



Legislation Text

File #: Res 32002, Version: 1

CITY OF SEATTLE

RESOLUTION _____

A RESOLUTION supporting renewal of King County's Best Starts for Kids Levy.

WHEREAS, since 1990, Seattle voters have generously supported investments in education and support services for the city's youngest learners, students, and their families; and

WHEREAS, Seattle voters approved successive seven-year property tax lid lifts known as the Families and Education Levy in 1990, 1997, 2004, and 2011; and

WHEREAS, in 2014, Seattle voters approved an expansion of the City's education efforts by approving the four-year Seattle Preschool Program Levy to provide Seattle children with accessible high-quality preschool services; and

WHEREAS, since 2018, with voter approval of the Families, Education, Preschool, and Promise Levy (FEPP Levy), the City has continued its investments in high-quality early learning, expanded learning opportunities, culturally-responsive programming, physical and mental health services, college and job readiness experiences, and post-secondary opportunities; and

WHEREAS, the overall goal of the FEPP Levy is to partner with families and communities to advance educational equity, close opportunity gaps, and build a better economic future for Seattle students; and

WHEREAS, despite these valuable investments and support for children, students, and their families, widespread educational inequities still exist within Seattle with respect to students meeting grade level standards, discipline rates, and graduation rates; and

WHEREAS, eliminating racial and economic educational inequities for Seattle children and students cannot be accomplished in isolation through the investments of only one entity, but must be approached

systemically and supported by entities at many levels; and

WHEREAS, collaboration and partnership are essential in supporting the development and education of the city's children and youth; and

WHEREAS, the City values its many partners in this work, including students, families, educators, community-based organizations, cultural- and language-based organizations, the Seattle School District, Public Health-Seattle & King County, Seattle Colleges, and King County; and

WHEREAS, in 2015, King County voters approved the six-year Best Starts for Kids Levy (BSK Levy) to fund programs and services that support promotion, prevention, and early intervention for King County's children, youth, and families; and

WHEREAS, the goals for the BSK Levy that voters approved in 2015 are to ensure that babies are born healthy, King County is a place where everyone has equitable opportunities for health and safety as they progress through childhood, and communities offer safe, welcoming, and healthy environments that help improve outcomes for all of King County's children and families; and

WHEREAS, the levy focuses on five investment areas: programs for pregnant parents and children prenatal to age five; programs for children, youth, and young adults age five to 24; community-level programs and policies developed by community members themselves; programs identifying needs for families with children and young adults in crisis to assist with maintaining their housing; and evaluation and data collection to monitor the impact and progress of the levy's investments; and

WHEREAS, since its inception, the BSK Levy has funded 570 programs and has reached over 500,000 babies, children, youth, and families throughout the county with community-driven programming; and

WHEREAS, the King County Executive has recently proposed legislation to renew and expand the expiring BSK Levy; and

WHEREAS, the proposal would create a new six-year levy, providing services from 2022 through 2027, that would continue providing funding for prevention and early intervention programs and services for

children, youth, young adults, and their families and communities; and

WHEREAS, the proposal would also generate funding for a new child care subsidy program, a new workforce demonstration project for low-wage child care workers, would expand out-of-school time programs for school-age children, and create up to four new school-based health centers; and

WHEREAS, the new child care subsidy program is estimated to help more than 3,000 King County families per year afford child care costs; and

WHEREAS, the new workforce demonstration project is estimated to supplement the salary and benefits of 1,400 child care workers across the county, focusing on child care providers that serve low-income communities and communities of color; and

WHEREAS, the City has a long history of providing child care subsidies to low- and moderate-income families through its Child Care Assistance Program to help pay for child care for children ages one month through 12 years; and

WHEREAS, the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic and its associated financial impacts have created hardships for many small businesses, including child care providers; and

WHEREAS, as of January 2021, Child Care Aware data indicates that ten percent of licensed child care programs in King County have temporarily closed due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic; and

WHEREAS, in response to the pandemic, the City launched a temporary emergency child care program providing no-cost child care to children of essential workers, has provided copay relief for income-eligible families participating in the Child Care Assistance Program and child care offered through Seattle Parks and Recreation, and provided over \$2 million in stabilization grant funding to over 500 child care providers; and

WHEREAS, additional investments in child care by King County through the proposed renewal of the BSK Levy offer a new partnership opportunity for the City and King County and will benefit underserved families and child care providers within the city; and

WHEREAS, the City and King County have collaborated and coordinated educational investments in the past, such as with the ParentChild+ program and school-based health centers; and

WHEREAS, King County’s newly proposed child care programs provide another opportunity for the City and King County to collaborate and to ensure that their respective child care programs are complementary and are assisting the families that need it most; and

WHEREAS, the King County Regional Policy Committee recently clarified, via an amendment, that the BSK Levy’s implementation plan will ensure that residents in any city in King County will be able to access Levy-funded strategies regardless of the availability of similar services and programs provided by their city or in their community; and

WHEREAS, a continuation of investments through a renewed King County BSK Levy will benefit residents of the city and county by investing in programs that: promote improved health and well-being; prevent and intervene early on negative outcomes; reduce inequities in outcomes; and strengthen and improve health and human services systems; NOW, THEREFORE,

**BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SEATTLE, THE MAYOR
CONCURRING, THAT:**

Section 1. The Mayor and the City Council support the renewal of King County’s Best Starts for Kids Levy for the purpose of funding prevention and early intervention strategies to improve the health and well-being of children, youth, families, and their communities.

Adopted by the City Council the _____ day of _____, 2021, and signed by
me in open session in authentication of its adoption this _____ day of _____, 2021.

President _____ of the City Council

The Mayor concurred the _____ day of _____, 2021.

Jenny A. Durkan, Mayor

Filed by me this _____ day of _____, 2021.

Monica Martinez Simmons, City Clerk

(Seal)