



Legislation Text

File #: 1683-2024, **Version:** 1

Mayor Ginther's vision for Columbus, America's Opportunity City, is that every child is ready for kindergarten. Kindergarten readiness is a multidimensional construct reflecting young children's preparedness for instruction in areas related to both academic and social-emotional skills. Children who arrive to kindergarten with limited readiness in one or more of these areas face challenges in the transition into the kindergarten setting, and are susceptible to academic achievement over time.

Early Start Columbus, the City's kindergarten readiness initiative, has helped prepare thousands of Columbus children for kindergarten over the last ten years. However, recent work by Future Ready Columbus, Franklin County's early education-focused public private partnership, has shown that we must act earlier to be successful. The Office of Education wishes to implement a pilot program with Columbus Early Learning Centers, limited to the use of two (2) classrooms at the City's Hilltop Early Learning Center, to provide childcare and early learning activities for infants and toddlers under four-years of age and to assess the pilot program's impact on kindergarten readiness.

The City's current Operations Agreement with Columbus Early Learning Centers, authorized by City Council Ordinance 0441-2022, strictly limits the services provided at the City's Hilltop Early Learning Center to pre-kindergarten education for four-year olds. Consequently, a modification to the Operations Agreement is necessary to allow Columbus Early Learning Centers, as part of this pilot program, to provide childcare and early learning activities services to infants and toddlers under four-years of age.

This legislation authorizes the Director of the Department of Finance and Management to execute an Appendix to the existing Operations Agreement with Columbus Early Learning Centers, on behalf of the Office of Education, to modify the agreement to allow, in a short term pilot program, provision of childcare and early learning activities to infants and toddlers under four-years of age in (2) classrooms at the Hilltop Early Learning Center and to amend the Conditions of Payment to provide for payment of up to \$1,625.00 per infant or toddler student enrolled. The existing Operations Agreement contract maximum payment of \$3,120,000.00 per year will remain unchanged.

No (\$0.00) additional funds will be expended under the modification. In addition, as noted above, the need for this additional service was not foreseen at the time of the original contract as recent work by Future Ready demonstrated that work with children younger than four is needed. It is not in the City's best interests to have the additional contract requirements awarded through other procurement processes as CELC already serves as the building's master operator. The price for serving children younger than four was determined by examining the market rate for such services.

Emergency Justification: Emergency legislation is required so that the pilot program can begin at the earliest possible date.

Fiscal Impact: There is no new funding required for this pilot program. (\$0.00).

To authorize an Appendix to the existing Operations Agreement with Columbus Early Learning Centers to allow for use of two (2) classrooms at the City's Hilltop Early Learning Center for provision of childcare and early learning activities for infants and toddlers under four-years of age under a pilot program; and to declare an emergency. (\$0.00)

WHEREAS, Mayor Ginther's vision for Columbus, America's Opportunity City, is that every child in the City will be

ready for kindergarten: and

WHEREAS, Early Start Columbus, the City’s kindergarten readiness initiative, has helped prepare thousands of Columbus children for kindergarten over the last ten years; and

WHEREAS, recent work by Future Ready Columbus, Franklin County’s early education-focused public private partnership, has shown that we must act earlier to be successful; and

WHEREAS, allowing Columbus Early Learning Centers to serve children under the age of four at the Hilltop Early Learning Center will advance the Mayor’s kindergarten readiness goals for Columbus Children; and

WHEREAS, the Office of Education wishes to implement a pilot program at the Hilltop Early Learning Center provide childcare and early learning activities infants and toddlers under four-years of age to assess the pilot program's impact on kindergarten readiness; and

WHEREAS, the current Operations Agreement with Columbus Early Learning Centers, authorized by City Council Ordinance 0441-2022, PO314712, was authorized in the amount of \$3,120,000.00 strictly limits the services provided at the City's Hilltop Early Learning Center to pre-kindergarten education for four-year olds; and

WHEREAS, no additional funding is required for the modification of the Agreement to add this Appendix and the existing contract shall not exceed the original contract amount of \$3,120,000.00; and

WHEREAS, it is necessary to execute an Appendix to modify the existing Operations Agreement to provide for implementation of a pilot program and allow Columbus Early Learning Centers, to provide childcare and early learning activities infants and toddlers under four-years of age in addition to the provision of pre-kindergarten education services for four-year olds, and to amend the Conditions of Payment to provide for payment of \$1,625.00 per infant or toddler student enrolled; and

WHEREAS, an emergency exists in the usual daily operation of the Department of Finance and Management in that it is immediately necessary to authorize the Director of Finance and Management, on behalf of the Office of Education, to add an Appendix to modify the existing Operations Agreement with Columbus Early Learning Centers for the operation of the Hilltop Early Learning Center to allow for a pilot program to provide childcare and early learning activities infants and toddlers under four-years of age in addition to provision of pre-kindergarten education services for four-year olds, all for the immediate preservation of the public health, peace, property, safety, and welfare; and **NOW, THEREFORE,**

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COLUMBUS:

SECTION 1. That the Director of the Department of Finance and Management be and hereby is authorized, on behalf of the Office of Education, to execute an Appendix to the existing Operations Agreement with Columbus Early Learning Centers to modify the agreement to allow provision of childcare and early learning activities to infants and toddlers under four-years of age, in a short term pilot program, in two (2) classrooms at the Hilltop Early Learning Center and to amend the Conditions of Payment to provide for payment of up to \$1,625.00 per infant or toddler student enrolled.

SECTION 2. That the terms and conditions of the Appendix shall be in a form prepared and approved by the Department of Law.

SECTION 3. That for the reasons stated in the preamble hereto, which is hereby made a part hereof, this ordinance is hereby declared to be an emergency measure and shall take effect and be in force from and after its passage and approval by the Mayor or ten days after passage if the Mayor neither approves nor vetoes the same.