

AISD/City of Austin
Task Force on Education and the Quality of Life in Austin for Hispanic Students

Meeting of March 1, 2006
11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Conference Room 223
ACC, Highland Business Center

Minutes

Members in Attendance:

Rick Burciaga, Eyna Canales-Zarate, Janis Guerrero, Veronica Rivera, Angela Valenzuela, Linda Velasquez

Others in Attendance:

John Moore, Della May Moore, Joey Crumley, Justin Fried

Proceedings:

- Dr. Guerrero informed members that minutes of the previous meeting were in their packet of materials.
- Dr. Guerrero provided a brief overview of items on the meeting agenda, including the second draft of the task force report, the online survey and efforts to publicize it, and the upcoming public forum.
- In reviewing the second draft of the task force report, Dr. Guerrero called the attention of members to the recommendations section, which had been undergone several revisions based on previous input. Discussion points included:
 - Changing the structure of the recommendations from Goals and Actions to Goals, Strategies, and Activities
 - Breaking out several of the items that were grouped together
 - Deleting language specifically related to staff compensation
 - Exploring dual language programs and considering pilots
 - Realigning the bilingual education program to maintain instruction in both English and Spanish through completion of grade five
 - Providing high-quality, culturally relevant professional development
 - Allocating resources to address the greatest need
 - Informing and counseling parents on the importance of their children receiving a good education
 - Establishing an advisory system
 - Holding counselors accountable for the advice they give to students on choices affecting college and career
 - Ensuring certain levels of consistency across campuses in high school redesign
 - Developing partnerships with higher education to provide more college-ready experiences to students
- In reviewing the latest draft of the online survey, Dr. Guerrero called attention to the expanded demographic information as well as the reiteration of each survey item to

distinguish between how well AISD was addressing specific issues and the importance of the district emphasizing each of those issues over the next five years.

Discussion points included:

- The reiteration of each of the issues is confusing, and how well the district is addressing the issues is in itself an indicator of priority or importance
 - There needs to be a response option for “unsure” or “not certain”
 - The wording of the item relating to TAKS testing needs to be more reflective of the impact of those tests on decisions affecting grade-level advancement and graduation
 - Need to make sure the Spanish version of the survey is in easily understood language for most in the Hispanic community
- Joey Crumley summarized the efforts being made to publicize the online survey, including a “hot topic” announcement on the AISD website, links to the English and Spanish surveys on the City of Austin website, public service announcements and newspaper ads in English and Spanish, message to all AISD staff encouraging them to take the survey and let others know about it, and message to all principals encouraging them to notify their students, parents, staff, and school communities about the survey.
 - Eyna Canales-Zarate said the Austin Public Library was prepared to assist anyone wishing to take the survey who did not have access to the Internet. Dr. Guerrero added that many schools would also be able to provide assistance.
 - Dr. Guerrero said the intent was to run the online survey for three weeks, and then analyze the results.
 - Several possible dates for the upcoming public forum were considered, with sensitivity to dates with religious significance and the schedules of working parents. The best time was deemed to be 6:00 to 8:00 p.m., and City Hall was stated as a preferred site. However, a specific date was not decided.
 - The next meeting of the task force was scheduled for March 22 from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.