

Family Engagement Services by Parent Support Specialists

2017–2018

Overview

Austin Independent School District (AISD) staff provide community and parent engagement support to families of students attending district schools. AISD's Parent Engagement Support Office (PESO) staff, within the Department of Communication and Community Engagement, coordinate many of these support activities. Using a combination of federal, district, and city funding, AISD employed parent support specialists (PSSs) at most of its Title I elementary, middle, and high schools during the 2017–2018 school year. PSSs help support school-family communication and relationships by connecting families, schools, and community resources, with the goal of increasing student achievement.

This report summarizes some of the parent and family engagement services provided by PSSs to parents and families at their schools during the 2017–2018 school year, as recorded in eCST, one of the district's data systems for recording student/family services. These data do not represent all the parent and family services provided by district staff during the 2017–2018 school year.

Family Engagement Services

AISD's PESO staff provide a variety of services across the district (<https://www.austinisd.org/parentsupport>). Examples of these services include parent and family engagement support to schools, communication and outreach to families and community members, parent and family education opportunities (e.g., workshops, classes), and professional development sessions for AISD staff. PESO staff also provide guidance and monthly training to PSSs on engaging parents through partnerships to strengthen students' academic success. AISD's Family and School Support Team (FASST) provide support and training to parents of students receiving special education services (<https://www.austinisd.org/parentsupport/specialeducationsupport>).

PSSs use the district's eCST data system to record their parent engagement activities. Each time PSSs provide an individualized service to a student's family (e.g., home visit, translation service, one-on-one meeting), they document the service on the student's service tracking record. For 2017–2018, AISD PSSs provided services to 12,266 students' parents or guardians, of whom 63% had students at elementary grade levels.



In addition, PSSs also helped organize and/or conduct classes, trainings, and workshops to support parent education and life skills. For 2017–2018, AISD families participated in 3,946 of these events at 78 schools; these events focused on topics such as academic improvement (54%), health and wellness (16%), educating parents on city services (7%), student attendance (5%), student behavior (3%) and behavior disorders (1%), and special education (1%).

Parent Survey Feedback

In Spring 2018, a survey was given to a sample of parents who attended a workshop series provided by a PSS during the school year. Of those who completed the survey ($N = 663$), 97% responded that the PSS at their child's school had helped them or their family.

Annually, AISD surveys all parents who have students attending AISD schools to gain feedback from parents about school climate, parent engagement by school staff, information parents receive from schools, and district initiatives. For the most recent one-page summary report, see this online link: https://www.austinisd.org/sites/default/files/dre-surveys/rb/Parent_Survey_2018_Executive_Summary.pdf. For campus-level and district-level reports of 2018 survey results, see this link: <https://www.austinisd.org/dre/district-campus-surveys#parent>.

Conclusion

AISD provides a variety of parent and family engagement support services on an annual basis to family members of students. These services are part of the district's vision and mission to provide a comprehensive, high-quality, engaging educational experience for all students (<https://www.austinisd.org/about-us>).

Parent and Family Engagement: Federal, State, and Local Policies

Parent and family engagement is part of AISD policy at the local, state, and federal levels. The AISD board of trustees adopted district policy (Local GK) states that the district's mission is to provide, in partnership with parents and the community, a comprehensive educational experience that is high quality and challenging for all students (<http://pol.tasb.org/Policy/Code/1146?filter=GK>).

The state of Texas also has requirements for reporting community and student engagement data as part of the broader state accountability system ([http://tea.texas.gov/About_TEA/Laws_and_Rules/Commissioner_Rules_\(TAC\)/Adopt-ed/14_06_Adopted_New_19_TAC_%C2%A761_1023/](http://tea.texas.gov/About_TEA/Laws_and_Rules/Commissioner_Rules_(TAC)/Adopt-ed/14_06_Adopted_New_19_TAC_%C2%A761_1023/)).

At the federal level, any school district that receives federal funding must provide opportunities and support for parent and family engagement, communication, and support (<https://www2.ed.gov/documents/essa-act-of-1965.pdf>).

Family engagement data are used by AISD for various reporting and compliance purposes.

AUSTIN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Martha Doolittle, Ph.D.

Department of Research and Evaluation



1111 West 6th Street, Suite D-350 | Austin, TX 78703-5338
512.414.1724 | fax: 512.414.1707
www.austinisd.org/dre | Twitter: @AISD_DRE

July 2018

Publication 17.36 RB