

Los Angeles Unified School District
Board of Education



STEVEN ZIMMER
Board Member, District 4

March 21, 2016

Honorable Gilbert Cedillo
Los Angeles City Council
200 N Spring St, Los Angeles, CA 90012

Chairman Cedillo:

Date: 3-27-16
Submitted in HSG Committee
Council File No: 15-0697
Item No.: 1
Deputy: public

I write you today in strong support for the collaboration between LAUSD and the City of Los Angeles through the FamilySource Centers. More specifically, I write to advocate for full funding for all sixteen FamilySource Centers under the present model. While I recognize that it is never easy to push for funding beyond the CDBG allocation, this is one of those rare instances where the partnership so redefines the working relationship between LAUSD, the City of Los Angeles and community providers that to discontinue this level of support will set us back literally a decade in our ability to serve our neighborhoods in the most need. I therefore urge you and the Committee to recommend continued full funding of \$800,000 to the 16 FamilySource Centers under this model.

Back when I was a teacher and counselor advocating with families in Northeast LA, myself and others urged the consolidation of city services into a resource center design to better engage families. After years of trying to provide services piecemeal, we knew that organizing services through a lead agency (in our case El Centro Del Pueblo) would help families. I think that the FamilySource Center model has served our communities well. Nevertheless, as we tried to align services between the Family Source Centers and LAUSD we ran into many obstacles trying to work through each system separately. As soon as I was elected it was one of my priorities to ensure we could break down the silos and through a partnership with Youth Policy Institute (YPI) we embedded our first Pupil Services and Attendance (PSA) counselor and Psychiatric Social Worker (PSW) in the YPI Hollywood FamilySource Center in 2011. That successful partnership has now expanded to every Family and YouthSource Center.

Since 2014, through the partnership with the City of Los Angeles, 13 LAUSD PSA Counselors, one lead counselor and one coordinator have collaborated with FamilySource Centers to serve over 5,200 students and 2,400 families throughout the District and City. PSA Counselors have also provided over 270 parent workshops on various topics, such as the importance of school attendance, high school graduation requirements and how to navigate school resources. This unprecedented partnership has additionally allowed our Los Angeles School Police Department to implement an Arrest Diversion program where students who commit minor law violations are referred to a PSA Counselor at one of the FamilySource Centers to receive counseling support rather than sent to juvenile court and probation. Close to 400 youth have been diverted away from the juvenile justice system.

Through this collaboration we have changed the way we work and improved how well we serve. More important, we are changing lives. As you may know, my field office is intentionally co-located at the YPI Hollywood FamilySource Center. Quite literally every day, I see LAUSD staff working with FamilySource staff. Referrals that used to take weeks or months now take minutes.

Where once families needed to take two or three buses between school and center, they now walk between offices. Gone is the fiction that there is a separation between LAUSD, LA City and our communities. Blaming and finger pointing have been replaced by friendship and collaboration. Family stability has increased, interventions are more successful and graduation rates are on the rise.

I am cognizant of the many priorities and strains on City finances. Even so, I am asking for you to invest in success and change. The only way this work can continue is for the Committee to recommend continued funding at current levels at all sites across the city. LAUSD stands ready and prepared to continue and expand this partnership. I personally stand ready to assist in any way that I can. No less than our ability to transform education outcomes hangs in the balance. I know I can count on your support.

All my best,



Steve Zimmer
Board President



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Housing Committee Special Meeting

Good afternoon, Honorable Committee members, HCID staff, FamilySource Center agencies, clients and residents of the City of Los Angeles.

I am Brenda Shockley, president of Community Build, a community development corporation established in 1992 in response to the Civil Unrest of that year.

Community Build has been a contractor with HCID and its predecessor department, CDD, since 1994. Community Build has operated the Southwest II FamilySource Center for the past five (5) years. I am proud to state that during these five years, up to, and including today, Community Build has been one of the highest performing FSC's in the system, consistently receiving the Department's 4-star commendation for excellence.

Community Build is not recommended for FSC funding. Community Build appealed this action by the department. Those appeals have been denied.

While the lack of recommendation and rejection of our appeals is disappointing, Community Build believes the greater concern is the department's focus on "process" at the expense of those whom the program is created to serve—the youth and families in our communities with the greatest need. The Department appears to be so invested in protecting and defending its process it has lost sight of the customer. The Department is not the customer. HUD/CDBG regulations, nor the RFP process – particularly where the Department asserts sole discretion for the RFP process and implementation of the FamilySource system—never intended to ignore or sacrifice the best interests of the youth and families, who are the real customers.

To make a recommendation that closes a program that has, by the Department's own standards, provided excellent service to thousands of low-income residents, increased family income by millions of dollars, and increased academic achievement and access to hundreds of youth, including those at-risk of gang involvement, values form over substance and rewards process over performance.

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Thank you for the opportunity to be heard. It is important to Community Build to express our concerns. We owe that to our outstanding staff and our loyal and appreciative clients.

That said, Community Build urges the Committee to fund all FSC contractors at the level of \$800,000 annually, as recommended by the Department.