ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & DIVERSITY COMPLIANCE DEPARTMENT SMALL BUSINESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
SCHOOL BOARD REPORT
DECEMBER 14, 2021
**Regular School Board Meeting**

Good morning, Interim Superintendent Cartwright, Chair Levinson, Board Members, and staff. My name is Dr. Reggie Lewis, and I am Vice Chair of the Small Business Advisory Committee, also known as SBAC, managed by the Economic Development & Diversity Compliance Department.

At the November 18th meeting, the committee's primary discussion centered around the objective to increase prime participation of certified small businesses. While this is a key path to economic development, we understand that one factor influencing M/WBE firms' decision to submit a bid has a lot to do with the District's track record. Additionally, they weigh the option of bidding and not winning compared to participating as a sub and receiving a percentage of work on an awarded contract.

In addition, concerning sub participation, we briefly discussed the concept of implementing a grading scale to award additional points to firms that commit to participation levels beyond the advertised goal. While we certainly support increased participation of small businesses, again, EDDC's emphasis is to increase M/WBE prime participation.

Finally, we discussed the issue of restrictive language included in solicitations. Restrictive language creates a barrier for small businesses based on over-reaching eligibility requirements. For example, we have seen bid language that requires previous experience with five other school districts, including two of a similar size and excluding sub participation. This type of language is easy to insert, but the impact is far-reaching and makes it impossible for small businesses to bid.

In closing, the Economic Development and Procurement Teams are developing solutions to help ensure these types of challenges are addressed prior to advertising future solicitations. Thank you.