

Root Cause Analysis – Data and Context Packet

WHAT & WHY?

On Saturday, January 22nd, each committee will brainstorm causes for the unmet needs selected for analysis. This is hard work that needs a deep understanding to be successful. You will receive readings for context around all three unmet needs selected during the December 14th Committee Meeting. Reading this packet will help you get the most out of the activities, including:

1. Provide a deeper understanding of the context around unmet needs.
2. Jumpstart your thinking on causes through guided prompts.

PART 1 REVIEW

Review the final unmet needs statements developed by your committee to perform a root cause analysis upon. Review the context from the Community Interviews and the “who”, “what”, and “why” identified in the development of that unmet needs statement.

PART 2 READ

Learn more about the context around each unmet need by reading the following perspectives:

1. Expert Interviews
2. Committee Insights
3. Research and Data

estimated time: 20 minutes or more

PART 3 REFLECT

Using the readings from Part 2, begin your initial brainstorm using the following prompts:

1. What might be causing this unmet need to happen?
2. What causes might be connected to the work of other committees?

recommended time: 10 minutes or more

Part 1 – Review | Unmet Needs Statement

This is one of three unmet needs statements prioritized by this committee for the January 22nd Root Cause Analysis exercise(s). This statement was selected by the committee during the December 14th committee meeting.

Students across all campuses need sufficient time to eat and equitable access to sufficient food portions for breakfast, lunch, and snack/dinner because hungry kids can't learn.

Part 1 – Review | Unmet Needs Statement Generation

Existing operations/practices do not meet students needs

Food services are too slow for hot meals

- students aren't getting food fast enough for it to be warm to want to eat or food is to unfamiliar to eat

1 Mentions: (1) Group Parent Interview

Students are hungry because quantities of food are insufficient, need for snacks, or meals are very early in the day (or being unsupervised)

- “Would appreciate an afternoon snack to help with that. Boys eat and drink a TON. I had 4 boys at one point going to school - that's a lot of hungry boys to feed. Either don't get enough or don't eat at all because they don't like what was served.”
- “Never enough food for them, they come home hungry and portions could be bigger. Choices are good but need more food. Some students eat very early and are hungry by the time they get home. Maybe a snack throughout the day although I know there are issues because of COVID.”

6 Mentions: (6) Parents

Evidence of lack of oversight/site management

- “Still have a sign at the front of school for (food) pick up.”

1 Mention: (1) AISD Staff/Educator

Cafeteria environment is not a positive experience, especially for learners from different backgrounds

- “Cafeterias are not empathetic spaces, lots of yelling commands.”

1 Mention: (1) AISD Staff/Educator

THIS IS AN
ACADEMICS/STAFF/
FACILITIES COMMENT
AND FALLS OUTSIDE
THE CONTROL OF
FOOD SERVICES
DEPT.

Cross-committee partnerships:
academics/principals and
facilities to address the lunch
scheduling

- **Who:** students across all campuses
- **What:** speed of service, insufficient quantities; sufficient time to eat and sufficient food portions for breakfast, lunch, and snack,
- **Why:** make sure children get food when they need it; hungry kids can't learn;

Are there other avenues to support providing snacks to students? (see notes/discussion below)

Unmet Needs Generation Draft:

Students across all campuses need sufficient time to eat and equitable access to sufficient food portions for breakfast, lunch, and snack/dinner because hungry kids can't learn.

Finalized Unmet Needs Statement:

Students across all campuses need sufficient time to eat and equitable access to sufficient food portions for breakfast, lunch, and snack/dinner because hungry kids can't learn.

Part 2 – Read | Expert Interviews

This page contains contextual information related to district practices, operations, and constraints as it relates to the identified root cause. Some of this information may have been relayed verbally during committee meetings. This information was provided by AISD staff selected by the PMs for the knowledge provided by their roles.

Because they receive federal funding via the Federal Policy National School Lunches Program, there are certain things that Food Services is held to:

- Only breakfast and lunch can be served during the school day
- Snack and dinner can only be served (free of charge) after school
- Snacks provided during the day free of charge will not be reimbursed by federal funding
- There are specific windows of times for when lunch can be served that are part of those federal requirements.

Lunch times and schedules are in Academics's purview, based on the master schedule

- Cafeteria sizes (facilities) can impact this based on capacity
- Availability of outdoor dining space and alternative furniture for a less-institutional environment is not equal across the board, but they are improving the dining experience at campuses that have them.

Some kitchens have outdated/undersized kitchens, which results in more frozen ingredients and less flexible delivery schedules for lunch menus.

- Food Services is always applying for any grant that they can to fix/replace aging equipment, but the scale of the district doesn't support the full need (only able to fix 1-2 kitchens at a time with grant funding).

Part 2 – Read | Committee Insights

This page contains any feedback from committee members across all committees from the November 30th committee meeting discussion around unmet needs not yet expressed or identified that the committee members were aware of or wanted to share. These have been organized as they relate to the existing unmet needs or grouped into new ones.

Snacks not provided equitably across all campuses

- Some campuses provide snacks to schools, but the teachers provide it themselves (whatever the district leaves for the after school, that's what we give)
- Some parents pack a snack (campuses encourage/ask parents)
- Some campuses/teachers ask parents to volunteer snacks for the classroom supply

Even if food is served hot, it's not always hot by the time the kids get seated to eat

- Temperature of the food could be a menu issue (plan for foods that retain heat/stay warmer longer)
- Consider Grab & Go options. Meet people where they are at.

Background: lines and lunch schedules are based on master planning and scheduling at the campus level – even if there are lunch blocks, the lines are still very long to get through.

- There is a system that works, but there are a lot of kids
- It's a population thing – getting all the kids through the lunch line, but serving them at 10 AM in the morning because it takes time to get them all through the line
- in ES and MS, there are cafeteria monitors, Princ/Asst. Principal, and 1-2 teachers that monitor the cafeteria
- Once they go to the cafeteria line, it's not Food Services but educators on the campus to make sure kids eat their food and are cognizant of time since they only get 30 min in the cafeteria
- sometimes the lines are very long (in ES and MS there might be only one line)

Cross-committee partnerships: academics/principals and facilities to address the lunch scheduling

Part 2 – Read | Research and Data

This page contains key findings from the additional data sources identified by committees during the October 26th committee meeting, as well as key findings from validated external resources and research from the AISD Department of Research and Evaluation.

Austin ISD Food Service Offerings

- 41% of schools that were scored have a Food Services ESA score of Unsatisfactory, however no schools scored Very Unsatisfactory
- 52% of elementary/middle schools offer after school meals
- 51% of elementary/middle schools offer breakfast in the classroom
- 38% of elementary/middle schools offer the snack program
- Only 18 of 97 schools (19%) offer all three programs

Sources: Academic programming datasets for ES, MS, and HS (2021-2022 SY)

Parents are mostly satisfied with the quality of food served to their children.¹

- Across all AISD campuses, 84% of elementary parents, 75% of middle school parents, and 76% of high school parents responded that they were satisfied with the quality of food services at their child's school
- For the most underserved campuses identified, 81% of parents across all three cohorts in 2020 and 86% of parents across all three cohorts in 2021 were satisfied with the quality of food at their child's school

Sources:

1. [Family Learning Preference Survey - Interactive Report](#)

The AISD Family Learning Preference survey was available for participation between September 10th and September 25th in English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Arabic, Kinyarwanda, Dari, Swahili, and Pashto. Families responded on behalf of over 54,000 students (N= 54,294) out of a possible 76,397 students for about a 71% response rate for the survey. Families were asked which instructional model they planned for their student to participate in from the options remote off-campus learning and on-campus learning, with a third, hybrid learning option available to students at the high school level.

Insufficient food access and food insecurity has negative impacts on early learners.²

- Household food insecurity during pre-school and early elementary years is associated with lower child development outcomes in areas of academics (literacy and numeracy), cognition (short-term memory), and psycho-social health (social-emotional skills and self-regulation).
- Reduced development in early childhood has life-long impacts on academic and post academic success.

Source:

2. [Household Food insecurity and early childhood development: Longitudinal evidence from Ghana](#)(Aurino, Wolf, Tsinigo, 2020)

A longitudinal study tracking household food access and early childhood development outcomes across a three-year period. Evaluated impacts on child development of persistent and transitory food insecurity, using the [Household Hunger Scale](#) as a key metric.

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Part 2 – Read | Research and Data *CONT.*

This page contains key findings from the additional data sources identified by committees during the October 26th committee meeting, as well as key findings from validated external resources and research from the AISD Department of Research and Evaluation.

School lunch period lengths can have significant impacts on student meal choices and food consumption

- There are CDC recommendations (minimum 20 minutes), but no national requirements around duration of lunch periods
- Study across 6 elementary and middle schools in a low-income urban school district showed that healthy food choices, specifically fruit, were less likely to be selected if students had less than 20 minutes of seated time for their lunch period
- Less than 20 minutes of seated time to eat caused students to consume less of their entrée and vegetables
- When students eat food too fast, they can have an adverse gastrointestinal response which decreases their perception of fullness after a meal, causing them to be feel hungry and be prone to overeating

Sources:

3. [The Amount of Time to Eat Lunch is Associated with Children's Selection and Consumption of School Meal Entrée, Fruits, Vegetable, and Milk](#) (Cohen, et al, 2016)

A study during the 2011-2012 school year that tracked the eating behaviors of 1000 students in elementary/middle schools in an urban, low-income school district to understand the correlation between lunch period lengths, student food waste, and student food consumption by meal component.

Part 3 – Reflect | Guiding Questions

This page contains guiding questions to brainstorm causes and reflect on connections between the work of different committees. The cross-committee connections highlighted on this page were identified by the PMs and/or committees prior to and during the December 14th committee meeting.

Unmet Needs Statement

Students across all campuses need sufficient time to eat and equitable access to sufficient food portions for breakfast, lunch, and snack/dinner because hungry kids can't learn.

Cross-Committee Connections



Reflection Questions

What might be causing this unmet need to happen?

What causes might be connected to the work of other committees?