the capacities of the parents and residents for example.

So we presented option 2 because it provided -- it provides the broader spectrum of opportunities for
communities to move forward.

MR. RIDLEY-THOMAS: All right. Thank you very much for that question and response.

Any other questions or concerns to be raised at this point in time?

Commissioner Kaufman.

MR. KAUFMAN: I'm not confused, I just don't think I'm informed. There's a subtle distinction.

I don't exactly have a sense of the 14 communities and where they are along the continuum of the providing support they're meeting with their -- et cetera. And not understanding, for example, what partnerships support they're doing or they have done recently and understanding what we're going to be authorizing for the next six months, is that something that lends itself to a user -- to use a grid that you could present at the meeting in only ten days?

Is there everybody else have a sense of this and -- I think I'm seeing nods that others have the same question. I'm not questioning it. I'm not -- I just don't think -- I know that I don't have a sense of it.

MR. RIDLEY-THOMAS: All right.

MR. KAUFMAN: So it makes it very hard for me to say yes, this is what I want to do.

MS. BELSHE: So maybe a -- and I would invite
Marsha either to respond or take it under advisement, but what I'm hearing is trying to get at this issue of concreteness; so what are examples of the kinds of activities that are being undertaken in the communications partnership development community capacity building.

MR. KAUFMAN: Yeah, I think, for two reasons. One is I think it helps us to make a decision. Two, it helps me be more informed at what's going on. I hear bits and pieces on it. I read evaluations here and there but I haven't been able myself to put it together into coherent form and I know the that the other entities that are up for not continuation of funding in July somehow relate to that.

And some of them are sort of part of that and some aren't. Because some of them are within Best Start and quarter of it's not, or whatever.

So there's just all of these different things floating around that I don't have my hands on.

MR. RIDLEY-THOMAS: All right.

Commissioner Dennis, I saw your hand.

MR. DENNIS. Number 1, I want to thank staff for their two recommendations. Marsha, thank you very much. I do believe that to some degree we -- we have in essence as a commission developed an expectation within communities.
And to some degree we have some responsibility in -- in dealing with -- with that and that's on us. I mean, that's our responsibility. I mean, we gave communities the impression that they would have the ability to have impact, affect change and take leadership, and so you know, I would suggest that to that, we do have some responsibility.

But at the -- as I'm saying that I don't believe money should be distributed arbitrarily. So I do appreciate the recommendations that came from staff because they do clarify how the moneys would be used and I -- I agree with Neil that all communities aren't at the same place at the same time.

So I would be interested in the gradations between communities with regards to their community engagement activities because I think that would be helpful for -- for the commission.

And then secondarily, and I say this after last commission meeting at the time we approved the Place Based model, there was a budget and a time line. So I'm really interested in seeing where are we with regards to budget.

And you know, as far as the time, my suspicion's that we are far behind in the spending according to where we, you know, perhaps should -- should be. And so I would like, you know, to see that information as well. Because
I think that would help inform what we're doing in the future.

MR. RIDLEY-THOMAS: Well, thank you for those remarks and response to Commissioners Kauffman and Dennis. I did see affirmative nods on the part of other commission members that suggest to me that we should have more information with which to work packaged in a fashion that does somewhat of a comparative filling in the blanks with respect to criteria and outcome as best as can be assembled at this point in time, that would help inform our deliberations on the 14th. So that the recommendations of the staff could then be considered more fully and completely by the Board.

So I think -- I take that as instruction for the Board to come back with -- to us with more complete information.

MS. BELSHE: We will take that back, Mr. Chair, and pull together additional information to provide a clearer and more complete picture of the type of activities that our Best Start community partners have been undertaking with First 5 support in these different areas.

I would like to note, though, a final observation in response to Commissioner Au's comment about services is in my judgment that's a really excellent example of one of
the real tensions or fault lines, if you will, around Best Start in terms of is there clarity as a Board with staff and with our community partners about what will or will not be supported with -- with First 5's LA's resources?

So when a Board made an allocation decision last spring to set aside $1.7 million per Best Start Community, it identified three principle areas where resources could go with Home Visitation and Welcome Baby being one, Community capacity building being a second, and then a third strand of activity that from what I've been able to piece together in my limited time hasn't been very well defined.

It's basically projects to support family strengthening. And so in my mind the process we began discussing this afternoon that will unfold with far more specificity and clarity over the course of the next couple of meetings is intended exactly to do what we need to which is bring consensus and clarity.

So how you might be thinking of direct services, Commissioner Au, may be a different definition of others; so I think we have an opportunity by this process that we're beginning to together to bring that clarity and I hope our community partners who share our aspirations for children in your neighborhoods in your communities actively participate with us in this exploration and bring
the kind of definition we need and importantly our community partners need to be able to move forward. But absence that consensus it's going to be very difficult for us to move forward and you've put your finger exactly on one of those fault lines.

MR. RIDLEY-THOMAS: All right. Any further business to come before us at this point in time?

Anyone wishing to be heard by public comment, Madam Secretary?

While it appears Commissioner Au --

MS. AU: No. It's just that we obvious -- we often end on some negative note, and I really want to thank the staff. I mean, Armando and Marsha and the others in back of you that worked with you to do this presentation.

This was excellent and I am so excited because it's given us a framework in which we can have this kind of substantive conversation which is truly -- which was so lacking; so I'm excited and -- and eager because I do know that down the road we will have clarity. And that's really exciting for me. Thank you.

MR. RIDLEY-THOMAS: Thank you very much. Well stated. And let that reflect the sentiments of entire Board. We're adjourned.

(At 4:36 p.m. the meeting was adjourned.)