



September 02, 2022

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor, State of California
1021 O Street, Suite 9000
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Request for Signature on AB 2517(Bonta) – It Takes a Village Act

Dear Governor Newsom:

First 5 Alameda County writes to **request your signature on Assembly Bill (AB) 2517 (Bonta), California Coordinated Neighborhood and Community Services Grant Program**, which will establish a two-year California Coordinated Neighborhood and Community Services grant program to implement new, and strengthen existing, neighborhood and regional cradle to career (C2C) networks to reduce inequities and increase economic mobility in communities across California through integrated place-based support systems.

Our mission at First 5 Alameda County is to continually invest and innovate to support young children and their families and caregivers. Findings from our 2021/22 Kindergarten Readiness Assessment, a participatory research project that surveyed over 3000 parents/caregivers, early care and education professionals, TK and Kindergarten teachers in Alameda County, show that *family health & well-being and access to basic needs are associated with school readiness*. We partner with community-based organizations to ensure that families and providers have the resources they need for children to thrive—including basic needs, connections to services and information, and peer support to promote mental health and well-being. We invest in place-based strategies through our Neighborhoods Ready for School grants to promote neighborhood conditions where families can thrive.

Promise Neighborhoods have worked in geographically distressed communities implementing place-based, cradle-to-career services and supports, building core capacities, and harnessing the power of cross-sector collaboration and the integration of services to engender long-term changes locally. C2C networks



have seen substantial improvements in healthcare access, literacy, college and career readiness, and reduced child welfare and juvenile justice involvement.

In Alameda County, First 5 has partnered with Hayward Promise Neighborhood (HPN) and the collaborative of partners they've brought together to strengthen supports for kindergarten transitions and resources that help families and children thrive. Currently, HPN is a member of the Research Advisory Group for our countywide Kindergarten Readiness study and was able to obtain surveys from 853 families of children 0-6, the largest response of any outreach partner. They are an important member of the early childhood system in Alameda County.

AB 2517 will invest in communities and regions with persistent poverty by allocating funding to networks who **(1) link, align, and leverage cross-sector community partners** for the effective and equitable distribution of services for children and families from cradle to career; **(2) prioritize systems change** by informing, funding, and advocating for program and policy changes to positively impact economically distressed neighborhoods and communities; and **(3) collect, assess, report, and share data** by working with partners and communities to identify the highest needs within neighborhoods, implement evidence-based C2C solutions, and use data to continuously improve programs.

By investing in place-based support systems, this grant program will create equitable communities that ensure children succeed in schools and families move out of poverty. For these reasons, **First 5 Alameda supports AB 2517 (Bonta) and respectfully requests your signature** on this important measure.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kristin Spanos".

Kristin Spanos
Chief Executive Officer
First 5 Alameda County

cc: Office of Governor Newsom
Office of Assemblymember Mia Bonta