

**AISD DISTRICT ADVISORY COUNCIL**  
**Summary of Annual Retreat**  
**October 22, 2020**

**ATTENDANCE**

**Member Attendance**

(See attached list)

**Staff/Trustees in Attendance**

Erin Bown-Anderson, Academics

Lisa Bush, Middle Schools

Dr. Elizabeth Casas, Chief Academic Office

Christian Clarke Casarez, Special Asst. to Chief Business Officer

Alexandra Copeland, Health

Joey Crumley, Innovation and Development

Dr. Stephanie Elizalde, Superintendent

George Gogonas, Financial Services

Monica Gonzalez, Elementary Schools

Dr. Stephanie Hawley, Equity Officer

Dr. Akweta Hickman, Special Education

Melinda Lipani, Innovation and Development

Dr. Anthony Mays, Chief Schools Officer

Dr. Jacob Reach, Chief Officer, Governmental Relations and Board Services

Charlene Rollins, Financial Services

Diana Saenz, Webb Middle School

Matias Segura, Operations Officer

Arati Singh, Trustee

Lindsey Stuart, Innovation and Development

Ann Teich, Trustee

Larry Throm, Chief Business Officer

Tyler Vanhook, Innovation and Development

Michelle Wallis, Innovation and Development

**Visitors in Attendance**

Jared Breckenridge

Melissa Lamm

**PROCEEDINGS**

**Preliminaries**

- The virtual meeting via Zoom was called to order by Andy Anderson at 4:31 p.m.
- There were no public comments.
- Joey Crumley acknowledged the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the DAC, and several members who have served ten years or more on the DAC. He briefly went over why the DAC was formed.
- Dr. Jacob Reach went over the basic statutory functions of the DAC, and said that he would work to ensure that they were followed.

**Superintendent's Update**

- After introducing Dr. Elizabeth Casas, Chief Academic Officer, and Anthony Mays, Chief Schools Officer, Dr. Elizalde went over the following points:
  - ☞ She acknowledged several DAC members she has been working with.

- ☞ Teachers are the key to our in-person instruction.
- ☞ We are attentive to health and safety, support for colleagues, and serving all families.
- ☞ We need to ensure that no students lose a year.
- ☞ Each day we are seeing more students returning to campuses.
- ☞ Many accommodations have been provided to staff – AISD more than any other district – it’s the right thing to do.
- ☞ We received a lot of feedback from teachers and principals.
- ☞ This year, we had fewer teacher and staff resignations and retirements.
- ☞ We are still experiencing new COVID cases and exposures.
- ☞ An additional question was added to screenings (i.e., “are you waiting for a test result?”).
- ☞ She showed a short video of a teacher’s perspective.
- ☞ Our continued focus is on excellence and equity for all students.
- ☞ We have not had a cluster of COVID cases that would make us close a school.
- ☞ Last week we celebrated food service workers, and this week transportation service workers.

### School Reopening Update

- On hand to present were Monica Gonzalez, Lisa Bush, Matias Segura, and Erin Bown-Anderson, whose presentation included the following points:
  - ☞ Phase-in for second four weeks of school and related transitions.
  - ☞ Temperature screening for bus riders.
  - ☞ Meals in the cafeteria or classroom.
  - ☞ Technology system updates.
  - ☞ Update on COVID statistics, and COVID dashboard.
  - ☞ Health and safety protocols update (campus kits, specialized PPE, health screening tools).
  - ☞ Blueprints for teaching and learning.
  - ☞ Professional learning.
- Questions and comments included:
  - Comment: The district should be commended on the number of staff accommodations.
  - Question: If a staff person fails screening tests, can there be a note about availability of all kinds of leave?
  - Answer: FFCRA will pay for all leave – no one should be docked their personal or sick leave. We will work on better communicating that.
  - Comment: Heard that AISD can now only offer accommodations to those in the highest risk groups.
  - Response: We would rather not address individual concerns here, but we will reach out to look into this.
  - Question: If the pandemic goes on at length, what is AISD’s plan?
  - Answer: We have not yet met with local health officials about this, but we will work on a more sustainable plan.
  - Comment: Concerned over a lot of user error in screening. There are still pods of students on campuses virtually learning.
  - Response: TEA requires a certain amount of in-person learning to receive funding.
  - Question: Could you add to surveys how many days parents would be sending students back to school? What are we doing to help alleviate teacher workloads?
  - Answer: No other urban and surrounding districts are experiencing greater than a 40 percent overall student return rate. We can’t take the same approach at every school to allocate students and teacher workloads.
  - Question: Is there a way to share what the various vertical teams are doing?
  - Question: Will AISD consider updating the COVID dashboard more often? Is there a schedule or ceiling for when we must go back to all-virtual learning?

Answer: We are considering more frequent dashboard reports. We will continue to stay in constant contact with TEA and local health officials because our situation is very fluid.

Question: How are we ensuring that special education students are receiving the appropriate level of instruction?

Answer: We are using specially developed tools to help teachers assess individual student needs, and special education teachers are receiving professional development.

### **Budget Update**

- On hand to present was George Gogonas, whose presentation included the following points:
  - ☞ An overview of revenues and expenditures by funding area.
  - ☞ A breakdown of funding by specific functions.
  - ☞ Budget investments for FY 2021, including \$21 million in compensation related increases.
  - ☞ Reduction in the district's tax rate.
  - ☞ Decline in enrollment over time.
  - ☞ The district's recapture payment history, and fund balance history.
  - ☞ COVID related expenditures.
  - ☞ Equity considerations in budget planning.
- Questions and comments included:
  - Question: How are funds being allocated to special education.
  - Answer: We receive about \$65 million in our state allotment weighted special education funding, but we actually spend more than double that.
  - Question: How does the district allocate the early education allotment?
  - Answer: We have to spend 100 percent of allotted funding on the early grades.
  - Question: How much funding is going to COVID, and to dual language, and how do we prioritize?
  - Answer: Departments and campuses will soon be receiving their proposed budgets for next year. We're planning as much as we can, but we still have some unknowns.
  - Question: How much are charter schools impacting us?
  - Answer: We'll have a better idea when the latest enrollment data come out for charters from TEA.

### **Adjournment and Breakout Group Discussions**

- The quorum meeting was adjourned by Andy Anderson at 6:45 p.m.
- DAC members then formed two breakout groups to discuss possible future agenda items and budget priority recommendations. The notes of the breakout sessions are attached.

## **Breakout Group Notes Potential DAC Agenda Items**

- Required items (e.g., district calendars)
- **Special Education** - Management and status of staff, IEP management system, tools, recruitment
  - Overview, challenges, strategy
  - DAC creates task force on Special Education
  - Special Education item on every meeting agenda
  - Special Education staffing, especially evaluation staff
  - 504/Dyslexia update (including bilingual support)
- Five-year plan for COVID - Learning losses, equity, Special Education
- **District organization (including chart)** - Rotation of breakout rooms with new chiefs, executive level staff, new trustees (including Schools Office overview)
- **Equity update** - What have we done since Chief Officer's hiring, what are we currently doing, what's next
  - Special campus programs - Value add, how do they contribute to equity
  - Expansion of cultural proficiency and inclusiveness professional development since school changes
  - Translation and interpretation services
- Standing agenda item on school changes
- **Standing agenda item on COVID**
  - COVID-19 long-range plans, including teachers doing in person and remote teaching simultaneously, communications
  - Equity - Some PTAs provide additional support and materials, others do not; communication also varies from campus leadership
- Legislative session and advocacy - Presentation from Intergovernmental Relations
- Strategic planning - Short-term and long-term
- Online options/remote learning as permanent option (some students thrive)
- Dual language
- Marketing for campuses - how are we trying to increase enrollment (beyond TUPs)
- **Communication plan for entire district, campuses**
- Transformation zones
- Facility improvements
- Transparency
- **Teacher safety, health, and well-being** - Staff climate and culture support (how can parents play role in supporting) - Staff retention
- Professional development

## **Breakout Group Notes Strategic Budget Priorities**

### **Strategic Plan Focus Area: Student Well-Being and Achievement**

- Early childhood literacy/3-by-3 initiative
- Teaching teachers the science of reading
- Preparing students for college and life
- CTE/vocational training
- Outdoor education

### **Strategic Plan Focus Area: Teacher and Employee Well-Being**

- Attract and retain staff - compensation/stipends/benefits
- Extending contract days for Special Education teachers and librarians (more planning days)
- Access to mental health/wellness counseling
- Unable to fill Special Education vacancies; not all vacancies related to COVID; teachers may start leaving in droves
- Inventive ways to support teachers
- Laptops for all teaching assistants

### **Strategic Plan Focus Area: Culture of Respect and Customer Service**

- Customer service depends on the priorities of the individuals dealing with customers – more accountability for providing good customer service to all, not some
- Enrollment/registration process is burdensome - the front door into the district is turning a lot of people away
- Strategic plan for dealing with all customers, internal and external
- Addressing what we're doing wrong – listening better to concerns
- Bring back the Ombudsman position
- Building better relationships – be more relational and less transactional – put money into showing appreciation
- Train highly qualified substitute teachers
- Substitute teacher compensation
- Improve the relationship between headquarters and field staff, which has deteriorated

### **Strategic Plan Focus Area: Fiscal Stewardship and Prioritization**

- Need to prioritize any cuts
- The budget presentation didn't even address the possibility of staff layoffs and cuts to programs/departments – prioritize not laying off staff
- All the money being paid to outside attorneys and consultants could be better spent
- Stipends for teachers who pay for their own supplies
- Getting rid of the structural deficit
- Better community utilization of district facilities
- Dual language
- Transparency around program allocations
- Inordinate funding for athletics, while arts funding is going down – many parents argue that athletics is an important career path – better fund the arts
- Some schools can't even get basic things fixed, like HVAC – we need to take better care of the facilities that already exist

### DAC MEMBER ATTENDANCE

Name	Category	Vertical Team	School	Present
Trudy Richards	Parent	Akins	Akins	Yes
Joel Bergh	Parent	Akins	Baranoff	Yes
Maria Sebastian	Teacher	Akins	Perez	Yes
Krish Stella	Librarian	Akins	Blazier	Yes
Ryan Hazlett	Parent	Anderson	Murchison	No
Jessica Sanchez	Parent	Anderson	Pillow	No
Christy Cochran	Librarian	Anderson	Murchison	Yes
Thuy Nguyen	Teacher	Anderson	Summitt	Yes
Barbara Knaggs	Parent	Austin	O.Henry	Yes
Vera Muñiz	Parent	Austin	Zilker	Yes
Richard Kelly	Parent	Austin	Austin	Yes
Alyssa Potasznik	Teacher	Austin	Austin	Yes
Matt Heisterman	Teacher	Bowie	Kiker	No
Emmaleigh Toto	Teacher	Bowie	Gorzycki	Yes
Zoe Trieff	Parent	Crockett	Sunset Valley	No
Kristel Nichols	Teacher	Crockett	St. Elmo	Yes
Ruth Tovar	Parent	Eastside Memorial	Brooke	Yes
Roland Hutson	Teacher	Eastside Memorial	Allison	Yes
Nancy Adames	Parent	Navarro	Navarro	No
Isa Boonto-Zarifis	Teacher	Navarro	Lanier	Yes
Griselda Pena	Teacher	Navarro	Burnet	Yes
Reedy Spigner III	Parent	LBJ	Norman-Sims	Yes
Blanca Galvez-Perez	Teacher	LBJ	Andrews	Yes
Holly Eaton	Parent	McCallum	McCallum	Yes
Lisa Flores	Parent	McCallum	Lee	Yes
Maya McElroy	Librarian	Northeast	Graham	No
Claudia Torres	Teacher	Northeast	Webb	Yes
Cesar Benavides	Parent	Travis	Travis Heights	Yes
Katye Howell	Teacher	Travis	Travis	Yes
Marcy Morgan	Teacher	Travis	Dawson	Yes
Sylvia Bell	Parent	Special Campuses	Richards	Excused
Lynn Boswell	Parent	Special Campuses	LASA	Yes
Julia Parker	Teacher	Special Campuses	ALC	Yes
Jennifer Pace	Principal	Not Applicable	Widen	Yes
Jess De La Huerta	Princioal	Not Applicable	Dobie	Yes
Dr. Susan Thames	Assistant Principal	Not Applicable	Akins	Yes
Laurie Solis	ACPTA	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Yes
Nina Wilson	ACPTA	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	No
Jimmy Counihan	Community	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	No
Dr. Katherine Fugate	Community	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Excused
Sondra Marks	Community	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Yes
Cathy McHorse	Community	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Yes
Heather Shaw	Community	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	No
Stacey Thompson	Community	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Yes
Genevieve Dell	Community	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Yes
Dr. Deanna Mercer	Community	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Yes
Shannon Gleason	Business	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Yes
Billy Pringle	Business	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Yes
Kathy Winfrey	Classified Employee	Not Applicable	Winn	Excused
Laurie Beaman	District-Level Employee	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Yes
Alonzo Blankenship	District-Level Employee	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	No

<b>Name</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Vertical Team</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>Present</b>
Dr. Jane Ross	District-Level Employee	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Yes
Andy Anderson	At-Large	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Yes
Vickie Black	At-Large	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	No
LaDonna Massad	At-Large	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	No
Paul Mitchell	At-Large	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Yes
Toni Rayner	At-Large	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	No
Michael Supancic	At-Large	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Yes
Paridhi Latawa	Student	Special	LASA	No