

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: MARCH 30, 2006
TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL
FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER
SUBJECT: BUDGET MEMO #48: PARENT LEADERSHIP TRAINING INSTITUTE

As indicated in information previously sent to Council, Councilwoman Woodson is interested in City funding for a Parent Leadership Training Institute for FY 2007. Ms. Woodson has asked that this be placed in budget memo format so that it becomes part of the FY 2007 budget consideration materials. Ms. Woodson has clarified that she will be proposing during the add/delete process to move \$30,000 to \$40,000 from Council Contingent Reserves for this proposed program.

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Dear Colleagues:

As you may recall, I sent a Memorandum in December 2004 (Addendum A) telling you about a Parent Leadership Training Institute (PLTI) as presented by Elaine Zimmerman, Executive Director of the Connecticut Commission on Children, at a National League of Cities conference. The PLTI is an exercise in democracy with the intent of making parents agents of change for their children, families and communities. It is a 20-week (one night per week) program. A description of the program is enclosed as Addendum B and C. I am planning to launch the first Parent Leadership Training Institute class this fall.

We have held many meetings with members of Department of Human Services (DHS), Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS), Elaine Zimmerman, and others in the community. We also held a Town Meeting last spring with graduates of the Connecticut program and Ms. Zimmerman. While we sent only one notice home with elementary students, the Town Meeting was well attended (over 40) by members of the Alexandria community; Alexandrians who are NOT seen at every public hearing. I am aware that other leadership programs exist in the City, but none focus on basic civics with such a broad curriculum. Every attendee expressed interest in participating in the program in some capacity.

Getting PLTI off the ground is my top priority. We have tested the waters; it is now time to get to the work. First, I am requesting your support for seed money for a pilot program. The cost of the program is approximately \$60,000 for one year, not including in-kind by private donors or other matching funds. This money should come from the contingent reserve fund, which is available for precisely this reason. A budget is attached as Addendum D. We will seek Community Partnership Funds in year two, as well as money from other foundations. Second, I am further requesting that the City be a partner or co-sponsor of the program. It would be logistically appropriate if DHS served as a liaison. PLTI serves the constituency of DHS and they are already familiar with the program. City partnership will enable free use of City and school facilities and allow distribution of PLTI material, which is necessary for our success. We are also seeking a partnership with the ACPS. As you will note, with substantial in-kind assistance this is a very inexpensive program. City and school co-sponsorship will enable such in-kind contributions. Finally, Addendum E, an evaluation summary with Impact Outcomes, shows both quantifiable and intangible benefits from a Connecticut PLTI. I find it hard to argue against these results.

Instead of trying to create a new non-profit to launch PLTI, Fay and I have received enthusiastic support from several non-profits in the City interested in serving as our umbrella organization. They will provide the history and stability we need for future foundation fundraising, and as needed they can provide grant assistance, facilities for classes, office space, and serve as a resource for teachers, parent participants, and design team members. I am proud to say we have not met an individual or organization less than enthusiastic about PLTI. Each verifies the need for PLTI in our community as an adjunct to smaller programs already in existence.

Consider a recent anecdotal experience: we left program flyers at the Gang Awareness Summit on Saturday and have already received an application request from a parent. Parents get it! This is a program that can enable parents who are otherwise frustrated about their children's future to determine productive ways to mold that future. ACPS and the City of Alexandria cannot help but improve if parents take an active interest. Democracy is promoted by greater and more varied citizen involvement, not less. PLTI grooms "we the people," teaching how to effectively impact process and policy without supporting a particular view or agenda. There is no downside.

Attachments

- Addendum A: Memorandum from Councilwoman Joyce Woodson to The Honorable Mayor, Members of Council, and City Manager, dated December 17, 2004
- Addendum B: Parent Leadership Training Institute, A Connecticut Commission on Children Civic Leadership Initiative
- Addendum C: Parent Leadership Training Institute, Start-up Plan for City of Alexandria
- Addendum D: Parent Leadership Training Institute Budget
- Addendum E: Parent Leadership Training Institute Evaluation Summary with Impact Outcomes

cc: Fay Slotnick, Aide to Councilwoman Joyce Woodson
Jim Hartmann, City Manager
Mark Jinks, Deputy City Manager
Bruce Johnson, Director, Office of Management and Budget
Debra Collins, Director, Department of Human Services
Rebecca Perry, Superintendent, Alexandria City Public Schools