

DRAFT Resolution supporting HB4

February 8, 2017

WHEREAS, The Early Childhood Council of the City of Austin is charged with making recommendations to the City Council that support optimal development of young children and their families, continued development of a system of high-quality early care and education, and cooperative arrangements to support quality early care and education; and

WHEREAS, Today's children are the workforce of the future for the City of Austin; and

WHEREAS, There is strong evidence that children who attend high quality pre-kindergarten programs are more likely to be ready for kindergarten than those who do not attend; and

WHEREAS, There is strong evidence that the benefits of early childhood education are much greater when that education is high quality; and

WHEREAS, There is strong evidence that the preschool years are critically important for success in school, likelihood of graduating from high school, and being a productive citizen; and

WHEREAS, Economists and other experts agree that the return on investment in education is greatest for programs offered in the first five years of life; and

WHEREAS, In conjunction with the Governor's commitment to pre-kindergarten education, the State of Texas (HB 4) appropriated \$118 million in the last year for quality improvement of pre-kindergarten programs throughout the state, enabling them to provide professional development, full-day programs, and other improvements in quality; and

WHEREAS, The current budget proposed in the Senate includes a reduction to about 2/3 of last year's amount to \$75 million per year which will limit the efforts of school districts, including AISD, to continue quality improvements;

WHEREAS, The City of Austin Early Childhood Council recommends that the City Council support full continued funding for HB4; NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN: The City's legislative agenda for the state is hereby amended to support continuing funding HB4 at the current level of \$118 million or more per year for the next two years.