

BOARD AGENDA ITEM

June 14, 2022

SUBJECT:

Proposed Incentive for Head Start Employees Using Head Start/Early Head Start American Rescue Plan (ARP) Funds

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Our District's Head Start program, like many others across the state, region, and nation, continues to deal with a significant shortage of staff, with the most vacancies occurring in the positions of teachers, assistant teachers and bus drivers. ACPD's Head Start program also has the dual-role position of assistant teacher/bus driver. Vacancies in all of these positions have resulted in 1) non-teaching staff (HS/EHS Director, Managers & Specialists, Center Director/Family Advocates, Mentor-Coaches) regularly subbing in the classroom to compensate for teacher shortages, which results in the foregoing, delaying and/or impacting other duties in order to provide adequate supervision and care for children; 2) the implementation of remote/virtual instruction for children; 3) inability to provide comprehensive early care and education services to eligible families/children on the waiting list. Since its start, the program has not been fully staffed. For these reasons, the administration is seeking ways to recruit new teaching staff and bus drivers.

ADMINISTRATIVE CONSIDERATION:

The administration believes a \$1,000 sign-on bonus for newly-hired, permanent teachers and assistant teacher/bus drivers paired with the existing training & technical assistance financial funding to support educational attainment and Commercial Drivers' License certifications would work as a recruiting tool for the 2022-2023 school year. Sign-on bonuses are an allowable expense under the American Rescue Plan funding flexibilities for Head Start. Proposed parameters for the sign-on bonus are described below.

Sign-On Bonus

- \$1,000 bonus overall for any new Head Start / Early Head Start employee
- Newly hired, Head Start/Early Head Start staff would be eligible. PRNs (substitute teachers) would not be eligible.
- \$500 would be paid shortly after initial hire (by the third paycheck) with the remaining \$500 paid upon completion of a 90-day evaluation and completion of obtaining a CDL, if required for the position. Both bonuses would be paid on the regular pay date.
- The sign-on bonus provision would sunset on March 31, 2023, as this is the ending date of the American Rescue Plan funding. Any extension deemed necessary would be recommended by the administration for Board

consideration and approval based on revisions to Office of Head Start guidelines and funding availability.

- The sign-on bonus will be subject to payroll tax but not State retirement.

The net cost is difficult to gauge and would be dependent upon the number of new hires. For planning purposes, projected costs are estimated at \$30,000. Costs will be incurred by the American Rescue Plan funds as assigned to Head Start and in compliance with fiscal funding flexibilities. The current budget for staff hiring bonuses should be sufficient to cover the projected cost.

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve implementation of sign-on bonuses for all Head Start / Early Head Start positions.

PREPARED BY:

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