

**AISD DISTRICT ADVISORY COUNCIL**  
**Summary of Annual Work Retreat**  
**September 20, 2005**

**ATTENDANCE**

**Member Attendance**

(See attached list)

**Others in Attendance**

(See attached list)

**PROCEEDINGS**

**Call to Order**

The retreat was called to order at 8:40 a.m. in the cafeteria of the Professional Development Academy.

**Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of the August 16, 2005 regular meeting were approved as submitted.

**Panel Discussions on Strategic Plan Implementation**

- Dr. Jane Ross stated that the purpose of the panel discussions was to identify challenges and issues related to implementation of the recently adopted AISD Strategic Plan.
- Dr. Ross explained that there would be four panel discussions focusing on the four perspectives presented in the Strategic Plan: education, staff, community, and resources.

**Panel Discussion on Education**

- Dr. Darlene Westbrook, Chief Academic Officer, provided commentary on Priorities 1, 2, and 3 of the Strategic Plan, all dealing with education.
- Dr. Westbrook said that the Strategic Plan set forth lofty goals, and we may need to do something different in we want to gain high achievement for all students. She stated that literacy has seen significant improvements, particularly at the elementary level; however, math still needs more improvement at all grade levels.
- Dr. Westbrook said that in addressing the needs of the whole child, character education was just one piece. She said a complex approach would be needed to address the needs of all students.
- Dr. Westbrook stated that the high school redesign initiative was a major, cross-cutting effort in terms of implementing Priorities 1, 2, and 3 of the Strategic Plan. She added that cultural connections to teaching and learning and safe, positive learning environments were also critical links.
- Discussion points included:
  - ☞ Diversity of district staff needs to better reflect the student population
  - ☞ Membership of the DAC and Campus Advisory Councils (CACs) also needs to be more diverse
  - ☞ More attention is needed in addressing struggling learners

- ☞ More attention is needed in addressing the needs and achievement of African-American students, and in addressing over-representation of African-American students in Special Education and disciplinary removals
- ☞ We need to prioritize our priorities, and really focus on English Language Learners and bilingual education
- ☞ Cultural connections to teaching and learning should occur throughout the year, and not just on special occasions (in response, curriculum and Instructional Planning Guides have been reviewed and updated in this regard)
- ☞ Accountability can have some good implications, namely in demanding higher achievement for all students; however, there is room for improvement in accountability systems, especially directing resources into struggling campuses and developing models for campus improvement rather than concentrating on sanctions

### **Panel Discussion on Staff**

- Michael Houser, Executive Director for Human Resources, provided commentary on Priority 4 of the Strategic Plan, dealing with staff.
- Mr. Houser said it was difficult to constantly recruit highly effective teachers and principals. He said the turnover rate is decreasing, but still a challenge. He said the district was still working to gain more bilingual teachers and more teachers with National Board Certification.
- Mr. Houser stated that salaries and benefits are very important and a continual challenge. He said that employees needed to be recognized in presence as well as pay. He said that closely related concerns are working conditions and professional development.
- Discussion points included:
  - ☞ The total value of the employee benefits package should be emphasized
  - ☞ How we treat our staff and improving internal communications are important, but do not cost money, rather they require a change in how we do things
  - ☞ The district needs to hire Austin first instead of bringing in so many outsiders
  - ☞ The district really needs to work more on raising salaries for teachers
  - ☞ The district needs to make better efforts in recruiting minorities, especially African Americans (in response, recruitment efforts have become more targeted with some improvements, but retention is still challenging)
  - ☞ Alternative teacher certification can become an asset with proper supports

### **Panel Discussion on Community**

- Dr. Janis Guerrero, Executive Director for Planning and Community Relations, provided commentary on Priority 5 of the Strategic Plan, dealing with community.
- Dr. Guerrero said the main challenge will be to engage and involve parents and community members meaningfully. She said the Strategic Plan environmental scan revealed a gap between where we are now and where we want to be. She said we really need to convince stakeholders that we value their input.
- Dr. Guerrero emphasized that the district needs to build sustain a customer service orientation. She said that we need to realize that we are not the only education option available, and we need to be seen by the community as clearly the best option.

- Discussion points included:
  - ☞ The district has come a long way in customer service and central office responsiveness
  - ☞ Improvements in community relations have been made, but the district still needs to work more on communications
  - ☞ The district puts on a lot of events, but very often there is a low turnout
  - ☞ Parents need to be trained in how to work within the system

### **Panel Discussion on Resources**

- Larry Throm, Chief Financial Officer, provided commentary on Priority 6 of the Strategic Plan, dealing with resources.
- Mr. Throm stated that significant progress has been made in buying new computers, and this effort will continue.
- Mr. Throm reported that implementation of the bond program was proceeding well at this time.
- Mr. Throm said the district must live within its means, and this year's budget process presented a particular challenge. He pointed out that AISD was certainly not the only district in the state facing such a challenge. He said a decision from the State Supreme Court on school financing was due soon. He added that there may be some room for optimism based on the Austin area's economic growth.
- Discussion points included:
  - ☞ Is there any plan for the possibility of not being able to complete facility construction and improvements (in response, there is a contingency for overruns in the bond program, and inflation has also been factored in)
  - ☞ There are still some campuses that are over capacity and many portables remain (in response, we do a good job in siting new schools to meet needs, but population patterns may shift over time)
  - ☞ School safety remains an issue, particularly with portables that are poorly lighted (in response, there are funds in the bond program for more security lighting)

### **Superintendent's Address**

- Dr. Forgione stated that we need to keep the Strategic Plan off the shelf and make it a living document. He said it was a compelling plan, and a place to start more dialog.
- Dr. Forgione said that the Strategic Plan provides a balance of perspectives – education, staff, community, and resources – all necessary for overall excellence and success.
- Dr. Forgione said the district looks different now compared to several years ago. He said that eliminating achievement gaps is a stretch goal, but it is important to set the bar at the highest level.
- Dr. Forgione said that a lot of employees who left the district are coming back. He said we are making great strides in becoming a premier employer. In regard to salary increases, he said we need to let our elected officials know our concerns.
- Dr. Forgione said that several things were well underway, including the character education initiative, bond program implementation, and the customer service initiative. He added that the Boundary Task Force would begin meeting tonight.

- Discussion points included:
  - ☞ More consistency is needed in customer service delivery across the district
  - ☞ To what extent are high school redesign plans flexible (in response, there are some non-negotiables, but lots of possible options; two district-wide community forums are coming up, following by individual campus forums)
  - ☞ To what extent does the Strategic Plan support state and federal plans (in response, the Strategic Plan aligns well with state and federal plans)
  - ☞ We cannot afford to compromise on safety
  - ☞ Greater expenditures do not always bring success; how funding is applied can make a big difference
  - ☞ More effort needs to be made in getting effective PTAs on every campus and identifying schools in need and helping them
  - ☞ We need to ensure that Parent Support Specialists are utilized effectively
  - ☞ True parental involvement will require providing a broad range of opportunities

### **Discussion with Board of Trustees**

- Ave Wahrmond, Board Vice-President, summarized recent activities of the Board, including approval of the budget – with employee benefits still covered and additional stipends – bond implementation, and high school redesign.
- Discussion points included:
  - ☞ Although revenues are going up based on property values, so is our Chapter 41 payment, and we cannot raise taxes any higher
  - ☞ Completion of the bond program in the face of rising costs (in response, we will have to keep a tight watch, and if there is a shortfall we will need to come forward to the community)
  - ☞ Each high school redesign plan will have certain points in common, but there will still be considerable leeway; the one-size-fits-all approach is not working
  - ☞ The Board should be commended for providing orderly and effective leadership
  - ☞ The policy governance framework allows for significant monitoring of the Board's policies, with clear expectations
  - ☞ How does the Board communicate with citizens (in response, in addition to citizens communications at regular Board meetings, the Board holds special community meetings and takes part in other public forums)
  - ☞ The district should not exclude students from its visioning efforts (in response, students will take part in high school redesign forums)
  - ☞ With all the talk of high school redesign, how are our elementary schools doing (in response, we never stop efforts at the elementary school level, especially in math and science)
  - ☞ Bond Proposition 6, regarding refinancing of debt, was presented to voters as a means for raising salaries; will this continue to be an issue in budgeting (in response, this is a perception problem and not a breach of promise; covering employee benefits is important, and we need to be prepared for possible cuts next year)
  - ☞ The DAC co-chairs thanked the Board members for attending and seeking the input of the DAC on many matters.

### **Breakout Group Discussions**

- Attendees broke out into five groups grouped by Strategic Plan priorities as well as vertical team representation. Each group was facilitated by a vertical team leader.
- Each of the groups worked to develop recommendations on action steps for implementing the Strategic Plan.
- The groups were advised that they may not have time to address all of the strategies under each priority; also, that this was an initial implementation activity.

### **Breakout Group Reports**

- Each of the five breakout groups reported back in full session on its recommendations.
- The recommendations of each group are attached.

### **DAC Goals for 2005-2006**

- Attendees broke out into five groups to discuss possible DAC goals for 2005-2006. Each group was led by a DAC Executive Committee member.
- The groups initiated their discussions with a review of existing DAC budget and strategic planning priorities.
- The group leaders will provide summaries of their discussions at the next DAC Executive Committee meeting on October 4, with continued discussion expected at the regular DAC meeting on October 18.

### **Adjourn**

The retreat was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.



| AISD District Advisory Council<br>Member List and Attendance (Revised, 09/06/05) | 2005 |      |      |       |       | 2006 |      |      |      |      |  |  |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|------|------|-------|-------|------|------|------|------|------|--|--|
|                                                                                  | 6/21 | 8/16 | 9/20 | 10/18 | 11/15 | 1/17 | 2/21 | 3/21 | 4/18 | 5/16 |  |  |
| Karen Stevens, Parent, Kealing JH (1/1)                                          | ✓    | ✓    | ✓    |       |       |      |      |      |      |      |  |  |
| Pam Gonzalez, Teacher, Highland Park ES (1/1)                                    |      |      | ✓    |       |       |      |      |      |      |      |  |  |
| Lizel Santiago, Teacher, Kealing JH (1/2)                                        | ✓    | ✓    | ✓    |       |       |      |      |      |      |      |  |  |
| <b>REAGAN VERTICAL TEAM</b>                                                      |      |      |      |       |       |      |      |      |      |      |  |  |
| Shaintay Abudu, Parent, Graham ES (1/1)                                          |      |      | ✓    |       |       |      |      |      |      |      |  |  |
| Tomi Welch, Parent, Graham ES (1/1*)                                             | ✓    | ✓    | ✓    |       |       |      |      |      |      |      |  |  |
| Sue Shoopman, Teacher, Barrington ES (1/2)                                       | ✓    | ✓    | ✓    |       |       |      |      |      |      |      |  |  |
| Constance Skeete, Teacher, Jordan ES (1/1)                                       | ✓    |      | ✓    |       |       |      |      |      |      |      |  |  |
| <b>TRAVIS VERTICAL TEAM</b>                                                      |      |      |      |       |       |      |      |      |      |      |  |  |
| Ramon DeJesus, Parent, Travis HS (5/1)                                           | ✓    | ✓    | ✓    |       |       |      |      |      |      |      |  |  |
| Adolphus Anderson, Parent, Rodriguez ES (2/1)                                    | ✓    | ✓    | ✓    |       |       |      |      |      |      |      |  |  |
| Frances Martinez, Teacher, Travis HS (1/1)                                       | ✓    | ✓    | ✓    |       |       |      |      |      |      |      |  |  |
| Douglas Rhodenbaugh, Teacher, Fulmore MS (2/1)                                   |      |      | ✓    |       |       |      |      |      |      |      |  |  |
| <b>ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS</b>                                              |      |      |      |       |       |      |      |      |      |      |  |  |
| Pat Butler, Mills ES (1/2)                                                       |      | ✓    | ✓    |       |       |      |      |      |      |      |  |  |
| Cornel Jones, Norman ES (1/1)                                                    |      | ✓    |      |       |       |      |      |      |      |      |  |  |
| Janie Ruiz, Becker ES (2/1)                                                      |      |      | ✓    |       |       |      |      |      |      |      |  |  |
| <b>MIDDLE SCHOOL PRINCIPALS</b>                                                  |      |      |      |       |       |      |      |      |      |      |  |  |
| <b>Jane Ross, Pearce MS (3/2)</b>                                                | ✓    | ✓    | ✓    |       |       |      |      |      |      |      |  |  |
| Julia Fletcher, Bailey MS (1/2)                                                  |      |      | ✓    |       |       |      |      |      |      |      |  |  |
| <b>HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL</b>                                                     |      |      |      |       |       |      |      |      |      |      |  |  |
| Barbara Spelman, Austin HS (1/2)                                                 | ✓    | ✓    | ✓    |       |       |      |      |      |      |      |  |  |
| <b>ACPTA REPRESENTATIVES</b>                                                     |      |      |      |       |       |      |      |      |      |      |  |  |
| <i>Vacancy, South</i>                                                            | N/A  | N/A  | N/A  |       |       |      |      |      |      |      |  |  |
| Colin "CJ" Carl, North (1/2)                                                     | ✓    |      | ✓    |       |       |      |      |      |      |      |  |  |
| <b>COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES</b>                                                 |      |      |      |       |       |      |      |      |      |      |  |  |
| Suzanne Stein (3/2*)                                                             | ✓    | ✓    | ✓    |       |       |      |      |      |      |      |  |  |
| Amy Averett (1/2*)                                                               |      | ✓    | ✓    |       |       |      |      |      |      |      |  |  |
| <b>BUSINESS REPRESENTATIVE</b>                                                   |      |      |      |       |       |      |      |      |      |      |  |  |
| Linda Klar, Time Warner Cable (1/2*)                                             | ✓    | ✓    | ✓    |       |       |      |      |      |      |      |  |  |
| <b>CLASSIFIED EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATIVE</b>                                        |      |      |      |       |       |      |      |      |      |      |  |  |
| Ruffina "BB" Coffill, St. Elmo ES (1/2*)                                         |      |      |      |       |       |      |      |      |      |      |  |  |
| <b>DISTRICT-LEVEL PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATIVE</b>                       |      |      |      |       |       |      |      |      |      |      |  |  |
| Julie Lyons, Accountability (1/2)                                                | ✓    | ✓    | ✓    |       |       |      |      |      |      |      |  |  |
| <b>AT-LARGE MEMBERS</b>                                                          |      |      |      |       |       |      |      |      |      |      |  |  |
| Alberto Gonzalez, Parent, Fulmore MS (2/2*)                                      | ✓    | ✓    | ✓    |       |       |      |      |      |      |      |  |  |
| Pascual Piedfort (3/1*)                                                          | ✓    | ✓    | ✓    |       |       |      |      |      |      |      |  |  |
| Vicki Baldwin, Principal, Garza HS (2/2*)                                        | ✓    | ✓    | ✓    |       |       |      |      |      |      |      |  |  |
| <b>BOARD OF TRUSTEES REPRESENTATIVE (ex officio)</b>                             |      |      |      |       |       |      |      |      |      |      |  |  |
| Cheryl Bradley (1/1)                                                             | ✓    |      | ✓    |       |       |      |      |      |      |      |  |  |

## = Total number of terms appointed/Year of current term

\* = Appointed by DAC Executive Committee

Name in Bold = Co-Chair

**DAC ANNUAL WORK RETREAT  
September 20, 2005**

**List of Others in Attendance**

Board of Trustees:

Cheryl Bradley  
Johna Edwards  
Robert Schneider  
Ave Wahrmund  
Patricia Whiteside  
Mark Williams

Superintendent:

Pat Forgione

Panelists/Commentators:

Joan Altobelli, Director, Special Education  
Tracy Diggs, Health Coordinator, Educational Support  
Martha Garcia, Executive Director, Bilingual Education  
Dr. Peggy Gordon, Associate Superintendent, Middle Schools  
Dr. Janis Guerrero, Executive Director, Planning & Community Relations  
Dr. Rosalinda Hernandez, Associate Superintendent, High Schools  
Michael Houser, Executive Director, Human Resources  
Julie Lyons, Director, State & Federal Accountability  
Terry Morganti-Fisher, Director, Professional Development  
Dr. Yolanda Rocha, Associate Superintendent, Elementary Schools, South  
Gray Salada, Executive Director, Technology  
Dr. Ann Smisko, Acting Executive Director, Curriculum  
Larry Throm, Chief Financial Officer  
Claudia Tousek, Associate Superintendent, Elementary Schools, North  
Paul Turner, Executive Director, Facilities  
Dr. Darlene Westbrook, Chief Academic Officer  
Dr. Maria Whitsett, Executive Director, Accountability

Vertical Team Leaders:

Sheila Anderson, Principal, Small MS  
Dr. Brenda Berry, Principal, Graham ES  
Ron Bolek, Principal, Pearce MS  
Dr. Lucio Calzada, Principal, Fulmore MS  
Mary Alice Deike, Principal, Akins HS  
Joel de la Garza, Principal, Metz ES  
Julia Fletcher, Principal, Bailey MS  
Donna Linn, Principal, Galindo ES  
Edmund Oropez, Principal, Lanier HS  
Sherrie Raven, Principal, Doss ES

Guests:

Lisa Brionez, Parent, Wooldridge ES

Marshall Bruni, President, Austin Council of PTAs

Betty Davis, Vice-President, Austin Council of PTAs

Gerard Jimenez, Chair, Special Education Citizens Advisory Committee

Tamara Vannoy, Austin Council of PTAs, Strategic Planning Panel

Support Staff:

Peggy Burns, Office of Planning & Community Relations

Joey Crumley, AICP, Office of Planning & Community Relations

Rosa Montoya, Office of Planning & Community Relations

Oscar Palomo, Office of Planning & Community Relations

## **RECOMMENDED ACTION STEPS FOR STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLEMENTATION**

### **DAC Work Retreat, September 20, 2005**

#### ***Priority 1***

*Raise achievement of all students to the world class level while effectively eliminating achievement gaps between student groups.*

- a) Research successful reading programs and share models, as well as provide continuity in full-time Reading Specialists.
- b) Analyze the math curriculum (elementary and middle schools) for true preparation for high school algebra and beyond (numerical fluency, graphing calculators, eighth grade TEKS).
- c) Develop a cadre of parents who are trained in some coordinated way to help teach at Tier One in the classroom, at various levels and in various subjects.
- d) Research and provide models of how to engage parents in supporting and helping students with needs (e.g., Travis Heights model based on Austin Interfaith model).
- e) Provide deeper professional development for Tier One implementation in the classroom to help teachers be more successful (e.g., inclusion, differentiated instruction).

#### ***Priority 2***

*Provide a quality educational experience that will develop the whole child – intellectually, socially, emotionally, physically, and ethically.*

- a) Pursue grants for after-school programs (i.e., advisory, block, restructuring).
- b) Provide district-level training and a model of delivery for after-school programs.
- c) Provide a systematic approach to developing social skills.

#### ***Priority 3***

*Provide a caring, safe, and orderly environment for all students.*

- a) Conduct regular safety surveys and assessments
- b) Develop effective district and campus crisis management plans.
- c) Establish assigned duty areas before and after school.

#### ***Priority 4***

*Recruit, develop, retain, and reward highly effective teachers and administrators.*

- a) Develop a climate of respect and recognition utilizing successful schools and leaders as models.
- b) Utilize successful schools and leaders as examples.
- c) Reevaluate equity for expectations and current compensation at all levels of employment.

**Priority 5**

*Build strong partnerships with parents and the community at the classroom, campus, and district levels.*

- a) Teach employers/ministers about important information that needs to get to parents; use centers of influence.
- b) Bring in community organization expertise in building relationships with the community.
- c) Establish policies for using public funds in coordination with community- and faith-based organizations.
- d) Each school should meet the needs of its parents, without judgment (e.g., find a parent who is willing to entertain other parents at home).
- e) Ask parents directly what they need to support their child's education.
- f) Help parents find the "handles" (i.e., the things in which they can meaningfully invest their time).
- g) Make sure information is understandable by having parents give feedback and input on publications (use this model to create campus report cards).
- h) Share best practices (i.e., what works) at district meetings, and value the expertise and experiences of others.
- i) Market the importance of school involvement at various community events and celebrations (e.g., parenting classes information).
- j) Effectively use the new Parent's Guide (e.g., distribute during parent/teach conferences, and via "centers of influence").
- k) Involve students as part of the community.

**Priority 6**

*Provide strategic alignment and sound stewardship of resources, including funding, personnel, technology, and facilities.*

- a) Provide teachers with specific instruction in using technology in the classroom.
- b) Take advantage of Intel Teach to the Future opportunities.
- c) Develop an aggressive technology replacement plan maintaining a dual platform, and set a standard for the timeframe of replacements.
- d) Encourage technology sharing.
- e) Prioritize resource assessment; develop a catalog updated with district and school resources, including access to free resources and regular maintenance.
- f) In addressing greatest needs, include high-need campuses, special education, non-English speakers, and staffing allocations.
- g) Ensure funding for a technology specialist at each campus.