

REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL



DATE: July 2, 2019

TITLE: Funding Request in the Amount of \$32,000.00 to be Utilized by Palm Springs Unified School District for the Multi-City Collaboration for Drug Education Program

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RECOMMENDATION

Consider a funding request in the amount of \$32,000.00 to be utilized by Palm Springs Unified School District for the Multi-City Collaboration for Drug Education Program for FY 2019-20.

BACKGROUND

In May of 2018, a request was received from the Palm Springs Unified School District, which serves Desert Hot Springs students, to participate with other West Valley cities and the district in funding a new drug education program for district students. (EXHIBIT 1) Each West Valley City was asked to contribute \$100,000.00 to this effort. At that time, the cities of Palm Springs, Cathedral City and Rancho Mirage approved \$100,000.00 funding request to implement a Multi-City Collaboration for Drug Education Program.

This program was designed to address concerns that staff in the Palm Springs Unified School District expressed regarding the impacts legal marijuana may have on an already concerning level of drug use that results in suspensions and expulsions of students across the District. Palm Springs Unified School District explored ways to address this issue for students and parents within the district.

Palm Springs Unified School District proposed a three-pronged approach to address this issue:

- Change Board policy regarding the expulsion of students. Provide interventions when a student is first caught using on campus.
- Provide substance abuse prevention curriculum for all students in grades 4, 6, and 9. In addition to this provide parent workshops.
- Provide two full-time substance abuse counselors to improve the current intervention groups, Insight and Bridges, as well as provide voluntary substance abuse counselling at all middle and high schools.

The elementary curriculum is designed around a book called Sunny's Story. Narrated through the eyes, ears and mind of Sunny, the family beagle, this story tells of the ups and downs of his life with his young master, from the moment they meet at an animal shelter to the dog watching his masters decline due to drug use. Student process the book through writing, art, group discussions and scientific demonstration.

In middle school the students learn about substance abuse and learn to:

- Develop a clear decision-making strategy on drug avoidance
- Have a clear plan to refuse the inevitable offer of alcohol and other drugs
- Identify 3-5 trusted adults who will support them when needed

High School students learn about prescription drug misuse, marijuana, binge drinking and other drugs, in addition to deepening the lesson taught in middle school. The parent component

teaches parents about the drug culture, setting boundaries, communicating the dangers of substance abuse and prevention, detection, intervention and support.

DISCUSSION

In May of 2019, the City of Desert Hot Springs met with the Palm Springs Unified School District to receive an update on the progress of the Multi-City Collaboration for Drug Education Program. (EXHIBIT 2) From 2018 to 2019, the District reports an 18% reduction in students suspended for unlawfully possessing, using, selling or otherwise furnishing or being under the influence of any controlled substance, alcoholic beverage or intoxicant of any kind. In an effort to continue the funding of the program, Palm Springs Unified School District is requesting funding from Rancho Mirage, Cathedral City, Palm Springs and Desert Hot Springs to allow them to continue the same program for two years, to provide enough data to assess the programs overall impacts on district students. The City Manager met with the School District Staff and is recommending funding one year of the program, or \$32,000.00. This one-year funding recommendation aligns with the City's budget parameters, as the city is in the last year of its 2-year budget cycle.

FISCAL IMPACT

Funds have not been appropriated in the FY 2019-20 budget. As such, City Council approval of this expense will increase FY 2019-20 expenditures by an amount of \$32,000.00.

EXHIBITS

- 1) Palm Springs Unified School District's 2018 Funding Request and Proposed Curriculum for the Multi-City Collaborative to Provide Drug Education.
- 2) Palm Springs Unified School District's 2019 Multi-City Collaboration for Drug Education Update and Funding Request.