



Memorandum

TO: RULES AND OPEN
GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE

FROM: Mayor Sam Liccardo

**SUBJECT: CRISTO REY WORK STUDY
AGREEMENT**

DATE:

APPROVED:

DATE: 8-22-19

RECOMMENDATION

- 1) Direct the City Attorney to discuss with the Council whether and how the existing agreement with Cristo Rey can be re-negotiated to enable a re-bid of the remaining three years of the contract.
- 2) If some portion of the contract may be re-bid, then direct the City Manager to:
 - a. re-bid the remaining term of the contract, but utilize criteria that ensure that paid work-study job opportunities be focused on students from low-income families, and any other criteria that the City Manager deems relevant to the student's readiness and availability for City employment.
 - b. reach out directly—by phone or in person—to senior staff at the Superintendents' offices in at least each of the three largest public high school districts in San Jose— East Side, San Jose Unified, and Campbell—to ensure their notification of the opportunity to participate in the RFP.
 - c. Return to Council with an assessment of each of the City's varied work-study arrangements with students, including the several hundred students working in the City's San Jose Works program (with Strive), and other City-funded programs, to determine whether all high school districts have an equitable opportunity to have their low-income students participate in those programs.

BACKGROUND

On August 6, 2019, the City Council voted unanimously to award a four-year work-study agreement to Cristo Rey San Jose Jesuit High School. Cristo Rey has a unique mission to help students from very low-income families—predominantly first-and second-generation Latino students—achieve college success. They have succeeded tremendously in their first six years, enabling nearly every graduate to become the first in their families to attend college. Their success results from a unique work-study model, which has the students working at least one day each week with local employers, who pay for part of the cost of the Cristo Rey college

preparatory education. Each student's family typically pays no more than a few hundred dollars a year for tuition.

The City of San Jose, like the Valley Transportation Authority and the County of Santa Clara, hires students from Cristo Rey to participate in work-study programs. The City determined that it should, in fairness, conduct a request for proposals with other schools and school districts for program participation.

After the Council's vote, I had a telephone conversation with East Side Union High School District Superintendent Chris Funk, who asserted that his office had no notification of the opportunity to participate in the program. East Side is a District with which we have very active engagement on several City-funded (and Mayor-fundraised) work-related programs, such as San Jose Works (and its partner program, Strive), which provides paid internships to hundreds of students drawn predominantly from ESUHSD, as well as students from Campbell and San Jose Unified school districts. Our Digital Inclusion partnership has already provided broadband access to 6,000 families served by James Lick High School, and is expanding this year to Overfelt—also a unique partnership among districts. The San Jose College Promise, which provides college education without cost for fees, books, or tuition to 1,500 students, many of them East Side graduates.

My inquiry with City staff revealed that City staff sent emails through the BidSync e-procurement notification system to various districts, and to a number of individual high schools. That approach had several flaws, including the use of an outdated email list; it appears doubtful that several of the intended recipient institutions even received an email.

Cristo Rey students have begun their classes and work-study experiences for this year, and we should not pull the rug out on their reasonable reliance on the City's agreement. However, if legally permitted to do so, the City should re-bid the remaining portion of the contract.

It is important to note that the contract awarded to Cristo Rey was not a grant – as outlined in the agreement, Cristo Rey will be paid a fixed fee per student placed in City Hall, and the number of students (up to 20 students the first year, and up to 24 for the remaining years of the agreement) will be up to the discretion of the City. The number of positions will be dependent on Department Directors who can identify a need and vacancy savings in their department to pay for a work study student position. As public entities, any school district with a work-study program may approach the City to establish similar agreements without going through an RFP process.

Regardless, the City should continue to focus this opportunity for the benefit of students from very low-income families. Students with college-educated parents are more likely to have independent access to employers for summer jobs and work-study. I encourage staff to come back to Council with a more comprehensive picture of the work-study and work opportunities that we currently provide to students, so that the Council and the public can better understand what is being offered, and we can ensure equitable access.