

LEGISLATIVE DIGEST

[Administrative, Campaign and Governmental Conduct Codes - Early Childhood Department and Advisory Committee]

Ordinance amending the Administrative and Campaign and Governmental Conduct Codes to establish a Department of Early Childhood as successor to the Office of Early Care and Education and First Five San Francisco; establish an Early Childhood Community Oversight and Advisory Committee as successor to the Office of Early Care and Education Citizens' Advisory Committee; and update the responsibilities of the Children and Families First Commission

Existing Law

In order to receive certain State tax revenues intended to promote and support the early development of children from ages zero to five, State law requires counties to create a commission that meets the requirements of Sections 130100, et seq. of the California Health and Safety Code. The Board established the San Francisco Children and Families First Commission, also referred to in the City Charter and the Municipal Code as the First Five Commission ("First Five Commission"), to meet those State law requirements. The First Five Commission, (which includes staff referred to as "First Five") expends State funds to support, promote, and optimize early childhood development. The City Charter also gives the First Five Commission a role in oversight of funds in the Public Education Enrichment Fund. The First Five Commission also creates and updates a strategic plan on an annual basis, prepares an audit on the implementation and performance of its functions, and holds public hearings on the annual audit and the State's annual Children and Families First report.

The Office of Early Care and Education ("OECE") is responsible for aligning and coordinating the City's efforts to provide support for quality early care and education for children ages zero to five in San Francisco. OECE's authorizing ordinance required OECE to initially submit a strategic plan and proposal to the Board by January 1, 2016 that addressed the expansion of quality universal early education in San Francisco. And, in 2018, San Francisco voters approved taxes on revenue from the leases of certain commercial real properties to fund quality early care and education for young children in San Francisco. Pursuant to Article XVII of the San Francisco Administrative Code, OECE submits a five-year spending plan for these funds to the Board of Supervisors. The Human Services Agency currently provides administrative support to OECE.

The Board has established the Office of Early Care and Education Citizens' Advisory Committee, in Article XIII of the San Francisco Administrative Code, as an advisory body to OECE that provides recommendations and input on implementation priorities, policy development, evaluation design and planning.

Amendments to Current Law

This Proposed Ordinance would create a new Department of Early Childhood (“DEC”), to combine the functions of First Five (but not the nine members of the First Five Commission itself) and OECE. The DEC would be responsible for enhancing services for children ages zero to five in San Francisco, including aligning and coordinating the City’s efforts to provide early education for these children. The DEC would improve services for children by such strategies as: strengthening the early care and education workforce, establishing family-support programs, expanding access and outreach to underserved families, measuring outcomes, ensuring community and stakeholder engagement, and responding to the needs and concerns of parents.

The DEC would develop a revised strategic plan (the “Department Strategic Plan”) for submission to the Board of Supervisors by January 1, 2024, and every five years thereafter. DEC would update that plan on an annual basis and include the recommendations of the EC COAC (defined below) and the First Five Commission. The DEC would be authorized to update the Department Strategic Plan in conjunction with the First Five Commission’s strategic plan (now called the “County Strategic Plan”), and would address expansion of universal early education in San Francisco.

The Executive Director of OECE would be the acting Director of the DEC until the Mayor appoints a Director. The First Five Commission and the EC COAC may make recommendations to the Mayor regarding appointment of the Director and may meet jointly to recommend such candidates. All programs and personnel of First Five and OECE would transfer to the DEC on the effective date of the Proposed Ordinance. The Human Services Agency would no longer provide administrative support to OECE following creation of the DEC.

The Proposed Ordinance would maintain the First Five Commission’s responsibility for spending State tax revenue for early childhood development, as well as the implementing the other State law requirements, including updating the County Strategic Plan, preparing an annual audit, and holding public hearings on the annual audit and the State’s annual report. The Proposed Ordinance would update the membership of the First Five Commission to include one member nominated by the Mayor (and approved by the Board), one member from the Child Care Planning and Advisory Council, and one member as a provider of family support services. The current members of the First Five Commission would retain their seats after the effective date of this Proposed Ordinance.

The Proposed Ordinance would replace the current Office of Early Care and Education Citizens’ Advisory Committee with the new Early Childhood Community Oversight and Advisory Committee (“EC COAC”). The sitting members of the OECE Citizens’ Advisory Committee would retain their seats during this transition. The Proposed Ordinance would maintain the current duties of OECE Advisory Committee, but would now require the First Five Commission and the EC COAC to hold joint public hearings to review of the DEC’s budget

and the DEC's annual update to the Department Strategic Plan. The Children and Families First Commission and the EC COAC would also coordinate to develop joint policy recommendations on the DEC's goals and would hold a joint public hearing on the DEC's budget.

Background Information

As a merger of First Five and OECE, the new department will be positioned to align and coordinate the development of comprehensive and connected systems, services, policies, and planning strategies for children ages zero to five in San Francisco. When distributing State tax revenues disbursed under the California Children and Families First Act of 1998, as well as local funds gathered under San Francisco's Proposition C of 2018, the DEC will have an improved ability to coordinate spending on child development and preschool.

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