



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO
2021 MAR -8 PM 2:46
CLERK OF THE BOARD
OF SUPERVISORS

NORA VARGAS
VICE-CHAIR
SUPERVISOR, FIRST DISTRICT
SAN DIEGO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
AGENDA ITEM

DATE: March 16, 2021

15

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBJECT

LITERACY CAMPAIGN TO INCREASE ACCESS TO BOOKS IN LOW-INCOME COMMUNITIES AND COMMUNITIES OF COLOR AND BOOST CHILDHOOD READING COMPREHENSION AND WRITING (DISTRICTS: ALL)

OVERVIEW

Beyond the public health impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, student learning and reading levels have been disproportionately impacting families with children, particularly for the early grade levels where reading fundamentals are the foundation. The pandemic poses even greater challenges for our English learner students. There are fewer resources for teachers and parents; more challenges for families to access technology; and the support at home to access the technology and language and reading programs face bigger challenges.

While studies show that enhancing a child's access to books at home has a significant impact on their long-term learning, many students in the San Diego County community do not have enough age-appropriate books in their home libraries, with parents on low-income households already struggling to make ends meet.

This Board Letter instructs the Chief Administrative Officer and San Diego County Libraries to create a Little Libraries initiative that will provide access to books from this neighbor-to-neighbor, community supported, and volunteer led book exchange and target implementation in communities of color. The intent of this initiative is to foster community and access to books and encourage at-home libraries and reading at home for students and their parents, and work with the appropriate stakeholders to reach communities of color and deploy the Little Libraries literacy campaign, and to provide support for augmenting literacy opportunities to further education and education success for advanced studies for continuing students.

I strongly urge your support for the recommendations in this letter. This is an opportunity for us to do more to promote literacy and to expand access to reading and learning opportunities for children, youth, and adults by increasing access to culturally appropriate library material and support services.

SUBJECT: LITERACY CAMPAIGN TO INCREASE ACCESS TO BOOKS IN LOW-INCOME COMMUNITIES AND COMMUNITIES OF COLOR AND BOOST CHILDHOOD READING COMPREHENSION AND WRITING (DISTRICTS: ALL)

RECOMMENDATION(S)

VICE-CHAIR NORA VARGAS

1. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer and San Diego County Libraries to create a Little Libraries initiative that will provide access to books for low-income communities & communities of color to help boost reading comprehension and writing skills
2. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to work with stakeholders to develop a volunteer-led book exchange and focus implementation in low-income communities and communities of color and identify locations to install little libraries.

FISCAL IMPACT

Funds for this request are included in the Fiscal Year 2020-21 Operational Plan for the San Diego County Libraries. If approved, this request will result in costs of \$20,000. The funding source is available prior year Library Fund fund balance. There will be no change in net General Fund cost and no additional staff years.

BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT

N/A

ADVISORY BOARD STATEMENT

N/A

BACKGROUND

As Read Across America launches it is important to highlight the extreme impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on all of our student learning. The challenges of doing more to support our children, teachers and educators have been present every day for our families since the start of online learning from home.

Beyond the public health impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, student learning and reading levels have been disproportionately impacting families with children, particularly for the early grade levels where reading fundamentals are the foundation. The pandemic poses even greater challenges for our English learner students. There are fewer resources for teachers and parents; more challenges for families to access technology; and the support at home to access the technology and language and reading program are bigger challenges.

In 2020, the San Diego Council on Literacy found that approximately 560,000 local adults read at an elementary school level, or not at all. The Council on Literacy also points out that 60% of low-income students have no books at all at home. As families struggle through the pandemic, we must do all we can to help to our school children, to not lose more ground on their reading and language learning. School closures and virtual learning has exacerbated access and learning opportunities. On average, students could lose a staggering five to nine months of learning by the end of June 2021. Students of color could be six to 12 months behind.

SUBJECT: LITERACY CAMPAIGN TO INCREASE ACCESS TO BOOKS IN LOW-INCOME COMMUNITIES AND COMMUNITIES OF COLOR AND BOOST CHILDHOOD READING COMPREHENSION AND WRITING (DISTRICTS: ALL)

It currently takes 6 years for community college students in the San Diego region to transfer from colleges to universities due to additional requirements relating to language and literacy expectations. At the County, we have identified that one of our Live Well areas of influence is Knowledge with an Education indicator focused on high school graduation rates. While there has been progress made on graduation rates, advancement to further education still experiences challenges. As an example, data from the Council on Literacy points out that the percentage of students in District 1 that meet the language arts standards are the lowest in the region, which is between 35 and 40 percent. The same data indicates that students residing in Rancho Santa Fe are approximately at 90 percent. Furthermore, college graduation rates follow the same disparities with lower income communities of color in District 1, only achieving between 7.9 and 15 percent of college graduation, while students in Rancho Santa Fe are achieving a 65.8 percent college graduation rate.

While studies show that enhancing a child's access to books at home has a significant impact on their long-term learning, many students in the San Diego County community do not have enough age-appropriate books in their home libraries, with parents on low-income households already struggling to make ends meet. Researchers have identified that having as few as 20 books in the home (regardless of income level), has a positive impact on a child's level of education. Additionally, when parents and children read together it helps to increase vocabulary, raises self-esteem, and builds good communications skills.

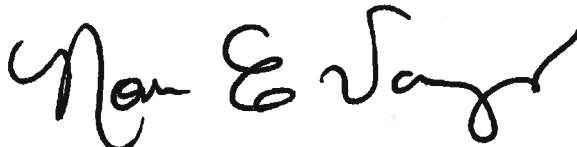
In order to address the lack of access to books in the home, this initiative will connect our San Diego County Libraries with the national Little Free Library movement where their focus is to facilitate book exchanges. The Little Free Library is a non-profit whose mission is to expand book access. The Little Free Library facilitates a step-by-step establishment of little libraries in communities by: 1. Offering a community registry of little libraries that are identified on a Geographic Information System (GIS) map on their webpage and identifies locations in communities across the United States; and 2. The program offers pre-constructed little library structures for purchase and registry, thus facilitating deployment at several sites, as well as other resources for securing books. The intent of this initiative is to identify any existing little libraries in communities as well as identify areas of need and engage stakeholders and partners that will assist in establishing new locations and promoting local support for book exchanges in coordination with the San Diego County Libraries. An analysis of the Little Free Library GIS map presents that higher income communities in San Diego have good access to book exchanges using the Little Free Library, while only 4 sites in City of San Diego South Bay (San Ysidro, Otay); 1 site in Paradise Hills and no sites in National City or Imperial Beach. The San Diego County Library will also identify initial book offerings and working with stakeholders and partners identify opportunities to integrate books in other languages.

LINKAGE TO THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO STRATEGIC PLAN

Today's proposed actions support the Live Well San Diego Initiative in the County's Strategic Plan, and its vision for San Diego that is Building Better Health, Living Safely, Thriving, by supporting and empowering communities.

SUBJECT: LITERACY CAMPAIGN TO INCREASE ACCESS TO BOOKS IN LOW-INCOME COMMUNITIES AND COMMUNITIES OF COLOR AND BOOST CHILDHOOD READING COMPREHENSION AND WRITING (DISTRICTS: ALL)

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nora E. Vargas". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Nora" and last name "Vargas" clearly distinguishable.

NORA VARGAS
Supervisor, First District

ATTACHMENT(S)

N/A

SUBJECT: LITERACY CAMPAIGN TO INCREASE ACCESS TO BOOKS IN LOW-INCOME COMMUNITIES AND COMMUNITIES OF COLOR AND BOOST CHILDHOOD READING COMPREHENSION AND WRITING (DISTRICTS: ALL)

AGENDA ITEM INFORMATION SHEET

REQUIRES FOUR VOTES: Yes No

WRITTEN DISCLOSURE PER COUNTY CHARTER SECTION 1000.1 REQUIRED
 Yes No

PREVIOUS RELEVANT BOARD ACTIONS:
N/A

BOARD POLICIES APPLICABLE:
N/A

BOARD POLICY STATEMENTS:
N/A

MANDATORY COMPLIANCE:
N/A

ORACLE AWARD NUMBER(S) AND CONTRACT AND/OR REQUISITION NUMBER(S):
N/A

ORIGINATING DEPARTMENT: Supervisorial District One

OTHER CONCURRENCE(S): N/A

CONTACT PERSON(S):

David Flores

Name
858-276-8133

Phone
David.Flores@sdcountry.ca.gov

E-mail

Name

Phone

E-mail