



**JOINT RESOLUTION
of the
AUSTIN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT, CITY OF AUSTIN,
and COUNTY OF TRAVIS in the STATE OF TEXAS
regarding
THE JOINT ADOPTION OF A LITERACY CAMPAIGN**

WHEREAS, literacy is critical to enhancing the region's economic vitality and human capital; linked with improved health, employment prospects, and socio-economic status for individuals; and fundamental for learning in school, for participating in society, and understanding important public issues; and

WHEREAS, 13% of adults aged 16+ in Travis County struggle with reading or cannot read,¹ and 20% of adults in Central Texas cannot read or write well enough to fill out a job application;² and

WHEREAS, statistics show that the percentage of students who read almost every day for fun declines as students get older. In 2004, the percentage of students who read almost every day for fun was 54% for 9-year-olds, 30% for 13-year-olds, and 22% for 17-year-olds.³ The percentage of students who never read was 8% for 9-year-olds, 13% for 13-year-olds, and 19% for 17-year-olds;⁴ and

¹ U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

² Literacy Coalition of Central Texas (2008).

³ Perie, Marianne, and Rebecca Moran. U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics. *NAEP 2004 Trends in Academic Progress: Three Decades of Student Performance in Reading and Mathematics*. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office (2005).

⁴ National Endowment for the Arts. *To Read or Not to Read: A Question of National Consequence* (2007).

WHEREAS, the gap between proficient and struggling readers in Austin is largest between economically disadvantaged and non-economically disadvantaged students.⁵ Research shows that the achievement gap appears long before children reach kindergarten, and can become evident as early as age nine months;⁶ and

WHEREAS, in Austin, the distribution of kindergarten readiness data from the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test, which is given to pre-K students in their native language, showed that in Fall 2010, 73% of pre-K students (rather than the expected 50%) had scores below the national average, and 37% of pre-K students were at least one standard deviation below average;⁷ and

WHEREAS, at-risk children are:

- 25% more likely to drop out of school;⁸
- 40% more likely to become a teen parent;⁹
- 50% more likely to be placed in special education;¹⁰
- 60% more likely to never attend college;¹¹
- 70% more likely to be arrested for a violent crime;¹² and

⁵ Austin ISD Assessment & Test Validation System, End-of-year data, 2010-2011.

⁶ Halle, T., Forry, N., Hair, E., Perper, K., Wandner, L., Wessel, J., & Vick, J. "Disparities in early learning and development: Lessons from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study – Birth Cohort (ECLS-B)" (2009).

⁷ Austin ISD Study, 10.46RBA Prekindergarten Evaluation of Student Performance, 2010 – 2011.

⁸ Barnett, W.S., and L.N. Masse. "A Benefit-Cost Analysis of the Abecedarian Early Childhood Intervention." New Brunswick, NJ: National Institute for Early Education Research (2002).

⁹ Campbell, F. A., Ramey, C. T., Pungello, E. P., Sparling, J., & Miller-Johnson, S. "Early Childhood Education: Young Adult Outcomes from the Abecedarian Project." *Applied Developmental Science*, 6, 42-57 (2002).

¹⁰ Barnett and Masse, note 8.

¹¹ Barnett and Masse, note 8.

¹² Reynolds, A., Temple, J., Robertson, D., Mann, E. "Long-term Effects of an Early Childhood Intervention on Educational Achievement and Juvenile Arrest." *Journal of the American Medical Association*. Vol. 285, No. 18, pp. 2339-2346 (2001).

WHEREAS, the City of Austin (City), Austin Independent School District (District), and Travis County (County) support the need for the community to come together around literacy, enhance the community's awareness of local literacy issues, and increase the knowledge of skill sets involved with literacy for students and adults; and

WHEREAS, on May 27, 2011, the Literacy Coalition of Central Texas presented its action plan proposal to the Joint Subcommittees, and the Members of the Joint Subcommittees evidenced their support for such an initiative; and

WHEREAS, it is in the best interest of all residents of the City, the County, and the District that the governmental bodies maximize collaboration in and coordination of all major planning efforts in improving literacy rates and skills within their respective jurisdictions; and

WHEREAS, on September 30, 2011, the Joint Subcommittees adopted a motion recommending the adoption of the Joint Resolution of the Austin Independent School District, City of Austin, and County of Travis in the State of Texas regarding the Joint Adoption of a Literacy Campaign.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN, THE COMMISSIONER'S COURT OF TRAVIS COUNTY, AND THE BOARD OF THE DISTRICT:

That the Joint Subcommittees have recommended to their respective governing bodies that the Joint Subcommittees are authorized and directed to oversee the development of working and advisory groups as they deem necessary or appropriate to assist the three governmental bodies in the creation and enhancement of programs that support increasing literacy rates and skills, that may include, but are not limited to, the following proposals:

- Increase general community awareness of literacy needs by developing and launching a strategic marketing campaign;
- Connect adults in need of services with instructional programs;
- Increase parents' ability to help their children's literacy rates through a mass media campaign;
- Increase capacity to improve early literacy and literacy for children in and out of school time;
- Build the capacity of direct literacy services and referrals; and
- Consider funding to support the above proposals from each of the governing bodies in an amount that is approved and budgeted by each respective governing body in the applicable fiscal year budget process; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That the Joint Subcommittees have recommended to their respective governing bodies that the Joint Subcommittees are authorized and directed to work with the City of Austin Library Foundation, as well as local businesses and non-profit organizations, to initiate a community wide reading program; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That the governing bodies of the District, City and County hereby accept the recommendations of the Joint Subcommittees and authorize and direct that the efforts outlined in this Resolution be pursued with the understanding that any commitment of funds, services and activities will be preceded by agreement(s) that is authorized by each governing body which is a party to the agreement(s), negotiated, and agreed to in writing by the City, County and District.

ADOPTED: _____, 2011

Lee Leffingwell
Mayor
City of Austin

ATTEST: _____
Shirley A. Gentry
City Clerk

ADOPTED: _____, 2011

Mark Williams
President
Austin ISD

ATTEST: _____
Elaine Hopkins
Secretary to the Board

ADOPTED: _____, 2011

Sam Biscoe
Judge
Travis County