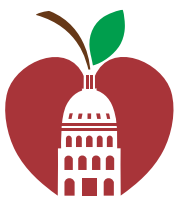


Frequently Asked Questions



School Changes 2019

REIMAGINE
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1. Q: Why is AISD undergoing a process to reimagine, reinvest and reinvent our schools?

A: To support our vision of reinventing the urban school experience, the 2017 Facility Master Plan committed to ensuring that district facilities continue to support excellence in teaching and learning at every level by supporting emerging models of 21st century learning. We know the learning environment has a huge impact on student success, but the reality is that some of our learning spaces are simply not suited to support the kinds of innovative instruction our students want and deserve. Today, the district is operating numerous aging and under-enrolled facilities, which ties up many of our dollars in recurring maintenance and overhead. We have the responsibility to assess whether those dollars would be more wisely invested in more robust academic programs, enrichment opportunities and whole-child supports for our students. Freeing up some of those funds will enable us to offer more specialized programs distributed more equitably across the district, ensuring all students have a robust menu of options to appeal to their talents and interests.

2. Q: Why are some of our schools facing under-enrollment?

A: The city of Austin has changed significantly over the past few decades and our schools experience many of the effects of that change. AISD has lost just over 6,000 students since its peak enrollment in 2013. Furthermore, the 2019 demographic report projects that we will lose another 7,000 students over the next 10 years.

The lack of affordable housing has led to families moving further outside the city. While many people are moving here, according to the city of Austin demographer, fewer of those people have school-aged children. Another factor contributing to our enrollment challenges is the increased competition from charter schools. Many charter schools within the AISD attendance area have expanded

and some of our families are choosing these options.

3. Q: How does enrollment affect my school community?

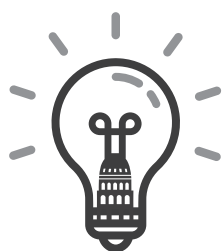
A: Schools that are significantly under-enrolled or are considered “small” due to the limited number of classrooms can have negative impacts on a school community, as they are not always able to offer robust opportunities and support for students. Because funding and staffing allocations are tied to the number of students attending a school, fewer students results in fewer resources. This means that schools have to make difficult decisions and trade-offs regarding staffing, the number and variety of elective classes, and programs offered. Additionally, the ability for collaboration and peer support amongst teachers is limited when some of our schools only have one or two classrooms per grade level. Lastly, smaller campus communities can also face challenges in recruiting enough families to participate in the PTA or other campus activities that provide additional support to the students and teachers.

Conversely, schools that are significantly overcrowded have their own unique challenges. Portable buildings are used to provided additional classrooms, which are located away from the permanent structures, and limits the ability for collaboration with students in other classes. Core spaces like the gymnasium and cafeteria also become stressed due to the number of students using these spaces.

4. Q: Why are modernized facilities so important for our students?

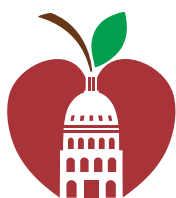
A: Modernized school facilities provide for flexible spaces that can adapt to the changing technology and careers of the future. Rapidly evolving technologies, a globalized economy, and advances in science are transforming future educational and career opportunities. AISD is working to transform curriculum

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and instructional practices to equip our students with the skills needed to navigate those changes— what we call the 6Cs of collaboration, communication, connection, creativity, critical thinking, and cultural proficiency. Modernized spaces and tools can enable our students to experience a new kind of learning in a way that is personalized and powerful. Through bond programs and the current work to reimagine, reinvest and reinvent - the district can begin to improve many of our schools that are not designed to support these innovative educational goals and programs.

5. Q: Does the district already know which schools will be closed?

A: No. The district is not working with a predetermined list of campuses identified for consolidation, closure or repurposing. We are committed to taking a new, more comprehensive approach than past processes. Rather than analyzing whether or not an individual campus should be considered for closure, we're taking it up a level, looking holistically across the district. That means identifying the needs and opportunities at every one of our campuses, taking numerous factors into account—not just current enrollment—to produce more creative, equitable, and sustainable solutions that will position us for success for years to come. We anticipate having a sense of which schools may be affected by this process, including recommended closures, by late summer.

6. Q: How many schools will be consolidated, closed or repurposed?

A: We won't have an idea of how many schools will ultimately be consolidated, closed, or repurposed until late summer after scenarios are developed and analyzed (see reinvention roadmap).

7. Q: How will AISD decide which schools will experience changes?

A: The district has developed a transparent decision-making process that will take

place over approximately ten months. The first step is to collect data on all 130 of our schools and gather community feedback on what it might look like to come out of this process with reimagined school communities that are stronger and more equitable than they are today. We will then group all of our schools into planning regions and establish a methodology that we will use to develop and analyze regional scenarios. The school changes guiding principles and feedback from the community will be used to select a final scenario for each region that will be recommended to the Board of Trustees. Once the final recommendations are adopted by the board, the district will begin planning and implementing the school changes no sooner than August 2020 when we will invite families, students and staff into their reinvented school communities.

8. Q: Why is the district creating planning regions to analyze scenarios and how will the regions be determined?

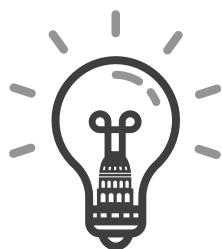
A: Planning regions allow us to analyze the challenges and opportunities of each of our schools in relation to other schools in the same region. For example, challenges of overcrowding or under-enrollment must be considered within the context of other regional schools that could be utilized to balance enrollment.

District staff is considering feedback from campus leadership to determine the best way to create regions that provide for the greatest opportunity to achieve our goals to reimagine, reinvest and reinvent.

9. Q: Why not just use Vertical Teams for regional planning?

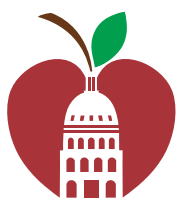
A: Traditionally, we have grouped schools by vertical teams or by geographic regions that are bounded by major thoroughfares. While those factors will be considered, we recognize that if we limit our thinking to the way things have been done in the past, we might also limit the kinds of solutions we come up with.

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10. Q: What factors will the district consider as it evaluates potential school changes?

A: The district is looking at a number of factors including but not limited to the facility condition score, educational suitability score, utilization, deferred maintenance costs, program offerings, school climate and culture, graduation rates, college readiness, teacher experience, student demographics, operational costs, transportation costs and real estate values. Keep in mind that these factors will not only be used to determine if a school would be considered for consolidation but also to explore other changes that could benefit the campus or region as a whole. Examples could include, receiving or reassigning students, adding academic programming, or providing additional student support services.

11. Q: When will we know which schools will be affected?

A: Throughout the process we will explore many scenarios which may be adjusted to better align with the guiding principles. We anticipate beginning to develop and analyze scenarios in May or June and should have a strong idea which schools will be affected and how by late summer. The board is scheduled to vote on the recommended school changes for each region when they adopt the Facility Master Plan in October.

12. Q: How will AISD invest in schools that receive new students and communities that are affected?

A: The 2017 Bond Program planned to invest dollars in every one of our schools. If it is determined that a school will be consolidated, closed, or repurposed, we will work with the AISD Community Bond Oversight Committee and the Board of Trustees to reassign those dollars to schools that will receive students. We will also work with our communities to ensure that receiving schools offer robust programming that meet the needs of the campus and region.

13. Q: How will AISD decide what to do with schools that are no longer being used as schools?

A: We know we may no longer need every one of our buildings to support student learning so we are working with our partners—municipalities, health care organizations, county government, the City of Austin, Travis County, and others—to identify opportunities that would allow our facilities to continue benefiting the community. This could mean affordable housing, workforce housing, green spaces, recreation spaces, shared use, social services or private development. We are committed to working with our communities to explore options that make sense financially and are responsive to the needs of our communities.

14. Q: How will the school changes process affect staff and their jobs?

A: Like most school districts, Austin ISD naturally experiences annual teacher and staff attrition. We anticipate that any reduction in staff resulting from the school changes process can be accommodated through staff transfers and reassignments to other locations or to available, comparable positions. The Office of Human Capital will support staff impacted by any changes throughout the process to ensure positive outcomes for those involved.