RESOLUTION NO. <u>20111020-060</u>

WHEREAS, literacy is critical to enhancing the region's economic vitality and human capital; linked with improved health, employment prospects, and socio-economic status for individuals; and fundamental for learning in school, for participating in society, and understanding important public issues; and,

WHEREAS, 13% of adults aged 16+ in Travis County struggle with reading or cannot read, and 20% of adults in Central Texas cannot read or write well enough to fill out a job application; and

WHEREAS, U.S. Department of Education statistics show that the percentage of students who read almost every day for fun declines as students get older. In 2004, the percentage of students who read almost every day for fun was 54% for 9-year-olds, 30% for 13-year-olds, and 22% for 17-year-olds. The percentage of students who never read was 8% for 9-year-olds, 13% for 13-year-olds, and 19% for 17-year-olds; and

WHEREAS, the gap between proficient and struggling readers in Austin is largest between economically disadvantaged and non-economically disadvantaged students.

WHEREAS, in Austin, *the distribution of kindergarten readiness data from the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test*, which is given to pre-K students in their native language, showed that in Fall 2010, 73% of pre-K students (rather than the expected 50%) had scores below the national average, and 37% of pre-K students were at least one standard deviation below average; and

WHEREAS, it is in the best interest of all residents of the City of Austin (City), Travis County (County), and the Austin Independent School District (District) that the governmental bodies maximize collaboration in and coordination of all major planning efforts in improving literacy rates and skills within their respective jurisdictions; and

WHEREAS, on September 30, 2011, the Joint Subcommittee adopted a motion recommending the adoption of the Joint Resolution of the Austin Independent School District, City of Austin, and County of Travis in the State of Texas regarding the Joint Adoption of a Literacy Campaign;

WHEREAS, the Joint Subcommittee of the City, County, and District recommended to their respective governing bodies to authorize and direct the Joint Subcommittee to oversee the development of working and advisory groups as they deem necessary or appropriate to assist the three governmental bodies in the creation and enhancement of programs that support increasing literacy rates and skills, that may include, but are not limited to, the following proposals:

- Increase general community awareness of literacy needs by developing and launching a strategic marketing campaign;

- Connect adults in need of services with instructional programs;

- Increase parents' ability to help their children's literacy rates through a mass media campaign;

- Increase capacity to improve early literacy and literacy for children in and out of school time;

- Build the capacity of direct literacy services and referrals; and

- Consider funding to support the above proposals from each of the governing bodies in an amount that is approved and budgeted by each respective governing body in the applicable fiscal year budget process; and
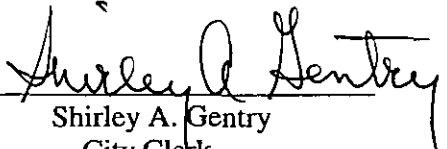
WHEREAS, the Joint Subcommittee recommended to their respective governing bodies to authorize and direct the Joint Subcommittee to work with the City of Austin Library Foundation, as well as local businesses and non-profit organizations, to initiate a community wide reading program; **NOW, THEREFORE,**

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN:

That Council accept the recommendations of the Joint Subcommittee to increase literacy and authorizes and directs the Joint Subcommittee to pursue the efforts outlined in this Resolution with the understanding that any commitment of funds, services and activities will be preceded by agreement(s) that is authorized by each governing body which is a party to the agreement(s), negotiated, and agreed to in writing by the City, County and District.

ADOPTED: October 20 , **2011** **ATTEST:** _____

Shirley A. Gentry
City Clerk