



**California Children and Families Commission Retreat**

**April 1, 2021**

**DRAFT MEETING MINUTES**

**Agenda Item 1 – Opening Remarks**

Dr. Nadine Burke Harris called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m.

Commissioners Present: Nadine Burke Harris  
Molly Munger  
Mayra Alvarez  
Shana Hazan  
Jackie Majors  
Elsa Jimenez

Ex Officio Member Present: Kris Perry

Announcements

Chair Burke Harris opened the meeting and described what she hoped to accomplish during the Retreat. She articulated the vision for her leadership of First 5 California (F5CA) in the years to come.

Executive Director, Camille Maben, followed with a welcome and background about what led to the Retreat. She introduced Jannelle Kubinec, Chief Administrative Officer at WestEd, as the facilitator of the meeting.

**Agenda Item 2 – Public Comment**

No public comment.

**Agenda Item 3 – Discussion to Inform the Strategic Direction of First 5 California and Build Relationships that Support Future Actions**

Ms. Kubinec opened by reviewing the purpose, objectives, and structure for the Retreat, and played a video clip by Michael Jr. called “Know Your Why,” which demonstrated when

people know the “why” of what they are doing, the “what” becomes more impactful. After playing the video, Ms. Kubinec opened the discussion to Commissioners.

### What Commissioners Care About and Why, and What motivates Their involvement with First 5 California

Each Commissioner discussed their upbringing and how it led to their profession, and the things in their lives that motivate their interest in and commitment to F5CA. Some of the motivations include:

- Belief that California’s children should have the right supports available to them, and that everyone has the same access
- Wanting to be part of an amazing network, and to say something of value that has a broader audience
- Feeling compelled to do more after working in a related field
- Responsibility as a public servant to serve families and young kids, and believing that government investments must support their needs
- The fact that interventions work, and it truly is possible to decrease experiences of child poverty. First 5 provides leverage to make this possible
- Belief in the idea of justice for everyone, and that it is the responsibility of First 5 to lead the way
- Feeling the need to act as a voice to bring others together in a common goal, and to lead the way on equity

Ms. Maben noted the stories from Commissioners inspired staff and provided them with much to contemplate, such as:

- F5CA’s “why” and how that guides its strategic direction
- Having an engaging and compelling story to tell about its work
- Recognizing the many strengths and unique attributes to build on

### F5CA Staff Presentations

F5CA staff to talked about projects related to the Strategic Plan.

- Erin Dubey, Administrator, presented an overview of programs, including IMPACT, book distribution, and emergency supplies.

- David Dodds, Deputy Director, discussed projects in the Evaluation Office, including California Health Interview Survey, *Kit for New Parents* evaluation, Emergency Child Care, and Essentials for Childhood.
- Max Vargas, Deputy Director, discussed projects in the External and Governmental Affairs Office, including state advocacy, Paid Family Leave advocacy, federal advocacy, media campaign, and the *Kit for New Parents*.
- Debi Silverman, Administrator, discussed projects in the Continuous Quality Improvement office, including the Dual Language Learner Pilot, Home Visiting Workforce Study, Small Population County Funding Augmentation, and the Smoker's Helpline.
- Jaime Hastings, Director, provided an overview of what is funded from the Administration account.

### Shared Care Abouts: Goals, Priorities, and Expectations for 2021–22

Monica Mathur-Kalluri from WestEd provided notes from the conversation about what Commissioners care about and why. She categorized them into several areas of focus:

- Child Health
- Child Development
- Family Functioning
- Systems of Care
- Trauma-Informed Care
- Populations served

### Retreat Takeaways

- Be Bold
  - Take on a big challenge that First 5 California is uniquely able to address
- Be Strategic
  - Identify a clear north star with measurable goals
  - Leverage the unique strengths of First 5
- Be About the Moment
  - There is growing recognition and support for investments in early childhood – the cause championed by First 5 is now receiving national attention

- Importance of early brain development
- Protective factors
- Breaking the cycle of poverty through two-generation approaches
- Be Focused
  - Better does not mean more; focus and coherence matters.
  - Narrow the interest and be specific, and look at things from a system lens to inform allocation of resources.
  - What is the right goal for equity? What is the north star for equity? How will programs address the following:
    - School readiness/kindergarten readiness – How can a kindergarten system work equitably for kids regardless of priors? Defining equity in school readiness and stand up as a voice for understanding how equity works and blends into metrics for the early childhood system.
    - Child health – Are kids screened when they should be? Is the system prepared and set up to do that? What are the markers that make parents feel supported by the systems of care they need?
    - Birth to age three – Moment to align with Biden programmatic and policy work; connect to trauma.
    - What are the methods for equity (awareness, incentivizing/requiring) for grants?
    - Child well-being – data collection, discussion, and strategies. Can we measure well-being around the state for the north star and aspirational work?
  - Idea: Population level work outside of First 5 with a focus on children birth to age 3 and place-based investments (built around support of equity, innovation).
  - Example: By 2025, California will have cut the number of children not ready for kindergarten for non-white communities and white communities in half.
    - Use data, lessons to present ideas
    - ACES, birth to age 5
    - Define grant making in contribute to goal (concrete and discipline)
  - Be open to what's not working

Commissioners discussed these areas of focus and noted that now is a critical moment in time, given the pandemic and conversations around racial inequity and wealth inequality. They stated F5CA has an opportunity to bring change due to its unique position as a “freer” entity that is not beholden to corporate shareholders, elections, etc. Commissioners mentioned that the multiple crises occurring at one time means the work that was being done previously was not as efficient, effective, and equitable as it could or should be, and that the solution is to put a focus on equity, and to create concrete milestones to achieve child and family outcomes.

#### **Action Item 4 – Adjournment**

**DISCUSSION:** None.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** None.

Chair Burke Harris adjourned the meeting at 4:03 p.m.