



King County

Metropolitan King County Council

STAFF REPORT

Proposed No.:	2020-0385	Name:	Tillery Williams
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SUBJECT

A motion accepting the Best Starts for Kids Assessment Report in accordance with Motion 15651.

SUMMARY

Proposed Motion 2020-0385 accepts the Best Starts for Kids Assessment Report as required by Motion 15651. Proposed Motion 2020-0385 is a non-mandatory dual referral, introduced on October 27, 2020, and referred to the Regional Policy Committee and the Committee of the Whole. Executive staff provided an initial overview of the Best Starts for Kids Assessment Report to the Committee of the Whole on November 3rd¹ and to this committee on November 4th. At that meeting and in a subsequent e-mail, the Sound Cities Association caucus members asked for additional information that would synthesize the data provided in the assessment report, and report out to RPC on the outcomes of BSK levy funding by sub-area, including the amount of funding spent serving residents by sub-area and the outcomes from these services. At today's meeting, DCHS is expected to provide additional information in response to the SCA request.

Generally, the BSK assessment report provides information that explains the context and impact of the Best Starts for Kids levy funded goals, strategies, and programs, and meets the requirements as outlined in Motion 15651.

BACKGROUND

Best Starts for Kids is a levy-funded, prevention-oriented regional plan that is aimed at supporting the healthy development of children and youth, families, and communities across King County.

2016-2021 Best Start for Kids Levy. In November 2015, King County voters approved the current Best Starts for Kids (BSK) Levy, which is a six-year property tax levy. The levy is anticipated to generate a total of approximately \$404.5 million in revenues over the six-year levy period, based on the most recent revenue forecast².

¹ Briefing No. 2020-B0103

² August 2020 King County Economic and Revenue Forecast, adopted by the Forecast Council on August 25th, 2020 (KCFC 2020-05)

The BSK levy ordinance (Ordinance 18088) directed that out of the first year's levy proceeds, \$19 million be set aside to fund the Youth and Family Homelessness Prevention Initiative³ (YFHPI) as well as the amounts that were necessary to pay for election costs related to the levy. All remaining levy proceeds are to be disbursed as follows:

- **50 percent for the Invest Early Allocation:** Focusing on children and families (ages 0-5) where they are to support healthy child development and family well-being.
- **35 percent for the Sustain the Gain Allocation:** Focusing on supporting positive development for children and young people (ages 5 to 24) as they progress into adulthood.
- **10 percent for the Communities Matter Allocation** (Communities of Opportunity): Focusing on strategies to create safe and healthy communities, building on a partnership between the County and The Seattle Foundation on Communities of Opportunity, which is based on the latest research regarding the impact of place on individual and population health and wellbeing outcomes. Includes local community supports in building their own capacity to create positive change.
- **5 percent for the Outcomes-Focused and Data-Driven Allocation:** Supporting evaluation, data collection and improving the delivery of services and programs under the levy.⁴

BSK Implementation Plan. In September 2016, the Council passed Ordinance 18373 adopting the BSK Implementation Plan. The Implementation Plan provides guidance on the goals, investments and implementation of the BSK Levy.

The Implementation Plan outlines the 2016-2021 levy goals as follows:

- Babies are born healthy and are provided with a strong foundation for lifelong health and wellbeing
- King County is a place where everyone has equitable opportunities to be safe and healthy as they progress through childhood, building academic and life skills to be thriving members of their communities
- Communities offer safe, welcoming and healthy environments that help improve outcomes for all of King County's children and families, regardless of where they live⁵

Levy Oversight. The BSK Levy is overseen by the Children and Youth Advisory Board (CYAB), which carries dual responsibilities tied to the Best Starts for Kids Levy and the Youth Action Plan, as well as the Communities of Opportunity-Best Starts for Kids Advisory Board⁶, which is the advisory body for the COO portion of the levy. These groups play an integral role in monitoring progress of service and program implementation, partnering with the County to ensure that BSK investments are consistent with levy requirements, effective and transparent to the public.

³ The BSK Youth and Family Homelessness Prevention Initiative (YFHPI) is intended to prevent and divert children and youth and their families from becoming homeless. Programming for the YFHPI is outlined in its Implementation Plan, which was approved by Ordinance 18285 and subsequently updated by Ordinance 18373.

⁴ As identified in Ordinance 18088, a portion of this allocation may also be used for eligible services provided by prorated fire and parks districts, subject to certain limitations.

⁵ As stated on page 21 of the Implementation Plan, "Best Starts of Kids is reflective of the County's commitment to Equity and Social Justice and the work the County is undertaking to impact lives and change inequities by focusing on institutional policies, practices and systems."

⁶ The current COO-BSK Advisory Board, codified as KCC 2A.300.520, expires December 31, 2021.

Motion 15651. Motion 15651, adopted by the Council in July 2020, requested the executive submit for Council review an assessment report of the current BSK levy funded goals, strategies, and programs. The intent of the assessment is to inform Council deliberations regarding the potential for a levy renewal, since the current BSK Levy expires at the end of 2021. Motion 15651 included a detailed list of reporting requirements covering both an assessment of the current levy and recommendations for any future levy.

ANALYSIS

Proposed Motion 2020-0385 would accept the BSK Assessment Report as required by Motion 15651. The motion asks the Executive to transmit a report to be developed in consultation with stakeholders, including soliciting feedback from the Regional Policy Committee that includes:

1. An assessment of how levy proceeds are being allocated, the status of strategy and program implementation, design or policy changes, challenges and outcomes. The report shall detail the context and impact of the best starts for kids levy-funded goals, strategies and programs outlined in Ordinance 18088, including, but not limited to:

- An analysis of investments by geographic area, including maps or data summaries reflecting available zip code data of residence of clients or participants served;
- An analysis of investments by strategy, including the rationale for and status of any unspent or reallocated levy proceeds;
- Progress of levy implementation;
- Preliminary measurement of changes experienced by families and communities;
- An analysis of the impact of investments in advancing equity and social justice and changing systems and policies of racial and other forms of oppression; and
- An analysis of levy proceeds used to fund technical assistance and capacity building; and

2. Recommendations that address the following:

- How a renewed levy, or an increased or expanded levy, would deepen the current levy's work to dismantle systems of oppression, heal continuing wounds and realize justice for black, indigenous and people of color across all strategies;
- Whether to maintain or modify the best starts for kids levy's three primary goals enumerated in the implementation plan approved in Ordinance 18373, which are to ensure that: babies are born healthy; King County is a place where everyone has equitable opportunities for health and safety as they progress through childhood; and communities offer safe, welcoming and healthy environments that help improve outcomes for all of King County's children and families, regardless of where they live;
- Whether to maintain or modify the relative allocations of levy proceeds to each goal area;
- Whether a renewed levy, or an increased or expanded levy, should incorporate new or revised goals or strategies such as childcare, recommendations from the children and families strategy task force or other county efforts focused on children and youth;
- How a renewed levy would align and coordinate with programs such as: the veterans, seniors and human services levy; mental illness and drug dependency fund; children and families strategy task force recommendations; the Puget Sound Taxpayer Accountability Account; and other federal, state and local funding streams and programs

to integrate, align and avoid duplication of efforts;

- Whether a renewed levy should retain, or make modifications to, existing strategies that are intended to: support parents, families and caregivers; screen children to prevent potential problems and intervene early to link to treatment; cultivate caregiver knowledge; support high-quality childcare; build resiliency of youth and reduce risky behaviors; meet the health and behavior needs of youth; create healthy and safe environments for youth; help youth stay connected to their families and communities; help young adults who have had challenges successfully transition into adulthood; stop the school-to-prison pipeline; support priorities and strategies to facilitate collaboration with communities that have much to gain; engage multiple organizations in institutional, system and policy change; and prevent youth and family homelessness;
- How a renewed levy would benefit the entire region while targeting resources to those most in need; and
- Whether a renewed levy should modify any, or any combination of, the role, the structure or the representation of the children and youth advisory board.

The transmitted report is organized into a number of sections, each responsive to the requirements outlined in Motion 15651 (as presented in the bullet points above). Each section of the report is covered below.

An analysis of investments by geographic area, including maps or data summaries reflecting available zip code data of residence of clients or participants served. (pgs. 37-40)

As stated in the report, to combat disparities based on such factors as race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, immigration status, disability, language, age, and geographic location, BSK services are distributed geographically in ways that advance equity and social justice (ESJ), follow the BSK Implementation Plan, respond to community ideas and feedback, and reflect the results of competitive procurement processes.

To meet this requirement, the Executive provides a map broken down by zip codes which shows that the highest proportion of BSK service participants live primarily in Southwest King County, South Seattle, White Center, Federal Way, Kent, and Skyway, areas with some of the highest poverty and/or population density in the County. High proportions of Best Starts service participants also live in Redmond and parts of Bellevue. The map also shows that the second highest proportions of Best Starts service participants reside in parts of Southeast King County, including the areas around Enumclaw, Maple Valley, Issaquah, and in parts of inner northeast King County, including Bothell and Kirkland. However, the Executive does not drill down far enough into the data to show, neither by zip code or sub-area, the number of individuals being served, what specific programs are being offered, or how much money is being invested.

Relatedly, the report did state that DCHS launched a new data system called Client Outcomes Reporting Engine (CORE) in January 2020 with the goal of making data about service participants, program performance, and outcomes more readily available, and to support the capacity for more robust analyses. In addition, BSK added a short series of questions to all Request for Proposals in 2019 to capture where organizations proposed to provide services, by

both zip code and physical address, if applicable. As a result, certain geographic information about funding and contracts may be extracted for future analysis to inform service improvement efforts and ensure that BSK services continue to be distributed in ways that advance equity and social justice.

Questions from Sound Cities Association

In addition, Mayor Birney, on behalf of the Sound Cities Association caucus members, requested in an e-mail dated November 12, 2020, additional information that would synthesize the data provided in the assessment report and report out to RPC on the outcomes of BSK levy funding by sub-area, including the amount of funding spent serving residents by sub-area and the outcomes from these services. At today’s meeting, DCHS is expected to provide additional information in response to the SCA request.

An analysis of investments by strategy, including the rationale for and status of any unspent or reallocated levy proceeds. (pgs. 101-106, 176-178)

Through June 30, 2020, as presented in report, the total actual expenditures related to investments by BSK strategy were as follows:

- **\$101.3 million** for Invest Early;
- **\$73.5 million** for Sustain the Gain;
- **\$18.9 million** for Communities of Opportunity; and
- **\$10 million** for program evaluation

Additionally, **\$19 million** was allocated out of the first year of levy revenues to fund the Youth & Family Homelessness Prevention Initiative (YFHPI). The report states the Executive increased the YFHPI budget by \$50K annually, in 2017. The additional \$2 million projected to be spent during the life of the levy were made possible by increases in property tax revenues. These increases brought the total amount from \$19 million to \$21 million over the life of the levy.

Regarding the rationale for and status of any unspent or reallocated levy proceeds, the report states the following activities for each of the investment areas were allowable under Ordinance 18088 and the BSK implementation plan:

Invest Early

Program	Change	Decision Making Progress
Workforce Development	<u>2018</u> Moved Workforce Development (\$4.8M) from Public Health–Seattle King County (PHSKC) to Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS). <u>2020</u> \$800K toward Universal	Consultation with program staff and division directors determined the Developmental Disabilities and Early Childhood Supports Division (DDECS) had a system of workforce development to build upon. Universal Landscape Analysis

Program	Change	Decision Making Progress
	Developmental Screening (UDS) funds held in DDECS.	revealed that training in UDS was a Workforce issue. RFP released in 2020 included developmental screening and workforce trainings.
Help Me Grow Caregiver Referral System	<p><u>2018</u> Moved Help Me Grow Caregiver Referral System (\$2.7M) from DCHS to PHSKC, Office of the Director (ODIR).</p> <p>Moved \$650K per year from Help Me Grow Caregiver Referral System to Parent Child Health (PCH) programs in the Community Health Services Division (CHW).</p>	<p>Program management moved to ODIR to leverage staff expertise and policy work.</p> <p>PHSKC's PCH programs were a go-first strategy for Help Me Grow, connecting clients already engaged in PCH services to needed resources and referrals in CBOs.</p>

Sustain the Gain

Strategy Area	Change	Decision Making Process
Youth Development	<p><u>2017</u> Youth Development (\$12.5M) RFP combined four programs: Mentoring, Leadership Development, Positive Identity Development, and Building Healthy Relationships.</p>	Through consultation with community and program staff, Best Starts understood that it was easier for CBOs to have only one program area that captured Youth Development.
Transitions to Adulthood	<p><u>2017</u> Moved \$500K from contracts to add Peer Connectors.</p> <p><u>2018</u> Added Career Launchpad to DCHS.</p> <p><u>2019</u> Added Clear Path to Employment in DCHS.</p>	<p>County Council removed expenditure restriction barring this in Ordinance 18766.</p> <p>Budget Supplemental Ordinance 18766 allocated Best Starts funding.</p> <p>2019-20 Budget Ordinance 18835.</p>
Stopping the School to Prison Pipeline	<p><u>2019</u> Added CEDAR (Prosecuting Attorney's Office).</p>	Budget Supplemental Ordinance 18766.

Communities of Opportunity

Strategy Area	Change	Decision Making Process
Communities of Opportunity	<u>2020</u> COO shifted \$1.75M from Learning Community strategy to Policy and Systems' resilience and response funding, due to the dual pandemics of COVID-19 and racism.	Through consultation with staff and community, the COO Governance Group approved the shift in funding, which leveraged \$250K from the Seattle Foundation.

Youth and Family Homelessness Initiative

Strategy	Change	Decision Making Process
Youth and Family Homelessness Initiative	<u>2017</u> Increased Youth and Family Homelessness Initiative contracts from \$100K to \$150K per year.	Ordinance 18285 required that awards be split 50/50 between case managers and flexible dollars to assist in preventing homelessness. Community provided feedback that it would not be possible to hire and retain staff with the current allocation, so DCHS increased the funding to adequately support case management while maintaining the mandated 50/50 split.

Evaluation

The report states, "There were no significant changes to allocations in the evaluation dollars".

Reallocating Staffing Underspend to Community Projects

As presented in the report, "After the Best Starts for Kids Implementation Plan and budget passed in November 2016, hiring began in January 2017. Hiring with an equity-centered approach took time; initially there were savings from staffing during 2017- 2018 as new hiring took place. There was additional underspend in staffing during 2019 due to staff turnover and adjustments. These salary savings were distributed into the community, where program staff identified short-term and one-time spending opportunities in conversations between community-based partners and Best Starts staff".

For each year there was underspend, staff worked with the DCHS and PHSKC department directors to reallocate dollars into community-based programs. The redistribution of underspent administrative funding to one-time community projects was allocated as follows:

2017–2018 Staffing (Underspend of \$900,000)

- BSK programs disseminated information, nontoxic nap mats, and supplies to child-care centers to reduce the disproportionate impact of lead and toxics on children. This was done in partnership with the environmental lead integration team (\$300,000).
- School-based Health Centers piloted the addition of student or patient navigators to address the physical and mental health needs of children in marginalized communities. Navigators supported the development of community advisory groups to implement prevention and early intervention strategies (\$450,000).
- Capacity-building funding went to all BSK organizations that identified specific needs, via mini-grants that supported the organizations' sustainability and compliance with King County requirements (\$150,000).

2019 Staffing (Underspend of \$700,000)

- During the COVID-19 pandemic, Child Care Aware (CCA) and other childcare programs provided communities with basic supplies. CCA conducted a survey of provider needs, and set up procurement and delivery to sites across the state. Supplies included toilet paper, bleach, paper towels, soap, and no-touch thermometers (required for regular screening of staff and children). This funding met the needs of open childcare centers and Friend, Family and Neighbor Caregivers (\$526,000).
- Child Care Resources assisted in King County's emergency childcare plan by identifying childcare providers who have vacancies, and matching essential personnel's children to these vacancies. BSK partnered with Child Care Resources' (CCR) to utilize the existing intake and referral systems to take calls from interested families, confirm their eligibility, and match them to an appropriate vacant slot (\$9,000).
- The Public Health Child Care Health Consultation team, which leads County-wide health consultation efforts supporting the COVID-19 response to support childcare centers. Prior to this, the team supported only the City of Seattle childcare centers but expanded county wide (\$50,000).
- BSK distributed over 280 computer tablets and hotspots to allow for virtual home visits during the COVID-19 pandemic. These tablets and hotspots ensured home-based services can continue. King County distributed and worked with capacity builders to supply training and equipment (\$100,000).

Progress of levy implementation. (pgs. 40-97)

BSK uses the following classifications to demonstrate a program's current stage of implementation:

- Laying the Groundwork: Internal work required to award funding, including hiring county staff, developing requests for proposal, and finalizing contracts with CBOs;
- Building Momentum: CBOs have contracts with King County and are beginning their work. The program may have started delivering services, but performance data is not yet available; and
- Delivering Impact: In this phase, the program is actively delivering services, and there are at least two quarters of performance data from 2019 to report.

In the report, the Executive states that most of BSK's programs were delivering impact in 2019 and 2020, as it was expected that BSK would have a ramp-up in spending and delivering services as programming began.

The Executive also provides a summary of implementation progress made for each program area in BSK as organized by investment area, and classified under one of the three implementation stages as mentioned above.⁷ The information provided in the report, which also details the amount that has been contracted for each program, the number of community partners selected, and the number of individuals served generally meets the requirements as outlined in Motion 15651.

Preliminary measurement of changes experienced by families and communities. (pgs. 108-123)

The Executive states in the report that while work remains to be done to see long-term, generational impacts, many early successes demonstrate these investments are on the path to healthier communities and the greater readiness of children to succeed. For example, the following key points, among others, were presented to indicate preliminary measurement and program success.

- In King County, 26.5 percent of parents and caregivers with young children said it was hard to afford basics like food. For children living in households with an annual income below \$50,000, this increased to 50 percent or higher. BSK Basic Needs-funded programs helped distribute almost 35,000 bags of healthy food for families in two years, with 80 percent of families reporting eating more fruits and vegetables.
- Perinatal Hepatitis B Prevention Program funds enhanced staffing and communication strategies among local health care providers working to prevent Hepatitis B among newborns. Between 2018 and 2019, BSK funded expansion led to a 10 percent increase in the proportion of eligible infants who completed serology testing. This ensured that 100 percent of enrolled at-risk infants were not infected by this preventable disease.

⁷ Appendix B which begins on page 153 also provides an overview of each program's current stage of implementation by investment area.

- School-based Health Centers (SBHC) provide evidence-based preventive care and health services within the school building, making it easier for students to access health care. Seventy-five percent of students using SBHCs are passing all their classes, an indication that SBHCs contribute to long-term academic success. Other programs for school-age youth help change the school environment to be supportive of every student. At the end of their first school year in 2019, 78 percent of youth in Trauma-informed Restorative Practices (TIRP) reported an improved school climate and culture, and 79 percent felt more connected, valued, and/or safe. Ninety-four percent of these students improved their school attendance. These early outcomes, of improved identity development, increased social and emotional skills, and leadership-skill development, result in youth who are healthy, safe, and thriving.
- Stopping the School to Prison Pipeline's (SSPP) programs help young people at risk of or already engaged in the juvenile justice or criminal legal systems to build relationships and connect to resources. Eighty-four percent of those who completed SSPP's Community Supports programs achieved their goals of increased school attendance, improved academic performance, or of applying for and getting a job.
- In White Center, youth leaders of Food Empowerment Education & Sustainability Team (FEEST) conducted a pilot program at Evergreen High School in response to youth identified barriers to accessing nutritious food. They developed a set of policy recommendations for the school district to improve nutrition for students, and provided 900 students daily access to nutritious snacks. When students had access to fresh, free fruits and vegetables, they reported positive outcomes for themselves and for the school culture and community. Seventy percent of students (332) surveyed reported an improved ability to learn. Among the most common improvements noted was an increase in energy and attentiveness. Sixty-five percent (310) reported improved moods during school. Teachers noticed a change, too: 87 percent reported a positive difference in their classroom environment, with the greatest improvements in energy, participation, and engagement.
- Youth and Families Homelessness Prevention Initiative (YFHPI): King County's innovative program is working as part of a coordinated system to prevent homelessness before it occurs. Of the more than 9,200 people served by this program, nine out of 10 households did not enter the homelessness system while enrolled. Ninety-two percent of those who have exited the program did not require homelessness services in the year after exiting.

An analysis of the impact of investments in advancing equity and social justice and changing systems and policies of racial and other forms of oppression. (pgs. 124-129)

The report outlines the following examples to show the impact of investments in advancing the County's commitment to equity and social justice, and systems and policy change centered around racism and other forms of oppression:

- Recognizing that a language barrier isolates some communities in King County, BSK began a Language Community Liaison Pilot Program in 2018, where a trusted, community member partnered with BSK to develop effective messaging for specific language communities, identify appropriate communications channels for language communities, and engage communities through existing, trusted relationships. The language liaisons were instrumental in supporting the BSK data, where community members helped interpret data that the County had collected. They also helped explain the work of BSK to new audiences. For example, for the 2018 Cambodian New Year celebration, the Language Community Liaison from the Khmer/Cambodian community created an audio recording that allowed event attendees to hear a brief “What is Best Starts for Kids?” introduction in Khmer.
- Regarding policy and systems change, BSK states that its efforts in this arena have targeted well-known, deeply entrenched inequities in society. BSK has collaborated with PHSKC to improve maternal and infant health outcomes, where stark racial disparities appear. Another effort expanded working families’ access to quality childcare, a need that became especially urgent during the COVID-19 pandemic. Most recently, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and social uprising against police brutality, BSK worked with county partners to issue a County declaration of racism as a public health crisis.
- Historically, CBOs, specifically smaller organizations or volunteer work done in community, are not adequately funded (if funded at all). BSK strived to fund organizations at the level required to ensure better outcomes to those being served in the community. This has resulted in organizations receiving larger contracts to cover actual cost of programming, and some organizational operation. BSK partners work with County finance and contracting teams to continue to refine the processes to ensure that smaller CBOs get paid for the cost of services rendered.

An analysis of levy proceeds used to fund technical assistance and capacity building.
(pg. 132)

The report states that six TA providers serve BSK applicant organizations. They represent a wide range of skills, expertise, and language abilities. These providers help applicants determine if their programs are an appropriate fit for RFPs, help applicants navigate the proposal process, review drafts, refine budgets, and support them in authentically sharing their own stories of success and impact. BSK has expended \$774,103 to contract with those six partners, and they have served over 250 organizations according to the report.

Additionally, BSK’s capacity building effort began at the end of 2019, therefore this service is in the beginning stages of making an impact. In the report, the Executive provides a summary of the newly implemented capacity building program which shows that \$1.4 million has been contracted with eight partners who have served over 67 organizations.

Section 2 of Motion 15651

The report also generally meets the requirements as outlined in section 2 of Motion 15651 to provide recommendations on key questions related to a levy renewal. Pages 136-153 of the report provides five recommendations that address each of the questions in subsections 2a. through 2h.

Recommendation 1: Keep Leading on Equity: Center the voices of Black/African American, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) in investment and program decisions in order to reflect community knowledge and to deepen programming in Best Starts areas most impacted by systemic and racial oppression.

Recommendation 2: Maintain Long-term Goals and Strategies while Refining Programs and Measures: Sustain the current levy’s emphasis on upstream transformation by maintaining goals, allocations, and strategies as outlined in the Best Starts for Kids Implementation Plan, approved in Ordinance 18373, while refining performance measures, community involvement, and programming within each strategy.

Recommendation 3: Strengthen the Care for our Children and Youth: Increase investment in child-care and youth strategies to support educational advancement and economic prosperity in the region.

Recommendation 4: Build Stronger Systems: Strengthen coordination across programs, initiatives, levies, and funded partners to increase efficiency and to benefit all families and children across the region, particularly those most in need.

Recommendation 5: Expand the Role of Youth: Modify the Children and Youth Advisory Board structure to promote more youth participation.

Table 1 below (as presented on page 137 of the report) ties those recommendations to the requirements outlined in Section 2 of Motion 15651.

Table 1.

15651 Recommendation Requirements	Recommendation
a. how a renewed levy, or an increased or expanded levy, would deepen the current levy's work to dismantle systems of oppression, heal continuing wounds and realize justice for black, indigenous and people of color across all strategies	Covered in Recommendation 1.
b. whether to maintain or modify the Best Starts for Kids levy’s three primary goals enumerated in the implementation plan approved in Ordinance 18373, which are to ensure that: babies are born healthy; County is a place where everyone has equitable opportunities for health and safety as they progress through childhood; and communities offer safe, welcoming and healthy environments that help improve outcomes for all of King County’s children and families, regardless of where they live	Covered in Recommendation 2.

c. whether to maintain or modify the relative allocations of levy proceeds to each goal area	Covered in Recommendation 2.
d. whether a renewed levy, or an increased or expanded levy, should incorporate new or revised goals or strategies such as childcare, recommendations from the children and families strategy task force or other county efforts focused on children and youth	Covered in Recommendation 3.
e. how a renewed levy would align and coordinate with programs such as: the Veterans, Seniors and Human Services levy; Mental Illness and Drug Dependency fund; Children and Families Strategy Task Force recommendations; the Puget Sound Taxpayer Accountability Account; and other federal, state and local funding streams and programs to integrate, align and avoid duplication of efforts	Covered in Recommendation 4.
f. whether a renewed levy should retain, or make modifications to, existing strategies that are intended to: support parents, families and caregivers; screen children to prevent potential problems and intervene early to link to treatment; cultivate caregiver knowledge; support high-quality childcare; build resiliency of youth and reduce risky behaviors; meet the health and behavior needs of youth; create healthy and safe environments for youth; help youth stay connected to their families and communities; help young adults who have had challenges successfully transition into adulthood; stop the school-to-prison pipeline; support priorities and strategies to facilitate collaboration with communities that have much to gain; engage multiple organizations in institutional, system and policy change; and prevent youth and family homelessness;	Covered in Recommendation 2.
g. how a renewed levy would benefit the entire region while targeting resources to those most in need	Covered in Recommendation 4.
h. whether a renewed levy should modify any, or any combination of, the role; the structure or the representation of the Children and Youth Advisory Board	Covered in Recommendation 5.

INVITED

- Sheila Capestany, Division Director, Children, Youth and Young Adults, and Strategic Advisor for Children and Youth, King County Department of Community and Human Services
- Marcy Miller, Policy Manager, Public Health – Seattle & King County

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Transmittal Letter
2. Motion 15651



King County

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October 15, 2020

The Honorable Claudia Balducci
Chair, King County Council
Room 1200
C O U R T H O U S E

Dear Councilmember Balducci:

This letter transmits the Best Starts for Kids Assessment Report, as required by Motion 15651, and a proposed motion that would, if enacted, accept the report.

This report analyzes the impact that the Best Starts for Kids initiative has had for children, youth, families, and communities since voters approved it in November 2015. The report provides data and analyses that will help inform the King County Council's 2021 deliberations on potential renewal Best Starts. Through partnerships with 383 community-based organizations, Best Starts helped launch over 570 new programs for children, families, and communities, all of which are community led. Across its investment areas and programs, Best Starts provides direct services to more than 425,000 of King County's children, youth, and parents/caregivers.

As called for by the motion, the report analyzes the implementation of Best Starts to date, considering factors such as geography, program implementation, investments, and equity and social justice, among others. This analysis includes a review of how Best Starts developed from community input and continues to rely on community perspective. In addition, it describes Best Starts' social and political context, including the dual pandemics of systemic racism and COVID-19, homelessness, and the institutional cultures of the many systems with which Best Starts interacts.

Since the levy passed in 2015, Best Starts has centered the values of equity and racial justice in its work, transforming county practices and service delivery in the process. Enacting this commitment has in turn resulted in sustained support for community-based organizations that reflect the people they serve and better outcomes for children, young adults, and their families. Best Starts is also deepening its collaborations with other county levies and initiatives in order to support and improve the lives of all county residents.

More work remains to achieve the Best Starts vision. This is especially clear as COVID-19 threatens to widen the racial, geographic, and income inequities in King County. To continue advancing equity and well-being for King County's babies, children, youth, and families, this report makes five key policy recommendations related to a potential renewed, increased, or expanded Best Starts levy:

- Recommendation 1: Keep Leading on Equity: Center the voices of Black/African American, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) in investment and program decisions in order to reflect community knowledge and to deepen programming in Best Starts areas most impacted by systemic and racial oppression.
- Recommendation 2: Maintain Long-term Goals and Strategies while Refining Programs and Measures: Sustain the current levy's emphasis on upstream transformation by maintaining goals, allocations, and strategies as outlined in the *Best Starts for Kids Implementation Plan*, approved in Ordinance 18373, while refining performance measures, community involvement, and programming within each strategy.
- Recommendation 3: Strengthen the Care for our Children and Youth: Increase investment in child care and youth strategies to support educational advancement and economic prosperity in the region.
- Recommendation 4: Build Stronger Systems: Strengthen coordination across programs, initiatives, levies, and funded partners to increase efficiency and to benefit all families and children across the region, particularly those most in need.
- Recommendation 5: Expand the Role of Youth: Modify the Children and Youth Advisory Board structure to promote more youth participation.

As discussed in the assessment report, Best Starts for Kids furthers King County Strategic Plan objective of babies being born healthy, children establish a strong foundation for life, and young people grow into healthy adults. Reflective of the County's Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan and the Youth Action Plan, Best Starts for Kids maximizes the assets and knowledge of our richly diverse County and its many cultures and communities.

This report required approximately 2,000 staff hours to produce, costing approximately \$106,292.

Thank you for your consideration of this report, and for your strong support for children, youth and families across King County.

The Honorable Claudia Balducci

October 15, 2020

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If your staff have any questions, please contact Leo Flor, Director, Department of Community and Human Services, at 206-477-4384.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dow Constantine". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line at the end.

Dow Constantine

King County Executive

Enclosures

cc: King County Councilmembers

ATTN: Carolyn Busch, Chief of Staff

Melani Pedroza, Clerk of the Council

Shannon Braddock, Deputy Chief of Staff, Office of the Executive

Karan Gill, Director, Council Relations, Office of the Executive

Leo Flor, Director, Department of Community and Human Services

Patty Hayes, Director, Public Health – Seattle & King County



KING COUNTY

1200 King County Courthouse
516 Third Avenue
Seattle, WA 98104

Signature Report

Motion 15651

Proposed No. 2020-0200.2

Sponsors Balducci

1 A MOTION requesting the executive to prepare an
2 assessment report to inform council deliberations regarding
3 possible renewal of the best starts for kids levy.

4 WHEREAS, in November 2015, King County voters passed the first best starts
5 for kids levy to generate funding for a wide range of programs to support promotion,
6 prevention and early intervention for King County's children, youth and families, and

7 WHEREAS, the goals of the existing best starts for kids levy are to ensure that:
8 babies are born healthy; King County is a place where everyone has equitable
9 opportunities for health and safety as they progress through childhood; and communities
10 offer safe, welcoming and healthy environments that help improve outcomes for all of
11 King County's children and families, regardless of where they live, and

12 WHEREAS, the best starts for kids levy was created to align with King County's
13 equity and social justice principles and includes a focus on systems and policies change
14 so that all communities in King County can thrive and prosper regardless of race or place,
15 and

16 WHEREAS, fifty percent of the existing levy's proceeds are allocated to
17 promotion, prevention and early intervention programs for children under age five and
18 pregnant families, thirty-five percent are allocated to promotion, prevention and early
19 intervention programs for children and youth ages five through twenty-four years old; ten

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20 percent are allocated to creating safe and healthy communities of opportunity; and five
21 percent are allocated to evaluation of the best starts for kids initiative. The allocation has
22 been beneficial in delivering services to populations in need of the services, and

23 WHEREAS, the best starts for kids levy will expire December 31, 2021, and

24 WHEREAS, the best starts for kids levy is a voter-approved, six-year levy lid lift,
25 renewal of which requires voter approval of a ballot measure, and

26 WHEREAS, the best starts for kids levy distributes resources across the region,
27 targeting investments to those most in need, and

28 WHEREAS, current events have underscored the urgency of the continued need
29 to dismantle systems of racial and other forms of oppression which affect youth, families
30 and communities in King County, like the school to prison pipeline, and

31 WHEREAS, over twenty-five thousand new babies are born in King County in
32 each year, and

33 WHEREAS, while King County as a region is thriving, research shows that there
34 are significant disparities in birth outcomes by race, geography and income, and some
35 children and youth are in danger of being left behind, and

36 WHEREAS, infant mortality is four times higher in some areas of King County
37 than others, twenty-nine percent of elementary age children are flourishing and resilient,
38 thirty-three percent of adolescents report depressive feelings and twenty-four percent
39 report using alcohol or other illicit drugs, and

40 WHEREAS, those disparities persist throughout a child's life course, contributing
41 to sustained disparities in long-term success, and

42 WHEREAS, services supported by proceeds of the best starts for kids levy have

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43 directly addressed those disparities through promotion, prevention and early intervention,
44 allowing King County's children, youth and families to be happy, healthy, safe and
45 thriving, and

46 WHEREAS, sustained investment in funded strategies and programs is necessary
47 to fully realize long-term beneficial impacts for children, families and communities, and

48 WHEREAS, the King County council is considering whether to submit to the
49 qualified electors for their approval in 2021 a ballot measure to renew the best starts for
50 kids levy, and

51 WHEREAS, the purpose of an assessment report is to support council awareness
52 of initiative implementation and outcomes to inform deliberations regarding the potential
53 ballot measure for a renewed levy;

54 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT MOVED by the Council of King County:

55 A. The council requests that the executive submit for council review an
56 assessment report of the best starts for kids levy-funded goals, strategies and programs.
57 The assessment report submitted to council shall be developed in consultation with
58 stakeholders, including, but not limited to, soliciting feedback from the regional policy
59 committee, and shall include:

60 1. An assessment of how levy proceeds are being allocated, the status of
61 strategy and program implementation, design or policy changes, challenges and
62 outcomes. The report shall detail the context and impact of the best starts for kids levy-
63 funded goals, strategies and programs outlined in Ordinance 18088, including, but not
64 limited to:

65 a. an analysis of investments by geographic area, including maps or data

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66 summaries reflecting available zip code data of residence of clients or participants served;

67 b. an analysis of investments by strategy, including the rationale for and status

68 of any unspent or reallocated levy proceeds;

69 c. progress of levy implementation;

70 d. preliminary measurement of changes experienced by families and

71 communities;

72 e. an analysis of the impact of investments in advancing equity and social

73 justice and changing systems and policies of racial and other forms of oppression; and

74 f. an analysis of levy proceeds used to fund technical assistance and capacity

75 building; and

76 2. Recommendations that address the following:

77 a. how a renewed levy, or an increased or expanded levy, would deepen the

78 current levy's work to dismantle systems of oppression, heal continuing wounds and

79 realize justice for black, indigenous and people of color across all strategies;

80 b. whether to maintain or modify the best starts for kids levy's three primary

81 goals enumerated in the implementation plan approved in Ordinance 18373, which are to

82 ensure that: babies are born healthy; King County is a place where everyone has

83 equitable opportunities for health and safety as they progress through childhood; and

84 communities offer safe, welcoming and healthy environments that help improve

85 outcomes for all of King County's children and families, regardless of where they live;

86 c. whether to maintain or modify the relative allocations of levy proceeds to

87 each goal area;

88 d. whether a renewed levy, or an increased or expanded levy, should

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89 incorporate new or revised goals or strategies such as child care, recommendations from
90 the children and families strategy task force or other county efforts focused on children
91 and youth;

92 e. how a renewed levy would align and coordinate with programs such as: the
93 veterans, seniors and human services levy; mental illness and drug dependency fund;
94 children and families strategy task force recommendations; the Puget Sound Taxpayer
95 Accountability Account; and other federal, state and local funding streams and programs
96 to integrate, align and avoid duplication of efforts;

97 f. whether a renewed levy should retain, or make modifications to, existing
98 strategies that are intended to: support parents, families and caregivers; screen children
99 to prevent potential problems and intervene early to link to treatment; cultivate caregiver
100 knowledge; support high-quality childcare; build resiliency of youth and reduce risky
101 behaviors; meet the health and behavior needs of youth; create healthy and safe
102 environments for youth; help youth stay connected to their families and communities;
103 help young adults who have had challenges successfully transition into adulthood; stop
104 the school-to-prison pipeline; support priorities and strategies to facilitate collaboration
105 with communities that have much to gain; engage multiple organizations in institutional,
106 system and policy change; and prevent youth and family homelessness;

107 g. how a renewed levy would benefit the entire region while targeting
108 resources to those most in need; and

109 h. whether a renewed levy should modify any, or any combination of, the role;
110 the structure or the representation of the children and youth advisory board.

111 B. The executive shall file the assessment report requested by this motion by

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112 September 30, 2020, in the form of a paper original and an electronic copy with the clerk
113 of the council, who shall retain the original and provide an electronic copy to all
114 councilmembers, the council chief of staff, the policy staff director and the lead staff for

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115 the committee of the whole and the regional policy committee, or their successors. The
116 report shall be accompanied by a proposed motion accepting the report.
117

Motion 15651 was introduced on 6/9/2020 and passed as amended by the Metropolitan King County Council on 7/7/2020, by the following vote:

Yes: 9 - Ms. Balducci, Mr. Dembowski, Mr. Dunn, Ms. Kohl-Welles, Ms. Lambert, Mr. McDermott, Mr. Upthegrove, Mr. von Reichbauer and Mr. Zahilay

KING COUNTY COUNCIL
KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON

DocuSigned by:

Claudia Balducci

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Claudia Balducci, Chair

ATTEST:

DocuSigned by:

Melani Pedroza

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Melani Pedroza, Clerk of the Council

Attachments: None