

**TO: Chamber Board of Directors**  
**FROM: Chamber Executive Committee**  
**SUBJECT: Pre-K 4 SA Reauthorization**  
**STATUS: Approved**



**DATE: September 24, 2020**

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**RECOMMENDATION:** The Executive Committee of the San Antonio Chamber of Commerce adopt the following policy statement:

**STATEMENT:** As a supporter of the initial Pre-K 4 SA initiative in 2012, the San Antonio Chamber of Commerce recognizes the data-proven positive impact of the program and strongly supports the reauthorization of the 1/8 cent sales tax dedicated to funding Pre-K 4 SA on the November 2020 ballot. The Chamber understands the critical role Pre-K 4 SA has on properly preparing students to succeed in school, developing San Antonio's future talent pool, and securing a prosperous future for the city. At the end of its eighth year, the program has served 25,761 children, and through partnerships and its grant component, Pre-K 4 SA has trained 21,000 teachers throughout San Antonio, thereby increasing the city's capacity in providing high-quality pre-kindergarten instruction. Additionally, in a recent study conducted by an independent third party, Pre-K 4 SA was shown to return \$156 for every \$100 invested. The well-tracked program outcomes show increases in classroom quality, daily attendance, kindergarten readiness, third grade test scores, employment & wage earnings of participating families; and decreases in special education placement, grade retention, and need for additional reading support. The accomplishments of the Pre-K 4 SA program have placed San Antonio as a national leader in early childhood education and demonstrate great progress toward its mission to develop a world-class workforce and create change in one generation.

**BACKGROUND:**

In May 2011, then-Mayor Julián Castro assembled a Brainpower Task Force comprised of concerned business and education leaders to determine if a targeted, significant financial investment could fundamentally improve San Antonio's educational achievement. The Brainpower Task Force, led by USAA CEO and Maj. Gen. (Retired) Joe Robles and H-EB Chairman and CEO Charles Butt, examined and evaluated three specific areas of interest:

1. Early childhood education;
2. Dropout prevention; and
3. College attainment

In June 2012 after more than a year of studying best practices and evidence-based outcomes in other U.S. cities, the Task Force presented its recommendations to City Council outlining that investment in early childhood education would yield the most profound results across the education spectrum. City Council subsequently approved the ballot referendum that called for utilizing 1/8 of a cent sales tax to finance the majority of the organization's budget. In November 2012 voters approved the initiative.

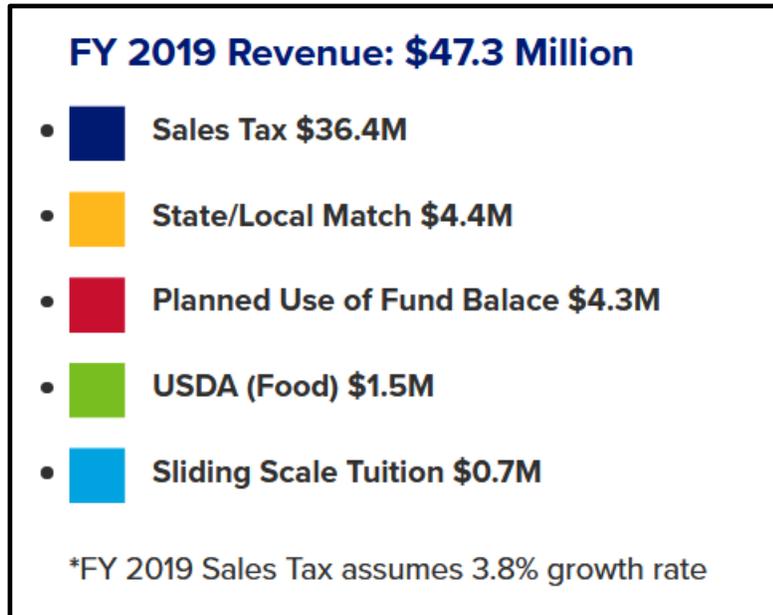
## Post-election timeline:

- **2013:** Pre-K 4 SA welcomed 700 students to its North and South Education Centers and partnered with seven school districts.
- **2014:** Pre-K 4 SA establishes centers in each city quadrant with the opening of the East and West Education Centers and more than doubles the number of students to 1,500.
- **2015:** Pre-K 4 SA launches Competitive Grants Program inviting public, charter, private, parochial schools and licensed childcare facilities to apply for funds to support enhancement, expansion, or establishment of early childhood education programs.
- **2016:** Pre-K 4 SA reaches target enrollment of 2,000 4-year-olds; Competitive Grant Program awards \$4.2 million in grants to 16 education providers throughout the city; independent study using Teaching Strategies GOLD Assessment shows “Pre-K 4 SA students who trailed the national norm at the beginning of the school year exceeded the national norm in cognitive, literary and mathematics at the end of the school year.”
- **2017:** Fourth consecutive year that Pre-K 4 SA students exceed national norm in kindergarten readiness (GOLD Assessment) including closing the gap in oral language, physical and social-emotional averages by the end of the school year; Pre-K 4 SA teachers observed using Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) and results show instructional quality of teachers is above research threshold in all domains: emotional support, classroom organization, instructional support; results from new assessment of executive function shows Pre-K 4 SA scored higher than children in other municipal pre-k programs.
- **2018:** Parents as partners program launched; Pre-K 4 SA secures NAEYC accreditations for all four education centers; Early Learning Leadership Series introduced.
- **2019:** Partnership with Edgewood Independent School District creates Gardendale Pre-K 4 SA Early Childhood Education Center.
- **2020:** In response to the COVID-19 health crisis, Pre-K 4 SA teachers and staff engaged families through weekly meal distributions, referrals for support services and medical care and testing, an online repository of high-quality lessons and grant funding for organizations in need.

## Budget

Pre-K 4 SA has consistently been a responsible steward of public funds as demonstrated through eight years of transparent reporting to City Council.

### FY 2019 Revenue



### FY 2019 Expenditures

## **FY 2019 Expenditures: \$47.3 Million**

-  **Education Center Services \$24.6M**
-  **Facilities, Leases, and Maintenance \$9.7M**
-  **Competitive Grants \$4.8M**
-  **Professional Learning \$2.0M**
-  **Other\* \$2.0M**
-  **Administration \$1.7M**
-  **Public Relations/Marketing \$0.9**
-  **Enrollment \$0.8M**
-  **Transportation Services \$0.8M**

### **Reasons to Support:**

1. Pre-K for SA has demonstrated both a return on investment and that the program is on track with addressing the City's need to raise academic achievement for the children of San Antonio by preparing them to become productive members of the future workforce.
2. The program's Board of Directors and community supporters include members from the business sector as well as education experts who continue to strongly support this collective financial investment.
3. Pre-K 4 SA has demonstrated the efficacy of its curriculum and comprehensive approach to family engagement through third party assessments.
4. Pre-K 4 SA's district partnerships have steadily increased to include eight school districts, one charter school, five partners in innovation, and nearly 60 community partners.

5. Pre-K 4 SA's professional development programs have increased the growth and quality of early childhood educators across the city and has helped increase educational attainment including, professional certifications, credentials and degrees.
6. Pre-K 4 is SA developing a plan to expand service to families who do not meet eligibility criteria but still struggle financially by reserving 500 of the 2,000 seats available throughout its service area.

**Issues of Concern:**

1. Given that school districts now receive full funding for early childhood education for high-quality Pre-K for qualifying families, Pre-K 4 SA could expand access to the estimated 3,000 families who do not meet requirements but have financial constraints that limit their options.

**IMPLEMENTATION:** The Chamber will help support the Reauthorization of Pre-K 4 SA in the upcoming election (Early Voting October 13<sup>th</sup> – October 30<sup>th</sup>, Election Day November 3<sup>rd</sup>) at membership meetings and other public opportunities. The Chamber will communicate this position to the media, the business community and other Chamber members through publication in The Chamber Today and media releases.