



To: Commissioners, First 5 Ventura County

From: Petra Puls, Executive Director

Date: November 21, 2019

Re: Recommendation to authorize pay for First 5 Ventura County preschool programs unable to operate due to circumstances beyond their control

Background

In January 2018, the Commission approved a recommendation to reimburse First 5 Ventura County (F5VC) preschool programs that were closed during regularly scheduled operating days due to fire danger and hazardous air quality resulting specifically from the Thomas Fire. Recently, several school districts throughout Ventura County and F5VC funded preschool programs were closed again due to fire danger, poor air quality, and power outages resulting from Public Safety Power Shutoff events. In addition, many F5VC funded preschools are located on school district campuses and are therefore unable to operate their programs during school district closures.

F5VC funded preschool programs have a fee for service payment structure, which provides a daily rate to the contractors for a predetermined number of operating days based on the number of children enrolled. Unanticipated program closures, such as those due to fires or power shut-offs, result in a loss of funds during those days when the programs would normally have been operating.

Continued payment to the F5VC preschool contractors during closures caused by circumstances beyond their control would mitigate against the loss of funds necessary for program operations and would be consistent with the California Department of Education's policy for continuing payment to preschool contractors that are unable to operate due to circumstances beyond the control of the agency. Circumstances beyond the control of operating contractors include, but are not necessarily limited to earthquakes, floods, fires, epidemics, impassable roads, or the imminence of a major health or safety hazard. Payment would only be provided if the program continues to incur its usual expenses (e.g. for personnel) despite the reduction in days of operation.

Recommendation

The recommended action would approve reimbursement to F5VC preschool programs for regularly scheduled operating days that were missed due to circumstances that are beyond the control of the contractor.