

1 [Endorsing efforts between WestEd, Stanford Medical Center, and the San Francisco Unified
2 School District to collaborate on a five year research study on trauma and its effects on
3 learning and executive functions in hopes of improving the cognitive learning functions of
4 children effected by violence.]

4 **Resolution endorsing efforts between WestEd, Stanford Medical Center, and the San**
5 **Francisco Unified School District to collaborate on a five year research study on**
6 **trauma and its effects on learning and executive functions in hopes of improving the**
7 **cognitive learning functions of children effected by violence.**
8

9 WHEREAS, Children living in low-income neighborhoods in the San Francisco Unified
10 School District are exposed to high levels of violence in their communities and are at great
11 risk for developing post traumatic stress symptoms and a cluster of behavioral and cognitive
12 difficulties; and

13 WHEREAS, Stress triggered by traumatic experiences can result in Posttraumatic
14 Stress Disorder, Depressive Disorder, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Phobia, Social
15 Separation Anxiety Disorder in addition heighten irritability/anger, distressing dreams and
16 social detachment; and

17 WHEREAS, Victor Carrion, MD, a child psychiatrist at Stanford Medical Center, has
18 conducted research studies that show children who are exposed to early life stressors can
19 develop Post Traumatic Stress Disorders and Symptoms, which can lead to adverse
20 structural changes within the development of the brain, as well as heightened adrenal activity;
21 and,

22 WHEREAS, Dr, Carrion's work shows that these physiological effects on children can
23 impair thought processes such as attention and executive functioning, which in turn can have
24 a direct negative impact on behavior and learning. This is often exhibited by hyper-arousal,
25 over stimulation, short attention span, hyper-vigilance, impulsivity, and low tolerance for

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1 frustration; and,

2 WHEREAS, PATHS, Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies, is a nationally
3 recognized and effective elementary school curriculum that boosts children's social and
4 emotional skills and has shown to reduce student's aggressive behavior, increase self-control,
5 increase vocabulary to express emotions and their scores on cognitive skills as well as
6 improving students ability to tolerate frustration and willingness to use effective conflict
7 resolution strategies; and

8 WHEREAS, Whereas, WestEd, a nationally recognized educational research and
9 service organization located in San Francisco has conducted numerous studies on how
10 to improve teaching and learning and whose mission is success for every learner; and,

11 WHEREAS, through the leadership and support of District Attorney Kamala D. Harris,
12 WestEd, Stanford Medical Center, Dr. Carrion, Superintendent Arlene Ackerman and the staff
13 of SFUSD have joined forces to design a groundbreaking project to address trauma suffered
14 by children exposed to violence, a project that may also result in fewer children entering the
15 juvenile justice system; and

16 WHEREAS, the collaboration between WestEd and Stanford Medical Center
17 brings together the expertise and passion of two innovative and forward thinking
18 organizations
19 dedicated to the health and well-being of children; and,

20 WHEREAS, The San Francisco Unified School District is highly committed to school
21 improvement through innovative programs such as the DREAM Schools to tackle low API
22 scores in 36 of their elementary schools in the eastern part of the city; and

23 WHEREAS, the proposed five-year research study will be presented to the
24 National Institute of Health (NIH) and will include third graders in San Francisco Unified
25 Schools who are at-risk for developing post traumatic stress symptoms and will provide an
intervention that is designed to prevent the adverse consequences of trauma on children's

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1 executive functioning and will measure children's ability to be resilient in the face of adversity;
2 and, now therefore be it

3 RESOLVED, that City and County of San Francisco Board of Supervisors endorses
4 the proposed study and encourages the reviewers at NIH to strongly consider this as a critical
5 program with great value to urban and large city school districts where children may live within
6 communities experiencing violence.

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