



City and Borough of Juneau
City & Borough Manager's Office
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DATE: September 14, 2020

TO: Maria Gladziszewski, Chair, Assembly Committee of the Whole

FROM: Mila Cosgrove, Deputy City Manager

RE: COVID-19 K-5 Childcare – RALLY Options

Background:

The Assembly requested that the Manager's Office provide a framework for K-5 Childcare options in light of COVID-19 operational constraints for the Juneau School District. One option before the Assembly is to fund or partially fund JSD RALLY care. This issue is time sensitive and a decision of whether to proceed and how to prioritize access and funding should be determined in the near term.

Proposed prioritization for enrollment:

The purpose of prioritizing enrollment for RALLY is to assure that those families most in need of care have access to services. Enrollment criteria has been designed to provide an alternative to children being left at home alone or solely under the care of older siblings who may also need to be focusing on their own school work.

1. Children who are enrolled in the Juneau School District and living with a single parent/adult caretaker whose work requires that they be away from home on all school days from 8:00 am – 4:30 pm.
2. Children who are enrolled in the Juneau School District and living with more than one parent/adult caretakers, all of whose work requires that they be away from home on all school days from 8:00 am – 4:30 pm.
3. Children who are enrolled in the Juneau School District and living with one or more parents/adult caretakers all of whose work requires that they be away from home on a regular basis on most school days from 8:00 am – 4:30 pm.
4. Children who are enrolled in the Juneau School District in grades K-2 and whose parents certify that having the child at home while they telework is a hardship to effectively working from home.
5. Children who are enrolled in the Juneau School District in grades 3-5 and whose parents certify that having the child at home while they telework is a hardship to effectively working from home.
6. Children who are enrolled in the Juneau School District
7. Children who are not enrolled in the Juneau School District.

Proposed funding strategies:

Care should be taken to assure that RALLY is an affordable option for families across all income levels. At the existing staff to child ratio, JSD has set the RALLY tuition rate at \$1,310 per child per month – an amount that puts care outside the reach of most families. If fully enrolled, the cost per child is \$1,111, an amount still outside the reach of many families.

Part of the problem is the way childcare tuition assistance is calculated for the RALLY program. State of Alaska Childcare Assistance support is available to families who meet certain federal poverty guidelines. The Assistance level available is based on faulty data that will not be corrected until the next rate schedule study. For this reason, as well as the desire to keep RALLY affordable for families who were not anticipating paying for full day care for children who would normally be in school, it is recommended that the rate for RALLY be set at \$515.00 per month through the end of the calendar year.

If that is the set amount, and the program is fully enrolled, the amount of funding required would be:

RALLY Program						
	Staffing		1,111	1,120,000	1,400,000	2,520,000
	Revenue Collected		-515	-520,000	-650,000	-1,170,000
	Total	252	596	600,000	750,000	1,350,000

To help further offset the cost of the program for the lowest income families, the Assembly could grant child care awards to help offset costs not covered by State of Alaska Childcare Assistance. This would need more exploration to assure there are not unintended consequences to that type of funding.

Requested Action:

The Assembly should decide if it intends to offset the cost of providing RALLY services to the community. If the answer is affirmative, the Assembly could decide to prepare an emergency appropriate resolution for the September 21st Assembly meeting authorizing funding up to \$600,000. That would allow the RALLY program to begin offering services to a greater sector of the community in the most expeditious manner. In the alternative, the Assembly could also forward this discussion to the next Assembly Finance Committee meeting.