



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

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Agenda Item Number: 3

Agenda Date: August 25, 2022

In Control: Community Health, Environment and Culture Committee

DEPARTMENT: Health Department

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Claude Jacob

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: Citywide

SUBJECT:

An update on the possibility of requiring that schools and universities which receive city funding ensure instruction on family violence, child abuse, and human trafficking.

SUMMARY:

Metro Health would like to provide an updated response to the Council Consideration Request filed by Councilmember Manny Pelaez on October 7, 2021, requesting City staff to draft an ordinance requiring that schools and universities which receive city funding ensure instruction on family violence, child abuse, and human trafficking.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Metro Health presented on this Council Consideration Request at the Governance Committee meeting on January 11, 2022. The Department recommended sending the response to the Community, Health, Equity, and Culture Committee (CHECC) for further review and presented

to the Committee on March 8, 2022. CHECC members had several inquiries and asked Metro Health to provide updates at the next Committee meeting.

The proposed CCR would require that K-12 schools, colleges, and universities provide age-appropriate and accurate instruction on the topics of child abuse, family violence, dating violence, sex trafficking, and the warning signs that a person may be at risk for sex trafficking, violence, or abuse. In the Summer of 2019, the City developed a five-year comprehensive domestic violence prevention plan. As a part of that plan, the Collaborative Commission on Domestic Violence (CCDV) was created. The CCDV is currently co-chaired by Bexar County Judge Monique Diaz and Deputy City Manager María Villagómez. Several of the strategies recommended in the plan directly support the recommendation of the CCR, including:

1. Promoting the adoption and implementation of comprehensive, evidence-based parenting education programs to reduce the incidence of child abuse, including the Positive Parenting Program (Triple P).
2. Expanding school-based prevention and engagement of service providers to reduce violence through the implementation of evidence-based violence prevention programming and structured partnerships between schools and community service providers.

Evidence-based community education programs that provide measurable behavior change are typically not one-time workshops, but generally structured curriculum requiring significant investment in both instructor training and resources. There are several evidence-based curricula for K-12 and college students, but all curricula share the features of multiple sessions by training facilitators. Quality, behavior change curricula require significant investment to execute with fidelity.

ISSUE:

State law requires public school districts (K-12) to provide appropriate grade-level curriculum for instruction regarding child abuse, family violence, dating violence, and sex trafficking, including likely warning signs that a child may be at risk for human trafficking (Senate Bill 9, 87th Legislature, 2021; resulted in changes in several portions of the Texas Education Code). The law requires that parents provide written consent for this curriculum offering, which takes effect during the 2022-2023 academic calendar. The law does not apply to private schools, colleges or universities, nor to charter schools.

State legislation also requires public colleges and universities adopt a policy on sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking; orient students on the policy; and implement a comprehensive prevention and outreach program for students (Texas Administrative Code, Title 19, Part 1, Section 3.4). Metro Health contacted Government Relations Departments of University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) and Alamo Colleges District (ACD) to inquire what these public universities and colleges are doing to implement instruction on sexual assault, sexual harassment and stalking as required by state law.

As part of its initial recommendation related to this CCR, Metro Health researched evidence-based curricula on domestic violence, child abuse, and human trafficking that we could share with

schools and ask them to implement. This could possibly pertain to private schools, universities, and colleges because they are not required to provide instruction on these three topics.

If COSA were to enact an ordinance requiring school-based programming for private and charter schools that contract with the City, it would require resources and close coordination with all stakeholders involved to ensure support is available for training and materials. Additionally, substitute teachers would be needed while staff is trained, would be required to implement high quality, evidence-based programming that can change outcomes in the community.

FISCAL IMPACT:

No fiscal impact at this time

ALTERNATIVES:

None are recommended at this time.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends continuing primary prevention efforts focused on evidence-based public health strategies that are either already in place or being set in motion. The City regulatory role in schools is limited.

However, the City is capable of offering no-cost, parenting support classes locally through the Triple P America curriculum, an evidence-based program used in more than 30 countries and designed to help parents model healthy relationships, set boundaries, and learn how to recognize emotions. Triple P has been shown to reduce child maltreatment rates across communities.

Additionally, the Collaborative Commission on Domestic Violence (CCDV), a County-City partnership co-chaired by Judge Monique Diaz and Deputy City Manager María Villagómez, serves as a system approach to addressing domestic violence as a collective problem. The CCDV recognizes that domestic violence cannot be solved by one organization, but rather depends on the collaboration of all actors involved. As part of this approach, the CCDV has two committees working on this education effort: the nonprofit committee and the education committee. Both are made up of subject-matter experts from our community.

The CCDV Education Committee and Nonprofit Committee are working to implement its proposed strategy to ensure evidence-based curricula on teen dating violence are used in schools.