



AUSTIN ISD

# BUDGET



**Revenue and Programs Subcommittee  
Preliminary Findings and Recommendations**

# *How to read and interpret our recommendations*



- These recommendations are not meant to be used as a way to pick a dollar value of cuts in any given year. Rather these recommendations provide a strategy for reorienting both major components of operations and budgeting. It will take years to implement our most important recommendations.
- Based on the materials provided to the subcommittee, we believe implementing a sunset review process focused on an academic return on investment, monetizing land and buildings, implementing a master teacher program, evaluating work loads and measuring how time is actually spent all offer over time a combination of improved academic performance and improved cash flow. This not a list of cuts.





# REVENUE: Short Term Recommendations



# Recommendations (*italics mean still under review*)



1. Drop property tax exemptions for designated historic properties.
2. Apply Build America Bonds Subsidy to the General Fund.
3. If the legislature does not make changes to recapture then eliminate the Copper Penny yield (*and tell Gov Abbott we did what he wanted and reduced the property tax rate*).
4. Increase rental fees for AISD facilities to market rates (percentage increase will depend on specific facilities and uses). The subcommittee would be in favor of providing sliding fee scale rates for select not for profits that have an educational focus.



# Short term revenue recommendations continued



5. Senate Bill 1882 does provide some interesting possibilities for in-district charters. The subcommittee supports the use of SB 1882 providing that at least the following safeguards are in place:
  - the community served is involved (parents, teachers, CAC, PTA)
  - the charter will accept its fair share of special needs children
  - disciplinary policies and procedures are aligned with AISD
  - the charter is integrated into the vertical team
  - include the right to cancel the contract with 30 days notice
  - Education Austin be involved in the teacher contract process
  - the District is careful to make sure that charters are varied and not just all STEM oriented.\*\*
6. Consolidate under-enrolled schools and budget based on projected vacancy rates. Use the demographic projections in conjunction with the Boundary Advisory Committee as the basis.

*\*\* We would like to see one full year of operation before claiming the Mendez Charter is a success. Initial results are good.*



# Short term revenue recommendations continued



7. Centrally manage current uncoordinated district activities including professional development, travel, entertainment, etc. P-cards might be a useful tool but it is more important to bring these scattered expenses into single budget categories.
8. We support moving investments into higher-yield vehicles so long as this does not threaten the district's AAA bond rating.
9. We support AISD selling services to charter schools, other districts and other organizations providing that the departments interested in such sales have the existing capacity to do so.



# Short term revenue recommendations continued



10. Investments in energy efficiency should continue to be made with decisions to invest based on years till payback.

*11. Magnet schools and busing are a discussion our subcommittee still needs to have due to the potential for unanticipated consequences.*





# REVENUE Long Term Recommendations





# Long term revenue recommendations



Use buildings and land as a source of revenue:

1. Use a real estate management group to coordinate building rental as downtime of schools and athletic facilities permits (AISD has ~13 Million Ft<sup>2</sup> under roof). This will likely require the Facilities Master Plan be updated regularly.
2. Using 99-year leases, partner with developers to build affordable, family friendly housing on unused AISD properties (AISD owns ~2,100 acres of land or 3.3 square miles)
  1. Preference given to AISD teachers and staff
  2. Preference given to families who left AISD due to gentrification
  3. Preference given to families with school aged children
  4. Two sources of revenue: AISD share of profit, enrollment growth
  5. Consider partnering with the City, Foundation Communities and other not for profits as well all commercial developers



# PROGRAMS: Sunset Review Process



# Program Evaluation: Sunset Review



Establish a Sunset process to review both internal and partner led programs to have a meaningful reason to determine which programs to keep and which to discontinue:

1. Work with the District Management Group to implement ability to calculate an academic return on investment (AROI).
2. Increase funding to the Department of Program Evaluation and other cooperating entities to enable Sunset Reviews of all programs on an every 3-5 year basis, with a focus on costly programs at first. We understand that a Sunset Process will require cooperation on the part of both central administration and the campuses.
3. Program evaluation should include the relevance of the program to AISD and campus goals. Evaluation should not be limited to grant or other external objectives.



# PROGRAMS:

## Master Teacher Program



# Implement a salary increase for Teachers ONLY - What we know/learned



- AISD teacher salaries are above state averages for starting teachers and those with 1 to 5 years experience.
- AISD teacher salaries are \$3,000-\$5,000 below the state averages for teachers with 6+ years experience.
- AISD has a higher percentage of new, inexperienced teachers than the statewide average. The salary structure is reflected in the outcome. (Student Achievement)
- Title I campuses experience higher teacher turnover and tend to have less experienced teachers. (Equity)
- Teachers do not always feel valued as professionals and often feel that they lack authentic opportunities to lead and grow as educators. (Recruitment and Retention)



# Implement Master Teacher Program



- Master teachers should be selected from the 3,500 teachers with 6+ years experience.
- Would like to see teacher turnover used as a metric by which Principals are measured.
- Would like to see the program developed in a way that funnels more experienced teachers with a demonstrated history of “success” in increasing student growth and proficiency to Title I schools.
- Salary increases for master teachers and recruitment incentives for teachers to staff difficult campuses can be funded by increasing class size.
- This option could be in lieu of across the board salary increases for teachers
- [Can look to San Antonio ISD as a model.](#)





# PROGRAMS: Equity



# Equity recommendations



1. We definitely support assessing the need for counselors and we support any initiatives that free the counselors so they can spend their time counseling. We are not convinced that a per student equity ratio is going to provide an equitable outcome.
2. When redrawing school attendance boundaries, to the extent possible provide diversity in both socio-economic status and special populations. Given the combination of new campuses and consolidation of other campuses, a district wide redraw of boundaries would also reduce PTA disparities across the district.
3. Increase the availability of childcare at District campuses for teachers and staff. The district needs to find a way to track the number of children under the age of 5 whose parents are AISD employees.





# Equity recommendations continued



4. Event revenue (parking for ACL, etc) should be managed on a district wide basis. Not all schools have the potential to collect event based revenue.
5. Whether it is the proposal to have secondary school teachers teach 7 of 8 sections or the myriad equity weighting proposals to increase counselors, assistant principals or other special positions, we would like to see AISD first evaluate what uniform work loads should look like across the district. Then evaluate the proposed work loads against current, actual practice. For example, what percent of the time do counselors spend counseling? Word of mouth is that counselors are instructed to proctor tests and assist as needed with other activities, in other words anything but counseling. Adding an equity weight for counseling positions will not fix the underlying obstacles to achieving greater equity.



# Equity recommendations continued



6. Invite Commissioner Mike Morath to officiate at this year's graduation ceremonies at Rosedale.



# PROGRAMS: MARKETING



# Marketing recommendations



1. AISD needs to offer the same after-school options that the charter schools do. This is a revenue opportunity in two ways: 1) increased WADA due to increased enrollment and 2) monthly fees for after-school child care. Parental convenience is a huge motivator.
2. AISD should consider releasing comparisons of average AISD TEA testing outcomes compared to those of the competing charters. These releases should be in both English and Spanish as AISD must market to the Hispanic population.





# PROGRAMS: ACADEMICS



# Academic recommendations



1. The subcommittee recommends that the Superintendent establish a task force to provide an easy to understand explanation of the myriad secondary offerings including: magnet schools, career launch, early college high school, international studies, etc. If parental aspirations include their student being accepted at Rice or Stanford, parents need to know which academic tracks within AISD will likely provide that outcome. To compete with the charters and private secondary schools (St. Stephens, etc.) AISD must have a simple to understand statement of what it offers.

We recognize that AISD does try to explain the options to both students and parents, but we are concerned that parental participation in these sessions is low. We think these programs are a tremendous advantage vis-à-vis the competition, but without public excitement they will not be sought out.



# Academic recommendations continued



2. We would like to see a complete review of special education in the district. That review would encompass: purpose, implementation, uniformity of outcome and use of dedicated resources. We are concerned that the implementation of rules which determine which students are placed in special ed differ from campus to campus. It also appears that outcomes vary from campus to campus. Given the enormous expense associated with this program, the attention needs to be more than just the sunset program evaluation we proposed earlier.





OPTIONS NOT  
RECOMMENDED





# Items considered but not recommended



1. We reject across-the-board raises, cuts, or other actions. Policies and programs should be targeted to solve specific problems. Attention should be paid to those persons who most directly influence the academic success of the District.
2. We do not think AISD should ask the city to trade property taxes or otherwise engage in cost sharing. AISD and the City of Austin geographic boundaries do not match. Many ISD's have territory inside the City of Austin. The City would have to offer the same deal to all ISD's, and those ISD's have territory outside the City of Austin.
3. Cafes on campuses. From an equity perspective we do not think all students have equal ability to pay for food or coffee.



# Items considered but not recommended



4. We do not think the sale of naming rights to stadiums, schools or classrooms is worth the trouble. AISD would have to determine the number of years a naming right conveys, a process would have to be arranged to review proposed names (no Confederate names, no LGBTQ slurs, etc.) and AISD alumni would have to be willing to see House Park lose its name.
5. It is our understanding that advertising on school buses is running as a pilot program at present. We suggest the experience with the pilot be the basis for a decision moving forward. We have no opinion on the matter.
6. We are not recommending any changes to AISD school safety policies, officers or school resource officers. However, given the expense, we wonder if a review of how AISD compares to other districts might be informative. Not all districts have their own police forces. We do not know what options, if any, are available to AISD.



# Items considered but not recommended



7. We do not recommend any changes to the school nursing program.
8. We do not want to see after-school buses cut. We value extra-curricular activities in their own right. And we think that any programs which help working parents leave their children safely and happily in school after hours are worthwhile marketing.





# Questions?

