



City Council Report

Date: July 3, 2023
To: City Council
Through: Natalie Lewis, Deputy City Manager
From: Sarah Tolar, Education and Workforce Administrator
Subject: Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) with Mesa Public Schools for AARP Experience Corps Program Implementation “Citywide”

Purpose and Recommendation

The purpose of this report is to provide information and seek the approval of the Mesa City Council regarding an IGA with Mesa Public Schools to facilitate the implementation of the AARP Experience Corps (EC) program in identified Title I schools throughout MPS.

Through the IGA, Mesa Public Schools will contribute \$60,000 to fund a full-time grant-funded position to coordinate the AARP Experience Corps program, which will launch in six MPS Title I elementary schools, beginning in January 2024.

Background

In 2021, the statewide English Language Arts (ELA) assessment data showed that only 32% of Mesa Public Schools students passed the 3rd grade ELA statewide assessment. The achievement gap was greatest for historically marginalized and economically disadvantaged students. The data indicated that 21% and 0% of economically disadvantaged and English language learners passed the statewide ELA assessment, respectively. 2022 saw a slight rebound with 41% of 3rd grade students passing.

Mesa’s recently re-launched community literacy collaborative, Read On Mesa, recognized that the evidence-based, one-on-one tutoring provided by the AARP Foundation Experience Corps is the high-impact program needed to help support and improve the literacy skills in some of MPS’ highest-need schools. The tiered approach MPS uses to provide intervention will benefit from the additional structured one-on-one literacy support and practice strategically targeting a selected student population who have scored just below benchmark, through the Experience Corp program.

Additionally, the Experience Corps (EC) program provides older adults with opportunities for generative engagement and achievement, as well as mentorship and community contribution through involvement in the EC program.

Discussion

Under the IGA, Mesa will be the lead agency, responsible for recruiting, training and managing the EC volunteers and overall program management. MPS will contribute the funding for the first-year program coordinator position, facilitating the volunteer background check process, providing a staff literacy contact at each participating site and access to student assessment data.

An additional partnership agreement with AARP will be required to establish the roles and responsibilities of AARP to help support the implementation of the EC program, as well as the expectations for the City as an EC partner.

Alternative sources of funding for subsequent years of the EC program will be identified in partnership with AARP, MPS, Read on Mesa and Read On Arizona.

Alternatives

The alternative would be to not offer the Experience Corps program in partnership with Mesa Public Schools.

Fiscal Impact

The program coordinator position funding will be contributed by Mesa Public Schools. Additional in-kind staff support and resources will be provided through City of Mesa, Mesa Public Schools and AARP EC.