



Marin Children and Families Commission  
Meeting Minutes – September 7, 2011

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Aideen called the meeting to order at First 5 Marin at 5:38 p.m.

**Commissioners Present**

David Bonfilio  
Aideen Gaidmore  
Sister Joan Hanna  
Cio Hernández  
Heather Ravani  
Sparkie Spaeth  
Alicia Suski

**Commissioners Excused**

Regina Archer  
Steve Kinsey

**Staff Present**

Amy L. Reisch  
Barbara Clifton Zarate  
Michelle Fadelli

**Representatives from the community**

Richard Waxman – LIFT/Levantate  
Ruthie Ament – Novato School Readiness  
Alex Porrata – Shoreline School Readiness  
LaDonna Bonner – Marin City School Readiness  
Christine Scott – Easter Seals  
Oscar Guardado – NWP/HHS  
Dave Cort – San Geronimo Community Center  
Jennifer Breen-Justice - San Geronimo School Readiness  
Brenda Rivas-Camarena – Canal School Readiness

**II. MEETING MINUTES**

Aideen asked if there were changes, additions or corrections to the June 2011 Commission minutes. No changes were announced.

**Motion: Spaeth/Bonfilio**

**The minutes of June 1, 2011 were approved.**

**III. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**

**Cio** announced the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Bi-National Health Week celebrations for 2011. Marin County will be hosting the inaugural event on Thursday, September 29 from 4 to 6 pm at the Marin Health and Wellness Campus, 3240 Kerrner Boulevard in San Rafael; the event will be followed by a community walk in the Canal neighborhood.. Four bi-national events will be hosted in Marin: Tomales Health Day on Wednesday, October 5<sup>th</sup> (1 to 4 pm) at the Tomales Town Hall; San Geronimo Valley Health Day on

Thursday, October 6<sup>th</sup> (2 to 5 pm) at the San Geronimo Valley Community Center; Canal Health & Safety Day on Saturday, October 8 (11 am to 2 pm) at Bahia Vista School; and West Marin Wellness Day on Wednesday, October 12 (3 to 6 pm) at the Dance Palace in Point Reyes. The community events will offer free health screenings, free or low-cost flu shots, healthy snacks and fun. For more information contact Cio at 473-2848 or e-mail [rhernandez@co.marin.ca.us](mailto:rhernandez@co.marin.ca.us).

**Alicia** announced the upcoming Summit on Medical-Legal Partnerships on Friday, September 16 from 8:30 a.m. to 5 pm at the UC Hastings College of Law (198 McAllister in San Francisco). Registration fees are \$50; a limited number of waivers are available. For more information, contact Andrea Frey at [freya@uchastings.edu](mailto:freya@uchastings.edu).

**Aideen** reported the recent release of the Marin Child Care Council's newsletter.

- David ask whether the “budget triggers” will impact childcare.
- Aideen responded that instead of the original 15% cut, there had been an 11% cut following the May Revise of the budget; another 4% will be necessary to respond to the (anticipated) cuts following the budget triggers.

Aideen also mentioned a bill recently amended to provide for the unionization of child care workers; it is being reviewed to analyze the impacts. [The bill is AB 101 (Perez); it was amended on September 2 to allow licensed and unlicensed child care providers the right to form a statewide child care union to negotiate collectively with the State.]

**David** recognized Alex Porrata, our Shoreline School Readiness Coordinator for her Marin Voice piece—published in her role as coordinator of the Marin Breastfeeding Coalition.

See “Support ‘Birth-Friendly’ Hospitals” in the Marin Independent Journal (link:

[http://www.marinij.com/opinion/ci\\_18799941?IADID=Search-www.marinij.com-www.marinij.com](http://www.marinij.com/opinion/ci_18799941?IADID=Search-www.marinij.com-www.marinij.com))

#### IV. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

#### V. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR/STAFF REPORT

**Pre-K to 3** – Amy reported on the meeting scheduled with Dr. Jerry Weast, former superintendent of schools in Montgomery County, Maryland (who is known for a focus on low-performing students and reforms that resulted in a dramatic turnaround in test scores). Amy, Tina Warren and Kay Wernert prepared information to be presented at the meeting as a “Pre-K landscape” for Marin County; the materials were acknowledged as an important description and summary of the current scenario.

**Audit** – Amy reported that work continues on First 5 Marin’s audit; the final audit will be presented at the commission meeting in October.

**Evaluation** – Amy also noted that the annual evaluation report from jdcPartnerships will be presented in October, with highlights and a standalone piece on systems change. (This will be valuable for our upcoming strategic planning process; probably not in November, but likely a Saturday retreat in December.)

**First 5 Marin: The Early Years** – Prompted by jdc, Amy and jdc has been working on a report summarizing the unique nature of First 5 Marin’s origins, early development and progress. Jdc emphasized that our experience would be a valuable perspective for the field.

**Conferences** – Amy will be attending the upcoming Grantmakers for Children Youth and Families Conference in San Francisco. David Lawrence will be speaking at the plenary session, and Amy will be moderating a breakout session. There will also be an Evaluators conference in November at which First 5 will be conducting a roundtable on “Evaluation and Strategy: Using an evaluation framework to refine a set of integrated initiatives”

## **VI. COMMISSION DISCUSSION**

### **A. Presentation: Summer Bridge/Kinder Academy**

**San Rafael-Canal/Brenda Rivas-Camarena** – Brenda explained that Canal School Readiness focused on children without preschool experience. The schedule was dropped from five to four days per week, but more hours per day; this allowed children to experience the lunch process at school. (This year, San Rafael schools were able to offer free lunches to students during the summer; parents could choose for their child to participate or not.) Special events included: Health Day organized by LIFT; a first-ever library visit; Dental Day with Jennifer Colombo; Wildcare on Family Day; and the “Chef Cilantro” puppet show about nutrition. 61 children participated in Summer Bridge in San Rafael; another six children were referred to the new Summer Bridge program at Marin Country Day school in Corte Madera (and nine children were wait-listed). [In 2012, 88 spaces (4 classrooms) will be needed to accommodate all children without preschool experience.]

- Amy noted that we are trying to encourage the incorporation of the Summer Bridge programs in all the Pre-K to 3 communities schools. There will be longitudinal tracking of these students. (At Bahia Vista school, teachers know whether their students had preschool or participated in Summer Bridge, and for what duration.)

**Marin City/LaDonna Bonner** – LaDonna reported that Summer Bridge was fabulous in Marin City this summer; it seems to get better every year. 22 children began the program; 15 completed the full session. Summer Bridge had to compete with free summer programs offered by the recreation department (that included swimming, field trips etc.). Summer Bridge was ethnically/culturally mixed, and included several Indian families. There was 100% participation at Family Fridays. LaDonna also shared a big success story: the Summer Bridge family advocate worked hard to enroll a child referred by the school district; this required repeated family contacts and explanations about the program, encouragement and persuasion. When the student arrived, staff became aware that he had several developmental issues. After the mother became more comfortable with staff, they were able to talk with her about getting assistance for him. By the end of Summer Bridge, staff supported the mother in arranging an autism check with a pediatrician, arranged an IEP with the school district, and had all the services in place to help him begin kindergarten successfully.

**West Marin/Alex Porrata** – Alex taught the Summer Bridge class in Tomales this year, and took a 40 – hour GLAD training (Guided Language Acquisition Design). The goal is closing the achievement gap for English language learners. The Tomales program was funded by Pre-K to 3 this year. The program served 22 children, and accepted ages 3.5 to 6 and included returning students, post-kindergarten students. All instruction, games and songs were bi-lingual. Not only did the Spanish-speaking children learn English, but the English-speaking students learned Spanish. (Staff discovered that English language parents saw this as a very positive aspect of the program.)

**San Geronimo Valley/Jennifer Breen-Justice** – Summer Bridge in the Valley included LIFT, dental, Wildcare, and a very popular fire department visit for Safety Day. 22 children were enrolled, and there was 94% attendance. 96% had prior preschool exposure, but due to family financial issues many had been pulled from their preschool programs. Dental and hearing screenings were provided by Coastal Health; three children were referred for further hearing examinations or care. (Staff knows this is a critical intervention: last year, a boy had serious hearing issues and, after a hearing screening, received a hearing aid; his mother reported a dramatic improvement in his behavior and learning.) Summer Bridge

in the Valley had a great mixture of families and cultures this year. Many children transferred to summer camp and “the loft” programs.

**Richard Waxman** from LIFT/Levitate – Richard shared that LIFT worked with 300 children this summer, promoting nutrition and fitness. Fitness Day featured “Zumba” classes (music & movement), with all the children dancing and exercising to the music; all parents were encouraged to participate, even moms with babies. (He noted that the school readiness coordinators were particularly helpful in organizing and encouraging the children and families to participate.) The key message to parents: model good behavior for your kids. LIFT created an experience to teach the concept that outdoor activity is more fun than being inside, and that healthy food is tasty. [He noted that teens have 7.5 hours of screen time per day; the figures are higher for African American, Hispanic and low-income teens.] Every child went home with a (size-appropriate) jump rope to continue physical activities on their own.

Richard introduced **Oscar Guardado**, introduced by Richard, talked about the “Chef Cilantro” presentations to the children which taught principles of proper nutrition, eating healthy, and enjoying the taste of good food. Children enjoyed the age-based show by Chef Cilantro and the bi-lingual cookbooks.

- Amy noted that First 5 Marin’s goal is to get as many of the core programs absorbed by the community (before budgets are reduced even further).

#### **B. Revised First 5 Marin Budget for FY2011-12**

Amy presented the revised budget for the current fiscal year. David asked if a contingency was being eliminated; Amy replied that it was not. The change before the commission was replacement of the (full) lease dollars into the budget (since we had not been able to change our lease, move spaces, or rent a portion of our unit); Amy noted that we would, however, continue trying to sublease space.

**Motion: Revise the FY1112 budget to reflect the full lease obligation, thereby increasing the budget by #11,044 or from \$2,126,725.to \$2,137,769.**

**Moved: Bonfilio**  
**2<sup>nd</sup>: Gaidmore**  
**Passed unanimously**

#### **A. Update on Healthy Kids Implementation**

Commissioner Heather Ravani reported that the Children’s Health Insurance (the healthcare application) staff is in place and outside recruitment to fill the remaining vacancy is underway. All staff have been trained as CAA’s (Certified Application Assistants) and in food stamp outreach. The transition to Partnership Health has been successful. With a capacity to provide healthcare for 850 children, 795 had been enrolled (as of August 24). Families have been given a grace period of the past two months in which their monthly premium cost was covered. They will now be billed for the monthly premiums and staff will work to ensure that families understand the process and retain the coverage. There is a hardship fund in place to offer limited assistance to those families unable to cover the premium cost (ranges \$10-\$30 monthly).

Heather noted that Kaiser has also enrolled over 900 children and continues to have slots available.

Staff distributed over 30,000 flyers through the schools and local communities. They are working with other counties on (best practices for) retention strategies; they are also working with Coastal Health. Heather noted that coverage and care for foster children has presented some challenges, as well as pharmacy issues. However, the personal response and personal attention to service has been commendable.

Alicia stated that the transfer to Partnership has been very positive for the most part, and that they did a lot of work on preparation and have been very responsive. (Sparkie added that there have been some problems with CCS, but that they continue to work with the Partnership staff.)

Heather also commented on the transfer of AB 3632/special education responsibilities from the counties back to the schools. She noted that there is a high number of students in Marin County who receive services, relative to other county comparisons. The Board of Supervisors has been very supportive, with a focus on the needs of the children first and foremost. The County has provided these services for 25 years, and is working with the school districts and MCOE for a successful transition of the services.

Alicia noted that pediatricians are concerned about children being left without adequate mental health services. Many of the special education services are for emotional and behavioral issues. There are not enough affordable mental health professionals in the community.

## **B. Update on AB 99 suit and Legislative Update**

### **1. AB 99**

Amy reported that there was a hearing on AB 99 in Fresno Superior Court on the legality of AB 99, the legislation that took \$1 billion from First 5 statewide. Sherry Novick from the First 5 Association had prepared a full summary of the proceedings; the document will be forwarded to all the commissioners. The counsel hired by First 5 Marin reported that the lawyer representing First 5 Fresno (and speaking on behalf of all the First 5 plaintiffs) was outstanding. The Attorney General's office presented for the State. The judge didn't have any questions for plaintiffs, but did ask the AG why legislation was passed to implement Prop. 10 and establish local control (for the revenues) and then AB 99 was passed to take local control away. The judge has 90 days to rule on the case; the deadline would be November 30.

Amy noted that for purposes of our audit, First 5 Marin will need to encumber (or record as an expense) the \$3 million that is our portion of the AB 99 obligation. Under current law, these funds are currently due to be transferred to the State Treasury by the end of the fiscal year.

Amy reported that, at the end of the last fiscal year, First 5 Marin had \$4.9 million in reserves; subtracting \$3 million for our AB 99 obligation leaves \$1.9 million. This year, we will spend about \$1 million, leaving less than a \$1 million cushion at the end of June-- which entirely changes our funding picture.

David noted that this accelerates our day of reckoning by three years. Amy added that we've been clear to our funded partners all along, and at this point all should assume there will be no funding after the end of the year.

[Alicia asked a follow-up question to the school readiness presentation, inquiring about reasons behind the Summer Bridge program at Marin Country Day. Amy replied that the program was provided as a public service to the community. We need to learn if it was convenient and comfortable for the families to go to a private school in Corte Madera for the Summer Bridge program.]

### **2. Legislative Report**

Michelle provided a brief report on legislation, and reminded commissioners that most of the work during this legislative session was focused on the state budget and the impacts on First 5.

- **AB 152 (Fuentes)** would establish a new tax credit for farmers who donate fresh fruits and vegetables to food banks. *(This bill has been sent to the Governor.)*
- **AB 540 (Bell)** would have provided drug and alcohol screening under Medi-Cal for pregnant women. *(This bill was held in the Senate Appropriations Committee.)*

- **AB 823 (Dickinson)** would have established the Children’s Cabinet of California as an advisory body to improve collaboration of services for children and youth. *(This bill was also held in the Senate Appropriations Committee.)*
- **AB 922 (Monning)** would establish the Office of the Patient Advocate as an independent entity to help individuals secure healthcare coverage. *(This bill has been sent to the Governor.)*
- **AB 1296 (Bonilla)** would establish the Healthcare Eligibility, Enrollment and Retention Act, and would require the development of procedures for application and enrollment in public healthcare plans. *(This bill has been sent to the Governor.)*
- **AB 1319 (Butler)** would prohibit the manufacture and sale of bottles and cups for children containing bisphenol A (BPA). *(This bill has been sent to the Governor.)*
- **SB 502 (Pavley and DeLeon)** would require hospitals to adopt infant feeding programs and promote breastfeeding in accordance with the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative. *(This bill was approved and sent to the Governor.)*

David reported on **SB 575 (DeSaulnier)** which would have closed loopholes for smoking restrictions in the workplace; the bill was dropped by the author. He added that the Cancer Research Act will be added to the ballot next June. It will institute a one dollar tobacco tax, which will include “backfill” for First 5 (revenues that will be lost). The UC Regents will support.

**VII. ADJOURNMENT** – The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

**VIII. NEXT MEETING**

Next Meeting:  
Wednesday, October 5, 2011 - 5:30 PM  
First 5 Marin 1101 -5th Avenue, Suite 215  
San Rafael, CA