



Enrollment – School Consolidation: Next Steps & Community Updates

Updated: 11/13/25

Executive Summary

A multi-departmental team including Enrollment, Information Technology, Family Engagement, and Communications is launching the 2025–26 Enrollment Campaign — a coordinated, districtwide effort to implement significant policy revisions resulting from the School Consolidation and Boundary Change Process. The core goal of these revisions is to establish a more transparent, standardized, and equitable student enrollment and transfer system.

The Enrollment Campaign spans from October 2025 through April 2026. The foundational planning phase (October–December) is focused on finalizing transfer policies, analyzing enrollment data, and completing crucial technology updates to the Enroll Austin and Frontline systems to accommodate the new rules. This ensures the technology is ready for the phased enrollment launch.

The enrollment process has three rounds:

Round 1: Program Application (Tentatively January): This round is exclusively for application-based programs such as Magnet, Dual Language and Academies. Admission decisions are based on rubrics or lotteries.

Round 2: General Registration and Transfer (Tentatively February–March): This window includes general transfers, zoned registration and application-based programs with remaining seats. A major change to note is that general transfers will now utilize a lottery system based on priority structures, eliminating the previous "first come-first serve" rolling acceptance method to standardize the experience for families. The priority structures will also be simplified.

Round 3: General Registration and Pre-K (Tentatively April): This final round includes general registration at zoned schools and the filing of Transfer Exception Requests (formerly hardship appeals). Pre-K enrollment (PK3 and PK4) also opens in this round due to state eligibility guidelines.

The plan was shaped by community input, which highlighted major concerns regarding logistical challenges posed by sibling separation and the desire to preserve the priority transfer status for district employees, which is a valuable recruitment and retention strategy for highly qualified staff. In response to this feedback, several accommodations have been established to provide guarantees to specific cohorts.

Students at campuses not closing or changing programs: All current K-12 students at any school that remains open are guaranteed enrollment to remain there until the last grade level offered, provided families actively re-register.

Updates to Continuation Transfers (formerly “grandfathering”): Broad continuation transfer priorities that apply to all students in Austin ISD are no longer applicable. Specific transfer priorities for affected students are listed in the Proposed Plan. **In the event of future closures and/or boundary changes, continuation transfer priorities will be re-evaluated and applied as appropriate.**

Guaranteed Transfers: To support continuity and staff retention, Sibling Transfers and Staff Transfers are guaranteed unless the Superintendent determines a campus has reached over-capacity before the opening of Round 2.

Priority Transfers: Students at affected campuses are offered specific priorities for transfers as outlined in the Proposed Plan.

Re-registration Compliance: All families must re-register annually for the 2026–27 school year, as no students will be automatically re-enrolled.

The success of the campaign hinges on collaborative communication, with consistent updates provided to staff and families throughout the spring semester.

Project Team Roles and Responsibilities

This team will oversee our department's consolidation-related activities. For questions or direct follow-up, please refer to the contacts below.

Name	Role/Title	Key Responsibilities
Ali Ghilarducci	Sr. Executive Director of Communications and Community Engagement	Executive leadership, vision, mission, priorities, communications & marketing
Cristina Nguyen	Director of Communications and Community Engagement	Project management communications and marketing
Sarah Wheeler	Strategic Communications and Marketing Coordinator	Coordination and implementation of communications and marketing

Name	Role/Title	Key Responsibilities
<i>Victoria O'Neal</i>	<i>Executive Director of Campus and Family Engagement</i>	<i>Executive leadership, vision, mission, priorities, coordination</i>
<i>Carla De La Rosa</i>	<i>Director of Student Attendance and Enrollment</i>	<i>Implementation and coordination</i>
<i>Whitney Neel</i>	<i>Manager Digital Governance and Policy Integration</i>	<i>Technology Coordination and project management</i>
<i>Mia Farrington</i>	<i>Project Specialist, Student Attendance and Enrollment</i>	<i>Implementation and organization</i>

District-Wide Opportunities for Long-Term Gains

The proposed enrollment and transfer plan is designed to provide several organizational gains for the district, primarily centered on improving efficiency, increasing clarity and standardization, and enhancing long-term stability and planning.

Key Organizational Gains

The expected organizational gains include:

- **Transfer Process Standardization:** Moving general transfers to a lottery system in Round 2 eliminates the bias toward early applicants and increases the reliability of the family experience. This change has an added benefit of removing a task from principal responsibility, allowing them to focus on their core role as instructional leaders.
- **Waitlist Management and Appeals Timeline Compression:** The lottery system eliminates the frustration created by dynamic waitlists, as the waitlist order will not change once established. Furthermore, because all transfer decisions will be communicated at the same time, the timeline for transfer appeals will be compressed and standardized, leading to predictable appeal timelines. This provides greater predictability for families and streamlines administrative processes.
- **Capacity Control and Stability:** The policy adjustments allow the district to intervene before campuses exceed capacity due to the acceptance of general transfers over time. Transfers will be naturally constrained due to a reduction in excess seat capacity across the district. Campus capacity for transfers will be developed collaboratively with Talent Strategy, Operations, Enrollment Services, and campus principals, making capacity

clearer and better communicated within the district and to families. The new process will also review limits on transfers when schools are too full or too empty to keep enrollment balanced and sustainable over time.

- System Clarity and Simplified Structure: Clearly separating program acceptances (Round 1) from general transfers and zoned registration (Round 2) provides needed clarity in the system. The priority structure will also be simplified.

Department Project Timeline

Below are the key dates and milestones for our department's work.

Focus Area	Action Steps	Deliverable/Metric	Date/Milestone
Campaign Planning	Finalize enrollment timeline for Spring Semester 2026	Enrollment timeline finalized	November
Campaign Planning	Collaborate with campus and district leadership departments on details of enrollment campaign	Campaign details defined	November
Technology Integration	Initiate technology updates	Technology updates initiated	After November 20
Communication Launch	Update Enrollment website	Updated Enrollment website ready	After November 20
Communication Launch	Social media, website campaign, Thrillshare calls, texts, emails to all families informing of enrollment timeline	Enrollment timeline notification complete	December
Technology Integration	Continue technology updates	Ongoing technology updates	December
Campus Readiness	Provide campuses with individualized materials to support enrollment	Individualized campus materials distributed	December
Staff Training	Provide campuses with training materials that can be used during PS events, principal coffee, etc.	Training materials distributed	December

Focus Area	Action Steps	Deliverable/Metric	Date/Milestone
Staff Training	Conduct enrollment training for campus staff part 1	Campus staff training part 1 completed	December
Communication/Marketing	Continue marketing enrollment dates and procedures	Ongoing marketing campaign	January
Communication	Thrillshare calls, texts, emails to all families informing of Round 1 closing date	Round 1 closing date notification complete	January
Round 1 Execution	Open and close Round 1 in Enroll Austin for program application	Round 1 opened and closed (tentative)	January
Data Reporting	Report our Round 1 data	Round 1 data reported	January
Staff Training	Conduct enrollment training for campus staff part 2	Campus staff training part 2 completed	January
Data Monitoring	Ongoing data monitoring re: re-registration	Re-registration data tracked	February–March
Communication/Marketing	Ongoing social media/website campaign for enrollment	Ongoing enrollment campaign	February–March
Round 2 Execution	Open Round 2 in Enroll Austin for general registration and general transfer requests	Round 2 opened (tentative)	February–March
Communication	Weekly Thrillshare calls, texts, emails to all families informing of Round 2 closing date and implications	Weekly Round 2 closing notifications delivered	February–March
Outreach	Provide campuses with toolkit materials to host enrollment clinics	Campus enrollment clinic toolkits provided	February–March

Focus Area	Action Steps	Deliverable/Metric	Date/Milestone
Outreach	Host centralized enrollment clinics	Centralized clinics hosted	February–March
Outreach	Phone bank to families who have not yet re-registered	Phone bank executed	Last two weeks of Round 2 (Feb–Mar)
Round 3 Execution	Open Round 3	Round 3 opened (tentative)	April
Pre-K Enrollment	Open PK Registration	PK Registration opened	April
Pre-K Communication	PK registration communication, Thrillshare, Website, etc.	PK registration communication deployed	April
Data Monitoring	Ongoing data monitoring re: re-registration and PK applications	Re-registration and PK application data tracked	April
Targeted Communication	Weekly Thrillshare calls, texts, emails to targeted families informing of Round 2 closing date and implications	Targeted family communication delivered	April
Outreach Evaluation	Evaluate need to continue central enrollment clinics and phone banks	Evaluation of clinic/phone bank necessity complete	April

Draft Consolidations Revisions & Updates Log

This section tracks all changes and additions made to the Draft Consolidation Plan document after its initial publication on October 3, 2025. This is to ensure transparency between what was originally communicated and what has been updated.

Date of Update	Section(s) Updated	Summary of Change	Original Information (If applicable)
10/11/25	Policies and practices	Adopted “continuation” and “continuation transfers” in place of “grandfathering.”	Replaced vocabulary
10/20/25	Policies and practices	Revise sibling transfer policy language to read, “A sibling transfer shall be granted if the request is submitted in accordance with FDB(REGULATION) unless the superintendent declares a campus is over capacity prior to the opening of the general registration window.” Families must apply for the transfer within the designated window.	Siblings high priority, but based on capacity
10/20/25	Policies and practices	Revise staff transfer policy language to read, “A staff transfer shall be granted if the request is submitted in accordance with FDB(REGULATION) unless the superintendent declares a campus is over capacity prior to the opening of the general registration window.” Staff must apply for the transfer within the designated window. This applies to full-time regular Austin ISD staff members and their children, step children, or foster children.	Staff children high priority, but based on capacity

Date of Update	Section(s) Updated	Summary of Change	Original Information (If applicable)
10/20/25	Policies and practices	Allow continuation transfers for current transfer-in students, in-district and out-of-district, at closing/program change campuses to the newly assigned campuses receiving zoned students from the closing/program change campuses.	Not included
10/20/25	Policies and practices	Allow a one year exemption from boundary changes for rising 6th and 9th graders.	Not included
10/20/25	Policies and practices	Clarify that continuation transfers apply to PK as well.	Not included
11/12/25	Policies and practices	Final updates to respond to final proposal. Defining priority transfer structure, in particular.	

Frequently Asked Questions

- Will existing transfers remain in place until the student graduates from that school (e.g., through 5th grade)?

- Yes. For schools that are not being closed or changed, as long as the student remains in good standing per AISD Board policy, the existing transfer will remain in place until the end of the last grade that school serves. This is not a change.
- **Will younger siblings of a currently enrolled student be guaranteed a transfer to the same school?**
 - Yes, with one exception. The new policy will read, “A sibling transfer shall be granted if the request is submitted in accordance with FDB(REGULATION) unless the superintendent declares a campus is over capacity prior to the opening of the general registration window.” Families must apply for the transfer within the designated window. This is a change based on community feedback.
- **Will employees of the district still have their priority transfer requests honored?**
 - Yes, with one exception. The new policy will read, “A staff transfer shall be granted if the request is submitted in accordance with FDB(REGULATION) unless the superintendent declares a campus is over capacity prior to the opening of the general registration window.” Staff must apply for the transfer within the designated window. Newly hired staff may apply through a Transfer Exception request. This is a change based on feedback.
- **Will the policy for out-of-district transfers remain the same?**
 - The policy for out of district (OOD) transfers is not changing. New OOD transfer requests will be accepted based on capacity and the priority structure. Families must apply for the transfer within the designated window. This is a change based on community feedback.
- **What is the explicit policy for students in Special Programs, Academies, or Magnet Schools?**
 - Policies for students in Special Programs, Academies, or Magnet Schools are not changing. Students who have already been accepted will continue as long as they remain in good standing. New students will apply during Round 1 of the enrollment system. The new Campus Wide Dual Language, Language Immersion, and Montessori programs will be available for application during Round 1.
- **How will school capacity be calculated for future transfer approvals?**
 - The campus enrollment capacity will be based on several factors. The physical capacity of the building—how many classrooms are available. The staffing capacity—how many teachers have been assigned to the building. The program capacity—some classrooms have a lower capacity than others, such as PK, special education, TAP campuses, and there are differences between elementary and secondary. The enrollment capacity will vary year to year. The enrollment capacity will be set prior to the opening of the general transfer process in Round 2. Zoned students and guaranteed transfer types will be guaranteed a seat and many of the remaining seats will be available

for general transfer. Schools must reserve some seats for new zoned students who move to the area after the general enrollment round.

- **Will I have to re-enroll my student for SY26-27?**

- Yes. It is Austin ISD policy that all parents/guardians complete annual re-registration forms through the district's unified enrollment system. It is even more important this year that we support all families to complete re-registration for the 26-27 school year. There will be a coordinated enrollment campaign in the Spring 2026 semester with more information to come.

- **How are priority structures changing?**

- The priority structures are being simplified. The new priority structures will be published on the enrollment website when approved, but in general, all siblings will be treated the same and the majority-to-minority transfer type will be eliminated.

- **Can my student transfer now to start getting adjusted to their newly zoned school?**

- No. All changes will be implemented for the 26-27 school year. The only transfers that may be approved for the second semester of the 25-26 school year are those that fall into the existing hardship transfer request categories found in Austin ISD board policy FDB (LOCAL.)

- **Why not remove general transfers entirely in order to promote neighborhood schools?**

- This would be a massive change to the functioning of Austin ISD. We know there are many reasons why families pursue a transfer and there will continue to be a general transfer policy in Austin ISD. However, it will look differently moving forward. One of the guiding principles of this process is to minimize disruption, which is why many categories of students are offered priority transfers. The priority transfers would roll up to the highest grade level offered at that campus. At the transition years, the current transfer policy in place would apply. This will naturally mean that there are fewer general transfers available in the eco system of Austin ISD enrollment. Also, the adjustments to the transfer policy allow Austin ISD to intervene sooner before campuses go over capacity due to the acceptance of general transfers.