

PREPARED FOR THE SAINT PAUL CITY COUNCIL

ADVISORY BODY WORKGROUP

SAINT PAUL EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM

Addendum 1

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Common Acronyms

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Common Acronyms

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|-------|---|
| ECC | Early Childhood Commission |
| ECE | Early Care and Education |
| ELLAC | Early Learning Legislative Advisory Committee |
| FFN | Family, Friend, and Neighbor |
| LNL | Legal Non-Licensed |
| OFE | Office of Financial Empowerment |

INTRODUCTION

By positioning the City to make early care and education accessible to more of its children, and earlier in life, the Saint Paul Early Childhood Program (the “Program”) plan offers a reply to the question, “How do our children, families, and workforce thrive?” The recommended program design both reflects and responds to the growing needs of Saint Paul children and families, in addition to the workforce of Saint Paul Early Care and Education providers.

The primary plan document outlines 8 considerations to program design along with recommendations for initial implementation. Highlights of these considerations include:

| Program Consideration | Consideration Overview |
|--|--|
| Funding and Budget | The proposed use of a special levy to fund early care and education subsidies. |
| Governance, Administration, and Advisory | Recommendations on the City office to oversee the program, the short- and long- term program administrator, as well as the role of a Community Advisory Board. |
| Service Delivery | Identifies the families, providers, and settings that can participate in the program, as well as funding distribution recommendations. |
| Eligibility and Scale | Highlights the recommendations for eligibility based on priority points in addition to the Program’s rate of scale |
| Outreach and Enrollment | Explores and recommends multiple ways to inform Saint Paul residents of the program, enrollment approaches, and needed materials |
| Program Standards and Features | Suggests provider and participant requirements along with unique program features reflective of Saint Paul. |
| Workforce | Proposes Saint Paul curated education and training efforts for ECE providers |
| Data and Evaluation | Suggests timelines and content for data collection and considerations for evaluation |

A review of the Program plan would provide a more thorough synopsis of each consideration along with recommendations during start up.

Among the benefits, the Program would scaffold early care and education for the more than 20k Saint Paul children aged birth through kindergarten entry, including the projected 10,549 children below the 185% Federal Poverty Line. In addition, the Program design intentionally works to connect Saint Paul families and providers with resources across sectors in an effort to better blend stronger networks of support in the early years, having a direct impact on families and the workforce.

BACKGROUND

The evolution of a Saint Paul Early Childhood Program has been on the horizon for nearly a decade. Beginning in 2016, Councilmember Noecker began engaging with Saint Paul stakeholders and interested parties in conversations regarding early care and education in the City and the possibility of a citywide preschool initiative. Since that time exploration, collaborations, and additional joint efforts have continued.

2017 produced the “Blueprint,” recommendations provided through a Saint Paul 3K Workgroup convened and facilitated by the Saint Paul Children’s Collaborative. 2018 and 2019 birthed a 3K Steering Committee which culminated in the Saint Paul 3K Design Team Report. The Early Learning Legislative Advisory Committee (ELLAC) was formed in 2022 when the City Council passed Resolution 22-1183 paving the way to evaluate a locally governed early care and education program.

In July of 2023, the City Council passed RES 23-1094, ordering a special election to be held on November 5, 2024, to add a ballot question on whether the City should create a dedicated fund for subsidies for children’s early care and education through a property tax levy. During the same month, Mayor Carter vetoed the resolution and submitted a veto letter to the Council explaining his rationale. In August 2023, the City Council overrode the Mayor’s veto.

2024 experienced monumental growth in program planning and details with the progression of detail-oriented tasks and data by MetrixIQ and Emmy Liss, prompted by the Saint Paul Children’s Collaborative, as well as the Program plan designed by People of Victory LLC.

For a more in-depth history, access the following documents listed in order of their creation:

- The Blueprint
- Saint Paul 3K Design Report
- City Council resolution 22-1183
- Early Learning Legislative Advisory Committee Report
- City Council resolution 23-1094
- Mayor Carter’s Early Childhood Program Veto
- MetrixIQ and Emmy Liss report
- Saint Paul Early Childhood Program plan

WORKGROUP NEED

The convening of community voices through each phase leading to the development of an early childhood program began in 2016 with conversations stimulated by Councilmember Noecker. A range of community voices has since informed each subsequent report and pivotal point of progression. The precedent for some form of collaborative ideation is at the core of the initiative and has continued into program design through the enactment of workgroups to address various details of the program that no one individual or group should inform independently.

The ELLAC structure itself – a composition of Early Care and Education (ECE) providers, Saint Paul residents, various community and education organizations, and council members – emphasized the value and necessity of community perspectives, as well as the power of collaborative ideation. The ELLAC included a range of voices, perspectives, and experiences to offer recommendations for a program designed to benefit the diverse population of Saint Paul. The 2023 report derived from this advisory committee offered recommendations to the Saint Paul City Council on the potential design and implementation of a citywide early childhood program. Their program recommendations gave thought to potential barriers to program access and participation; addressed income, cultural, and language diversity needs; examined access to resources and subsidies; dove into provider types, settings, and hours, among other considerations.

More specifically, in the final polling of the ELLAC and included in the subsequent report, 95% of the respondents agreed that a city run program should include strong parent, provider, and community voices in policy decision-making through appropriate structures like a governing board, advisory, or other structure. The Advisory Body Workgroup was convened in response to this recommendation. The Advisory Body would be developed as one of the first actions following voter approval. This community body would inform subsequent steps.

WORKGROUP CHARGE

The Advisory Body Workgroup was charged with:

- Recommending the population of a community Advisory Body, including
 - Basic participant criteria
 - Representation
 - Quantity of participants
 - Participant service duration
- Identifying the authority and responsibility of an Advisory Body.
- Determining an appropriate governance structure for the Advisory Body.

The workgroup task was to recommend the structure and expectations of the community Advisory Body recommended in the ELLAC report. The group was also tasked with continuing the Advisory Body recommendations provided in the Program plan, in greater detail. Ultimately, their work required crafting the groundwork for a community collective designed to inform, monitor, advise, and support accountability for the use of levied funds towards early learning. The design of the Advisory Body is essential to the overall Program plan, as it is the initial step of implementation following voter approval.

WORKGROUP PROCESS AND COMPOSITION

Participation in the Advisory Body Workgroup was an open invitation to the public. Targeted invitations were sent to the following types of participants:

- Saint Paul residents
 - Saint Paul community elders
 - Saint Paul families of young children (0-5)
 - Saint Paul families of children with special needs
- ECE centers and home providers
- ECE professionals and professional organizations
- Federal and Public Pre-kindergarten programs
- FFN providers
- Culturally specific and language diverse organizations and programs
- Representatives of unhoused populations

Organizations or individuals who chose to participate in one or more workgroup sessions included:

- ECE professionals and professional organizations
- ECE advocacy organizations
- Saint Paul family of children with special needs
- Saint Paul resident, licensed social worker, and family advocate
- Saint Paul elder
- Saint Paul resident and member of a Saint Paul education governing board
- Representative of unhoused populations

Contributing to conversations about advisory body criteria, membership, and responsibilities outside of workgroup sessions were representatives from Child Care Aware of Minnesota, Community Action Head Start, Hmong Early Childhood Coalition, Minnesota Child Care Association board of directors, Saint Paul Public Schools, and Voices and Choices Steering Committee members of Children's Defense Fund Minnesota.

The workgroup convened on three occasions spanning July through August 2024. Over the course of the sessions participants discussed ideal criteria for membership of a community advisory structure focused on early learning in Saint Paul. Based on experience – both lived and professional – participants worked to identify optimal advisory member representation that would span the experience and perspectives needed to inform and elevate the Program's implementation and growth over time.

During the three sessions participants reviewed descriptions and selection processes for multiple Saint Paul organizations having boards, committees, commissions, or councils. The workgroup also explored similar structures within current City of Saint Paul governance. Using guided inquiry in tandem with awareness of Saint Paul demographics, workgroup participants constructed a proposed identity for the Advisory Body inclusive of membership representation

along with a general group description with responsibilities and identified an optimal structure to guide and govern the work.

Pertinent to note, the workgroup openly addressed the highly impactful, but typically undervalued, factors of culture, language, economics, access, and lived experience that are often viewed secondary to professional expertise in relation to advisory structures. The group's intent was to ensure expertise—learned through lived or trained experience—was present in the span of advisory representation. The workgroup worked to establish an expectation of balance in Saint Paul family and provider experience, diversity of voice, perspective, and access, with professional expertise.

WORKGROUP OUTCOMES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Participants in the Advisory Body Workgroup constructed a proposed identity for the ELLAC recommended Advisory Body inclusive of membership criteria, membership representation, and a general Advisory Body group description with an overview of responsibilities.

Membership Criteria

Guided by experiences with community engagement, family advocacy, and resource access, workgroup participants recommend basic criterion for Advisory Body membership. Membership would require:

- Individuals to reside in Saint Paul.
- Organizations to be located in Saint Paul and include service to Saint Paul families.
- Members to commit to the time and attendance required of an Advisory Body.
- Individuals and organizations to provide input reflective of their membership representation rather than themselves.

Membership Representation

Advisory Body Workgroup participants identified representation of 21 membership types in an effective community advisory body. Collectively, member representation spans various cultural groups, language experiences, family and resident experiences, stages of family and child development, provider types, ECE settings and organization, as well as school-based programs.

Each role on the Advisory Body has a service duration. Service durations overlap to allow continuity and new perspectives, while also maintaining group momentum. For individuals, service duration is two or three years, at which time a new individual can apply or become appointed to the seat. This encourages variety in perspective, as well as an opportunity for the Advisory Committee, Office of Financial Empowerment, and the Program administrator to remain current and address needed topics.

For organizations, some positions – Head Start or the Mayor’s Office, for example – are ongoing, yet would require a new designee to represent the organization on a rotating basis. In this way, there are regular fresh perspectives on the work and complacency is avoided. Other organizations – those marked with an asterisk – do not themselves occupy an ongoing position, however, may apply on a rotation, along with other qualified organizations, to occupy the membership position.

| Membership Representation | Representation Term |
|--|--|
| Parent of an infant/toddler | 2 years |
| Parent of preschool child | 2 years |
| Parent of a child with unique needs (age 0-5) | 3 years |
| Community Elder | 2 years |
| Youth | 2 years |
| Financial Analyst | 3 years |
| Dual or Multilingual Community Representative | 3 years |
| *Childcare Center Provider | 3 years |
| *Family Childcare Provider | 3 years |
| Kindergarten Teacher | 2 years |
| *Family, Friend, and Neighbor (FFN) or Legal Non-Licensed (LNL) Provider | 2 years |
| Head Start Staff Person | Ongoing with person rotation every 2 years |
| Saint Paul Public Schools Staff Person | Ongoing with person rotation every 2 years |
| Representative from the Mayor's Office | Ongoing with person rotation every 2 years |
| City Council Member | Ongoing with person rotation every 2 years |
| Financial Empowerment Community Council | Ongoing with person rotation every 2 years |
| *ECE Labor or Workforce | Ongoing with a new organization rotation every 3 years |
| *Cultural Community Agency: African or African American | Ongoing with a new organization rotation every 2 years |
| *Cultural Community Agency: American Indian | Ongoing with a new organization rotation every 2 years |
| *Cultural Community Agency: Hmong or Karen | Ongoing with a new organization rotation every 2 years |
| *Cultural Community Agency: LatinX | Ongoing with a new organization rotation every 2 years |

Advisory Body Workgroup participants recommended specific representation types to help ensure the inclusion and interaction of various perspectives of program design, implementation, and compliance. The Community Elder representative would be a Saint Paul resident of older years and may include retirees, grandparents, etc., who have an interest in ECE or supporting the

implementation of the Program plan. A more definitive description would be determined by OFE. The Youth representative refers to late-teens or young adults having interest in ECE, those participating in Grow-Your-Own postsecondary programs, or those engaged with organizations such as, but not limited to, YouthBoard and Youthprise. Having this representation would allow those who are entering the profession to influence the work that is done.

Participants in the Advisory Body Workgroup recommended including a Financial Analyst who is both a resident of Saint Paul and appropriately professionally trained. This role would provide fiscal purview and necessary interest in the application of levied funds. The Dual or Multilingual Community Representative member would help to ensure the experience and perspective of language communities are included in conversations and decisions. Certainly not least, a kindergarten teacher would have a critical role as the work of the Program has direct implications on the kindergarten experience. This member type would alternate between district charter, district public, and private school kindergarten teachers at each service duration.

While an online application for City Committees, Boards, and Commissions was available on the City website at the time of the Advisory Body Workgroup convening, participation in select structures is by Mayoral appointment. Consideration should be given to the process that best fits the work of the Advisory Body, whether an open application process or Mayoral appointment.

Advisory Board Structure

Advisory Body Workgroup participants explored both the explicit and nuanced norms of advisory structures. Primary responsibilities, processes, chains of command, authority, and influence were thoughtfully examined; strengths and challenges were weighed. Participants determined the primary goals of the Advisory Body would be to:

- Monitor
- Advise
- Provide feedback and recommendations
- Remain aware of Program data for effectiveness
- Ensure implementation is aligned with the Program goals and funding
- Support accountability for the use of publicly raised funds
- Report to the OFE Director and/or the Mayor

As a result of exploring the roles and responsibilities of boards, commissions, committees, and councils both within and outside of City governance, the Advisory Body Workgroup determined the structure most aligned with the desired authority and responsibility of an early learning advisory body is a commission. [The Advisory Body is henceforth identified as the Early Childhood Commission in subsequent reporting.](#)

Early Learning Commission Overview

Following a guided inquiry process the Advisory Body Workgroup constructed a potential Early Childhood Commission identity, inclusive of a general group description, responsibilities, and unique characteristics.

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| <p>The Saint Paul Early Childhood Initiative is a Program designed to provide access to early care and education for Saint Paul's earliest learners, birth through kindergarten entry. The Program is funded by a special levy with an expected outcome of advancing kindergarten readiness, short- and long- term school outcomes for children, impacting family finance, and supporting the early care and education workforce.</p> <p>The Early Childhood Commission will advise the Mayor and Office of Financial Empowerment on the implementation of the Early Childhood Initiative. The 'Commission' will be established as the first task of the initiative and help to inform decisions moving forward.</p> | |
| Who is the Commission? | The Commission is a mixed group of resident and organizational community members who have an interest in the short- and long-term outcomes of early care and education for Saint Paul's youngest residents. |
| What does the Commission do? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend and actively represent community perspective at meetings • Review the annual budget for indirect and direct costs and applied use of special levy funds • Review annual progress towards Program implementation and program outcomes (for children, families, providers, and the Program) • Provide advice and counsel to the governance structure or Mayor • Stay informed of early childhood initiatives • Stay informed of participating providers, partners, contractors, and enrollment trends • Monitor and review the plans and activities of the Governance and Administrative bodies for adherence to the Program plan • Ambassador in community settings and brings community issues/concerns to the Commission as appropriate and relevant • Participate in the hiring process of Program Governance or Administrative staff as selected or appointed • Inform timelines and deliverables for contracted services related to early childhood |
| How frequent does the Commission meet? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly during the initial implementation phase (years 1-3), to be revisited in years 4 and 8. |
| Other unique qualities of the Commission membership | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connected to early childhood • Connected in their geographic or cultural community • Live or work in Saint Paul |

Potential Partnerships

During the development of the Early Childhood Commission (ECC) by Advisory Body Workgroup, the following partners were identified as those who might participate in an application review, or appointment, process. These potential partners would also aid in distributing or communicating a public announcement regarding the Early Childhood Commission, or review representation and group descriptions, and refine ECC work tasks. The following list is not comprehensive or all inclusive, yet is a starting place based on current relationships.

- African American Babies Coalition
- American Indian Family Center
- Child Care Aware of Minnesota
- City of Saint Paul District Councils
- College Bound Saint Paul
- Comunidades Latinas Unidas En Servicio (CLUES)
- Hmong American Partnership
- Hmong Early Childhood Coalition
- Karen Organization of Minnesota
- Minnesota Child Care Association
- Network for the Development of Children of African Descent (NdCAD)
- Saint Paul Public Schools Parent Advisory Councils
- Ramsey County Family Services
- Think Small

ADVISORY BODY IN THE INITIAL STAGES

The development of the Early Childhood Commission – formerly Advisory Body – is paramount to the infrastructure of the Program, initial and ongoing implementation, as well as resident trust and investment. Initial stages of Program implementation include establishing the Commission as well as hiring Program staff and consultants. To do this, the following would occur:

- Develop a detailed membership description for each member type or a general description for all memberships
- Confirm the process for selection, application or appointment
- Develop and distribute public communication regarding Commission roles, responsibilities, and time commitment; add this to the Committees, Boards, and Commissions website
 - Subsequently determine who will review applications. This might include Commission members, City staff, Council members, etc.

Subsequent steps would depend upon the given responsibilities and authority of the Commission. These next steps could include:

- Aiding in, or developing, job descriptions for contractors and Program staff.
- Participating in the interview and selection process.
- Informing or developing standards for evaluation; both broad Program standards, as well as detailed expectations within categories, as outlined in the Evaluating Quality Workgroup Addendum.
- Participating in the initial stages of Program implementation.