



Legislation Text

File #: 19-0598, **Version:** 1

Item:

Update on Formation of a Durham County Early Childhood Action Plan (15min)

Date of BOCC Meeting: December 2, 2019

Request for Board Action:

The Board is requested to receive this update and ask any questions they wish.

Since the October update on this topic, County staff have been engaged in further discussions with EDCI, CCSA, Durham's Partnership for Children, and others about the most appropriate and effective shape for this early childhood action planning process to take. This discussion item is share the most recent thinking with Commissioners and, if appropriate, to receive authorization to move forward with additional steps to set this process in motion.

Staff continue to believe that the East Durham Children's Initiative (EDCI) should play a leading role in this effort. EDCI has been working for the better part of a decade to create a high-functioning pipeline of community partners serving young children in East Durham. In recent years they have repeatedly expressed interest in, and energy for, the idea of leading community-wide efforts to deepen and improve our early childhood service continuum, and are also in the process in dropping the "E" from their name and becoming the Durham Children's Initiative. EDCI's experience leading collective action and in private fundraising will be critical for this effort.

The October discussion centered around a proposal for EDCI to receive significant funding over 2.5 years to complete and begin implementation of this plan. Staff now believe that a shorter, one-year process is both advisable and feasible. Staff also believe that some funding for other partners would be appropriate given the level of effort several of them are likely to put into this effort.

Finally, staff continue to believe that the timing is right to launch this effort. The County will soon have more bandwidth through the hiring of an early childhood systems coordinator. The recently announced \$4 million SAMHSA grant which funds the Center for Child and Family Health and numerous other agencies to improve social and emotional wellness of Durham children ages 0-8. The County has now been invited to apply for a Pritzker Foundation grant later this fall which would help fund better coordinated strategies for children 0-3. The County's Pre-K investments continue to grow. Boston Basics may be launched this coming year as a community-wide early childhood communication platform. The opportunity *and* need to understand and coordinate all these related efforts as much as possible is critical. Staff do not believe the County has the internal capacity to do that; but believes that (E)DCI and other local partners have both the energy and capacity to do it for us.

Alignment with Strategic Plan: A clear, specific early childhood action plan mirroring the State of North Carolina's plan will help coordinate Durham's future steps in this arena, help align them with the state's, and will make Durham County's early childhood activities more attractive for private and philanthropic funding.

Resource Persons: Drew Cummings, Chief of Staff

County Manager's Recommendation: The County Manager recommends that the Board receive this update and ask any questions they wish.

County Manager: _____