

**AISD/City of Austin
Task Force on Hispanic Quality of Life: Education**

Meeting of January 24, 2006

4:30-6:30 p.m.

Conference Room A-370

AISD Carruth Administration Center

Minutes

Members in Attendance:

Eyna Canales-Zarate, Janis Guerrero, John Limon, Veronica Rivera, Angela Valenzuela, Linda Velasquez

Others in Attendance:

Joey Crumley, Justin Fried

Proceedings:

- Janis Guerrero recapped the previous task force meeting of December 6, 2005.
- Dr. Guerrero briefly reviewed the list of interviewees and the interview protocol. She explained that several additional interviews still needed to be conducted. She and Joey Crumley then went over the qualitative and quantitative results of the interviews conducted to date.
- Discussion points on the interview results included:
 - The term "majority" implies power; it may be better to say that Hispanics are in the demographic plurality
 - Standard deviation should be included in the statistical results
 - There can be polarization, differences, and distance among elements in the Hispanic community; realization and appreciation of a shared history could help bring them together
 - Dual language programs would be beneficial
- Task force members were then asked to identify the most compelling issues and recommendations for things that absolutely must be done. Attached is a detailed summary of the discussion, arranged by specific themes.
- The next meeting of the task force was scheduled for February 15, 2006, from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Developing Understanding

- Improve teacher-student, school-parent, and school-community relationships
 - Need a bilingual parent liaison in every school trained in outreach and community relations, and accountable for success in bringing parents into schools; need to evaluate how effective parent support specialists have been, how to improve
 - Need to be more creative in being inviting/welcoming to parents
 - Need to carry parental enthusiasm/involvement seen at elementary level over to secondary level; multiple teachers for each student and vice versa at secondary level a big factor, and smaller learning environments would help
 - Need to create opportunities for students, parents, and teachers to develop stronger connections
- Teach to the diversity in the Hispanic population through curriculum and educational programs
 - Teach Spanish to those who don't speak Spanish, create opportunities for English learners and Spanish learners to work together; oral history projects within language programs to develop mutual understanding and respect
 - Create opportunities to unite different groups within the Hispanic community; look at shared histories and dual language programs

Changing Attitudes

- Cultural and professional training may help, but more needed to effect behavioral/attitudinal change
- Negative attitudes about the Spanish language and Hispanic people persist in the schools and larger community; these attitudes must be changed
 - Campaign to celebrate cultures within the district; turn around the idea that Spanish is a second-class language
 - A hemispheric perspective in curriculum, opportunities to connect with classrooms in Mexico, simulate opportunities to travel across borders; move students beyond local prejudices to view Spanish language and Spanish speakers in global perspective; opportunities of the language

Creating Opportunity

- Tracking
 - Need to look seriously at how kids may be placed in tracks that steer them away from college; this kind of tracking may start at an early age; district should commission study on reach of tracking and curriculum placement; teachers discouraging students from taking challenging courses
 - Expand AVID
 - Create document/resources/counseling to inform parents about repercussions of pulling children from recommended/college-prep track

- Make available career training opportunities; Need more career/vocational opportunities (not all kids will go to college); need to raise status/perception of these courses.
 - Shift from college/no college coursework to college prep as one option in a menu of various career prep tracks
 - Every child has skills, but we need to be better at ascertaining what they are and how to choose the best pathways to follow
 - Recommendations for high school redesign?

Ensuring Equity

- Equitable allocation of resources
 - Distribution of quality and experienced teachers
 - District needs to make teacher and principal placement decisions more transparent to community
 - Need more incentives for teachers and principals to go to low-performing schools, and to stay at needy schools
 - Need more extensive mentoring for new teachers and teacher transfers (all new hires)