*BELIEFS*
*Statements of the organization's fundamental convictions, its values, its character.*

We believe that:
- Communication is essential to relationships; relationships are essential to communications.
- A healthy community is one in which all voices are heard.
- Self-awareness is vital to personal development.
- There is strength in diversity.
- Every individual has the inherent right to develop his or her full potentials.
- Learning is a lifelong journey.
- People thrive when they are free to be bold and creative.
- There are always opportunities within change.
- All people deserve to be and feel safe.
- Everyone has a purpose or passion that drives him or her.
- Everyone is both a leader and a follower.
- Ultimately, success is defined by each individual.
- Education involves the mind, spirit, and body.

*MISSION*
*A broad statement of the organization's identify, the unique purpose to which the organization is committed, and the basic means of accomplishing that purpose.*

The mission of the Austin Independent School District, the shining star of education, is to ensure each student discovers and reaches his or her life goals through an extraordinary education system distinguished by:
- A culture of acquiring intelligence, knowledge, and wisdom.
- Safe and inclusive environments.
- Dedication to the whole child.
- Creativity and risk taking.
- Vibrant community relationships.
- Bold, caring, and progressive staff.

*PARAMETERS*
*Strict pronouncements that establish the boundaries, limits, and rules within which the organization will accomplish its mission; self-imposed restrictions that position the organization among others similar to it.*

- Verifiable excellence will be our standard.
- The needs of individuals will take precedence over institutional demands.
- We will honor the worth and dignity of each person.
- We will practice collaborative decision-making throughout the district.
- We will make optimal use of transformative technology.
- We will preserve and protect the autonomy of both the individual and the district.

*OBJECTIVES*
*Expressions of the desired measurable, observable, or demonstrable results of the organization.*

- Each student realizes her or his self-worth.
- All students meet AISD expectations for achievement in all areas.
- Each student continuously progresses in an academic and personal plan for success.
- All graduates will boldly continue to discover and explore their passions.

*STRATEGIES*
*The broadly stated means of deploying resources to achieve the organization's mission and objectives.* (Numbered for reference.)

I.  We will individualize teaching and learning.

    Results Statements:
    1. The district will ensure that campuses develop a process for students to explore and study post-secondary career opportunities.
    2. Educators at all campuses will get to know each student as an individual and engage each one in their own education based on their strengths, interests, and learning styles.
    3. AISD will adopt and promote a research-based learning framework that focuses on differentiated instruction.
    4. AISD will assess current resource allocation and devise a plan to equitably allocate resources to provide quality individualized education at each campus with the goal of equipping each student to achieve his or her potential while closing achievement gaps between students.
    5. The culture of AISD will foster a safe, caring, and positive learning environment that inspires innovation and excellence among students and educators.
    6. Every campus will create partnerships with stakeholders that extend student learning outside of the campus walls in order to meet individual student needs.
    7. The district will deliver comprehensive educator development training opportunities that focus on building expertise in the field and promote cultural understanding.
    8. AISD will provide mentoring and leadership opportunities for every student.

II. We will provide our students a variety of unique opportunities for unlimited learning.

    Results Statements:
    1. Students will have multiple opportunities for flexible personalized learning.
    2. Students will have equitable/appropriate access to technology to develop and grow as contributors and creators.

III. We will provide services and support for every student on every campus.

    Results Statements:
    1. Each student has access to personalized learning and is supported by qualified, caring adults within an "I believe in you" culture.
    2. Each student is actively engaged in learning and is connected to the school and broader community.
    3. Each student is academically challenged and prepared for success in college or further study, employment, and participation in a global environment.
    4. Each student learns in a physically and emotionally safe environment.
    5. Each student learns about and practices a healthy lifestyle.

IV. We will actively involve and value all families.

Results Statements:
1. We will be a multicultural school district communicating through all media using the top five home languages of district families.
2. Every family will be involved in the academic success of their child from early childhood through high school graduation through the development of a personal plan for success and goals each school year.
3. Families are included in the district decision-making process through a variety of outreach venues.
4. All neighborhood schools are exemplary and are the preferred schools for parents to send their children.
5. All parents and community members will receive excellent service in every interaction with schools and district staff.

V. We will ensure organizational capacity (including design, staff and operations).

Results Statements:
1. Foster a climate of respect and professionalism.
2. Improve internal communications.
3. Build and use systems that provide transparent, accurate, and accessible information.
4. Distribution of resources is needs-driven (equity = need is met)
5. Develop and expand access to external resources.
6. Strengthen business and community partnerships.
7. Provide and promote learner-centered opportunities that support choice, growth, and personalized learning.

VI. We will acquire the necessary resources to accomplish our mission and objectives.

Results Statements:
1. We will have an understanding of the physical, social, emotional, academic, and technological resources needed to support the students on each campus.
2. We will have sustained community partnerships that provide the resources necessary to support specific campuses.
3. We will maximize current revenue streams/sources.
4. Optimize current resources (buildings, programs, personnel, etc.) and ensure they are utilized efficiently and effectively.
5. We will have established new revenue streams at both the district and campus levels.
6. We will recruit and retain highly effective employees.

VII. We will build relationships with the City of Austin and other local government agencies.

Results Statements:
1. Ensure the availability of quality, full-day pre-K programming and coordinate pre-K marketing efforts to stabilize or expand enrollment in AISD schools.
2. Maximize access to school-based and community-based co-curricular and extracurricular educational opportunities.
3. Ensure that schools have the resources to engage, support, and stabilize AISD families.
4. Identify avenues for enhancing the coordination and use of available community infrastructure.
5. Identify innovative funding mechanisms and/or operational strategies to support non-educational district functions.

*Note: These internal and external analyses are the brainstorming products of subgroup work and do not necessarily reflect the thinking of the Planning Team as a whole. However, collectively, these analyses helped inform the Planning Team in the overall development of the strategic plan.*

**IN-SESSION SUBGROUPS**

**Internal Analysis – District Strengths and Weaknesses**

**Subgroup #1**
    Strengths:
- Rich in diversity
- Dedicated individuals
- Encourage community involvement
- Value career and technical education
- Increased focus on safety, both social and emotional as well as physical
- Increasing graduation rate
- Good professional development opportunities
- Good teacher mentorship
- Single-district city
- Magnets and choices for students
- Willingness to innovate
- Generous benefactors/partners
- Responsive superintendent
- Increase in transparency and communication
- Dual language programs

    Weaknesses:
- Outdated transfer policies
- Inadequate staffing and funding (counselors and other positions)
- Idea of "closing the gap" instead of expecting excellence
- False inclusivity in terms of community input
- Not early enough exposure to possibility of postsecondary education
- Not a broad enough spectrum of career/technical programs
- Failure to promote positive, unique attributes of the district
- Uneven access to rigorous programming across the district (rationing opportunity)
- Lack of trust among some stakeholders
- Many new systems with little training

**Subgroup #2**
    Strengths:
- Better parent/teacher communication
- Specialty/unique programs at each campus
- Employees have genuine concern and caring for students and their learning
- Early college high schools
- More dual credit opportunities
- Campuses where students feel safe
- Strong extracurricular programs/options
- No Place for Hate initiative (anti-bullying)

- AISD newsletter – intercampus communication
- District communication via social media, other outlets

Weaknesses:

- Lack of class options/offerings
- Significant portion of tax revenue is recaptured by the state
- Emphasis on managing and teaching to the tests
- Disparity of resources among campuses
- Organizational silos and power struggles
- Transition/continuity of learning when multiple teachers involved
- Lack of student engagement, feedback on staff performance
- Inefficient use of class time
- Slow decision-making and ambiguous authority to take action
- Allocation of resources to administration – support versus direct services
- Weak in career-based classes – skills being taught do not align to current career/market opportunities
- District has an overall negative reputation – typically not the first choice in the area
- Overemphasis on arts and social sciences as opposed to STEM
- Continuity of programs from elementary through high school (through the system)
- Too much focus on helping low-performing students pass as opposed to enabling all students to achieve their potential (get everyone to pass the tests at all costs)
- Slow to integrate new technology and new methods into learning

**Subgroup #3**

Strengths:

- Relationships between Education Austin, APPSA, and central office leadership0
- Willing to make a change; flexibility, ability to innovate
- Leveraging diversity through dual language, board policy changes, No Place for Hate, etc.
- Support for struggling schools
- Whole child – Social and Emotional Learning and Creative Learning initiatives
- Opportunity for stakeholder input
- Graduation rates are increasing
- Celebrating student achievements via district website
- Students are engaged, contributing, and giving back to the community
- Student-centered district
- Texas Literacy Initiative
- Grow and build our own leaders
- Investing in staff through creative initiatives
- Investment in our Early Childhood programs
- Program choice and school options such as Ann Richards, Garza, LASA, Murchison IB, etc.

Weaknesses:

- Lack of funding to expand and support programs
- Non-competitive salaries for staff
- Retention of teachers
- Facilities – utilization, management, deferred maintenance, overcrowding, underused
- Boundary lines
- Communication written for different audiences
- Interdepartmental collaboration and communication in central office
- Marketing/central branding

- Geographical location of school options and program choice especially for high school
- Declining enrollment
- Achievement gaps
- Staffing/leveling policies
- Dual language support/training and follow through for middle/high school
- Failure to draw down philanthropic dollars
- Building relationships with businesses and universities in Austin

**Subgroup #4**

Strengths:
- Improved community engagement
- Wonderful students
- Highly-trained, committed faculty and staff
- Different types of campuses/programs and offerings
- Student-focused programs (SEL, Pre-K, CLI)
- High-quality curriculum development
- Commitment to literacy and libraries
- Commitment to sustaining true public schools
- Commitment to district-labor relations
- Valued student opinion
- Strong district leadership
- Commitment to student health
- Progress in some areas (graduation)
- Board/superintendent/district leadership embracing social media/technology
- District support of sustainable community school model

Weaknesses:
- Negative perceptions of some schools
- Inequity in distribution of resources, funding of campuses
- Achievement gaps among student groups
- Overcrowding and under-enrollment
- Overreliance on testing
- STEM capability
- Implementation of fidelity programs
- Food and nutrition programs (quality issues)
- Need to communicate successes
- Not keeping up with effective use of market
- Communication
- Children being priority – true in deeds as well as words (general education first)
- Silos still exist
- Operate in top-down fashion
- Climate and culture is challenging
- Lack of technology support
- Employee pay – attracting and retaining quality talent

**Subgroup #5**

Strengths:

- SEL curriculum
- District transparency
- Opportunities to hear the community's voice
- Full-day Pre-K program and piloting a 3-year old Pre-K program
- High internal achievement both at state and national levels
- Quality of staff, and passionate executives
- Great student leadership opportunities
- Public school choice/open enrollment
- Strong special education programming (SCORES, Go Project, Clifton)
- Creative learning opportunities – arts rich
- Differentiated and unique school opportunities
  - Dual language
  - Twilight programs
  - Early college
  - Magnet
  - In-district charter schools like Travis Heights
  - Single-gender schools
- Community partnerships
  - CIS
  - Breakthrough Austin
  - AVID
  - Seedling
  - Family Resource Centers
  - Seton and St. David's
- Great professional development opportunities, including Universal Design for Learning
- Essential areas of learning at all campuses – art, music, PE, library
- No Place for Hate

Weaknesses:

- Non-competitive teacher pay
- Inadequate funding to meet unequal needs
- Poor facilities and capital resources – in disrepair, under-utilized
- Discretionary discipline policy
- Poor quality of food
- Achievement gaps for special populations
- Transition planning for Special Needs students
- Overburdened and stressed workforce
- No autonomy for teachers in poor-performing schools
- Culturally insensitive instruction
- Gap in services towards student with specialized needs – dyslexia, dysgraphia
- Inclusion and integration policies in regard to students with special needs
- Communications breakdowns
- Uneven and inadequate professional development
- Eastside-Westside divide
- Unequal learning opportunities between high- and low-needs students
- High turnover rates in high-needs schools
- Counseling shortages – and diversion of their time
- Total separation between magnet and regular schools on same campus
- Not enough emphasis on early childhood

**EXTRA-SESSION SUBGROUPS**

**Internal Analysis – District Organization**

**Subgroup #1**
- Span of control
- Verticality
- Gaps
- Redundancy
- Organization vs. Operation

**External Analysis – Conditions and Circumstances**

**Subgroup #2: Demographics**

| Factor | Assumption | Impact |
|---|---|---|
| Population growth | The city's population will continue to grow | Stresses resources, but could be an opportunity for increased enrollment, also gentrification |
| Community identity/perception | Negative perception is a challenge | Fewer families will choose AISD/ declining enrollment |
| Affordability | Property values will continue to increase | Drop in enrollment, gentrification, less diversity |
| Poverty | Socioeconomic status will shift | Affects school finance, social services needed |

**Subgroup #3: Education and Economics**

| Factor | Assumption | Impact |
|---|---|---|
| Education: High-stakes testing | • High-stakes testing will continue<br>• More schools/districts will be identified IR based on increased standards/expectations | • Less time for "elective" courses<br>• More reconstitution<br>• New programs created to meet campus needs |
| Education: Charter schools | More charter schools will move into the area and current charters will grow | • Declining student enrollment<br>• Loss of teaching staff<br>• Loss of funding<br>• Increased marketing of AISD |
| Education: TEKS/Curriculum | Need to address cultural relevancy in curriculum and resources based on state adoptions | Curriculum will include additional resources to address cultural relevancy within the district population. Students will feel included. More teacher professional development on CPI. |
| Economics: Recapture | Payments will escalate to over $300 million | No pay increases. Loss/reduction of services/programs. Facility closures/ consolidations. |
| Economics: State funding of half-day Pre-K | The state will continue to only fund half-day Pre-K and AISD will have to create funding tradeoffs to continue to fund full-day Pre-K | Funding for additional programs will be limited. Students will continue to be prepared. Parents will select AISD to be a part of a full-day program. |
| Economics: Austin business community | Business will continue to grow and move to Austin | Opportunities for more partnerships, mentorship, internships, and donations. |

## Subgroup #4: Technology

| Factor | Assumption | Impact |
|---|---|---|
| Google | Google laying new fiber network | Double costs (GAATN and Google) and modifications to facilities and updates |
| More devices | Devices will be cheaper; devices will become obsolete | More students will have access; constant replacement |
| Cloud services | More shared resources; address privacy/security issues | Easier collaboration; financial |
| Less print available | Digital textbooks/books will replace traditionally printed materials | District will have to pay to support this, communications with families change, lack of access for all students |
| Increased education on software writing/app creating | Students/teachers will be able to write their own software | Increased need for teacher training, curriculum, logistical implications |
| Ever-evolving technology | Traditional education format will change | More online learning, blended and self-paced learning |
| Human element | Institutions/people outpacing technology; not the same | Innovative ideas not able to be implemented |

## External Analysis – Competition

## Subgroup #5

| Charter Schools | |
|---|---|
| Their Advantage: <br> • Less regulation <br> • Random selection of student body <br> • Room for growth <br> • More individual attention to students | Our Advantage: <br> • Extracurricular activities <br> • Certified teachers in all classrooms <br> • More academic options <br> • Variety of academic resources |

| Private Schools | |
|---|---|
| Their Advantage: <br> • Smaller campuses <br> • Smaller class sizes <br> • More funding per student <br> • Can provide specialty education (religious) | Our Advantage: <br> • Free <br> • Diversity <br> • Larger options with schools and programs (fine arts, athletics) |

| Home Schools | |
|---|---|
| Their Advantage: <br> • Safer learning environment <br> • One-on-one attention <br> • Unstructured learning format <br> • Efficient in time management <br> • College admissions | Our Advantage: <br> • Social environment <br> • Educational resources <br> • Extracurricular activities <br> • Safer learning environment |

| Other Public Schools | |
|---|---|
| Their Advantage: <br> • Closer to home for some AISD employees <br> • More money available for programs <br> • Outside of the city <br> • Less travel time and commitment | Our Advantage: <br> • Closer to home for some AISD employees <br> • High performance <br> • More programs and school options |