



# Memorandum

**TO:** MAYOR LICCARDO

**FROM:** Councilmember Sylvia Arenas

**SUBJECT: BUDGET DOCUMENT**

**DATE:** 5/25/21

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Approved [Sylvia Arenas](#)

Date [5/25/2021](#)

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## **RECOMMENDATION**

That the following recommendation be enacted.

### **Proposal**

Program/Project Title: San Jose Childcare Pandemic to Recovery Transition Program

Amount of City Funding Required: \$ 10,000,000

This change is:

One-time       Ongoing

Cost Estimate Number (if applicable):

Proposal Description, including the reason for the need and anticipated outcomes (Please describe how the proposal will affect services for San José residents, community groups, businesses, etc.):

As schools closed due to the pandemic and our essential services workers needed to work in person, families found themselves in need of a childcare support network. PRNS has traditionally provided ROCK (on school sites) and Recreation preschool programs on a cost recovery basis and in areas of San Jose that can afford to pay for these services independent of need. The few city operated community centers were chosen during the recession period due to the surrounding communities ability to pay for program and services.

Left out from these much needed services for children and working families are the neighborhoods with extreme concentration of low-income communities of color, who have suffered the highest positivity rates, death rates, unemployment rates, disconnection from education services rates, and the lowest vaccination rates. That this is a national phenomenon does not lessen the consequence of the tragedy that is happening right under our noses.

As the pandemic expanded, San Jose’s PRNS and Library teams mobilized to convert our existing education and recreational services programs to the Child Care Learning Pod program. This program

was exceptionally successful in both its delivery of services, its equity approach, and its deepening and strengthening of coordination between school districts, teachers, and Library and PRNS staff.

Most importantly, it delivered support services to children that normally wouldn't have access to our city for fee programs and during critical stages of child development that can only be described as life-changing and for families that needed scholarship support. San Jose school principals and resource staff directly referred their neediest and most disadvantaged students to our programs, which were offered for free, with 100% scholarships for income eligible families – the price that families of this demographic can afford. Working families lean on our programs to provide a childcare strategy that allows for all-day child care to sustain the requirement of a minimum two-income household to achieve a living wage in San Jose. Over 500 students received full time in person support through the pandemic. Many of them entered the program hundreds of assignments behind, and our learning pods provided much needed support.

Without an investment in this budget process to bring these reforms to the ROCK program, Camp San Jose, Camp San Jose Jr, and San Jose Recreation Preschool – they will return to a status quo that doesn't adhere to the Race and Equity principles our city made a commitment to uphold. Ultimately leading to break the gains that have been made during the pandemic.

I recommend that we:

- A. Continue to provide 100% scholarships for ROCK, Camp San Jose, Camp San Jose Jr, and San Jose Recreation Preschool programs for income qualifying families through the next three fiscal years.
- B. Bring the PRNS ROCK program to gap Title 1 schools that do not have ASES funded school-district-run after-school programs but are also not in communities that have the financial resources to meet the cost-recovery goals required in Pricing and Revenue Council Policy 1-21.
- C. Bring the San Jose Recreation Preschool program to gap Title 1 schools where no full day pre-k, T-K, or kindergarten program is currently offered, and the program would provide either additional hours of safe programming for families or meet a current completely unmet need.
- D. Update Pricing and Revenue Council Policy 1-21 to make these programs align subsidies with intended outcomes related to public, merit, and private services (EA5a); and expanding and marketing the scholarship program to increase donations to meet growing needs (EA5b).

Approving this budget request will put our money where our mouth is. Investing in a San Jose Childcare Pandemic to Recovery Transition Program is in clear alignment with our 2021 Legislative Program to protect and increase funding to deliver city services for family friendly policies that prioritize supporting children and families, including improved access to quality childcare. Without this investment in our children, working families in San Jose will be vulnerable and left to choose between working to afford basic needs and quality childcare. If we do not act now, San Jose will continue to see the pre-pandemic trend of an exodus of families that make up the essential fabric of our City.

Staff estimates that \$10,000,000 per year would provide sufficient scholarships and staff to provide over 35 additional school sites for ROCK, and the same for San Jose Recreation Preschool, achieving the goals above. Working with school districts, leveraging additional partnerships, and an investment of this scale will provide the opportunity for children and families to actually heal and not be left behind in the City of San José's road to recovery.

## **Funding Source**

Essential Services Reserve:

Other (Please specify program/project/fund): American Rescue Plan

**Department or Organization Contact**

Please list the contact information for the individual that certified cost estimates contained within your recommendation:

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