

STATEMENT FROM THE AISD BOARD OF TRUSTEES

As a board of nine individual trustees, we recognize the need to focus on two interrelated goals: supporting academic excellence for every Austin ISD student and supporting and modeling a work environment addressing issues of morale, retention and the climate and culture of our district.

There are many issues facing our schools – some specific to Austin ISD, and some reflect wider challenges in education. Our budget is tight, and we are looking ahead to an important budget vote later this month. Learning gaps from the COVID-19 pandemic linger even as we have returned to in-person learning, and our academic outcomes must remain a focus. The data shows we are serving some students well, and failing to serve other students and we must break patterns aligned by race and economic status. We are working to improve the experience of Austin ISD for students who receive special education services. We know students and staff are facing mental health challenges and our schools can play a role in addressing their needs. We are also looking ahead to a potential bond election and to opening a new Northeast Middle School – both requiring important work that is still to be done.

As part of the process of selecting an interim Superintendent, we as a board, identified a set of shared priorities, we reviewed all applications for interim Superintendent, interviewed one candidate, and tonight, we selected Dr. Anthony Mays.

We enter this moment with new strengths. Our district and community is talking about disaggregated data that offers a clear picture of who we are serving well and who we must serve better. Austin ISD has a diverse and committed mix of community partners who are deeply invested in the success of our students and schools. We will soon begin a long-awaited equity assessment. Important work is being done to address disparities in discipline. We are working in new ways to live into our promise to prepare students for college, career and life. Classrooms across the district are filled with love and learning. Austin ISD students have a rich mix of options unmatched anywhere in Central Texas. And we have a community that is deeply committed to our schools, to our district, and to every student we serve.

After the interim Superintendent is hired, the board and community will prepare for the deep work of identifying the next permanent superintendent. We hope to begin the informal community engagement now, post a request for proposals for a superintendent search firm in January 2023, and select and hire our next superintendent by Summer 2023.

There is much to celebrate in our schools and there is much possibility and promise we have not yet achieved in our schools. As we begin collaboratively working with Dr. Mays and look ahead to the search for a new Superintendent, we ask you to continue to work with us to co-create a district whose vision meets our reality consistent with our strategic plan, mission and values.