Academics – School Consolidation: Next Steps & Community Updates

Updated: 10/31/25

Executive Summary

The Academics Department serves as a strategic driver behind AISD's school consolidations, responsible for ensuring that all students—regardless of school location—receive equitable, high-quality instruction and programming. Its core role is to design and implement an aligned Academic Framework that defines consistent expectations for teaching, learning, and access to programs across all campuses. Some of the main data sources and drivers for this academic work are student performance data (unacceptable campus accountability ratings and student performance that has been improving, but at a slow rate), input from the community through long-range planning, and resource and equity analyses showing the need for better resource allocation. Consolidations are identified as a strategy to redirect funding and increase support capacity for campuses, especially in the face of increasing financial pressures on our educational system that have affected that capacity over time.

The first phase of the academics department in 2024-25 was to **Reset and Align** teaching and learning. Alongside school leadership, the department addressed long-standing inconsistencies in curriculum, instructional practices, and program implementation. Focus areas included resourcing all elementary schools with high-quality instructional materials, emphasizing a dual language model, and strengthening early literacy and numeracy. Professional learning for principals and fidelity to language-of-instruction became priorities. This phase is continuing and has expanded to middle schools in 2025-26.

The next phase is **Academic Framework Development**. The Academics Department will create a districtwide roadmap for curriculum, instruction, and student pathways. In the short term, the team will map existing programs, beginning with campuses most affected by student moves, and identify how they can continue at receiving schools using student schedules and enrollment data. This work will set a baseline for academic programming across all campuses and set the stage to expand it over time. It is important to note that all campuses are required to follow the state's Foundation High School Program, which means all campuses offer the core curriculum and pathways to earn a diploma and a state-mandated endorsement. However, specific course availability can vary by campus, particularly for specialized programs or endorsements. As the district identifies differences and gaps in programming, we are committed to the following:

1. Developing Solutions for Gaps: Based on the individualized campus-by-campus analyses (examples linked below) between sending and receiving campuses, leadership must identify and communicate clear solutions, which may include the following as examples:
   ○ Assessing the feasibility of creating new sections at receiving schools for high-demand or critical-sequence pathways. This will require staffing and facility evaluation.
   ○ Working with CTE to approve a modified course sequence to satisfy the program of study (pathway) requirements.

DRAFT: Community Engagement Ongoing

○ Exploring district-level options, such as collaboration with other schools, to provide "gap" course support.
2. Universal Choice Sheets: Requiring that district-level universal choice sheets with all possible offerings be provided at all campuses. Previously, a universal choice sheet was shared but campuses adapted the courses to those they were currently offering. This year, the district is changing the format so that all campuses must share an unmodified, universal choice sheet. The district will monitor responses to verify selections and monitor arising needs for course offerings.
3. Conducting Individual Pathway Audits: For every student enrolled in a "gap" course, counselors must conduct individual audits to determine the impact on their specific endorsement and graduation plan. Create a larger team from academic teams that can support students and help families navigate these changes.
4. Identifying New Opportunities: Students can take advantage of many different offerings at a new campus. This would highlight courses and programs at receiving campuses that are not currently offered at sending campuses.
5. Proactive Communication: Communicate directly with families to present the specific plan and alternative options available to them.

Long-term efforts will develop the full Academic Framework, outlining curriculum standards, instructional practices, assessment and feedback systems, and professional learning plans, with input from stakeholders and alignment to district initiatives.

The primary goals of this work are to
1. Ensure every student receives access to the same level of instructional quality and academic opportunity, regardless of campus;
2. Streamline educational programs (e.g. Dual Language) to maximize access, efficiency, and long-term viability;
3. Create a unified academic vision through a districtwide framework that clarifies curriculum, teaching expectations, and assessment alignment; and
4. Use ongoing achievement, observational, and equity data to refine academic supports and measure the impact of consolidations and the Academic Framework.

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
Mary Ann Maxwell	Assistant Superintendent of Academics	Lead supervisor for EC-12 academics and student support services, oversee academic continuity program planning and development of Academic Framework

Yvette Cardenas	Executive Director of Academic Programs	Manage planning for academic programs, including Dual Language and Early Childhood programs
LaShanda Lewis	Executive Director of Student Support Services	Manage planning for student, staff, and community support for campus transitions, and supplemental programs such as after school care
Tracy Rieger	Senior Executive Director of Academics	Manage planning for core academic programming, including core content, advanced courses and CTE

District-Wide Opportunities for Long-Term Gains

The consolidation process presents challenges but also significant opportunities. From our department's perspective, these are the anticipated impacts and gains for the district:

- Creation of a unified academic framework and instructional expectations, including identifying core classes and programs available at all campuses and additional/signature programs;
- Expansion of successful academic programs and course offerings at currently underenrolled campuses;
- Streamlined and better resourced academic programs that serve their intended students;
- Cost savings that can be reinvested in academic programs, instructional materials, and professional development;
- Improved student outcomes that reflect better-resourced programs and the inputs of district and campus staff.

Department Project Timeline - Academic Framework

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

Focus Area	Action Steps	Deliverable/Metric	Date/Milestone
Phase 1: Establishing Baseline Academic Programming			
Academic Course and Program Continuity Mapping	Develop a campus-by-campus program map to identify programs at sending and receiving campuses. Use campus-by-campus comparisons, student schedules, and enrollment to create analyses that identify high-demand courses and programs that currently exist or that can be established at receiving schools. Establish plan to work with campus administrators and assess the feasibility of creating new courses/sections and the supports needed to create them Explore district level options to create new courses/sections Communicate directly with families to present plans for available courses, plans for course gaps, and alternative options Conduct campus events centered on course selections and course/program information	District-Wide Program Planning Map Campus-by-campus course analyses Campus and district feasibility plans Campus course selection and information event schedule Campus Transition Plans	Example Analyses (see example analyses for [McCallum-Northeast](#) and [Austin HS-Crockett](#)): October 31, 2025 District-Wide Program Planning Map: November, 2025 MS and HS analyses: November-December, 2025 Campus events schedule: December, 2025 Feasibility plans: January, 2026 Campus Transition Plans: Spring 2025

	Develop campus transition plans that include student pathway audits, advisory meetings on opportunities, and campus-specific program transitions.		
Phase 2: Engaging Staff & Community in Drafting District-Wide Academic Framework			
Vision and Planning	Draft an academic vision that describes AISD beliefs for what all students and families can expect from every school, and also establishes the critical components of an Academic Framework that provide a strong foundation for every student Share draft with district, campuses and community for feedback. Revise and publish Academic Vision and Framework Academic Framework Critical Components (to be further completed throughout 25-26 and 26-27 school year as components are developed)	Draft Academic Vision Academic Framework	Draft [Academic Vision and Framework Components](#): October 31, 2025 Initial Version of Academic Framework: December, 2025
Curriculum & Instruction Component	Create draft of district-wide model of curriculum design, instructional materials, instructional delivery practices, and engaging student learning environments Form stakeholder input committees for feedback and revisions (district, campus, and community representatives)	Curriculum Design Guidelines and Long-term Plan Committee agendas and attendance logs Curriculum & Instructional Model	Curriculum & Instruction Model: May 2026

	Publish curriculum and instructional model		
Professional Learning Component	Create professional learning plan that supports teachers in understanding curriculum and instructional material design, instructional delivery practices, and creating engaging student learning environments	Academic Professional Learning Plan	Professional Learning Plan: May 2026
PLCs Component	Create district-level PLC Guiding Coalition that includes campus representatives Establish district-wide expectations and best practices for PLCs, establish shared leadership practices across all levels of the district, build clarity and consistency around PLC structures, create common resources and tools, and create systems of support and monitoring Share proposed PLC Framework with all campuses to gather input and make adjustments Publish PLC Framework	Guiding Coalition agendas and attendance logs District-Wide PLC Framework	PLC Framework: July 2026
Assessment Component	Form assessment framework committee with district, campus, and other representative members Facilitate monthly assessment planning	Committee agendas and attendance logs Assessment Plan	Assessment Framework: June 2027

	sessions to study and align on assessment practices, and provide feedback on the district-created assessment framework Share assessment framework with currently existing district assessment committee, additional representatives (could include community, experts, district staff) Publish assessment plan		
Phase 3: Sustainability			
Implementation and Progress Monitoring	Create a two year plan that evaluates the impacts of consolidations on academic outcomes, including student achievement and learning environments. Metrics will be established in the plan (e.g. attendance, achievement scores, student and staff retention, observable/qualitative classroom measures, course access and completion, community engagement, etc.) Create a long-term plan that evaluates the impact of all components of the Academic Framework on student achievement and various other measures of effectiveness. The plan will include a process for regular evaluation of each component. Publish progress monitoring plans	Consolidations Progress Monitoring Plan Academic Framework Progress Monitoring Plan	Consolidations Progress Monitoring Plan: August 2026 Academic Framework Progress Monitoring Plan: First draft August 2026, will be updated and revised as components are completed

Draft Consolidations Revisions & Updates Log

Date of Update	Section(s) Updated	Summary of Change	Original Information *(If applicable)*

Frequently Asked Questions

- **Question: How will consolidations create stronger academic programs?**

  Answer: When schools combine, funding, staff, and instructional materials are pooled together instead of being spread thin across multiple campuses. Consolidation helps ensure all students, regardless of neighborhood, have access to comparable academic opportunities and allows us to provide more equitable programming at schools that have been underenrolled. It also improves teacher collaboration and student peer collaboration – in many cases our smaller elementary schools operate with extremely small class numbers that either reduce opportunities for collaboration in a class or cause campuses to create multi-age classrooms in schools without an instructional model to support this. In secondary, this underenrollment presents as less academic courses and offerings. Similarly, bringing educators together increases opportunities for shared planning and professional development. Our district will use consolidation as part of a broader Academic Framework – a roadmap to ensure consistency in curriculum, instruction, and enrichment – that is greatly needed.

- **Question: Can you clarify that other elementary campuses will continue to offer DL programs?**

  Answer: Besides our school-wide dual language campuses, we have over 50 elementary campuses offering dual language programming. Some may expand while others may phase out based on enrollment and boundary changes. Any updates to dual language programming will be shared after Fall break.
  📄 Projected 2026-2027 Dual Language Campuses

- **Question: What is AISD's plan to maintain continuity of after-school care and enrichment opportunities for families affected by rezoning or consolidation?**

  Answer: After the November vote by the Board of Trustees, Austin ISD will review the current programs offered at the schools impacted by consolidations to determine the need and capacity of offerings moving forward. We will continue to offer affordable after-school care for families, and department leaders will review the affordable options available to students impacted by the consolidations and take intentional care to review the available options.

- **Question: Is there a potential impact on staffing for programs (e.g.. bilingual certified teachers, advanced courses, fine arts, essential areas, after school programs)?**

  Answer: Yes, consolidations will impact staff for various programs. In many cases, staff will move with students as demands for different programs and services change across campuses. In some cases, streamlined and relocated programs (such as dual language) will create more opportunities to ensure students have fully certified staff in their classrooms. In all cases, our goal is to provide placement opportunities for all employees who wish to continue with the district. Talent Strategy will work to match staff to available positions within their certification area and classification.

- **Question: Will consolidations provide opportunities to expand programs to other campuses?**

  Answer: Yes, consolidations have a priority to balance enrollment and improve underenrollment at many campuses, creating the opportunity for more students and families to be part of a campus which increases demands for courses and programs. This creates the conditions for Austin ISD to respond with course and program establishment to serve each campus community.

- **Question: Is the goal to provide the same options to families at their new campus?**

  Answer: The goal is to provide continuity in programming between sending and receiving campuses. Some programs and courses will be feasible to establish for the 2026-27 school year, while other programs and courses may take additional time to establish as student enrollment and staffing availability increases.