

# Austin Independent School District



*Nicole Conley*

*Chief Financial Officer*

September 14, 2016

Mr. Andrew O. Moore  
Director, Youth & Young Adult Connections  
Institute for Youth, Education, and Families  
National League of Cities  
1301 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Suite 550  
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Mr. Moore,

I am writing to express my support for the City of Austin's Cities Connecting Children to Nature Implementation Plan. The extensive research and highly collaborative strategic planning process conducted by the Core Planning Team and six Working Groups ensures that children's equitable access to nature will be a top priority for the City of Austin and our partners.

The enthusiasm and commitment to this mission was readily apparent throughout the planning process. With representatives from the City of Austin, health, education and non-profit sectors this initiative helped build and strengthen relationships across departments and sectors that had not existed previously.

I firmly believe that these partnerships and the collaborative efforts of the plan will help Austin achieve these long-term outcomes:

1. Every child has abundant & equitable access to nature at their home, neighborhood & school.
2. Every parent, health professional & teacher knows & understands the importance of access to nature for a child's healthy development. And every child considers outdoor play a top option for free time.
3. City codes & school curriculum are designed to allow & encourage kids to play outside in nature more frequently.
4. Austin is seen as an innovator & leader in the Children in Nature Movement.
5. Kids Choose nature

With a focus on greening school yards and creating a new network of school parks, Austin will be able to provide daily access to rich nature environments for tens of thousands of students across the city and strengthen communities with access to new park space. We look forward to the opportunity to contribute to this burgeoning national movement and build a relationship within schools across the city. We also hope to incorporate pieces of the new CCCN plan into our district's Master Sustainability Plan which is currently being drafted by our Environmental Stewardship Advisory Committee.

I also endorse the Children's Outdoor Bill of Rights resolution which will be brought before City Council in November and will help support the subsequent public awareness campaign surrounding issues of children's healthy development as it relates to nature connection.

I look forward to continued collaboration and information sharing with National League of Cities, the Children & Nature Network, and the six cohort cities as we discover new and better ways for city leadership to institutionalize equitable nature access. I greatly appreciated the opportunity to participate in this planning initiative and look forward to the positive change it will make for Austin's children.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Nicole Conley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Nicole" and last name "Conley" clearly distinguishable.

Nicole Conley  
Chief Financial Officer

NC/rs/ao