

**CITY OF SAN ANTONIO
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY INITIATIVES
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA MEMORANDUM**

TO: Mayor and City Council

FROM: Dennis J. Campa, Director, Department of Community Initiatives

SUBJECT: Agreements with Local Independent School Districts and Community-Based Organizations in connection with the Single Portal Entry/Kid First Initiative

DATE: January 5, 2006

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This ordinance authorizes the execution of Agreements with Local Independent School Districts and Community-based organizations for the provision of a customized web-based childcare database in connection with the Single Portal Entry/Kid First Initiative.

Staff recommends approval of this ordinance.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Single Portal of Entry (SPE)/KidFirst Initiative is an internet-based methodology for providing San Antonio's families with ready access to publicly funded early education and care programs. The SPE is intended to be an electronic bridge for information on parents seeking publicly funded childcare and available publicly funded childcare slots. It allows for the information to be cross-referenced and maintained in a single database.

Three intended users of the SPE database are parents, caseworkers, and collaborators of the project. Parents, through the SPE, are able to determine if they are eligible for assistance and, if so, through which collaborative program and in particular, which location has available space. Caseworkers working for collaborators, or other non-profit or governmental agencies, are able to assist parents determine eligibility and availability of publicly-funded child care assistance. Collaborators in the project can analyze both needs and demand while managing their own publicly funded child care system slots by knowing what other publicly funded child care systems slots are available on a real-time basis.

Early childhood education and development programs in the City of San Antonio have existed for many years. The three largest publicly funded early childhood education and development programs are the Child Care Delivery System (CCDS), Head Start and Public School Pre-Kindergarten (Pre-K). CCDS is managed by the City of San Antonio, Department of Community

Initiatives, under a contract with the Texas Workforce Commission through Alamo Workforce Development, Inc d/b/a Alamo WorkSource. Parent Child Incorporated (PCI) manages the Head Start Program, under a contact with the City of San Antonio. Public Pre-K's are funded by the Texas Education Agency and managed by each of the separate independent school districts in the City. Over 21,000 children are served each year through early childhood education and development programs.

Presently, early childhood education and development programs work in collaboration, and frequently exchange operational information. However, there is no interface between the information systems that support these programs. Each program's data, including critical client information, are housed in databases that are incompatible with each other. Therefore, data sharing can only be done manually and often results in client duplication within the databases. Managing waiting lists becomes cumbersome, prone to error, and results in inefficiency in the services provided for children aged three to five in the local service delivery area. COSA, in collaboration with PCI and local independent school districts, advocates an early childhood system that supports a single portal of entry for all three of these publicly funded early childhood education and care programs: CCDS, Head Start and Public Pre-Kindergarten.

During the development phase of the SPE system, two major bills were introduced in the Texas Legislature, which complement such a system. Senate Bill 76, introduced in January 2003, emphasizes that school districts exhaust all possibilities before starting a new pre-kindergarten program. House Bill 1019, introduced in February 2005, supports a single point of entry for families for childcare and education related activities. Each bill supports the efforts of the SPE and realizes the importance of maximizing current resources through collaboration. This system has also gained recognition by the Texas Workforce Commission and the National League of Cities (NLC). The SPE was highlighted at the NLC Summit for Children and Families, held in San Antonio in September 2005.

Collaborating programs were engaged to assist in the testing of the SPE system in 2004. The User Acceptance Testing was very successful as there were no major issues. Development of the SPE has been completed and information from the CCDS, Head Start, and Harlandale Independent School District (ISD) has been uploaded into the system. To maximize its use, DCI proposes to enter into agreements with local ISD's and community-based organizations wishing to utilize and support the SPE. Recruitment of additional collaborators will continue.

POLICY ANALYSIS

This ordinance addresses the core area of family strengthening and supports the City's efforts to provide high quality early care and education, seamless safety net services, and convenient and decentralized access to services for its residents.

FISCAL IMPACT

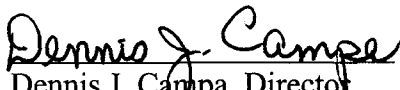
This action requires no General Fund commitment.

COORDINATION

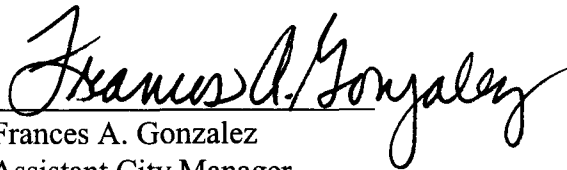
Coordination has occurred with the City Attorney's Office, Information Technology Services Department, Metropolitan Health District, San Antonio Parks and Recreation, Risk Management, External Relations Department and local Independent School Districts.

SUPPLEMENTARY COMMENTS

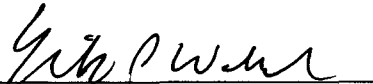
Provisions of the City's ethics ordinance do not apply.



Dennis J. Campa, Director
Department of Community Initiatives



Frances A. Gonzalez
Assistant City Manager


+ Sheryl Sculley
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