



Item:

Children's Defense Fund Freedom School—Program Overview

Requested Action:

1. The Board is asked to receive this update.
2. The Board is asked to consider increasing funding to accurately fund Freedom School.

Background:

On December 13, 2021, the Trust approved Resolution 2021- 23 authorizing the Executive Director to negotiate a contract with University of Florida College of Education-Collaborative for Equity in Education for The Children's Defense Fund (CDF) Freedom School. In an effort to take an intentional approach to addressing literacy during the summer, CTAC staff and the UF College of Education - Collaborative for Equity in Education collaborated to bring the CDF - Freedom School model to Alachua County. Staff recommended funding this pilot program for 40 low-income, public-school children, who otherwise may not have access to books and educational enhancement programs during the summer, particularly African American and Latino children from at-risk communities.

The Children's Defense Fund (CDF) Freedom Schools, a six-week summer reading camp that aims to motivate low-income children to fall in love with reading. CDF Freedom Schools focus on addressing summer slide, where children fall behind academically because their families and/or community lack the resources to engage them in high quality summer programs. Freedom Schools also emphasize how scholars (students) can make a difference in themselves, their families, school community, the country, and world. Specific program activities include:

- Integrated Reading Curriculum (3 hours/day)
- Weekly field trips
- Weekly parent meetings/workshops
- Extracurricular activities (e.g., music, dance, sports, arts, etc.)
- STEM development
- Weekly programming at the intersection of arts, culture, entrepreneurship, education, and wellness
- Teacher candidate and teacher professional development

Annual assessments of CDF Freedom Schools have shown that the program has a statistically significant, positive effect on children's reading skills, attitudes toward learning, and belief in themselves, and in their ability to make a difference in the world around them.

This contract was exempt from competitive procurement under Board Policy, 6.60,B,4 which exempts all Supplies or Services, purchased from another unit of government. Freedom School was implemented June 2022.

This report will provide an update of program goals/objectives, activities, outcomes, and challenges.

Attachments

Freedom School Presentation

Programmatic Impact:

This initiative supports Goal 2 - All children can learn what they need to be successful, Strategy 2.3 - Support literacy and other academic supports.

Fiscal Impact:

\$60,000 for FY2021-2022

Account number 001.15.1500.569.82.00

Recommendation:

Receive the information

Consider fully funding Freedom School to support all program components