



Contra  
Costa  
County

To: Board of Supervisors  
From: Melinda Cervantes, County Librarian  
Date: November 14, 2017

Subject: Grant for 10 Starling Wearable Word Counting Devices

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**RECOMMENDATION(S):**

APPROVE and AUTHORIZE the County Librarian, or designee, to apply for and accept a grant in the form of ten Starling wearable word counting devices from the California State Library for the San Pablo Library for the period October 1, 2017 through September 31, 2018.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

No Library Fund match.

**BACKGROUND:**

If granted, the Starling Pilot Project will award Contra Costa County Library a supply of ten Starlings, as well as staff training and support, to pilot various approaches to sharing and/or loaning Starlings to families. Starlings are wearable word counters that pick up vocal sound waves in order to count the number of words a child is hearing. The number of words can be accessed through a parent's smartphone app and can demonstrate to the parent the power of words in an effort to inspire them to sustain and expand their early learning and literacy efforts. The Starling pilot project will take place at the San Pablo Library in partnership with the Early Learning Center at Contra Costa College. A project such as this fits in perfectly

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☒ APPROVE

☐ OTHER

☒ RECOMMENDATION OF CNTY ADMINISTRATOR

☐ RECOMMENDATION OF BOARD COMMITTEE

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Action of Board On: 11/14/2017 ☒ APPROVED AS RECOMMENDED ☐ OTHER

Clerks Notes:

**VOTE OF SUPERVISORS**

AYE: John Gioia, District I  
Supervisor  
Candace Andersen, District II  
Supervisor  
Karen Mitchoff, District IV  
Supervisor

ABSENT: Diane Burgis, District III  
Supervisor  
Federal D. Glover, District V  
Supervisor

I hereby certify that this is a true and correct copy of an action taken and entered on the minutes of the Board of Supervisors on the date shown.

ATTESTED: November 14, 2017

David Twa, County Administrator and Clerk of the Board of Supervisors

By: June McHuen, Deputy

Contact: Alison McKee,  
925-608-7790

cc:

with the goals of the Library to support early literacy in the community, and the mission of the Early Learning Center to support parents who are enrolled at Contra Costa College.

### CONSEQUENCE OF NEGATIVE ACTION:

The Library will not be granted the use of the Starlings devices.

### CHILDREN'S IMPACT STATEMENT:

This project supports two of the community outcomes established in the Children's Report Card: Children Ready for and Succeeding in School and Children and Youth Healthy and Preparing for Productive Adulthood. One of the most important early literacy practices is parent engagement. Bridging the word gap experienced by many lower-income children is extremely important, and Starling devices provide a concrete method for measuring the frequency of words spoken to children and assists parents with a method for measuring the increase in the words spoken while engaging in extra time reading, singing and talking to one another. The Starling Pilot Project will allow CCCL to be involved in discovering how technology can be used to help bridge the word gap in communities that stand to gain the most from learning to be their child's most effective first teacher equipped to successfully prepare their child to succeed in school and graduate so that they'll be productive adults ready to contribute positively to their communities.