



**Memo**

**To:** Commissioners, First 5 Ventura County

**From:** Petra Puls, Director of Countywide Strategies and Evaluation

**Date:** August 15, 2013

**Re:** Recommendation to approve revised FY 2013-14 funding allocation for Ventura County Office of Education (VCOE) for the Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) Program

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**Background**

First 5 Ventura County has been partnering with the Ventura County Office of Education (VCOE) since 2005 on implementing the Preschool for All and Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) programs, through which early education providers receive the training, technical assistance and support to meet rigorous quality standards and to increase their education and effectiveness.

First 5 Ventura County has been able to greatly expand the breadth and depth of the initially envisioned quality rating and improvement scope of work by leveraging local investments with additional revenues:

<b>Funding Source</b>	<b>Funding Period</b>	<b>Total Amount</b>
First 5 CA Child Signature Program (CSP)	FY 2012-13 through FY 2014-15	\$2,486,250
California Department of Education (CDE) Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC)	January 1, 2012 through December 31, 2015	\$1,784,600
		<b>\$4,270,850</b>

F5VC and VCOE have created one seamless quality improvement initiative that is anchored in a 5-tier QRIS matrix, incorporates Educare Best Practices and utilizes local First 5, First 5 California Child Signature Program, and federal Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge grant funding streams. Participating QRIS sites are eligible for participation and quality improvement incentives, and have access to a broad range of training and technical assistance geared towards reaching higher levels of quality.

FY 2012-13 marked the first year of implementing a blended QRIS program. Due to delays at the State level to finalize the 5-tiered QRIS matrix and associated assessment parameters, participating programs were not able to fully utilize all budgeted quality improvement incentives. In addition, VCOE had lower than anticipated personnel costs.

The QRIS program has generated significant interest within Ventura County. In FY 2012-13, 43 early education sites participated in QRIS, representing 75 classrooms and over 2,000 children. Initial projections for FY 2013-14 contemplated that only 12 new, additional sites would select to join the QRIS efforts. However, a total of 44 sites have completed applications to participate in

the program. A review of those applications determined that approximately 30 of those sites would meet the participation criteria set forth by state and federal funding sources.

First 5 CA Child Signature Program and CDE Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge grant guidelines allow the use of rollover funds. Staff is in the process of submitting revised budgets to both funding sources.

In December 2012, the Commission approved a FY 2012-13 program funding allocation for VCOE of \$1,580,000. In order to allow already participating programs to fully utilize their quality improvement incentives, and to accommodate additional sites that serve high-needs children, up to \$360,000 of prior year unspent federal and state grant funds would need to be incorporated into the FY 2013-14 QRIS contract with VCOE. The funding would increase the line items for program participation and quality improvement incentives, training, and technical assistance. Staff anticipates additional prior year unspent federal and state funds, which would then be brought to the Commission at a later date.

### **Recommendation**

The recommended action would increase the FY 2013-14 allocation amount for the Ventura County Office of Education for implementing the QRIS Program. The action would also grant authority to the Executive Director to enter into an amended FY 2013-14 contract with the Ventura County Office of Education, in an amount not to exceed \$1,940,000.00. No new allocation of funds would be required as the increase is supported by prior year unspent federal and state grant funds.