



MINUTES EARLY CARE & EDUCATION COMMITTEE MEETING

Workforce Solutions Alamo
100 N. Santa Rosa St., Suite 120, Boardroom San
Antonio, TX 78207
April 4, 2025
10:00AM

BOARD OF DIRECTORS: Ana DeHoyos O'Connor, Leslie Cantu, Elizabeth Lutz, Yousef Kassim

COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Dr. Todd Landry, Dr. Henrietta Munoz, Ashley Orihel, Jennifer Martinez, Eunice Grant

STAFF: Adrian Lopez, Teresa Chavez, Brandee Perez, Eric Vryn, Gabriela Navarro Garcia, Kristen Rodriguez, Becky Espino-Balencia, Dr. Ricardo Ramirez, Trema Cote, Gregory Villines, Jesse Maldonado, Juan Palencia, Maria Martinez, Kimberly Gomez, Jessica Villarreal, Victoria Rodriguez, Chris Ferguson, Erika Landeros, Giovianne Washington, Jessica Lockhart, Sandra Alvarez, Janel Santos

PARTNER STAFF: None

GUESTS: Jessica Bracamonte, Patricia Alejandro, Liza Gomez, Jessica Vachon, Gabriella Oviedo, Tabitha Munoz, Sonia Oviedo, Leticia Munoz, Teresa Robledo,

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. People 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 10:00 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 24, 2025

Motion to approve the meeting minutes by Yousef Kassim, seconded by Eunice Grant.

All in favor of approving the minutes of the meeting held on January 24, 2025.

VI. DIRECTOR FEEDBACK: ACADEMY EXPERIENCE & WORKFORCE INITIATIVES (DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION)

Presenter: Kimberly Gomez, Child Care Quality Manager

The meeting highlighted the success of local childcare programs, emphasized the importance of supporting and retaining staff, and provided updates on early childhood education initiatives in Texas. Three childcare programs recently graduated from a 10-month Leadership Academy that focused on building strong leadership skills, supporting staff, and improving retention, especially critical after the challenges posed by COVID-19. Participants expressed deep appreciation for the incentives and support they received. Programs shared how the academy helped them shift their mindset to prioritize collaboration and staff well-being. Examples included creating dedicated spaces for teachers to decompress and fostering a close-knit, family-like atmosphere where staff and children stay for many years. The agency's work was praised as transformation rather than transactional, driven by passionate staff and leadership. Directors and owners were commended for their dedication and commitment to serving the community.

a. San Antonio College (SAC) Early Childhood Center

Teresa Robledo has dedicated 27 years to the San Antonio College (SAC) Early Childhood Center, where she has served as Director for the past four years.

Teresa shared her experience attending the leadership academy with the teacher.

b. Angel Valley Christian Day Care

Leticia Munoz, owner of Angel Valley Christian Day Care since 1990, and her

daughter, Tabitha Munoz, shared remarks about their experience attending the leadership academy and their journey in delivering high-quality care for children.

c. **Creative Little Minds**

Sonia Oviedo, owner of Creative Little Minds, along with her daughter Gabriella Oviedo, shared their experiences attending the leadership academy. They expressed how meaningful it was to participate in a program that not only validates their work but also reassures them they are on the right path. Sonia emphasized the pride she takes in her center and highlighted the remarkable dedication of her staff, many of whom have been with the center for 25 years. She expressed deep gratitude for their hard work and unwavering commitment to the children throughout this journey.

VII. CHILDCARE UPDATES (DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION)

Presenter: Jessica Villarreal, Director of Child Care

a. **Childcare Performance Briefing**

For FY2025, TWC established Alamo's target units of care at 14,335. As of December 2024, WSA's unofficial year-to-date (YTD) performance was 14,215 units, indicating that Alamo continued to meet performance expectations for the first quarter of the fiscal year. This represents 99.16% of the annual target, reflecting strong initial progress. However, due to system limitations within the TX3C platform, the ability to accurately capture and report performance data has been constrained. As a result, the December figures currently represent the most reliable data available.

b. **Texas Rising Star Assessment Update**

The Texas Rising Star (TRS) program is a Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) administered in partnership with the Texas Workforce Commission's (TWC) Child Care Services (CCS) program. It is designed to recognize and support high-quality early childhood education programs across Texas. TRS certification is available to licensed childcare centers, licensed childcare homes, and registered childcare home facilities that meet established quality standards. The program features three levels of quality certification—Two-Star, Three-Star, and Four-Star—each intended to encourage and reward continuous quality improvement. These tiered certifications also align with enhanced reimbursement rates for providers serving children who receive childcare scholarships.

c. **Texas Rising Star Business Coach Update**

Our TRS Business Coach continues to play a critical role in supporting Early Learning programs by connecting them to essential resources, analyzing business models, and helping address staffing challenges. This support is complemented by TRS mentors who assist centers as they navigate the certification process. Notably, this coaching has influenced several programs to maintain their participation in the CCS and TRS initiatives. Additionally, the coach has been proactive in expanding available resources and support by fostering partnerships and facilitating training opportunities.

- d. **RFP Update: Management and Operations of Child Care Services (CCS)**
Workforce Solutions Alamo (WSA) – The Board of Directors previously approved a contract renewal for the Management and Operations of Child Care Services 4 through September 30, 2025. This represented the fourth of four (4) one-year renewal options and is now in the process of being reprocured. WSA requires the outsourcing of Management and Operations of Child Care Services. Accordingly, a Request for Proposals (RFP) was posted on February 26, 2025, on the Texas Electronic State Business Daily (ESBD) and WSA’s procurement platform, Bonfire. The RFP will remain open until the submission deadline of May 16, 2025.

VIII. PARTNER UPDATES

- a. **Early Matters**
Early Matters continues to focus on advocacy and policy efforts supporting early childhood education. Several bills under consideration aim to improve data integration and establish a dedicated work group to support these efforts. Notably, the Appropriations Committee has voted in favor of including \$100 million in state funding to help reduce the childcare waitlist across Texas.
- b. **United Way**
Our Directors and Business Roundtable is kicking off soon, and we’re really excited about the conversations and planning that will come from that. At United Way, we’re hiring a new coach to support centers working toward Texas Rising Star certification. This will help expand coaching capacity and deepen impact. We’ve been working closely with Alamo Colleges to align efforts, clarify systems, and strengthen partnerships. These discussions help us better understand their processes and identify ways to streamline pathways for our providers and staff. We’re also building connections with ECI (Early Childhood Intervention) programs, recognizing the growing need to better support children with developmental concerns. Our goal is to make it easier for directors and educators to know where to go, what to do, and how to access services quickly. One area we’re focused on improving is the pathway beyond Texas Rising Star. Getting certified is a great achievement, but we want to help providers understand “what’s next” in terms of continued growth and quality improvement. Finally, we’re also thinking about how to better equip directors and educators to have difficult conversations with families, especially when developmental concerns arise. Having the right resources and language makes those conversations more effective and compassionate.
- c. **Texas A&M University San Antonio**
The Educare groundbreaking event recently took place, with attendance from key figures, including both the outgoing and incoming chancellors. In another exciting development, Texas A&M University–San Antonio is launching a lab school to support the training of pre-service teachers. Additionally, the Early Learning Shared Services Alliance continues to provide vital support to childcare providers through leadership development, business coaching, and other resources aimed at strengthening operational capacity.

d. Pre-K for SA

Ashley Oriel, Services Manager with the Early Learning Shared Services Alliance provided an update on how their team supports childcare providers in San Antonio through three focus areas: leadership development, business sustainability, and professional learning. Right now, 46 of our centers are Texas Rising Star certified, with 13 more pending assessment which is a huge success in itself. Our coaches have been working closely with TRS mentors to ensure providers have the support they need. We're also offering business coaching to 54 providers, with real results reducing labor costs, cutting debt, and helping build stronger brands through websites, videos, and Google profiles. One exciting outcome: providers offering health insurance rose from 23% to 29%. Next, we'll be helping new providers implement childcare management systems to move from paper to digital. We're excited by this progress and proud to keep building a stronger early learning community together.

IX. CEO REPORT

Presenter: Adrian Lopez, CEO

a. Local Plan Occupations

Local Plan Occupations highlights included the childcare industry and how it's being prioritized in our local and strategic planning efforts. Mr. Lopez acknowledged the work our team has done in response to feedback from the childcare sector. We've made sure to include childcare occupations, especially childcare workers and preschool teachers, at the top of our priority list. These occupations remain critical, not just from an economic perspective but also because they serve as foundational workforce support for other industries. This matters for workforce development too. If someone enters the childcare workforce, we want to ensure they have clear pathways to advance such as earning a CDA (Child Development Associate credential) or pursuing other stackable credentials that build career growth. We're also looking at projected job growth over the next 10 years and the occupations most affected in this sector. One of the tools our staff developed is a simplified overview of career pathways in childcare. Many providers want to invest in staff development but don't always have a clear view of "what's next" in career progression. We're working to provide that clarity. We'll be sharing more tools soon that will break down: Graduation and certification trends locally; Educational attainment across relevant training programs; Apprenticeship or work-based learning models that apply to childcare and We've also added a wage target strategy we know not all childcare jobs will reach that immediately, and that's okay. We'll balance this with other occupations in higher-wage industries, keeping an eye on the average. As we move toward finalizing our local plan, our next step will be working with staff to simplify and clearly articulate childcare career pathways. We'll also leverage our infrastructure, especially our provider networks, to educate both the workforce and the broader community.

X. CHAIR REPORT

Presenter: Ana DeHoyos O'Connor, Committee Chair

I want to take a moment to thank Mr. Lopez and his team. I remember being in a meeting and asking, "Why can't childcare be recognized as part of the occupational industry list?" The answer I got was, "Because we're not paid enough." But I asked, "Can we change that? Can we make it happen?" And I want to acknowledge Jessica and

the team because they took that challenge seriously and worked incredibly hard to make it happen. It means so much to see childcare finally being prioritized alongside other industries. It validates the work you're all doing every day. And to everyone, thank you. You remind us why this committee exists, why we ask hard questions, and why we fight for solutions. Thank you for keeping your doors open to our children and our community. As we wrap up, thank you for being here. Our doors remain open to you. You are always welcome.

XI. EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Pursuant to Chapter 551 of the Texas Open Meetings Act, the Committee may move into an Executive Session for discussion on any issue for which there is an exception to the Act as set out in section 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 on the appointment, employment, evaluation, reassignment, duties, discipline or dismissal of a public officer or employee of Workforce Solutions Alamo.

NONE.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

Presenter: Ana DeHoyos O'Connor, Committee Chair

The meeting adjourned at 11:32 AM by Jennifer Martinez and Mark Larson.