

# Most Ventura County students not ready for state universities

Jean Cowden Moore, jean.moore@vcstar.com, 805-437-0236 Published 10:41 a.m. PT April 6, 2017 | Updated 5:18 p.m. PT April 6, 2017



(Photo: CHUCK KIRMAN/THE STAR)

Only about a third of Ventura County students take the classes they need to go directly from high school to one of the state's public universities, essentially blocking a key pathway to improving their standing. [Fullscreen](#)

Students who don't take those classes, the so-called A-G [Gallery: Most students not ready for California state universities](#) requirements, are ineligible for a University of California or California State University campus.

In Ventura County, 37 percent of students have met the requirements, significantly lower than the state average of 43 percent. The statistics are from the 2014-15 school year, the latest numbers available.

"It's their lives, their futures," said Penny DeLeon, superintendent of the Oxnard Union High School District. "It impacts the entire economic development of our community."

That's because college graduates, over their lifetimes, earn more, on average, than those who have finished only high school or community college. In 2015, college graduates earned 56 percent more than people who went no further than high school, according to the Economic Policy Institute.

Students who aren't eligible to apply to a UC or CSU can still go to a community college and then transfer — an option many students choose, often for financial reasons. But they are narrowing their options.

The issue starts as early as childhood, said Jamshid Damooei, chairman of the department of economics, finance and accounting at California Lutheran University. Low-income families may not be able to afford preschool, putting their children at an academic disadvantage as early as kindergarten, he said.

The solution: Start interventions as early as infancy, rather than high school, he said. But don't give up on the interventions local school districts, such as Oxnard Union, are trying.

"You've got these kids — you're setting them up for failure," Damooei said. "Many of them don't take (these courses) because they're not ready. It's too little, too late."

These are the A-G requirements:

- English: four years
- Math: three years required, four recommended
- History and social science: two years
- Laboratory science: two years
- Language other than English: two years
- Visual and performing arts: one year
- College-preparatory elective: one year. This can include any class that meets the A-G requirements.

Private universities like Cal Lutheran also expect students to take a similar set of courses, though they don't call them A-G requirements.

Across the county, affluent school districts generally have higher percentages of students meeting their A-G requirements.

In the Conejo Valley Unified School District, where about a quarter of students are low-income, 59 percent have met the A-G requirements when they graduate.

Compare that to Oxnard Union, where the numbers are nearly flipped: 56 percent of students are low-income. Just over a quarter of students have met those requirements.

There are also disparities within school districts.

In Oxnard Union, which has six traditional high schools, the most affluent campus, Camarillo High, has a much higher percentage of students meeting the A-G requirements than the least affluent, Hueneme.

**MEDIA**

At Camarillo, 29 percent of students are low-income. About 43 percent have met the A-G requirements.

At Hueneme, 80 percent of students are low-income. Only 19 percent have taken the classes they need to apply to a UC or CSU.

"Socio-economically disadvantaged students disproportionately represent those who do not take these courses," Damooei said.

"So we have lost the American dream."

A range of factors contribute to that disparity, educators said. If parents haven't been to college themselves, they may find it difficult to help their kids navigate the sometimes-daunting application process, including knowing what classes to take.

Counselors can help, but they're spread thin, so students who need extra help may not get it.

Also, counselors sometimes track students into easier classes, based on biases they may not be aware of, said Eder Gaona-Macedo, executive director of Future Leaders of America.

"It's a self-fulfilling prophecy that Latino youth face — that because of their background, their language, they're not going to live up to college expectations," Gaona-Macedo said.

## Some solutions

Even if the long-term solution is early intervention, school districts still need to address the issue with the students they have now, educators said.

So Oxnard Union is working to eliminate both learning and financial gaps that can keep students from going directly to college. The idea is that every student will have the option to go to a four-year university, even if they decide to take a different route, DeLeon said.

"We'll step in as parents, so it's not incumbent on some parent coming in and banging the door down so students get what they need," she said.

Oxnard Union now covers the cost of the PSAT for every student in ninth, 10th and 11th grades. The PSAT is essentially a practice test for the SAT, the college entrance exam.

When students get their results, they'll also get a report that lets them know if they have the potential to take an Advanced Placement class. The district also is offering low-income students fee waivers for the exams taken at the end of those AP classes, bringing the cost down from \$95 to \$15. That matters because, if students pass the AP exam, they often can get college credit for the class.

Then, starting in June 2018, the district plans to cover the cost for every student to take the SAT.

Counselors will get additional training in the A-G requirements, said Tom McCoy, assistant superintendent of educational services. And the school will build its master schedule so that it's harder to put students into classes that don't meet college requirements, McCoy said. The district also is rewriting courses so that most of them meet UC requirements.

"We have to make sure we're not tracking kids into courses that don't prepare them for any secondary college experience," McCoy said.

Oxnard Union also will work with elementary and middle school districts in the area to make sure students are starting high school with the foundation they need to take and pass those classes, DeLeon said.

## Doing more

But some students believe the district should do more. The students, part of Future Leaders of America, have been petitioning district leaders to make changes so that more students head directly to universities.

One suggestion: make high school graduation requirements the same as A-G requirements. School boards can set their own graduation requirements, as long as they're at least as rigorous as the state's, said Roger Rice, deputy superintendent with the Ventura County Office of Education.

But districts that have tried requiring all students to meet the A-G requirements have run into problems, Rice said.

"For many years, the mantra was A-G for all," he said. "Slowly, we realized it did not work. Not all kids want to go to college. Not all kids need to go to college."

Districts also have seen graduation rates drop when they institute more rigorous graduation requirements because students have a harder time meeting them, DeLeon said.

"You can do it, but you have to have a plan for it," DeLeon said. "You have to have a system where you're doing a great job or helping students be successful."

The district should make that effort, to be sure students can go directly to university if they want, said Johnny Garcia, 17, a member of Future Leaders and a senior at Hueneme High.

"There are thousands of students out there who don't know about the A-G requirements," Garcia said.

## Preparing counselors

The district also needs to hire more counselors, to help students take the classes they need, said Juan Carrillo, 18, a senior at Channel Islands High School.

"At Channel Islands, we have five counselors and about 2,000 students," Carrillo said. "Not every student can get one-on-one attention."

And those counselors need to be more diverse, he said. When he started at Channel Islands, Carrillo's counselor didn't put him into honors classes until he pushed for it, he said. Now he's at the top of his class and has been accepted to several universities.

"They're not able to really understand the perspective, the background of other people," Carrillo said. "When you have culturally proficient counselors, you can make more of a connection."

If counselors and other adults assume that Latino youth can't meet college expectations, that takes a serious toll, Gaona-Macedo said.

"Those are dangerous biases we instill in our children that prevent them from thriving academically and economically when they're older," Gaona-Macedo said. "Some students feel it, sense it, especially in rural communities like Oxnard where students aren't expected to do well."

The toll spills out into the community as a whole, he said, pointing to economic disparities between Thousand Oaks and Oxnard.

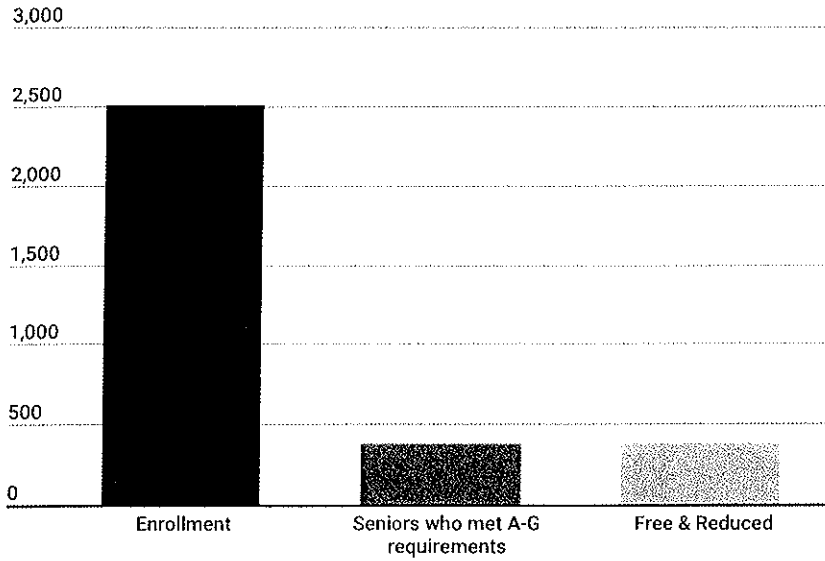
"Not only are our youth not going to college, our economy isn't as vibrant," he said. "That's a lot of missed opportunities for the city of Oxnard because we're not preparing our kids to go into college."

That's why Damooei believes society needs to address the issue starting in childhood — so that the community gets the best return on its investment.

"We have to be smart in investing," he said. "And the best investment is high-quality early childhood education. Why don't we look at this problem from its core? ... Then we're setting ourselves up for a much higher return later on."

## Number of seniors who have met the A-G requirements

*Use the drop-down menu to search for your student's school.*



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Ventura County high school seniors eligible for UC and CSU colleges  
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 Create column charts (https://infogr.am/create/column-chart?  
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March 28, 2017

## POLICY & ADVOCACY NEWS



### In This Issue

- Legislative Update
- Federal Policy Webinar
- Help Me Grow Updates
- Upcoming Webinars & Events

### Legislative Update

The Association's Advocacy Committee took positions on bills last month. These bills are not moving through the legislature and their status is available on our bill track [here](#). Some of the Association's letters of support are available [here](#).

The following bills and topics will be heard in the upcoming committees. Additional information is available on the Daily Files: [Assembly](#) and [Senate](#).

#### Assembly Health

- AB 753 (Caballero) – April 4<sup>th</sup>

#### Assembly Human Services

- AB 1164 (Thurmond) – April 4<sup>th</sup>
- AB 258 (Arambula) – April 25<sup>th</sup>
- AB 300 (Caballero) – April 25<sup>th</sup>
- AB 377 (Frazier) – April 25<sup>th</sup>
- AB 435 (Thurmond) – April 25<sup>th</sup>

#### Assembly Budget Sub-1 on Human Services

- Hearing on Denti-Cal – April 24<sup>th</sup>

#### Assembly Budget Sub-2 on Education Finance

- Early Education Hearing – April 4<sup>th</sup>

### Federal Policy Webinar

Thanks to everyone who participated in yesterday's Federal Policy webinar with The Raben Group. We had a great conversation on the health care, Trump's "skinny budget", trauma informed care, MIECHV reauthorization, and more. The full webinar recording and powerpoint presentation are available [here](#).

## Help Me Grow Updates

### CA's Website Update

HMG CA's website [www.helpmegrowca.org](http://www.helpmegrowca.org) is nearing completion and on schedule to be open by the end of April. Please send us stories on how HMG has played a role in your county to be featured on the site: What innovative measures are you taking to ensure children 0-5 receive developmental screenings? How are you partnering with your local agencies and organizations to ensure early identification and intervention of developmental delays is taking place? What successes have you seen within your locality that highlight the effectiveness of your HMG system?

Please send to [heather@first5association.org](mailto:heather@first5association.org) so that we can help spread the word of all the amazing work we are doing across California and the impact we are having on the lives of our youngest children.

HMG CA, collaborating with several experienced affiliates, is helping First 5 San Benito work through the process of becoming our newest county affiliate. Twelve additional counties are actively working with their localities to develop the groundwork necessary to take next steps in affiliation

2017 Help Me Grow National Forum Registration Ends March 31st

Please make sure to register for the HMG National 2017 Forum by **Friday, March 31<sup>st</sup>** to secure your attendance.

Join *Help Me Grow* leaders from over 25 affiliate states at the 8th Annual Help Me Grow National forum in Saint Paul, Minnesota. This event will feature presentations, workshops, and networking opportunities with affiliates from across the country, including presentations by HMG CA Affiliates Alameda, Orange and San Joaquin.

### For your Information:

- Forum Hotel: Intercontinental Saint Paul, Saint Paul Minnesota
- Group rates are available through March 31, 2017
- \$169 per night (group rate)
- \$145 per night (government per diem, government identification required)

### Registration cost and dates:

Regular Registration rate of \$375 - available through March 31, 2017

## Upcoming Events & Webinars

### Help Me Grow

Moira Kenney and Margot Grant Gould of the First 5 Association, and Kendra Rogers of Children Now will be presenting on California's advocacy efforts regarding early childhood systems change in the fourth and final installment of HMG National's 2017 Making Change Webinar Series.

This webinar intends to bridge together the concepts of strategic messaging and evaluative measurement as key pieces of collective impact, with an intention of moving policy and practice to develop stronger community systems that advance service to families.

Register Here: April 5th from 11am - 12:30pm

Child Poverty Webinar with PPIC

On April 20th at 11AM, the Association will be hosting a webinar with PPIC staff on their recently released Geography of Child Poverty in California report.

Accompanying the report is an interactive map of California's 265 Census PUMAs, showing overall and subgroup poverty rates for children 0-5. The site also displays a range of characteristics of children in poverty, including parents' education and employment, commuting, and housing costs.

**Registration is open!**

Save the Date: CAEYC's Early Learning Advocacy Day: May 24th

The Association is co-sponsoring CAEYC's Early Learning Advocacy Day in Sacramento on May 24th. Registration information coming soon! Registration fee (\$45) includes keynote presenter, education, breakfast snacks and lunch, followed by legislative visits.

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March 7, 2017

## POLICY & ADVOCACY NEWS



### In This Issue

- Blue Ribbon Commission's First Hearing
- Advocacy Committee Votes to Support Legislation

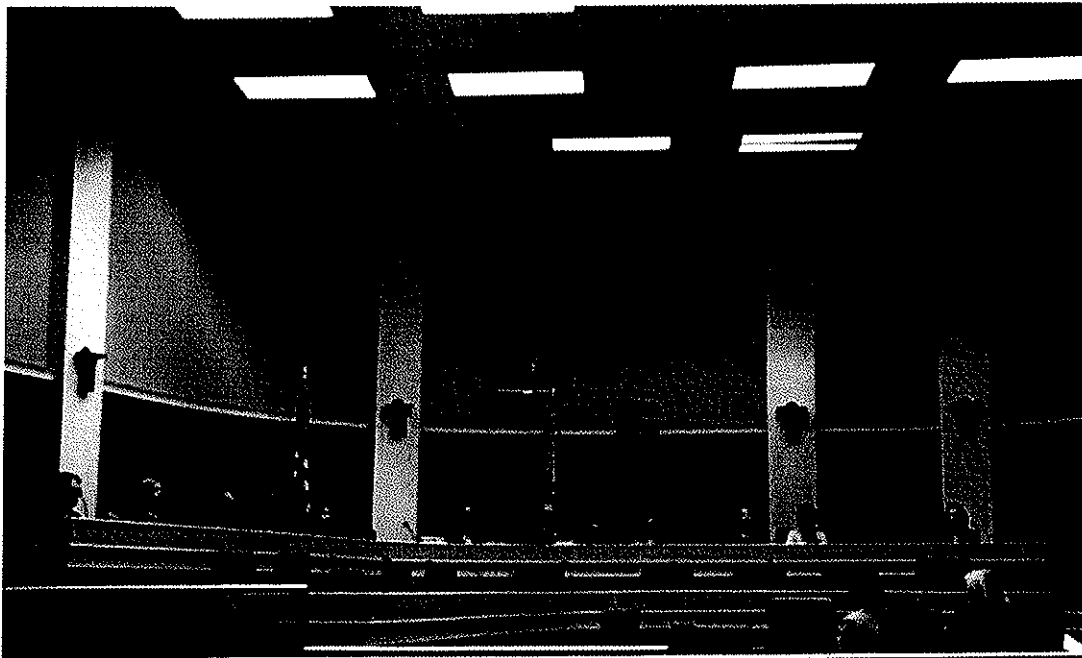
### Blue Ribbon Commission's First Hearing

The Speaker-appointed Blue Ribbon Commission on Early Childhood Education held their first hearing in Sacramento yesterday. The first hearing provided a platform for the commissioners, both Assemblymembers and child care experts, to introduce themselves and offer what they hoped to discuss and tackle as a commission.

Notably, many commissioners discussed the importance of studying issues facing infant-toddler-, preschool-, and school-aged students, along with workforce concerns. Additionally, many acknowledged that the system is widely under-resourced. As such, the commission is also tasked with discussing funding sources to support recommended changes.

Three speakers helped set the stage and provide a historical overview of child care systems in California and the many state and federal funding streams. Speakers included:

- Erin Gabel, Deputy Director External Affairs, First 5 California
- Donna Sneeringer, Policy Director, Child Care Alliance of Los Angeles
- Rowena Kamo, Research Director, CA Child Care Resource & Referral Network



First Blue Ribbon Commission hearing held in Sacramento on March 6<sup>th</sup>



All three speakers discussed how child care funding remains 20 percent below pre-recession levels, which has impacted all providers. Rowena Kamo highlighted the dramatic impact of budget cuts have had on family child care providers. Erin Gabel discussed the school-side of child care and relayed that the system, while complex, was designed to address the diversity of parent's needs and meet the dual workforce and child development goals. Donna Sneeringer focused on the voucher-side of child care and discussed how Alternative Payment Programs provide the needed flexibility to meet the needs of families with non-traditional and unpredictable work schedules. She also discussed the complex reimbursement structure through the Standard Reimbursement Rate (SRR) and Regional Market Rate (RMR) and encouraged commissioners to address the discrepancies between these two structures.

Handouts from the presentation are available [here](#). The hearing's full agenda is available [here](#). The next meeting has not been announced, but the Association is monitoring the hearings and will be meeting with many of members of the commission.

### **Advocacy Committee Votes to Support Legislation**

The Advocacy Committee met on February 22<sup>nd</sup> to take positions on bills. The full list of endorsements is available [here](#).

Please remember that it is still early in the legislative process and the Advocacy Committee will be voting on additional bills in the coming months. If you would like to recommend that the Association take a position on a specific bill, please contact Margot.

Most notably, the Association the voted to support AB 60 (Santiago/ Gonzalez Fletcher), legislation that will update the State's Median Incomes (SMI) level to current date and provide continuous 12 month child care eligibility for families. This legislation is the same as last year's AB 2150 and is a top priority in the child care field. The Association submitted a support letter and we encourage other commissions to do the same. The bill will be heard in the Assembly Human Services Committee today.

Additional letters of support authored by the Association are available [here](#). Various fact sheets, produced by the bill authors, are available [here](#). Please check back as additional support letters and bill fact sheets are added regularly.

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# Simi Valley Acorn

2017-02-24 / Community

## **First 5 Express comes to Simi Valley Bilingual tour focuses on early childhood development**

The First 5 Express—a statewide bilingual tour educating families on the importance of talking, reading, and singing in everyday life and its impact on a child's early brain development— will stop in Simi Valley Wed., March 1.

Families can drop in anytime between 9:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. in rooms 13/14 at Justin Early Learners Academy, 2245 N. Justin Ave., Simi Valley.

Participants can park in school parking lots after noon.

The First 5 Express features activities that provide parents with ways to keep their children engaged through talking, reading and singing.

The event will include First 5 Express staff-led story time sessions, a child-friendly library, an interactive karaoke booth and nursery rhyme spin wheel.

“The first three years of life are particularly critical for mental stimulation through talking, reading and singing, which helps billions of neurons inside the brain make strong connections that last a lifetime,” said Camille Maben, First 5 California’s executive director.

Children and families that participate in the free Express activities will receive free prizes, including a storybook, toy musical instrument and activity book.

Parents and caregivers also have the opportunity to receive educational tools like brain development brochures, tip sheets, new-parent kits and other resources.

For more information about First 5 California, visit [www.cffc.ca.gov](http://www.cffc.ca.gov) as well as [www.first5california.com](http://www.first5california.com).

For the local information, go to [www.mpsvnfl.com](http://www.mpsvnfl.com) or call Simi Valley First 5 at (805) 520- 6619, ext. 7.

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2017-02-24 / Schools

## First 5 asks parents to read to kids

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Children and families that participate in the Express activities will receive free prizes, including a storybook, toy musical instrument and activity book.

Parents and caregivers may also receive more educational tools like brain development brochures, tip sheets, Kits for New Parents, and other resources.

For more information about First 5 California, visit [www.ccfc.ca.gov](http://www.ccfc.ca.gov) or [www.first5california.com](http://www.first5california.com).

For the local website, go to [www.mpsvnfl.com](http://www.mpsvnfl.com) or call Simi Valley First 5 at (805) 520-6619, ext. 7.

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# Camarillo Acorn

2017-02-24 / Schools

## Guide on parenting toddlers, preschoolers

Call it Parenting 101.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has released a series of online video tutorials in English and Spanish for parents of toddlers and preschoolers.

“Essentials for Parenting Toddlers and Preschoolers” covers such topics as communicating with your child, giving directions, creating structures and rules, and using timeout.

Each topic has its own video tutorial.

Reached at [www.cdc.gov/parents/essentials/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/parents/essentials/index.html), the site also has an interactive feature that lets visitors practice their parenting techniques.

The director of a local educational program for young children said the new CDC tutorial series might benefit her program’s parenting classes.

“I’d be interested in viewing it, absolutely,” said Rafaela Frausto, director of First 5 Ventura County’s Pleasant Valley Neighborhood Learning Center. “The more parents are educated, the more they can apply what they’re learning to help and support their child.”

The Camarillo-based program for infants and children ages 4 months to 5 years serves about 300 children a year.

Unlike a day care, a regular preschool or a Head Start program, the First 5 program requires parent participation. Parents must attend classes with their children.

The learning center already uses CDC materials that help parents understand children’s developmental milestones, Frausto said.

“It basically tells parents what they should expect from their child at different stages of development, things to look for that could indicate a developmental issue,” she said.

—*Hector Gonzalez*

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2017-02-23 / Community

## Losses mount for infant, toddler care program

By Dawn Megli-Thuna

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**SOS—Parents of students at Neighborhood for Learning at City Center told the school board they would pay higher tuition to save the school. RICHARD GILLARD/Acorn Newspapers**

In a bid to save Conejo Valley Unified's cash-strapped infant and toddler child care programs, parents told the school board on Tuesday that they would be willing to pay more if it meant keeping the programs in place.

The show of support came in response to an item on the board's Feb. 21 agenda asking whether trustees would consider eliminating care for children under the age of 2½ from the Neighborhood for Learning City Center on Conejo School Road due to ongoing financial losses.

Operating both programs through the 2017-18 school year would result in a projected loss of \$100,000 for CVUSD, according to district staff.

Infant and toddler care is an enterprise program, which means it is expected to be self-supporting rather than paid for out of the district's general fund.

The parent of a 1-year-old girl enrolled in City Center's infant program said that parents and teachers should be given a chance to make the program solvent before a closure—which would be effective July 1—is considered.

"We as parents are more than willing to increase our tuition," she said. "We're a very strong community, and we're more than willing."

Superintendent Ann Bonitatibus said that for the program to break even, a tuition hike from \$1,100 to \$1,600 per month would likely be necessary.

CVUSD took over operations at the City Center site in 2002 from the City of Thousand Oaks, which still owns the property. In addition to infant and toddler care, the center operates a preschool and hosts Parent and Child Together classes, neither of which would be affected by the proposal.

The main factor driving staff's recommendation is the rising cost of employing the necessary high ratio of full-time staff members to children enrolled. Because the children served by the programs are so young—6 weeks to 2½ years— state licensing rules mandate the district maintain strict staffing ratios.

There are 19 children enrolled in the two programs which are staffed by five full-time employees.

While a shift to more part-time teachers would lower costs, Deputy Superintendent of Instruction Bob Iezza said that such an option would compromise the continuity of care that is imperative for very young children.

"If we're going to do this, we're going to do this right," he told the *Acorn*.

The issue has nothing to do with a lack of demand. In fact, the two programs are currently near or at capacity. Both have a waiting list.

In an effort to save the failing programs, staff was reduced beginning in 2015, lowering operating costs by \$80,000 annually. But when the cutbacks were not sufficient to balance the budget, funds from CVUSD's popular after-school child care program— which serves children from transitional kindergarten through fifth grade—were used to subsidize the infant and toddler fund to the tune of \$200,000 for the 2016-17 year, Iezza said.

Mark McLaughlin, the deputy superintendent of human resources, said rising employment costs were driven by increasing benefit and retirement contributions.

While a full-time early care teacher earns a \$45,000 annual salary, employee benefits cost an additional \$23,000 per year. With CalPERS contributions expected to rise nearly 13 percent by 2023, he said, those benefit costs could reach \$30,000 per year.

Bonitatibus instructed staff to weigh the feasibility of a tuition rate hike and report back to the board in April.

CVUSD offers NFL programs at four different locations, but City Center is the only site that offers infant and toddler care. NFL centers provide parents with children age 5 and under with resources like affordable preschool options and parent education classes through First 5 Ventura County, part of a statewide initiative.

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April 18, 2017

## POLICY & ADVOCACY NEWS



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- **Board of Equalization Updates**
- **Federal Outreach**
- **Early Learning Advocacy Day on May 24<sup>th</sup>: Registration Open!**

### State Budget & Legislative Updates

#### Concerns over the Governor's Child Care "Pause"

The Assembly Budget Sub 2 on Education, tasked with analyzing the proposed education budget, voted to reject the Governor's "pause" on preschool slots and reimbursement rates.

The Senate Budget Sub 1 on Human Services and Sub 3 on Education held a **joint hearing** on early education. While they did not take any formal action, the members expressed grave concern over the Governor's proposal. Both Democrat and Republican members have expressed their support of fully funding the intended child care promises of last year's budget, which are estimated to infuse \$121 million in General Fund and \$105 million Proposition 98 dollars into child care programs across the state.

#### Women's Caucus & Latino Caucus Priorities

Both the legislative Women's Caucus and the Latino Caucus submitted letters to the Governor, expressing their 2017 legislative priorities. The Women's Caucus expressed the need to fully fund the child care promises and reject the governor's proposed child care "pause". The Latino Caucus listed AB 60 (Gonzalez Fletcher/ Santiago), legislation that will update the state's family eligibility and provide 12 months of continuous child care, as a top priority.

#### Trailer Bill Language

The Governor's budget also proposes a number of changes to the child care licensing, facilities, and ratios. While the Association has not formulated an official position on the budget trailer bill proposals, we voiced our concerns with the proposed changes and the consequences on quality in early learning. An overview of the changes are available [here](#).

#### Legislation

The Association's updated Bill Tracker is available [here](#). Upcoming hearings include:

- AB 5 (Gonzalez Fletcher/ Kalra): Employers: Opportunity to Work Act will be heard in Asm Labor and Employment on April 18<sup>th</sup>.
- AB 185 (Chau): Adult-use marijuana marketing, packaging, and labeling will be heard in Asm Business and Professions on April 18<sup>th</sup>.
- AB 43 (Thurmond): Taxation on prison contracts dedicated to prevention funding will be heard on April 24<sup>th</sup>.

- Child Care Pilot Bills – AB 258 (Arambula); AB 300 (Caballero); AB 377 (Frazier/ Gonzalez Fletcher); AB 435 (Thurmond) will be heard in Human Services on April 25<sup>th</sup>.
- AB 350 (Salas): Marijuana edibles appealing to children will be heard in Asm Health on May 9<sup>th</sup>.

*\*Please note that hearing dates will often change. Please refer to the Daily Files for updates.*

### **Additional Resources**

- Example [support letters](#)
- Bill [fact sheets](#)
- Watch the hearings on [CalChanel](#)
- Find out about upcoming hearings on the [Assembly's](#) and [Senate's](#) Daily Files

### **Board of Equalization Updates**

The Board of Equalization hosted a briefing on Prop 56 implementation pertaining to both the additional \$2 cigarette tax and the equivalency tax placed on e-cigarettes. At the briefing, the Association learned that e-cigarettes will be taxed as “Other Tobacco Products” (OTP), just as cigars, snuff, and such products are taxed. Handouts from this meeting are available [here](#).

The exact tax rate will be voted on at the upcoming BOE Commission Meeting on April 25<sup>th</sup>. **BOE staff is recommending** a 65.08% tax rate on OTP for 2017-18, a steep increase from the 2016-17 tax rate of 27.30%. The increase is attributed to the voter-approved tax increases of Prop 56. If approved by the BOE Commission, the new tax rate will take effect on July 1, 2017.

The Association is monitoring these tax increases closely will provide addition updates and resources on what this means for First 5 revenue projections.

### **Federal Outreach**

The Association has been assisting a few commissions with federal engagement of key members of congress. The meetings have been going well so far and we encourage more commissions to engage with their federal representatives. Please contact the Association for additional support in these efforts.

- Talking points for federal outreach are available [here](#)
- Need to find your Congress Member? View the [Congressional](#) roster by county.

### **Early Learning Advocacy Day May 24<sup>th</sup>: Registration Now Open**

The Association is participating in CAEYC's Early Learning Advocacy Day on May 24<sup>th</sup>. We encourage Commissions to join us in Sacramento!

- Registration is \$45 and covers lunch, legislative visits, and speakers for the event. Please register for the event [here](#).
- Please remember to also let the Association that you are attending. You can do so by signing up [here](#).
- Need to find your legislators? View the [Senate](#) and [Assembly](#) Rosters by county

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### BEFORE:

In 2002, Alma Ferrel opened a home-based day care center and preschool in Fillmore. By 2010, she was at capacity. With different classes throughout the day, ranging from infant care to preschool and after-school care, Ferrel had children in her home eight hours each weekday. With the demand for child care services rising in Fillmore, Ferrel knew she needed a bigger space.

### BEST ADVICE:

All it took was a phone call to EDC-VC and its Small Business Development Center for Ferrel to begin the process of opening ABC Kids Preschool & Childcare in a facility that could accommodate more children. From working with SBDC advisors on permits, finance, planning and facilities and developing a business plan, to acquiring loans and contacting construction engineers for renovations and playgrounds, SBDC advisors were with Ferrel every step of the way. EDC-VC's partnership with the county and First 5 Ventura County enabled Ferrel to receive more than \$200,000 in loan funding to build out her new commercial facility, equip it with furniture, purchase playground equipment and install a kitchen.

### AFTER:

ABC Kids Preschool & Childcare currently has over 150 children enrolled and nearly 20 teachers. It is the first preschool and child care center of its kind in Fillmore, with classes for infants, toddlers, preschool classes and after-school care.

She hopes to open another center in the future so she can serve more families. "I plan on reaching out to EDC-VC and its SBDC again. They were so helpful the first time and I know that having them as a partner will build on our success and help to provide a much-needed resource to the community," said Ferrel.



Gustavo and Alma Ferrel

### LESSONS LEARNED:

- **Patience is a virtue:**  
"The whole process took about two years," said Ferrel. "But with the support of EDC-VC, SBDC and First 5, everything worked out. From going through the lease to acquiring the right permits, staying on track and trusting in the plan we developed was the key to our success."
- **You've got friends:**  
"Some of our neighbors initially opposed the day care center moving in. EDC-VC, First 5 and Ventura County Supervisor Kathy Long spoke on my behalf and really helped turn opinions around. Today, we have a great relationship with all of our neighbors and they love having the center in the neighborhood."
- **Trust in yourself:**  
"Throughout the process, there were times where I wondered if I could do it. But EDC-VC really believed in me as an individual and was willing to advocate on my behalf. It really helped me because I knew that having their support and the support of my family would help me overcome any obstacles."
- **Funding is available:**  
"By establishing a partnership with EDC-VC, SBDC and First 5, I gained access to everything I needed to renovate and build out the space. From gaining funding to hire contractors and employees, the loans I received made all of this possible and allowed me to create jobs."



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