

School Changes 2019

REIMAGINE
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School Changes Community Engagement Report



School Changes 2019

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April-May 2019

Community Workshops & Online Engagement

In April, Austin ISD held four community workshops regarding the district's program planning and potential school closures, consolidations and repurposing.

Each workshop featured a panel of Austin ISD staff, community members, planners and developers followed by facilitated small group conversations to discuss concerns and opportunities the School Changes process presents.

4 COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS | 260 PARTICIPANTS



Academics and Economic Opportunity

Focused on academic priorities and how the district is responding to the changing economic landscape in Central Texas.

April 16 | Bowie High School | 6-8 p.m.

April 24 | Alternative Learning Center | 6-8 p.m.



Equity and Community Benefit

Focused on how the district can continue meeting community needs in different capacities and how the reinvention process presents an opportunity to increase equity in the district.

April 17 | Fulmore Middle School | 6-8 p.m.

April 25 | Dobie Middle School | 6-8 p.m.



Key Themes:

Opportunities

1

Increase Student Outcomes and Improve Access to Programming: Numerous participants felt that the process has the potential to ensure that each school has what it needs to support student success. Many shared their enthusiasm for providing more equitable access to academic programs, enrichment opportunities and wrap-around services.

2

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion: Many participants expressed hope that the process would bring about greater socio-economic and cultural integration of schools and improve the academic performance of all schools.

3

Budgetary Benefits: Numerous participants felt that the funds freed up through the process should be reinvested into priorities such as teacher and staff salaries and increased staffing to better support students.

4

Improved Facilities and Innovative Instruction: Many attendees felt that more modernized facilities would enhance the level of innovation and creativity in the classroom and create more engaging learning environments for students.

5

Repurposing for Benefit Community: Many participants felt that offering affordable housing to teachers and families would be an ideal alternative if a campus were to close. Other ideas included community centers, health and wellness clinics, and community art and recreation spaces.



Key Themes:

Concerns

1

Community Voice: Numerous participants emphasized the importance of working closely with the communities that could be affected to ensure that the changes reflect the needs and values of those affected communities.

2

Communication: Many participants expressed concern about how the district would ensure that families understood the changes that are under consideration and know how to get involved in the process.

3

Impact on Low-income Communities: Many attendees expressed concern that the process could have a disproportionate impact on low-income communities and felt that the district should exercise caution to avoid potential negative effects.

4

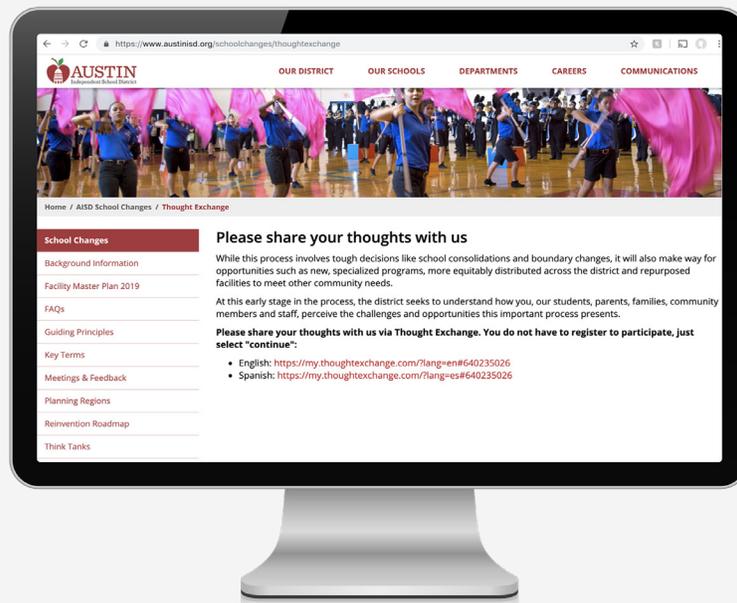
Cost of Uncertainty: Numerous participants expressed how transitions and periods of uncertainty can take a toll on communities.

5

Maintain what is working: Many participants communicated how hard school communities have worked to be successful. They expressed the need to nurture those successes and not disrupt school communities that are thriving.



Online Engagement: ThoughtExchange



Austin ISD opened a community-wide ThoughtExchange on April 15 to hear from the community in the Reimagine phase of the School Changes 2019 engagement process.

Thought Exchange is an online tool that allows participants to share their ideas in 300 words or fewer and to rate the ideas shared by others in the exchange.

The idea behind the exchange is to allow the public to share their thoughts and ideas even if they were unable to attend one of the School Changes 2019 Community Workshops.

Top-rated thoughts included a need for transparency, concerns regarding changes in school assignment, the need for increased equity, closing opportunity gaps, building trust and supporting students and staff through transitions.

2,161
Participants

2,026
Thoughts

81,000
Ratings



Online Engagement:

Thought Exchange

Participants responded to the prompt: *What are your hopes, concerns and/or questions regarding the Austin ISD School Changes process?*

I hope that AISD considers not splitting up vertical teams that are working well.

Its important to keep kids in their neiborhood schools as much as possible. To avoid distance hardships for students and volunteers

4.2 ★★★★★ (43)

Ranked #164 of 2016



Changes in attendance boundaries break up communities

We want our kids to go to the schools where we already have strong ties. This is why we bought our home here and developed relationships here.

4.4 ★★★★★ (40)

Ranked #30 of 2016



My hope is that this process will be well thought out and not rushed!

4.2 ★★★★★ (43)

Ranked #171 of 2016



My hope is that AISD is transparent with the process

It allows the community to trust the district

4.2 ★★★★★ (44)

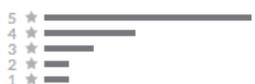


I hope AISD addresses what makes families think some schools aren't good enough for their kids.

Title I schools need strong leaders, better climate, culturally responsive teaching, and not to be pressured to teach to the test.

4.0 ★★★★★ (48)

Ranked #406 of 2016



Will there be a grandfather approach?

Life choices have been established based on schools.

4.2 ★★★★★ (43)

Ranked #182 of 2016



Keep kids close to their schools

Minimizing transportation time is important, especially with Austin's terrible traffic.

4.4 ★★★★★ (44)

Ranked #10 of 2016





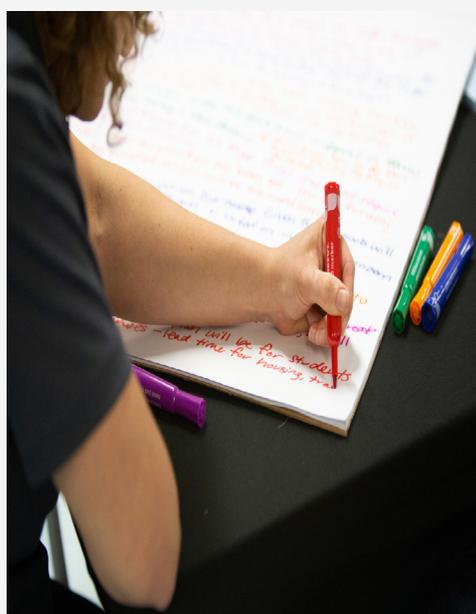
School Changes 2019

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June-July 2019

Community Visioning Sessions Recap



Austin ISD hosted a series of Community Visioning Sessions designed to gather feedback on the strengths, challenges and opportunities of each planning region. Feedback from these meetings will be used to shape the academic vision that will drive the development of scenario options.

Five region-specific meetings were hosted along with two districtwide meetings and one Spanish language meeting. Meetings were conducted in a come-and-go format allowing attendees to participate at their own pace.

8

Community
Visioning
Sessions

820

Participants

455

Feedback Forms
Completed



Key Themes

- 1** **Maintain successful school communities**
- 2** **Close achievement gaps**
- 3** **Engage school communities that could be affected**
- 4** **Consider proximity to schools and travel time**
- 5** **Recruit and retain strong teachers and school leaders**
- 6** **Align programming throughout grade levels**
- 7** **Offer more hands-on, project-based learning experiences**
- 8** **Provide affordable housing for Austin ISD staff and families**
- 9** **Extend process timeline**
- 10** **Incentivize highly qualified teachers to teach in lower income school communities**

"I appreciate the transparency and willingness to answer questions. The staff was very professional in their responses to some difficult questions/attitudes."

"I hope there is a way for the district to take advantage of/channel that energy in a way that not only benefits their own schools but also those that are struggling."

"The data on academics, Human Resources and facilities was interesting and eye-opening."

"I was pleased to learn about the pathways Austin ISD is creating for identifying and hiring better school leaders."

"Please consider walk and bike-ability. Let's keep cars off the road—a long term city-wide goal."



Feedback by Region: North



79

Feedback
Forms

4

Zip
Codes

Strengths:

- International Baccalaureate program
 - Strong program alignment
 - Strong community support
 - Variety of language offerings
-

Opportunities:

- More robust gifted and talented programs
 - Stronger support for students with Special Education needs
 - Modernized facilities
 - Fewer portables
-

Repurposing:

- Affordable housing
- Sports and recreation spaces
- Community center offering general and mental healthcare, tutoring or job training
- Daycare or extracurricular activities center



Feedback by Region: North Central



28

Feedback
Forms

8

Zip
Codes

Strengths:

- Dual-language programs
 - Community partners offering wrap-around support
 - Community volunteers
 - Fine Arts Academy
-

Opportunities:

- Two-way dual language
 - Greater socio-economic and cultural diversity of students and staff
 - Mental health support
 - After-school enrichment opportunities
 - More specialists and support in the classroom
-

Repurposing:

- Affordable housing
- Community center, park, recreation center, or natatorium
- Adult education center with vocational training and support for small businesses
- Creative, art, theater and performance space



Feedback by Region: Central



125

Feedback
Forms

11

Zip
Codes

Strengths:

- Academies at Austin High
 - Early College High School
 - After-school programs
 - Outdoor learning spaces
 - Involved parents and sense of community
-

Opportunities:

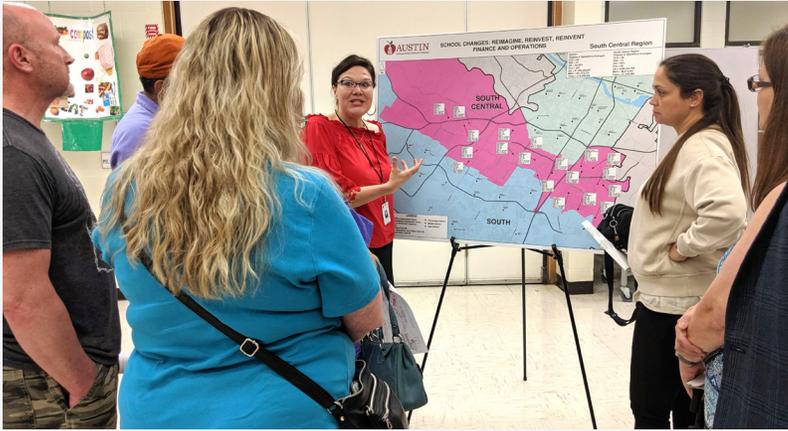
- Increased hands-on learning
 - Stronger arts programming
 - Stability, without fear of closure
 - More comprehensive after-school enrichment programming
 - Strengthen and expand two-way dual-language
-

Repurposing:

- Affordable housing
- Community education
- Mix of non-profit spaces, business spaces, museum or cultural center
- Natural science lab to take advantage of proximity to the greenbelt
- A community center offering art classes, artist residencies and collaboration with students



Feedback by Region: South Central



51

Feedback
Forms

8

Zip
Codes

Strengths:

- Academies
- Early College High School
- Hands on learning
- After school enrichment
- Career and technical education such as construction, auto technology, audio visual production, graphic design and cosmetology

Opportunities:

- Strengthen connection between feeder schools
- More programming at the elementary level, particularly performing arts
- Modernized schools
- More advanced academics
- Greater socio-economic diversity

Repurposing:

- Affordable housing
- Community center
- Adult-education
- Kids enrichment center and arts space
- Magnet campus



Feedback by Region: South



35

Feedback
Forms

8

Zip
Codes

Strengths:

- Advanced academic courses
 - Strong vertical teams
 - STEAM programming
 - Pre-K
 - Reading specialists and interventions
-

Opportunities:

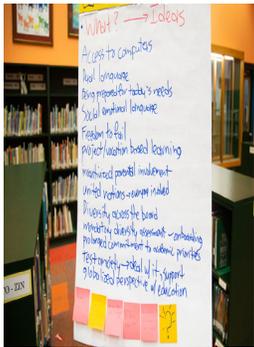
- More challenging curriculum
 - Smaller classes
 - Stronger early literacy support
 - More play-based and project-based learning
 - More opportunities for parents to get involved in their child's school
-

Repurposing:

- Community center
- Vocational school
- Creative opportunities for kids (maker space, arts)
- Tech industry partnership



Austin ISD School Changes 2019 Think Tanks



June 18 | 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. | Perez Elementary - 7500 S Pleasant Valley Rd. | South Central

June 20 | 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. | Alternative Learning Center - 4900 Gonzales St. | Central

June 25 | 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. | Kocurek Elementary - 9800 Curlew Dr. | South

June 26 | 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. | Padrón Elementary - 2011 W. Rundberg Ln. | North

June 27 | 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. | Pickle Elementary - 1101 Wheatley Ave. | North Central

Austin ISD recruited representatives from more than 110 of its school communities to participate in one of five regional Think Tanks. Think Tanks were charged with thinking big and brainstorming innovative ideas around a given planning region. Their big, bold ideas will contribute to the overall universe of ideas to help the district develop preliminary scenario options.

Think Tanks were comprised of parents, students, staff and community members with diverse backgrounds and experiences in an effort to be reflective of the district as a whole. The district worked to recruit status quo-challenging, creative, divergent thinkers willing to explore opportunities and tackle challenges to improve student outcomes.

Individuals who were accepted to represent their region on a Think Tank but were unable to attend on their assigned day were invited to participate on an alternative day in an at-large capacity. At-large representatives were asked to take a districtwide perspective as they generated ideas to address district challenges and capitalize on opportunities.

110

Participants

5

Regions

3

At-large
groups

Big Bold Ideas

SOUTH CENTRAL

WHAT

HOW

WHY

Big Bold Idea A

All South Central students feed into Crockett
Force the change.

Transform Bedichek into 9th grade campus and Mendez into kinder-8th grade campus with strong leadership focus. Develop strong marketing strategy to strengthen the brand of the Vertical Team.

Current Vertical Teams serve to reinforce segregation and limit students' exposure to opportunities outside their assigned schools. This is an opportunity to ensure all students have access to rich, high-quality academic environments.

Big Bold Idea B

Teacher exchange program
Give teachers a better understanding of what school looks like across the district.

Identify the strongest teachers with a track record of engaging students and building student interest in a subject area.

There can be a disparity in the level of experience of teachers at schools in different parts of town, and it can be hard to recruit teachers who can teach certain electives. Sharing teachers among campuses increases the number of students with access to high-quality instruction and a variety of courses and it exposes teachers to a variety of learners and communities within the district.

Big Bold Idea C

Strong Marketing Strategy
Austin ISD must work to dispel misconceptions regarding the relative quality of its schools.

Put on display the quality teaching and learning that take place in all schools. Create transparency in how performance is measured and offer alternative ways to measure student growth beyond the test.

Perceptions about schools affects where families choose to buy homes and contributes to the under-enrollment in certain parts of town and to the overall segregation of the city.



Big Bold Ideas

SOUTH CENTRAL

WHAT

HOW

WHY

Big Bold Idea D

**Pre-K to 12th
Grade School**
Create a new
model of school
for the 21st
century

Collapse Widen into Mendez. Extend the school day from 6 a.m. - 6 p.m. Offer wrap-around programming. Assign flexible hours to teachers and employ strong, experienced staff. Eliminate the concept of grade levels and move to multi-age grouping and mastery learning.

Meets the needs of students and families. Allows students to progress at a pace that is consistent with their natural development. School needs to adapt to ensure students are prepared for the demands and jobs of the 21st century. Attract families who are choosing out of district options.

Big Bold Idea E

**Boon
Elementary
Early
Childhood
Mecca**
Provide
a strong
foundation
for student
learning.

The site would be a mix of free and tuition-based pre-K operating year-round. On-site wrap around services including health care could be provided through community and intergovernmental partnerships.

Boon is in a great location accessible to all of the region. There is high demand for quality early-childhood care in the area.

Big Bold Idea F

**Grow Stronger
Community
Culture in
Schools**
Schools
must become
an active
partner in a
community's
welfare.

Schools serve as a hub for the community by becoming a Life Center offering services such as a food pantry, swim lessons, taxes, budgeting and tires. Offer extra-curricular services earlier in the day. Seek community partnerships to offer services.

District assets should be optimized to meet a broad array of student and family needs. Increased access to resources and services can enhance families' connections to their schools, resulting in higher student achievement.



Big Bold Ideas

SOUTH CENTRAL

WHAT

Big Bold Idea G

**Rethink
School Culture**
We don't have to do things the same way as we always have.

HOW

Re-envision the structure of the school day with flexible school hours. Offer four-day curriculum with one day of enrichment. Consider year-round school. Offer mobile programming for art, music, culinary, tech and maker spaces. Capitalize on Austin as a classroom with outdoor based-curriculum, civics projects and social justice framework. Implement teacher exchange among schools. Draw on community member experts to co-teach.

WHY

Schools need to work for students and families, not the other way around. In order to equip students for a changing future, the district needs to get creative and reassess how things have been done in the past.



Big Bold Ideas

CENTRAL

WHAT

Big Bold Idea A

Ensure Equal Access to Resources and High Expectations for all Students

All students can achieve and deserve equal access to district programs, resources, and high-quality instruction.

HOW

Define expectations for distribution of resources across the district and “hold someone accountable” for meeting them. Challenge implicit biases around what students are capable of. Ensure transportation is not a barrier to access.

WHY

A student’s zip code should not predict outcomes. Instruction cannot look different in different parts of town and that can only change if the district sets the expectation that all students receive rigorous instruction that is not fixated on results on a test.

Big Bold Idea B

Redesign School Transfer Policies to Support Equitable Vertical Teams

Keep what is working and challenge what is not.

Facilitate courageous conversations around school boundaries that best utilize public transportation options, biking, and walking. Spotlight achievements in all schools/vertical teams and improve communication about successes at all schools. Consider a district rebranding initiative that highlights successes and programming. Develop an Austin ISD app. Share teachers and identify best practices across teams.

Schools lose students to in-district transfers based on lack of knowledge about their neighborhood campus’ strengths and achievements. If students are truly given the opportunity to attend a campus that meets their individual needs and interests, their commitment to achievement is strengthened. Schools across the district would benefit from increased diversity. While transfers make sense for the work-life balance of our families, the policy needs to be reimagined.



Big Bold Ideas

CENTRAL

WHAT

Big Bold Idea C

Revamp the Culture of Special Education and Reduce Barriers to Success

Commit to success for children with special needs.

HOW

Use best inclusive practices at all decision-making levels and co-teach students receiving special education and non-disabled students together. Implement co-teaching and Universal Design for Learning. Give specific consideration for students receiving Special Education services in all areas of planning and decision-making. Evaluate special education training for staff at all levels and revise training where improvements are needed.

WHY

Students receiving special education services can make academic progress when working in a heterogenous student group co-taught by special education and general education teachers. Teachers can also gain new skills with a diverse classroom. Data shows that meaningful inclusion benefits all students. Disability rights are civil rights.

Big Bold Idea D

Tailor Curriculum and Instruction to Identified Community Strengths and Needs

Every school has its strengths and needs that affect student learning.

Commit to the Community Schools process to give communities a say in what is best for their schools. Partner with the business, tech, non-profit, and higher ed sectors to create mentorships and internships for students, introducing real world learning at all school levels. Conduct a needs assessment, by campus or vertical team, of community resources, strengths, and needs. Use findings to guide teaching and learning so that instruction is relevant to students and the world in which they live.

The most effective teachers know and understand their students' strengths and challenges. A needs assessment of the school community can provide valuable information about how to best serve students.



Big Bold Ideas

CENTRAL

WHAT

Big Bold Idea E

Alter the Structure of the District
The current structure limits possibilities.

HOW

Consolidate schools and create kinder-8th or 6th-12th grade schools. Repurpose sites for affordable housing. Remove portables, change/collapse/remove boundaries and revamp the transfer policy. Re-envision the structure of the school day with flexible school hours. Consider year-round school. Offer mobile programming for art, music, culinary, tech and maker spaces. Capitalize on Austin as a classroom with outdoor based-curriculum, civics projects and social justice framework. Implement teacher exchange among schools. Change LASA acceptance model to allow students who live in the Eastside area to stay at the school. Develop ways to rate and hold administrators and principals accountable.

WHY

The combination of changing school assignments and creating affordable housing can address the challenge of over and under-enrolled schools. “Low performing” schools tend to struggle with enrollment and administrators should be held accountable for their role in a school’s performance.

Big Bold Idea F

Social Justice Programming at Eastside and International High School
Students must understand their ability to affect change.

Reimagine the curriculum to integrate social justice studies in the health sciences and Early College High School programs. Develop and implement robust, project-based, student-centered, culturally responsive curriculum at the Eastside Memorial Vertical Team elementary and middle school. Consider a kinder-8th grade model.

Eastside and International have demonstrated strong student advocacy in AISD and the city of Austin. The students are deserving of an academy geared toward leadership, ethnic studies, social justice and activism. Student-centered advocacy skills and civic engagement is crucial in this community and in low-income black and brown communities.



Big Bold Ideas

CENTRAL

WHAT

Big Bold Idea G

Create Partnerships That ‘Think Outside the Box’ Regarding Building Use
Innovation requires bold thinking.

HOW

Lease parts of under-utilized buildings to offer programming such as STEM, languages and arts programming, to expand the district’s program offerings. Whole campuses can become multi-use sites providing housing, clinics, resource centers, meeting rooms, farmers markets, etc.

WHY

If schools are no longer schools, they should continue to benefit the community. There is also a potential to generate revenue for the district. Working with all types of partners to rethink and best utilize school buildings can strengthen service to students, families, and staff.

Big Bold Idea H

Partnerships to Support Affordable Housing, Community Schools and Academic and Career Opportunities
Our enrollment and achievement challenges require a comprehensive approach.

If schools are closed, affordable housing at a max of 50-60% of the Median Family Income should be the priority for the site. Partner with the city of Austin to address zoning. Reinforce partnerships already in place at schools such as VIDA Clinics, Goodwill, Lifeworks and SAFE. Extend services beyond the school day with 24-hour access to the facility. Establish youth-led boards to advise planning, monitoring and goals. Explore co-location opportunities to increase facility utilization and generate revenue. Offer enhanced programming, internships, mentorships and job opportunities.

Schools will have no one to serve if families can’t afford to stay in Austin. The Community Schools model ensures that decision-making is shared with families, students and the community. Wrap-around services for families ensure that basic material, social and emotional needs are met so students can focus on learning. Schools can’t do it alone and in Austin we are fortunate enough to have partners that can help.



Big Bold Ideas

SOUTH

WHAT

Big Bold Idea A

Classrooms for Life/Not for Work
Students benefit from a broad curriculum that exposes them to skills and qualities necessary in life, not just the workplace.

HOW

Focus on content mastery and developmentally appropriate readiness, rather than grades. Expand foreign language and fine arts instruction into earlier grades. Implement comprehensive cultural immersion program from early childhood and build on it throughout the school career. Students create auto-ethnographies to foster pride in their culture and background and to help teachers build stronger relationships with students.

WHY

The world gets smaller each year. In the decades ahead, students will live and work in multicultural settings. Students thrive when they feel a sense of belonging in school.

Big Bold Idea B

Integrated Technology
Technology is a tool that has increasing importance in all aspects of life.

Distribute technology funds equitably between schools and increase access to online services. Provide wi-fi to families through partnerships. Create opportunities for online learning. Establish mobile units to share technology between campuses. Repurpose closed schools as community technology hubs. Partner with Austin's high-tech community to secure technology equipment and expertise.

Every year, technology plays a greater role in our lives. Students must graduate technology-proficient to be successful in college or work.

Big Bold Idea C

Equal Access to Educational Opportunities for All Students
Public education must be committed to the success of every child.

Identify student/community needs. Strategically rezone to create diversity and integrate attendance areas. Provide transportation to Academy schools through hubs. Offer distance learning. Provide college test preparation. Fund campuses equitably. Ensure there are experienced teachers at every campus. Offer stipends and require a certain number of years of teaching experience. Compensate staff adequately. Empower parents in decision-making.

Schools have the responsibility to equal the playing field of life. All students deserve opportunities that will propel achievement.



Big Bold Ideas

SOUTH

WHAT

Big Bold Idea D

Ensure a Safe and Positive School Environment

Schools should be healthy havens.

HOW

Offer empathy programs after school and on weekends to reduce bullying, stereotypes and increase inclusivity. Partner organizations provide food and gift cards to incentivize attendance. Employ more dedicated mental health counselors to increase the amount of focus each child receives. Ensure counselors' time is protected. Encourage parent involvement with family events. Expand after-school programming.

WHY

Children learn best when they are physically safe and emotionally secure. Schools that are welcoming to families have greater parent participation, which contributes to student success.

Big Bold Idea E

Make Under-utilized Spaces Work for our Communities

Austin is rich in potential service providers; find more ways to work with them.

Assess possible uses for space in under-enrolled schools and closed schools. Think outside the box and consider all Austin organizations as options, even sports facilities. Leasing possibilities could include community tech hubs and learning centers, primary health centers, homeless facilities or graduate counseling programs. Focus on marketing available space.

Excess space could be used to provide enrichment opportunities for students. A school closure doesn't have to be a total loss for a community if we work with community partners.

Big Bold Idea F

Market Vertical Teams

The many assets and strengths of our school communities must be promoted.

Build communication networks among vertical team members and their families. Instill pride in vertical teams by promoting their successes. Update campus websites and use them as marketing tools, i.e. "Why go to X high school." Utilize existing grassroots networks.

It can be hard for parents to find information about what is available. Campus websites are inconsistently updated, which is a bad signal to parents. Schools can have wonderful things happening inside but no way of communicating that message.



Big Bold Ideas

SOUTH

WHAT

Big Bold Idea G

Develop a New Definition of “High Performing” Schools

There is more to a school than how its students perform on a test.

HOW

Develop a local accountability system and ensure teachers are supported in deemphasizing the test. Determine what essential skills students must develop to be successful in the decades ahead and develop ways to measure those competencies. Provide diversity training for teachers and staff to ensure they can recognize and cultivate the unique gifts inherent to every child.

WHY

Students must understand that they are more than a test score and parents want more for their kids than a test-centric learning environment. If we want our schools to be perceived more positively, we have to ensure they are places of rich teaching and learning. Instruction cannot be stagnant. It must be continually rich and evolving so that students are fully engaged. Students will require competency in new skills and professions as they live and work through the coming decades and our schools need to be focused on cultivating those skills.

Big Bold Idea H

Create Accessible Academies in the South

Many of the district’s specialized programs are on the other side of town

Bring Liberal and Fine Arts High Schools to the south. Design programs that are provided throughout Vertical Teams.

Specialized programs in the north are not at a reasonable distance for all students to access, especially due to Austin traffic. Students with an interest in these specialized programs shouldn’t have to make a choice between sacrificing a significant part of their day traveling and forgoing the opportunity.



Big Bold Ideas

SOUTH

WHAT

Big Bold Idea I

Public-Private Partnerships

The district must engage with community partners.

HOW

Partner with local universities to assist with increasing diversity in the teaching setting. Obtain business sponsorships for diverse teacher training. Administrative teams identify areas of potential involvement and reach out to local companies to meet needs. Work with businesses to develop industry-led curriculum. Partner with telecommunications companies for internet connectivity.

WHY

Greater collaboration with local universities could optimize public and private dollars for the benefit of our schools. Working closely with industry partners will ensure students are graduating with skills that are in-demand.



Big Bold Ideas

NORTH

WHAT

HOW

WHY

Big Bold Idea A

Educate Holistic Citizens
Students benefit from a global perspective and real world experiences.

Create partnerships with businesses and organizations that have an international focus. Promote civic engagement, social emotional learning, and social justice in the curriculum.

To enable students to develop global perspectives and prepare them to become contributing members of the communities in which they will live and work.

Big Bold Idea B

Invest in a Well-Rounded Curriculum
Programs' unique identities can foster pride and empower students to achieve.

Recruit through vertical teams with mindfulness to diversity. Create a diverse menu of programs that address students' interests. Assess each school community's strengths and needs. Decentralize decision-making.

Enthusiasm for special programs capitalizes on students' interests and strengths.

Big Bold Idea C

Meet the Needs of All Students
Students' academic and non-academic needs impact learning.

Offer wrap-around services at all campuses that help students with mental health and social service needs. Re-utilize closed spaces for clinics, etc.

Learning can sometimes take a back seat to personal problems in a student's life. Schools have potential to help young people through personal difficulties than impact their work in school.



Big Bold Ideas

NORTH

WHAT

Big Bold Idea D

Invest in Teacher Development
Growing and retaining quality teachers is a critical interest of the district, its families, and students.

HOW

Define the skills and talents of “quality” teachers and provide teacher-to-teacher mentorships. Reduce teacher-administrator ratios so that principals can be instructional coaches to teachers. Reduce class sizes. Review current recruiting techniques and devise “creative” ways to attract the best. Recruit new teachers with salary incentives. Increase number of student teachers in east Austin schools.

WHY

Quality teaching will improve student outcomes and overall school experience. It will also strengthen each member school of the vertical team.

Big Bold Idea E

School Choice
Attract students and families back to the district with equitable programming.

Expand two-way dual-language programs. Create international elementary, middle and high schools. Create Robotics Academy at Burnet and something like a middle school focused on learners with dyslexia. Create fine arts elementary in the north or a Physical Development elementary like in Houston ISD. Build mobile classrooms such as a maker space or STEM bus. Employ traveling teacher specialists. Explore corporate partnerships to fund additional opportunities.

Austin ISD offers a lot of school choice but not all families can get to the places where it is offered. Families would consider schools that they might not otherwise consider if Austin ISD strategically placed coveted programming in schools that struggle with enrollment or performance.

Big Bold Idea F

Market Austin ISD Schools
Austin ISD has great programs not everyone knows about.

Campuses need better web content management. Provide a stipend to a staff person or volunteer to keep updated. Improve the district transfer application process. Improve the district website choice page like Dallas ISD. Distribute postcards advertising local schools. Host a school choice fair.

Need to make it easy for families who are shopping for a school. People go by what they hear. Non-district choices have glossy ads and attractive websites and these things attract families out of Austin ISD.



Big Bold Ideas

NORTH

WHAT

Big Bold Idea G

Teacher Support
Make sure teachers want to stay in the classroom.

HOW

Offer incentives to improve retention such as pay raises, housing and childcare. Further incentivize effective teachers to teach at under-performing schools. Provide support for new and seasoned teachers. This could include a database for shared curricular resources with grade level wikis. Provide teacher mentorships and scaffold support for those with 1-3 years of experience. Provide virtual and in person meetings to share best practices. Schools with large refugee and English Language Learner populations need qualified support in the classrooms. Provide mental health services on-site.

WHY

The data shows that schools that are high performing tend to have more experienced teachers. Students with the greatest barriers to learning need the strongest, most experienced teachers. It doesn't matter how great a program or curriculum might be if you don't have strong teachers to implement it.

Big Bold Idea H

Remix student and teacher population at Burnet and Murchison

This could be done in several ways.
1) Implement a lottery across several Murchison Middle School and Burnet Middle School elementary feeder schools.
2) Give families the choice or
3) Redraw boundaries. The key is that the staff would also be reassigned to truly give each school a reset.

This could solve the issues of socio-economic disparity between the schools as well as the student performance disparity. It would be an opportunity to explore new innovative programs for both schools. The two schools would also have more balanced financial and parent support. Essentially this would make the schools anew.



Big Bold Ideas

NORTH

WHAT

HOW

WHY

Big Bold Idea I

**Every School has
a Community
Liaison**

The Community Liaison helps to navigate school events, campus use and promotes collaboration with businesses and community partners.

Parents and students would be more knowledgeable about the opportunities at the school. Schools are stronger when they have community support.

Big Bold Idea J

**Equitable
Programming at
all Campuses**

All schools should offer the same programs to create a balance among the schools.

If programming were equitable students wouldn't need to transfer to access the opportunities that interest them.

Big Bold Idea K

**Dedicated Days
for Teacher
Enrichment**

Teachers should be given paid-time to collaborate on a departmental, campus, Vertical Team and district level.

Greater collaboration supports newer teachers and ensures that students benefit from the innovative instruction.

Big Bold Idea L

**Reinvent what
"Success" Looks
Like**

Develop a local accountability system that draws on current research into how we can better measure student performance.

The test is biased and is a poor indicator of student achievement and potential.



Big Bold Ideas

NORTH

WHAT

HOW

WHY

Big Bold Idea M

Student and Parent Activism

Create opportunities for students and parents to plug in to what is happening not only at the school level but at the district level.

People are more invested in the things they create. Give students and parents greater say in decision-making.

Big Bold Idea N

Equitable Programming at all Campuses

All schools should offer the same programs to create a balance among the schools.

If programming were equitable students wouldn't need to transfer to access the opportunities that interest them.

Big Bold Idea O

Incubate Holistic Citizens

Give students real-world learning beyond the campus.

Partner with nonprofits to equip students with useful tools such as finance, social-emotional skills, civic engagement, global perspective and languages. Identify partners through a community bidding process. Integrate design thinking into curriculum and instruction

To create and sustain a sense of belonging and prepare students to be adaptable for the future of Austin and the WORLD!

Big Bold Idea P

Prepare Students to be Ready to Learn

Increase the availability of wrap-around services.

Offer mental health services and social services through clinics. Capitalize on the availability of space in under-utilized campuses.

To create and sustain a sense of belonging and prepare students to be adaptable for the future of Austin and the WORLD!

Big Bold Idea Q

Create a Unique Identity Built on Programming

A strong sense of identity fosters pride in one's school

Empower students, families, teachers and principals to design programming in individual schools or Vertical Teams. Possibilities include STEM, robotics applied and fine arts, classics and liberal arts and tech incubators. Identify community strengths and needs and develop programming based on findings. Decentralize decision-making.

To create and sustain a sense of belonging and prepare students to be adaptable for the future of Austin and the WORLD!



Big Bold Ideas

NORTH CENTRAL

WHAT

Big Bold Idea A

**Expand Student
Choice and
Awareness of
Programs and
Resources**

HOW

Create an AISD “asset map” of programs and resources and distribute it to all students and parents in predominantly low-income schools. Get information out early to students and parents/guardians well before they must make a decision about where they will receive their next level of education. Designate “application coaches” who will help students apply to district academies and selective programs, and provide them with mentors to help guide them to the program which matches their needs and interests. Conduct an equity audit.

WHY

Information doesn’t always reach all our families equally. Many families may not even know about opportunities such as magnet schools, academies or transfer options. A proactive approach to preparing and recruiting students from low-income families to specific programs can benefit students’ academic outcomes and improve racial and geographic diversity. Given more time to prepare, students could be more competitive in their applications, particularly to schools that require a portfolio.



Big Bold Ideas

NORTH CENTRAL

WHAT

Big Bold Idea B

Conscious Focus and Specific Actions to Diversify Schools

HOW

Rethink the vertical team concept with a focus on equity and diversity. Consider regional groupings, rather than specific school assignments so no home is assigned to one school, but instead to a variety of schools. Ensure diverse staff in all schools. Offer cultural proficiency and responsiveness training for students and staff districtwide. Provide programming for students that addresses social justice.

WHY

Loosen the tie from school assignment to property values and build a stronger more united district and City. People won't leave elementary to find a better feeder pattern and they won't buy a home in an area assuming a single school placement is their right. A diverse student population increases opportunities for academic success and mirrors "real world" experiences following graduation. All students deserve true access to districtwide programming. Represents a reinvestment in neighborhood schools making them more attractive.

Big Bold Idea C

Establish Schools as Community Hubs

Identify community needs, available resources, and service gaps. Partner with agencies and programs to locate services at schools so that families can easily access them. Schools would offer job, parenting and life training from birth to high school, evening and weekend ESL classes, health clinics and after school care. Utilize technology to help build community by providing support for schools that need it to consistently have an online community beyond the current Austin ISD-run campus sites.

Community schools serve families' varied needs, and can increase a sense of connection and ownership among families. This can impact a student's academic outcomes. Extending care beyond the school day would help families stay in the district rather than choosing alternatives that offer after-school care.



Big Bold Ideas

NORTH CENTRAL

WHAT

Big Bold Idea D

Commit to Technology as an Essential Learning Tool
School should mirror future work environments.

HOW

Integrate technology throughout the curriculum to create “blended and personalized learning” for every student. Improve district technology infrastructure. Ensure students have access to new technology and devices. Create facilities that mirror the career world including gardens, non-traditional work spaces, health/wellness spaces, indoor/outdoor spaces, collaboration studios and learning spaces. Create group and individual learning spaces that utilize technology. Ensure that every student develops computer literacy, and that they understand its importance to success in college and careers.

WHY

College or work environments are always evolving, and students must be prepared for the challenges they will face after graduation.

Big Bold Idea E

Ensure a Stellar Teaching Corps
Teachers are the foundation of our schools, invest in them!

Offer competitive salaries that attract and retain talented teachers. Provide mentorships that support professional development, and align professional development to identified needs. Capitalize on “real world” professionals to enhance instruction. Create principal and teacher residency programs. Offer cross-training within vertical teams. Provide diversity training to teachers. Diversify teachers corps with strategic and innovative hiring practices. Fully fund classroom supply needs. Increase staffing of teacher assistants and give teachers a better work-life balance.

Teachers are the foundation of every school and are the source of students’ academic success. Research supports the need to invest in them.



Big Bold Ideas

NORTH CENTRAL

WHAT

Big Bold Idea F

Strengthen and Structure Vertical Teams

Capitalize on what's working and makes our vertical teams strong.

HOW

Hold vertical team staff meetings and professional learning communities by grade, subject or area of interest. Rethink junior high vs. middle school. Strengthen the connection between the community and the school.

WHY

More tightly aligned vertical teams would create opportunities for collaboration among teachers, increase the team's "sense of family," and increase pride beyond the individual school. Improve instructional quality. Establish true communities as we envision them. All of this will increase retention of students and staff.

Big Bold Idea G

Focus on Academic Rigor and Mastery

Expect students to excel.

Commit to fully funded and staffed fine arts programs with accountability for the staffing allotments that are non-negotiable. Integrate technology throughout the curriculum to create "blended and personalized learning" for every student. Identify "signature programs" at campuses that reflect the community, and create partnerships within the community. Establish "youthtopias," with a leadership curriculum that empowers students through development of decision-making skills and shared governance. Consider the ideal class size for optimal student learning.

Empowering students to take charge of their own learning makes them more engaged and strengthens the school community. Students benefit when they understand connections between learning and future work experiences. Teachers need to be treated as professionals and equipped to implement best practices.



Big Bold Ideas

NORTH CENTRAL

WHAT

Big Bold Idea H

Empower Students with Experiential Learning Opportunities
Empowered students are engaged students.

HOW

Create partnerships between schools and community entities (businesses, organizations, colleges, agencies, etc.) that bring “real-world” learning to students and can offer internships and mentorships. Develop interest-based programs based on student surveys. Explore learning without borders at universities, museums, the Capitol, hospitals, barbershops and beauty schools. Expose students to global opportunities, “sister cities,” volunteer missions and study abroad. Expand curriculum to focus on diversity, community issues and multicultural programming.

WHY

Enable different learning styles to dismantle systemic barriers to education, especially racial and socio-economic inequities. We live in a global society that is complex and diverse. Students will benefit from becoming comfortable with society’s many structures, challenges, and opportunities.

Big Bold Idea I

Human Capital
Retain and grow high quality, effective teachers and campuses and campuses leaders

Provide mentorships and incentives for teachers to stay with the district. Adjust administrator to teacher ratios. Recruit teachers with small class sizes. Offer professional development on anti-racist pedagogy.

Improve the student experience using student climate surveys and other ways to measure teacher effectiveness.



Big Bold Ideas

AT-LARGE

WHAT

Big Bold Idea A

Market district and campus' strengths

Capitalize on what Austin ISD is doing right.

HOW

Assess district strengths by campus and program. Capitalize on community and university partnerships. Develop mentorship program for students and teachers. Grow our own teachers and celebrate them. Share the positive stories of our schools from a parent/student perspective.

WHY

Alter the perception of schools that may be seen as "bad." Build on the unique strengths of each campus community and attract and retain families.

Big Bold Idea B

Provide Excellent Programming Accessible for All

A student's zip code shouldn't predict their outcome.

Strategically place programs in schools to promote diversity. Identify program gaps. Increase college and career counseling. Review admission criteria and processes of magnet schools. Partner with higher education, business, and non-profit sectors to provide internships and mentorships to students throughout the district. Expand capacity at magnet schools and selective admission programs. Ensure big decisions are driven by accurate data. Better inform students of their options by re-examining choice sheets and transfers.

Austin ISD's varied and successful programs should be open and accessible to all students. All students benefit from diverse learning environments with programs that are relevant to their interests and goals.

Big Bold Idea C

Intentional Integration of Schools

Ensuring all students reach their fullest potential requires rethinking where students attend school and with whom.

Rethink campus boundaries to diversify campus student bodies. Consider program placement in a campus with the intention of diversifying. Rethink choice sheets and transfers. Create affordable housing to help families stay in Austin ISD schools. Conduct a district-wide equity audit on programs and human capital.

The concentration of wealth and opportunity in certain areas of the district limits the opportunities available to all students. Biases in the system determining where students can attend reinforce inequities.



Big Bold Ideas

AT-LARGE

WHAT

Big Bold Idea D

Improve Post-Graduation Readiness for College and Career

Students must be prepared for whatever their futures hold.

HOW

Establish community partnerships that enrich curriculum. Assist students in identifying their individual skills sets. Create sister-schools that can partner in activities for students. Provide wrap-around services for families. Identify school and community strengths and needs. Create mentoring and internship opportunities. Evaluate the school day: Is the current model the most productive for students? Establish college-readiness hubs by region to help connect students to colleges and career training.

WHY

Schools must provide students with both roots and wings to develop competencies and confidence as they enter the world of college, career and life.

Big Bold Idea E

Offer Opportunities that Promote Wellness for Students and Staff

Wellness must be a priority to ensure full engagement in teaching and learning.

Open campus mental health/wellness centers that offer a variety of services and classes; make them available to the community. Create outdoor learning spaces. Teach nutrition and cooking at all levels. Create “quiet rooms” at all campuses for quiet “mindfulness” as needed by students and staff. Incorporate wellness concepts in after-school programs.

Physical and emotional wellness facilitates confidence and an eagerness to achieve as a learner or teacher. We build stronger relationships when we are well in mind, body and soul.

Big Bold Idea F

Create Community Connections via Mobile Teams

It takes a village.

Partner with Austin’s business, non-profit, technology, higher education, and social service sectors to enhance learning opportunities for all students at all grade levels. Provide wrap-around services based on needs assessments. Create mobile teams to educate about the services available and ensure that students and families can access the services, providing transportation if needed. Establish ‘sister schools’ to better distribute resources where they are needed most.

Using data to identify needs specific to community served avoids a one-size-fits-all, top-down approach. Communities must work together to support each other to ensure students have what they need to succeed.



Big Bold Ideas

AT-LARGE

WHAT

Big Bold Idea G

**Whole Student/
Whole World**
Educate the whole child, equip them for all the world has to offer.

HOW

Teach a more accurate, comprehensive view of history, both national and international. Implement 'sister schools' across the district or with other cities. Offer place-based curriculum that reflects what is special about each part of Austin. Reimagine career and life readiness where college doesn't have to be the goal. Expand access to magnet-type academics across the district. Develop multi-faceted evaluation of success for students, teachers and administrators.

WHY

Students equipped with social-emotional awareness and cultural sensitivity are better prepared to take on the future. Schools must acknowledge and nurture the vast complexities of a student's being.

Big Bold Idea H

**Working Together,
Growing Stronger
Together**

Leverage community partnerships and collaboration with companies and organizations to develop curriculum, tap into volunteers, provide internships and make use of under-utilized spaces. Focus on career readiness and entrepreneurship. Collaborate with institutions of higher education. Develop co-working/co-living spaces, events spaces for festivals, art and classes. Share space with ACC.

We have an opportunity to create a symbiotic relationship with employers where our students graduate prepared to do the work employers need. By partnering with businesses, we make the most of our limited resources and can give students more opportunities.





School Changes 2019

REIMAGINE
REINVEST
REINVENT

REINVENT