

Vallejo Early Learning Center Project Briefing



Table of Contents

Summary/Introduction	Page 2
Background	Page 2
Project Description	Page 3
Partners	Page 4
Timeline	Page 5
Funding Request/Budget	Page 6
Due Diligence	Page 7
Conclusion	Page 8
Attachment A – Letter of Support Vallejo City Unified School District	Page 9
Attachment B –Solano County General Services Due Diligence Review	Page 11

Summary/Introduction

In partnership with the Vallejo City Unified School District, the Solano Office of Education, Child Start, Inc., and other early care and education providers, the First 5 Solano Children and Families Commission (First 5 Solano) is working towards establishing an Early Learning Center (ELC) at the Beverly Hills Elementary school site in Vallejo and is requesting \$1.87 million of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) toward the total project budget of \$3.17 million.

The ELC is a dual-pronged approach—providing high quality early learning opportunities for children, as well as safe and consistent child care for working families. The ELC would provide a variety of early care and education opportunities for infants through preschoolers and families of all income levels will be served. The site will be renovated to meet the needs of young children and their families.

The ELC meets multiple community needs that have been identified both prior to and during the COVID-19 pandemic:

- Expands facilities for early care and education for infants through transitional kindergarten for a total capacity of 298 slots directly addressing facilities as a primary barrier to expansion for child care providers.
- Transitions two Child Start preschool classrooms on the Virginia street site to a new location, freeing up a county building on a congested campus; Allows Child Start to expand to provide two Early Head Start classrooms in addition to the two preschool classrooms, providing much needed infant and toddler care for low-income families.
- Provides a continuum of care and early educational opportunities for young children from infants through age 5, as well as a continuum for families of all income levels.

Background

A large body of research has demonstrated a multitude of short-term and long-term benefits of quality early learning programs for children; however, a primary barrier to expanding child care is the lack of physical locations to provide early childhood education and child care. Providers struggle to find suitable buildings with classrooms equipped to serve young children (e.g., small bathrooms, outdoor play space, and safe places for parents to pick up and drop off their children) and the cost of renovating facilities in addition to the high cost of real estate is prohibitive for most providers. Due to the lack of facilities and other challenges, many children are left out of a quality early care and education experience.

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of having adequate child care to support working parents. While the number of open licensed child care providers has returned to pre-pandemic levels, many of them are operating at reduced capacity, limiting the number of children that are served. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, only one out of four



children in Solano County who needed child care had access to a licensed child care slot (2019 California Resources and Referral Network Child Care Portfolio) and less than half of 3 to 4-year-olds had a preschool experience (US Census, American Community Survey, 2015-2019 5-Year Estimates), so with an already limited child care system in Solano, it is imperative that systemic changes are made to increase capacity of child care for working parents.

In addition to the overall challenge of facilities for early care and education, the opening of an ELC in Vallejo resolves a longstanding challenge at Solano County's Vallejo Campus. Child Start, Inc has been operating two Head Start preschool classrooms in a county owned facility on Virginia St in Vallejo. The facility is in need of major renovations and is located in a crowded campus. The County has requested that Child Start relocate, but Child Start has not been able to identify an alternate location to provide services in Vallejo despite looking for the past 6 years. When seeking a location for the Vallejo First 5 Center, First 5 Solano partnered with Child Start to seek a location that would meet both agency's needs. While the search for a co-located site was not fruitful, First 5 Solano continued to explore alternate sites for Child Start as they arose.

After many conversations with local stakeholders, the City of Vallejo, Solano County Office of Education and Vallejo City Unified School District, the closed Beverly Hills Elementary School has been identified as a site that could be used as an Early Learning Center. The site would not only relocate the two Head Start preschool classrooms but expand to add two additional Early Head Start classrooms as well as multiple private providers for ages 0-5 and transitional kindergarten.

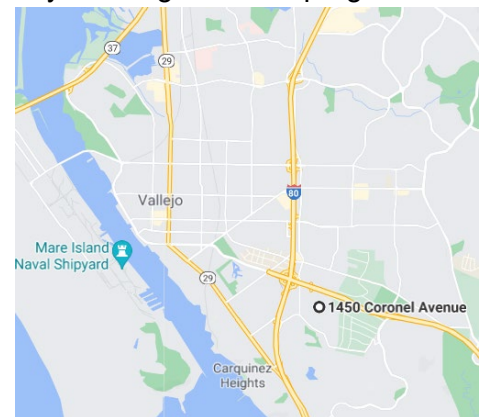
Project Description

The Beverly Hills Elementary School is an elementary school that was closed in 2020 and consists of 18 permanent classrooms, 4 portable classrooms, a multipurpose room, kitchen, and outdoor play areas that could accommodate multiple early learning and care programs.

The site is located in Southeast Vallejo, adjacent to multiple freeways. In school year 2019-20 (the last year the site was utilized as an elementary school), 91% of kids who attended qualified for free and reduced lunch indicating a high need in the community for options for low-income families.

The site would support parent choice in early care and education programs as well as provide services for families of different income-levels, including:

- Head Start and Early Head Start for infants/toddlers (ages 0-2) and Pre-K (ages 3-5) (including relocating the 2 Head Start Pre-K classrooms currently on Virginia Street in Vallejo)
- Private child care and early learning opportunities for infants/toddlers (ages 0-2) and Pre-K (ages 3-5), utilizing a variety of curriculums, including Montessori, and taking both private pay families and families who are receiving a voucher to subsidize the cost of child care
- Transitional kindergarten through the Vallejo City Unified School District
- Solano Office of Education Quality Counts coaching staff supporting child care providers in quality early childhood education



The facility has many assets including:

- 18 permanent classrooms. Each classroom is approximately 900 sf with access to water. One classroom is set up as a preschool classroom and includes bathrooms.
- 4 portable classrooms
- 4 shared bathrooms
- 1 multipurpose room with adjacent kitchen
- 3 play structures
- Large blacktop
- Large grass area
- Staff parking
- Easy drop-off/pick up zone



Renovations are needed to refresh the site and convert the site from an elementary school to an age-appropriate site for early learning.

Highlights of the renovations include:

- Minor cosmetic updates to permanent classrooms, including paint, refinish floors, replace window coverings, lower sinks, etc.
- Increase access to bathroom facilities for preschool classrooms. Depending on the location of the toilets to specific classrooms, this includes creating a doorway from existing bathrooms to classrooms or creating additional bathrooms within classrooms.
- Replace play structures to age-appropriate structures that meet current safety guidelines.
- Seal/repair blacktop and repositioning fencing for appropriate outdoor play and safety.
- Update shared spaces, such as the kitchen, to meet the needs of multiple early learning providers.
- Replace portable classrooms which are nearing the end of their useful life.
- Ensure site meets compliance with ADA and other appropriate code as indicated.

Partners

Several partners have a long-term commitment to ensuring the success of the ELC. These partners and their roles are as follows.

- **Vallejo City Unified School District** – Agreed to lease the facility for the purpose of creating an ELC. Will lead coordination of renovations utilizing School District contractors. Will provide 2 transitional kindergarten classrooms to create a continuum of care options for birth-TK. (See letter of Support-Attachment A)
- **Child Start, Inc.** – Will be the primary leaseholder and sublease to other early care and education providers. Will occupy 5 classrooms, including moving 2 preschool

classrooms from Virginia St. All children served by Child Start will be provided care free of charge and must meet income eligibility requirements.

- **First 5 Solano** – Will secure funding for tenant improvements and work with VCUSD to implement the renovations. In partnership with Child Start, will provide coordination for the partners at the Early Learning Center Site.
- **Solano County Office of Education** – Will provide quality supports for providers, including coaching, professional development, child behavioral/mental health support, etc.
- **Private Child Care and Early Learning Providers** – Approximately four child care and early learning providers will occupy the remaining classrooms providing a variety of care options for infants through preschool age children. Providers will accept private pay or vouchers for families receiving subsidies.

Timeline

The current plan and timeline include a phased approach:

Phase 1: Make improvements to 2 classrooms and a play structure to allow Child Start to relocate its Virginia Street classrooms as quickly as possible. This is targeted for fall/winter 2022 completion.

Phase 2: Make improvements to the remainder of the school, including 16 permanent classrooms, 4 portable classrooms, shared multipurpose room/kitchen, and the remaining outdoor space. This is targeted for fall 2023 completion.

Meeting the timelines for both phases is dependent upon multiple factors, including securing adequate funding, the timelines for the approval process for Division of the State Architect (required for improvements to school sites), and the availability of construction contractors and materials which is currently significantly impacted nationally. Should these or other factors impact plans, the timeline will be adjusted accordingly.



Funding Request/Budget

One-time Renovations

First 5 Solano is requesting one-time American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding in the amount of \$1.87 million to support the cost of renovating the facilities and supporting age-appropriate outdoor play structures/grounds at the Beverly Hills Elementary School site. This will be coordinated with funding from Child Start, Inc., Solano County Office of Education, and potential grant funding for a total of approximately \$3.17 million for full renovation.

The current tenant improvement budget is as follows:

ITEM	Unit Cost	Number Needed	Total
Classroom updates	10,000	18	180,000
Play structure replacement	100,000	2	200,000
Bathroom renovation	45,000	4	180,000
Bathroom in classroom	150,000	3	450,000
Door from bathroom to classroom	20,000	3	60,000
Shared kitchen			75,000
Laundry			25,000
Multipurpose room			25,000
Blacktop--replacement			25,000
Blacktop--sealing			35,000
Shade Structure			25,000
Paint--exterior			60,000
Paint--interior			28,000
Fencing			70,000
Staff room			15,000
ADA updates			100,000
Replace portables	200,000	4	800,000
Run water to portables			200,000
Construction Subtotal			2,553,000
Contingency (10% of construction)			255,300
Architect			85,000
Project management			40,000
Permitting/DSA Approval			15,000
Furniture, fixtures, equipment			150,000
IT/AV			50,000
Signage			25,000
TOTAL EXPENDITURE			\$3,173,300

It should be noted that budget amounts are estimates based on recent constructions projects by Vallejo City Unified School District, initial review by Solano County General Services, and

reasonable construction estimates. Budget amounts are under review by Vallejo City Unified School District's architect and will be updated accordingly. Should estimate come in significantly higher than budgeted, modifications to plans and revenue sources will be adjusted accordingly.

The funding sources for the \$3.17 million in tenant improvements is shown in the table below:

Proposed Revenue	
Child Start, Inc.	215,000
Solano County Office of Education	30,000
Lead Abatement Grant (pending)	30,000
CA Dept of Social Services Early Learning Facilities Grant (pending)	1,028,300
American Rescue Plan Act (pending)	1,870,000
TOTAL	\$3,173,300

Should one of the pending funding sources not be secured, alternate funding will be sought or plans will be adjusted according to amount secured.

On-Going Operations

The ELC will have 22 classrooms which will be occupied by up to six early care and education providers. The providers will share the cost of ongoing operations based on the number of classrooms each provider occupies. The initial operating budget is estimated using actual costs provided by the Vallejo Unified School District based on the last full year of school operation and projected out:

ITEM	Annual Cost
Utilities (water, sewer, garbage)	85,000
Landscaping	15,000
Custodial	30,000
Front office/reception	50,000
Minor repairs/ongoing site improvements	40,000
Insurance	20,000
TOTAL	\$240,000

As the providers occupying the space will share the cost of operations, there is no ongoing cost to the County. Responsibility for major and minor repairs/ maintenance will be negotiated and defined in the contract for ongoing use of the site.

Due Diligence

First 5 Solano has worked with the following partners to review the project and ensure the project meets requirements for feasibility to move forward, as well as recommendations for future action.

- Vallejo City Unified School District has done a full review of their school locations and the impacts of transitioning the Beverly Hills Elementary School into an ELC. The Superintendent has committed his full support and has provided a Letter of Support for the project (Attachment A).
- Solano County General Services has completed a site visit and due diligence review of the site. General Services has provided a letter of review which states “With appropriate renovations, the Beverly Hills School can be a viable facility for implementation of an Early Learning Center providing childcare and early learning opportunities for young children in Vallejo and Solano County.” The letter and considerations is included as Attachment B.

Conclusion

First 5 Solano and Solano County have a once in a lifetime opportunity to create an Early Learning Center in Vallejo which has the ability to transform the lives of young children and their families for years to come. A one-time investment of ARPA funds can be used to create a sustainable solution to adding much needed child care slots to a fragile system, as well as relocate 2 preschool classrooms from a county building, freeing up much needed space.





December 21, 2021

Submitted via email to Michele Harris, First 5 Solano Children and Families Commission

Re: Early Learning Center at Beverly Hills Elementary School Site in South Vallejo

Dear Ms. Harris:

On behalf of the Vallejo City Unified School District, I strongly support the effort to secure funding from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) through Solano County to convert the Beverly Hills Elementary School Site in South Vallejo to an Early Learning Center (ELC).

This concept for an ELC came to our District through a partnership between the First 5 Solano Children and Families Commission, the Solano County Office of Education and Child Start, Inc. the local Head Start provider. This collaborative has been looking for appropriate space to offer early childhood services and reached out to our District. The group cited the longstanding barrier to childcare expansion in Solano County, which is the lack of facilities to expand childcare and early learning services.

We know that a child's brain develops 95% by age five, providing a critical window of opportunity to support strong beginnings. Research shows that challenges children face early in life can lead to life-long negative outcomes and high-community cost, including school drop-out, incarceration, chronic health problems, and isolation within the community. We see the beginnings of these results in our K-12 system. A recent *Issue Brief on The Impact of High-Quality Pre-K on K-12 Education* reported,

“In looking at dozens of high-quality programs across the US, researchers have identified three primary benefits to K-12 systems based on children's participation in pre-k: reduced need for special education services, reduced grade repetition and better performance and fewer behavioral problems in school.”

This ELC will provide programs and services that can support these outcomes by laying a strong foundation to develop lifelong learners.

From our District's perspective, the conversion of one of our unused facilities to an early learning site makes a lot of sense for several reasons that span beyond the reasons above:

1. **Location:** The site is located in an area of South Vallejo with a high need for services and supports.
2. **Access:** The site is easily accessible, with on/off access to Highway 80, supporting those families that commute out of county to access convenient childcare and early learning opportunities for their young children. An Adult Education Center is also only three blocks away from the school site, providing resources for those parents that also need support.

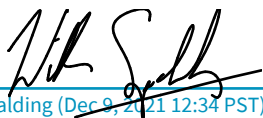
3. **Enrollment:** Establishing an ELC would not only support Vallejo’s children, but would provide positive experiences at a school site for incoming students, thereby potentially increasing enrollment in the District.
4. **Exploration:** The ELC could be used as a way to explore which model of service delivery best aligns with our local learners as we begin to plan for the implementation of Universal Transitional Kindergarten, such as the Head Start model, Montessori early learning, etc. This also aligns with and supports parents in choosing what style of learning they want for their child.
5. **Best Use:** While the District did consider the sale of this property to support the payback of its loan to the State of California, this investment in early learning is the best pathway to success that supports our student population and helps to spark excitement in our incoming student body.
6. **Long-Term Viability:** Through discussions of terms, the partners to this ELC have identified an accountability structure that supports the long-term use of this facility as an ELC that requires minimal investment from VCUSD to keep the site owned by the District.

For these reasons, the ELC is a great investment in the long-term health of Solano County. This multi-pronged approach of service delivery become a model for other districts, thereby improving their outcomes as well.

While the ongoing cost for the space and operation expenses is fully covered by the providers occupying classrooms at the site, funding is needed to support the tenant improvements necessary to convert the K-12 site to an early learning site and make the space child friendly for our youngest constituents. I appreciate you giving this request your consideration. If I can answer any questions or provide further information, please let me know.

As the Superintendent of the Vallejo City Unified School District, I am in full support of the conversion of the Beverly Hills Elementary Site to an Early Learning Center and will continue to partner with these agencies to ensure this facility provides safe, high-quality early learning and childcare services to the children and families in our community. I can also say that our district Board of Trustees are also very excited about this project and this partnership for the reasons stated above. If I can answer any questions or provide additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



[William Spalding \(Dec 9, 2021 12:34 PST\)](#)

William Spalding
Superintendent
Vallejo City Unified School District

MEGAN M. GREVE
Director
MMGreve@solanocounty.com
(707) 784-7902

DUSTIN D. LENO, MBA, A.A.E.
Assistant Director
DDLeno@solanocounty.com
(707) 784-2781

DEPARTMENT OF GENERAL SERVICES



SOLANO
COUNTY

675 Texas Street, Suite 2500
Fairfield, CA 94533-6342
Main (707) 784-7900
www.solanocounty.com

January 10, 2022

Michele D. Harris
Executive Director, First 5 Solano
601 Texas Street, Suite 210
Fairfield, CA 94533

Re: Early Learning Center at Beverly Hills Elementary School Site in South Vallejo

Dear Ms. Harris:

Solano County General Services was asked to conduct a due diligence facility review regarding the use of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding for the use of the Beverly Hills Elementary School as an Early Learning Center for children ages 0-5.

The school, located at 1450 Coronel Avenue, is part of the Vallejo City Unified School District. It is described generally as follows:

- Opened as an elementary school in 1949 and closed by the school district in June 2020.
- The primary school building contains 18 classrooms, 1 kitchen, 1 multipurpose room, 1 staff bathroom and 4 boys' and girls' bathrooms.
- There are 4 portable classrooms on the back portion of the school blacktop.
- The outside playground areas consist of 1 large blacktop area, 3 play structures that vary by age group, and a large grassy area.
- Off-street parking is available for staff and visitors.

Solano County General Services conducted a site visit on December 17, 2021, and noted:

- Overall: the site appears to be in generally good condition and with the proposed renovations should serve a useful life of the proposed lease term of at least 20 years, with appropriate maintenance. ADA accessibility compliance needs to be verified along the entirety of Path of Travel.
- Classrooms: appear properly maintained and in good condition; only in need of superficial updates. Adding supplemental access to the existing bathrooms and the addition of two new bathrooms that would serve four classrooms could prove to be cost prohibitive. An inspection of the sewage line and grading/fall will need to be performed to give a proper appraisal of the feasibility of new bathroom additions.

- Portables: at or close to the end of their useful life. If intended for use, they should be replaced with new units. Water-stained ceiling tiles were observed along with some buckling of flooring, both suggesting moisture intrusion.
- Playground: 2 playground structures need replacement with age-appropriate structures, the blacktop needs resurfacing and internal fencing should be replaced to look less like an institution.
- Overall: ADA compliance needs to be verified relative to all features; any required architectural modifications to accommodate pre-school age children must also be verified.

Items to consider while negotiating the lease are:

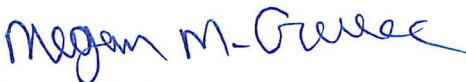
- The long-term infrastructure maintenance/ownership cost, such as for HVAC and roofing.
 - They may need to be repaired/replaced during the lease.
- Significant grounds care, both initial and ongoing, is required for the large site and should be accounted for within the operations maintenance budget.
- Negotiated lease should be long-term with adequate protections for lessee to realize the significant investment of ARPA funds.

The proposed renovations encompass necessary modifications to address the needs of young children, including age-appropriate bathroom facilities and age-appropriate playground structures. The site and facility may need additional upgrades to bring elements up to current code, including ADA accessibility, upgrade of fire/sprinkler system, upgrade of electrical power in kitchen, etc. These should be considered during the planning for renovation and be appropriately cost-estimated, prioritized and budgeted for. A full site and facility assessment, including preliminary renovation plans and cost estimates prepared by qualified professionals, will identify necessary upgrades and help clarify funding requirements. General Services staff will be happy to assist with finding the appropriate consultant/contractors to accomplish the needed renovations and review any/all submittals as needed. Additionally, Real Estate staff is available to review and assist with lease terms and conditions.

With appropriate renovations, the Beverly Hills School can be a viable facility for implementation of an Early Learning Center providing childcare and early learning opportunities for young children in Vallejo and Solano County.

Please feel free to contact me at 707-784-7900 or mmgreve@solanocounty.com, should you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Megan M Greve, Director
General Services Department

CC: Dustin Leno, Assistant Director General Services
Jason Alvarez, Facilities Operations Manager
Mark Hummel, Capital Projects Manager
Megan Richards, Deputy Director, First 5 Solano