



Advocacy Advisory Committee

May 26, 2026
Meeting Minutes

The Advocacy Advisory Committee (AAC) met on May 26, 2026, from 4:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. via Zoom.

The following attended the meeting:

AAC members: Noelita Lugo, Natalie Fontenot, Laurie Solis, Jiae Kim Batra, Bardo Montelongo, Amal Al Swaiedi, Quinn Butler, Taylor Cavin, Stacia Crescenzi, Linzy Foster, Vanessa Mata-Martinez, Lily McClure, Samhitha Nittala, Angelica Perez, Elina Sarkar, Evan Shreeve, Denise Simmons, Zayden Toohey, Callum Thomas, and Sonia Cabriaes

Presenters: Carrie Griffith and Dee Carney, Our Schools Our Democracy

Public Guests: Luca Sims, Conner Praba, Bryan Page

AISD Staff: Edna Butts

The meeting was called to order by Co-Chair Jiae Kim-Batra at 4:31 p.m. There was no public comment.

Carrie Griffith, Founder and Executive Director of [Our Schools Our Democracy](#), provided a brief history of the organization, and presented information on the impact of unlimited charter expansion on Austin ISD. She shared a school locator map available on OSOD's website, showing where 114 Austin ISD campuses, 31 charter campuses and 76 voucher-accepting private school campuses are located.

She shared that 39% of charters have closed, 65% of those that received ratings in 2025 were rated D or F, and unlike public school districts, charters are not required to notify families about their accountability ratings. Ms. Griffith explained the more rigorous application process for a new charter and that the SBOE can veto the Commissioner of Education's recommendation to approve a charter. A charter amendment to expand or open a new campus is filed with the Commissioner, there is no public comment, no interview, no general public notice and no SBOE input or authority.

Four-year graduation rates for public school districts is 93% and 75% for charter schools. Public schools serve 12.9% special education students and charter schools serve 9.2%. The rates of uncertified teachers in public schools is 7% and 49% for charters; rates of teachers with five or fewer years of teaching experience is 34.1% for public schools and 63.6% for charters.

She also shared that there were 15,120 Austin ISD student transfers to charters in 2024-25 resulting in an estimated revenue loss to AISD of \$148,445,002.

Dee Carney presented a summary of the \$1 billion voucher program approved by the legislature during the 89th session. There have been more than 2,500 private schools

approved, 52 are online schools. Sixty percent (60%) of approved private school providers only enroll PK through Kindergarten. The Comptroller has received 274,000 applications of which 75% are from private schools, homeschools, or never enrolled in public school. 37,000 of the applicants are pre-K applicants – the most of any grade.

Ms. Carney explained the tier system spelled out in the law: Tier 1 being students with disabilities whose annual household incomes are at or below 500% of the federal poverty line (\$165,000 for a family of four), Tier 2 are families with incomes at or below 200% of the federal poverty line (\$66,000 for a family of four). Vouchers have been awarded to 42,640 Tier 1 students and their siblings; 51,181 Tier 2 students have been awarded vouchers and 22,000 are waitlisted. Private schools do not have to decide whom they will admit until June 15. If they do not admit students in Tiers 1 and 2, those on the waiting list and their siblings will move up and be offered vouchers.

The presenters answered many question from AAC members.

Co-chair Noelita Lugo will send out a Google form soliciting input on next meeting dates and which topics AAC members would like presented at future meetings.

The meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.