

TO: Juvenile Welfare Board Members

FROM: James E. Mills, Executive Director 
Browning Spence, Director, Strategic & Community Planning #38

Requested Action

The Board is requested to approve the receipt of grant funds in the amount of \$50,000 for use by the Pinellas County School Readiness Coalition to support the Coalition during its planning phase. The Board is also requested to approve JWB becoming the designated fiscal agent for the Pinellas County School Readiness Coalition beginning July 1, 2000.

Options

1. Approve the Request
2. Deny the Request
3. Other action as deemed appropriate by the Board.

Recommended Action

1. Authorize staff to execute a memorandum of agreement with the School Readiness Coalition to provide fiscal agent services.
2. Accept \$50,000 in initial planning grant funds from the School Readiness Partnership for the Pinellas County School Readiness Coalition.
3. Increase the Miscellaneous Revenue and the Administrative Contracts and Grants budget by \$50,000.
4. Authorize staff to add up to four additional positions to the personnel system for support of School Readiness.

Source of JWB Funds

None

Fiscal Impact

Miscellaneous Revenue would increase from \$940,336 to \$990,336. The JWB administration budget would be increased from \$4,317,477 to \$4,367,477. The Contracts and Grants budget will be increased from \$700,797 to \$750,797. The Pinellas County School Readiness Coalition will fund all positions and the positions will not be filled if sufficient administrative funds are not available.

Narrative

During its 1999 session, the Florida Legislature, recognizing that school readiness programs increase children's chances of achieving future educational success and becoming productive members of society, passed into legislation statute 411.01, The School Readiness Act. The Act:

- Created the Florida Partnership for School Readiness, which leads the state's efforts in Readiness planning and operation, with 57 local coalitions across the state charged with tailoring school readiness to local communities.

- Mandates the interagency coordination and collaboration of early education and child care programs funded with state, federal, lottery, or local funds, which includes Florida First Start, Even Start, Pre-K EI, Subsidized Child Care, Head Start, Title I, Teen Parent programs, and programs offered by public and private providers of child care. In Pinellas County the estimated budget for the Coalition will be approximately \$27 million dollars.

The School Readiness coalition is a statutory policy making body whose actions are not subject to the review or approval of any other local body.

In December 1999, the Coalition submitted its charter grant application to receive \$50,000 in initiation grant funds to support the Coalition in developing its school readiness plan, which is due to the Florida Partnership on Monday, May 15, 2000. The Juvenile Welfare Board, as the designated interim fiscal agent, received these funds for use by the Coalition.

The Coalition has had benefit of the five-year existence of the Pinellas Early Childhood Collaborative (PECC). The PECC is well known throughout the state as an innovative leader in early child care and education practices and programs. The PECC was instrumental in the formation of the Coalition and has taken a leadership role in the planning process as well as the actual writing of the plan. Without the existence of this very active group, embarking on the path of school readiness would have been much more difficult. The PECC has proposed, and the Coalition approved, becoming a standing committee of the Coalition, a move that ensures a collaborative effort that is broad based in its representation, strong, and an effective system of response to local needs.

It is anticipated that the Pinellas County School Readiness Coalition will select the JWB as its permanent fiscal agent at its next regularly scheduled meeting to be held on Thursday, April 13, 2000. As fiscal agent for the Coalition, JWB, at a minimum, would:

- Provide financial and administrative services to include:
 - General accounting
 - Payroll/government reporting
 - Fixed asset inventory
 - Execution of contracts
 - Fiscal monitoring
 - Receipt and deposit of Coalition funds
 - Preparation of financial reports
 - Fiscal technical assistance
- Disburse funds in accordance with approved coalition plan and based on billing and disbursement procedures approved by the Partnership.
- Conform to all data-reporting requirements established by the Partnership.
- Serve as the employer of record and perform human resource functions.
(The creation of the positions within the JWB personnel system does not obligate the JWB to fund the positions)

Currently, there is a work group developing a business plan that will dictate the organizational structure and the number of positions needed to staff the Coalition. This group has developed a structure similar to that of the CCYD model. Once the Coalition

receives its allocation and a detailed line item budget is developed, the Coalition will approach JWB about the positions, their classifications and descriptions. However, it is not anticipated that there will be a need for more than four positions under the initial staffing.

The issue of school readiness is a fluid one. Coalitions can expect a very active transition and growth period as policy changes are handed down from the State level. Thus it is anticipated that the Coalition and the JWB Board will have future dialogue about school readiness in Pinellas County.

Staff Resource Person: Tracie T. White, PECC Coordinator