



MINUTES EARLY CARE & EDUCATION COMMITTEE MEETING

Workforce Solutions Alamo
100 N. Santa Rosa St., Suite 120,
Boardroom San Antonio, TX 78207
April 10, 2026
9:00 AM

BOARD OF DIRECTORS: Ana DeHoyos O'Connor, Leslie Cantu, Dawn Dixon, Elizabeth Lutz
Excused Absence: Eunice Grant

VOLUNTEER MEMBERS: Dr. Henrietta Munoz, Mark Larson, Dr. Todd Landry, Ashley Orihel, Liza Gomez, Lisa Elizondo, Dr. Melissa Jozwiak

STAFF: Adrian Lopez, Tim Schindler, Carlos Garcia, Eric Vryn, Gabriela Navarro Garcia, Jessica Lockhart, Abigail Garcia, Patricia Alejandro, Jessica Bracamonte

GUESTS: Gracia Regalado, Stephanie Bustos, Mindy Jimenez, D'Undray Peterson

LEGAL COUNSEL: None

AGENDA

Agenda items may not be considered in the order they appear.

Citizens may appear before the Committee to speak for or against any item on the agenda in accordance with procedural rules governing meetings. Speakers are limited to three (3) minutes on each topic (6 minutes if translation is needed) if they register at the beginning of the meeting. Questions relating to these rules may be directed to Janel Santos (210) 850-2160.

The Chair of the Committee will be at the Host Location. The Host location is specified above. Meetings will be visible and audible to the public at the Host location, and there will be a visual or audio recording of the meeting. There will be a two-way audio and video of the meeting between each Board member sufficient that Board members and public can hear and see them. WSA will comply with all Videoconferencing Guidelines.

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During the Public Comments portion of the meeting (Agenda Item 4), the Public may type their name into the chat box or unmute themselves and state their name. The meeting host will call each member of the public for comments; in the order their names were submitted.

Workforce Solutions Alamo is an equal opportunity employer/program. Persons with disabilities who plan to attend this meeting and who may need auxiliary aids, services, or special accommodation should contact Janel Santos at (210) 850-2160 so that appropriate arrangements can be made. Relay Texas: 1-800-735-2969 (TDD) or 711 (Voice).

I. CALL TO ORDER

Presenter: Ana DeHoyos O'Connor, Committee Chair

At 9:01 AM, Chair Ana DeHoyos O'Connor called the meeting to order.

II. ROLL CALL AND QUORUM DETERMINATION

Presenter: Ana DeHoyos O'Connor, Committee Chair

The roll was called, and a quorum was declared present.

III. DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICT-OF-INTEREST

Presenter: Ana DeHoyos O'Connor, Committee Chair

None.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT

Presenter: Ana DeHoyos O'Connor, Committee Chair

None.

V. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON MEETING MINUTES

Presenter: Ana DeHoyos O'Connor, Committee Chair

a. Meeting Minutes - January 16, 2026

Motion to approve the meeting minutes by Leslie Cantu, seconded by Dawn Dixon. All in favor of approving the minutes of the meeting being held on January 16, 2026.

VI. CONSENT AGENDA (DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION)

Presenter: Ana DeHoyos O'Connor, Committee Chair

a. Texas Rising Star Update

Committee Chair, Ana DeHoyos O'Connor presented the Consent Agenda. No vote was taken.

The Texas Rising Star program, a Quality Rating and Improvement System administered in conjunction with the Texas Workforce Commission's (TWC) Child Care Services (CCS) program, recognizes and supports high-quality early childhood education programs. The program offers three distinct levels of quality certification—Two-Star, Three-Star, and Four-Star—designed to incentivize continuous quality improvement. These tiered certifications correlate with enhanced reimbursement rates for providers serving children receiving child care scholarships. TRS-certified programs, which demonstrably exceed the minimum standards set forth by the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) Child Care Regulation (CCR), are positioned to significantly contribute to the positive physical, social-emotional, and cognitive development of children. As of March 26th, 2026, the Alamo region boasts 487 TRS-certified Early Learning Programs of the 587 CCS programs. This cohort comprises 283 Four-Star, 158 Three-Star, and 46 Two-Star programs. TRS-certified programs represent 83% of all CCS programs within the Alamo region. TRS mentors and boards maintain consistent engagement with the Centralizing Assessment Entity to ensure a shared understanding of roles and responsibilities related to assessments. The number of providers with active scholarship agreements continues to fluctuate.

VII. CHILD CARE CHAMPION (DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION)

Presenter: Kim Gomez, Assistant Director of Child Care Quality

Kim Gomez introduced Ms. Gracie Regalado and Ms. Stephanie Bustos.

a. **Gracie Regalado, owner of Learning with Grace Educational Child Care and Learning with Grace Educational Child Care #2 reported on the impact of the Texas Rising Star (TRS) Staff Retention Grant. Six staff members at the first location received a total of**

\$11,000.00, and three staff members at the second location received a total of \$7,400.00. Ms. Regalado reported that both centers retained all staff, with the second location adding an additional staff member. She also shared staff testimonials, including one from Jennifer McKinnon, who described how the grant helped relieve a financial burden, and another testimonial from Natalie Regalado, U.T.S.A student who applied her grant funds toward college expenses. Ms. Regalado thanked the Board for its support through the TRS Staff Retention Grant.

- b. Stephanie Bustos, owner of Bustos Daycare and Learning Center and Bustos Youth Center reported that the facility was a recipient of the Texas Rising Star Retention Grant in the amount of \$5,000.00. Ms. Bustos presented photos of the daycare and youth centers to the Board, highlighting how the grant funds from the Texas Rising Star Maintenance Incentive were utilized to support development activities to enhance the learning environment of the facility. Ms. Bustos also thanked the Board for its support.**

VIII. PRESENTATION: LiftFund Inc. (DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION)

Presenter: Mindy Jimenez, Vice President of Advancement for LiftFund Inc.

Mindy Jimenez, provided an overview of the partnership between LiftFund and Workforce Solutions Alamo (WSA) in support of the Texas Rising Star (TRS) Certification Program. The partnership provides childcare entrepreneurs with training, technical assistance, business education, and access to capital to strengthen and sustain their businesses. Ms. Jimenez reported that from 2024-2026, the partnership served more than 100 childcare entrepreneurs and delivered more than eight workshops, with at least fifteen providers participating in each session. Training topics included the TRS certification process, access to capital, bookkeeping and finance, and business sustainability. Ms. Jimenez thanked the Board and WSA staff for their continued partnership and support of childcare entrepreneurs throughout the Alamo region.

IX. CHILD CARE UPDATES (DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION)

Presenter: Timothy Schindler, Director of Child Care, Jessica Lockhart, Assistant Director of Childcare Services and Kimberly Gomez, Assistant Director of Child Care Quality

- a. TWC Performance Target**

Jessica Lockhart reported that the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) revised the Board Contract Year (BCY) 2026 target for the average number of children served per day following a correction to its calculation methodology. WSA's target was reduced from 12,994 to 12,509 children, a decrease of 485. Ms. Lockhart reported that Alamo received an additional \$576,903 to support the higher average cost of care. TWC also approved an additional \$2,087,625 in Child Care Services (CCS) funding following the BCY 2025 year-end reconciliation and higher-than-projected costs. WSA will begin intake for select priority populations to enroll approximately 300 children and will continue monitoring enrollment and expenditures to meet the revised performance target.

- b. Child Care Service – Open Intake**

Jessica Lockhart reported that, based on WSA's revised BCY 2026 performance targets and updated financial forecasts, there is a need to open Child Care Services (CCS) enrollment for select priority populations currently on the waitlist. WSA Fiscal reviewed contractor forecasts, projected expenditures, and the estimated cost of new enrollments and recommended initially enrolling approximately 300 children.

Ms. Lockhart explained that keeping intake closed could result in a year-end surplus of funds and could also impact on WSA's ability to meet its performance target. Enrolling approximately 300 children will assist WSA in meeting the revised target while ensuring projected carry-over funds remain within the recommended amount.

WSA will continue to monitor enrollment, expenditures, and financial forecasts to determine whether additional children can be enrolled while maintaining fiscal and performance targets.

c. Texas Education Freedom Accounts (TEFA) Updates

Mr. Schindler reported that based on WSA's revised BCY 2026 performance targets and updated financial forecasts, there is a need to open Child Care Services (CCS) enrollment for select priority populations currently on the waitlist. The fiscal department reviewed contractor forecasts, projected expenditures, and the estimated cost of new enrollments and recommended initially enrolling approximately 300 children.

Mr. Schindler explained that keeping intake closed could result in a year-end surplus of funds and could also impact WSA's ability to meet its performance target. Enrolling approximately 300 children will assist WSA in meeting the revised target while ensuring projected carry-over funds remain within the recommended amount. WSA will continue to monitor enrollment, expenditures, and financial forecasts to determine whether additional children can be enrolled while maintaining fiscal and performance targets.

d. Parent Cafe- Be Strong Families Parent Cafe Training Institute

Kimberly Gomez reported that Workforce Solutions Alamo recognizes that parent/family involvement and education is vital for young children's development and supports Texas Rising Star certification measures in Category 3: Program Administration. Through Parent Cafes, families will have a physically and emotionally safe space to share their experiences. Be Strong Families is known for using structured, small group conversations to facilitate healing with families, build community and develop peer-to-peer relationships. Six Texas Rising Star Mentors have received training to conduct Parent Cafes in the Alamo area to strengthen parent involvement and education. Additionally, six mentors attended a two-day Parent Café training in San Antonio hosted by Family Support Services. Training prepared participants to convene and conduct in-person Parent Cafes and to serve as Table Hosts during them. A planning and implementation timeline was also outlined in the presentation. Focus outreach opportunities were also reported and that the focus for outreach would be the rural county with a high number of centers and the city with the highest number of centers. Ms. Gomez also reported that the participation goal for families to enroll in the Parent Café sessions is 30 participants. It was determined that quality staff will outreach families in Schertz located in Guadalupe County. There are currently 41 centers located in Guadalupe and 13 in Schertz, excluding the after-school programs, staff identified 8 centers to outreach in Schertz. The eight programs have a combined licensing capacity of 1,185 and a combined enrollment of 660 children (data from October from seven programs). This represents 403 families from the available data from seven programs.

X. PARTNER UPDATES (DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION)

a. United Way – Provider Council

A representative from United Way provided an update for the following programs:

Directors of Excellence Program – The peer-to-peer mentoring program for directors and providers pursuing Texas Rising Star Certification has been relaunched. Thirteen directors were accepted into the program and participated in kickoff meetings in March. Participants received stipends and were matched with certified directors to provide mentoring support. The program will run from April through September, with participants expected to have at least two touchpoints with their mentor. There are plans to continue expanding the program.

Provider Council – Thirty-nine providers have expressed interest in participating in the Provider Council. The first meeting was held in February, with the next meeting scheduled for April 28. Providers will discuss current challenges, prioritize issues to be elevated and addressed, and identify potential actions. Key information and priorities identified by the Council will be shared at the quarterly meeting.

b. Pre-K for SA – Updates on Quality Initiatives

A representative from Pre-K 4 SA provided an update on the Early Learning Shared Services Alliance (ELSSA) quality initiatives. The presentation highlighted efforts to expand support for early childhood providers through professional learning, technical assistance, and extended-hour child care opportunities. Staff reported that a Professional Learning Specialist was hired to lead support efforts, an initial cohort of five providers located near military installations was established, all participating providers were enrolled in the Military Child Care in Your Neighborhood Plus (MCCYN+) program, and access to extended-hour care was expanded, including a 24-hour care option. The presentation also included an overview of alliance-wide data demonstrating the impact of the initiative. Current data showed participation by 644 teachers across the alliance, with the majority serving infants, toddlers, and preschool-aged children. Staff reported that the alliance's average hourly teacher wage was \$14.36, exceeding the San Antonio and Texas averages, while emphasizing the continued need to strengthen compensation and support for the early childhood workforce.

c. Texas A&M University San Antonio

i. Early Matters – Recap of All Partners Convening

Mark Larsen from Texas A&M University–San Antonio and Early Matters San Antonio provided a recap of the Early Matters Partners Convening and highlighted the community's goal of ensuring that 70 percent of Bexar County children are kindergarten-ready by 2030. The presentation included an overview of the inaugural 2025 Early Matters Impact Report and collaborative efforts among community partners to improve kindergarten readiness and long-term academic success. The presenter also shared findings from a longitudinal research study examining the relationship between kindergarten readiness and third-grade outcomes. The analysis demonstrated that children who enter kindergarten ready are more likely to achieve higher reading and mathematics performance in third grade. The study found positive outcomes across multiple student populations while identifying opportunities to improve results for economically disadvantaged students, English language learners, and other priority populations. The presentation concluded with an overview of current kindergarten readiness trends in Bexar County and ongoing collaborative efforts among community partners to achieve the countywide goal of 70 percent kindergarten readiness by 2030. Dr. Henrietta Munoz and Dr. Melissa Jozwiak also provided a brief update regarding

the new EduCare Center on the campus. Construction is underway and going as planned

XI. CEO REPORT (DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION)

Presenter: Adrian Lopez, CEO

a. Impact Awards - Honoring Those Who Took the Chance...

Mr. Adrian Lopez, Chief Executive Officer, provided a recap of the 2026 Workforce Solutions Alamo Impact Awards, themed "Honoring Those Who Took the Chance." The CEO recognized the event's success in celebrating individuals, employers, and community partners whose contributions have advanced workforce development throughout the Alamo region.

- i. Lakeshore Partnership – **Mr. Lopez also highlighted Workforce Solutions Alamo's partnership with Lakeshore Learning, acknowledging the organization's support of workforce and early childhood initiatives and its continued collaboration with the Board.**

- ii. Sponsorship

b. Local Match Partnerships

Mr. Lopez, reported on Workforce Solutions Alamo's local match partnerships supporting Child Care Services. Through partnerships with EQUUS, United Way of San Antonio and Bexar County, Early Matters San Antonio, and the YMCA of Greater San Antonio, Alamo secured more than \$8.7 million in local match funding, exceeding the 2026 local match target and leveraging more than \$17.4 million in federal matching funds.

XII. CHAIR REPORT (DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION)

Presenter: Ana DeHoyos O'Connor, Committee Chair

a. Board Retreat

Ms. Ana DeHoyos O'Connor, Committee Chair, provided a summary of the Board Retreat. The Early Care & Education Committee reported its 2026 priorities, which include increasing awareness of regional child care gaps, strengthening pathways into the child care profession, and expanding business engagement to support child care solutions. The committee discussed challenges related to provider sustainability, workforce shortages, affordability, and opportunities to support new and existing child care businesses.

The committee also discussed potential strategies to address these priorities, including exploring a pilot program in partnership with the City of San Antonio or the U.S. Department of Labor, expanding provider training and business support resources, increasing employer engagement, and enhancing data collection to measure outcomes and support future decision-making.

XIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Pursuant to Chapter 551 of the Texas Open Meetings Act, the Committee may move into Executive

Session for discussion on any issue for which there is an exception to the Act as set out in section

on 551.071 et. seq. including, but not limited to, the following:

- a. Government Code §551.072 – Discussions Regarding Purchase, Exchange, Lease, or Value of Real Property if Deliberation in an Open Meeting Would Have a Detrimental Effect on the Position of Workforce Solutions Alamo in Negotiations with a Third Party;
- b. Government Code §551.071 – All Matters Where Workforce Solutions Alamo Seeks the Advice of its Attorney as Privileged Communications Under the Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct of the State Bar of Texas, Pending or Contemplated Litigation; and/or Settlement Offer;
- c. Government Code §551.074 – To deliberate the appointment, employment, evaluation, reassignment, duties, discipline, or dismissal of a public officer or employee of Workforce Solutions Alamo.

None.

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

Presenter: Ana DeHoyos O'Connor, Committee Chair

There being no further business item, the meeting adjourned at 10:36 AM.