

**Community Committee on Neighborhoods and Schools**  
**Summary of Meeting**  
**October 23, 2007**

**Member Attendance:**

(See attached list)

**Others in Attendance:**

Joey Crumley, AISD Planning & Community Relations  
Heather Dalrymple, AISD Planning & Community Relations  
Dr. Janis Guerrero, AISD Planning & Community Relations

**Proceedings:**

- The meeting was called to order at 5:50 pm in Conference Room A-230 of the AISD Carruth Administration Center.
- There were no citizens communications.
- The meeting focused on a debriefing about stakeholder input gathered by committee members through their various outreach activities. In this first step toward developing draft recommendations, members presented the most compelling ideas and recurring themes they heard at focus groups, interviews and/or the community forum. These ideas were grouped under three categories: 1) *Communication*-how AISD can better let stakeholders know about important school issues in a timely manner; 2) *Procedure/Policy*-for handling important school issues and potential changes in facility use; and 3) *Engagement*-developing an authentic process for AISD stakeholders to shape and own the decision-making process. (See attached list for recurring themes resulting from community outreach efforts)
- Discussion points included:
  - ☞ Clarifying the definition of “neighborhood school.” A neighborhood school typically is one that is associated with a particular community, can be walked to, and serves as a center of community.
  - ☞ A major topic emerging from these discussions is school choice versus neighborhood schools.
  - ☞ The Mueller development provides an excellent case study for ways to accommodate new types of growth, such as infill development, that have not been extensively seen before in Austin.
  - ☞ Concepts and terminology that are understandable to people who are unfamiliar with the district need to be used throughout this process.
- Discussion focus shifted to the online survey, which continues running until the end of October. Staff provided the committee with a preliminary report of overall survey results as well as a sample template showing the format of the completed analysis. That analysis will break survey results out by 1) race/ethnicity of respondent and 2) connection of respondents to AISD (teacher, parent, community member, etc.)
- Discussion points included:
  - ☞ Tabling discussion of the survey results until the committee’s next meeting. Doing this allows more time for staff to complete a detailed analysis after the survey period closes.
  - ☞ The need for a final email blast to encourage/remind those who have not yet taken the survey to do so.

- ☞ The need to remember that the survey is only one of many tools being used to gather stakeholder input. The focus groups, interviews, and community forum have all provided the committee with a wealth of information.
- ☞ The extent to which committee members could have access to raw survey data rather than being provided with a summary report of recurring themes.
- Committee members were encouraged to email any remaining focus group notes and/or comments that were not voiced during the meeting to either Joey Crumley or Dr. Janis Guerrero as soon as possible.
- Committee members were encouraged to attend a focus group being held at Linder Elementary School on November 28, 2007.
- The next committee meeting will be Tuesday November 13, 2007 from 5:30-7:30 pm. This meeting will focus on: 1) discussion of the literature review on other districts' experiences and 2) continued discussion of the information received through the community outreach efforts. A special meeting will be held from 5:30-7:00 pm on Wednesday November 14, 2007. At that time, Sylvia Reyna of San Antonio ISD will speak about that district's Integrated Communications Network.
- The meeting was adjourned at 7:59 p.m.

**Community Committee on Neighborhoods and Schools**  
**Recurring Themes from Community Outreach Efforts**  
**October 23, 2007**

✓ = *Point repeated in discussion*

**Communication**

- Not the message, but how communicated ✓✓
- Open and honest
- Provide information at the earliest possible point ✓✓✓✓
- Continue guerilla marketing; expand all kinds of communication (e.g. city's community registry) ✓✓
- Notes home don't inform all in the community; everybody is a stakeholder
- Post notices in local businesses; get on various list serves; get connected with various communities
- Annual state of the district address
- Get authentic communication and dialogue
- More communication between AISD and COA
- General frustration...not communicating enough (e.g. Mueller community's school and boundaries)
- Schools seem to think they're doing ok, but could tap into certain networks better
- Hispanics not all the same, but generally need more advocates
- Need to know where to go with questions
- Uniform translation is important but challenging
- Better/more orientations for Hispanic parents
- Develop a pipeline to get information out to folks
- PSS's may be over-worked ✓
- Need to feel that AISD and school communities are on the same side → develop trust ✓ and sense of true public voice
- More active listening by district → authentic communication
- Make important things at schools stand out
- Make sure communications are in various languages
- Sufficient advance notice
- Who are our community partners?
- District personnel need to communicate thoroughly
- Public needs same information as district/decision makers
- Be school-specific as needed, with sufficient opportunities for input/information at schools
- Perception of district is low; district seems to have already made up its mind on important matters
- Transportation to meetings → coincide with bus stops and pick-up points
- Communicate with clergy; send individuals to communicate with faith groups
- Based on respect; don't talk down ✓
- Don't schedule meetings on traditional church nights; schedule meetings at churches

- Develop personal communication networks; get out to where community members are; just be at events
- More likely to notice information from a teacher → trust level
- Advertise achievements/successes
- Communicating with trustees; more advance notice of board agendas (and language in agendas)
- Need a plan to notify/manage crisis situations
- Need consistent terms/definitions

### **Engagement**

- At the beginning/all along. This includes both community and staff
- If people are engaged consistently with their schools, they will already be engaged when a ‘crisis’ emerges
- Get community involved before setting policy
- Interest in authentic engagement; not informing people of decisions already made
- Interest in preserving neighborhood schools can be met in various ways; need to explore things like multi-use campuses
- Possibly have trustee on Planning Commission have a more active role
- Need to have a sense of what is meant by ‘neighborhood school’
- Retail- relationship-based engagement
- ‘Seeding’ leadership in the community ✓
- Use parent support specialists to create networks/ ensure they’re not overworked to do so ✓✓
- Create mentoring programs as a way to get parents involved in the schools
- Create parent-mentoring programs to develop new leaders
- Develop trust so that people feel “AISD is on our side” ✓
- Address perception of a “culture of secrecy”
- Bring parent involvement from level of “serving pizza” to decision-making empowerment
- Develop strong relationships with non-AISD community partners (like businesses) so they can help engage people
- Engage stakeholders throughout entire process of addressing and considering alternatives through multi-year process (3 years- 5 years suggested)
- “Mentoring ministers” program
- Provide bus transportation on night of important meetings, with normal bus stops
- Communicate through churches- develop church communication policies
- Open communication begins with respect- don’t talk down to people
- Utilize teachers to improve engagement (training opportunities for teacher to maximize engagement)
- Multi-variant approach to assessing enrollment issues

### **Procedure/Policy**

- Distinct, different policies for over/under enrolled school ✓✓
- Commit to central neighborhood schools concept ✓✓
- Dedicated staff to support neighborhood schools/communicate with city
- More alignment in planning between city and AISD ✓✓

- Provide information at the earliest possible point ✓✓✓
- Widely publicize school report cards
- Process needs to be systematic, frequent, sustainable
- Stakeholders (parents, staff, community) should be a part of examining problems and formulating solutions/alternatives all along the way ✓
- Assume a leadership role in community (urban) planning that includes a commitment to central city neighborhood schools
- Improving middle schools
- Re-examining benchmark testing and field test and work together with community to change state/federal laws regarding acct
- Equitable and rich education for all students ✓
- Clear timeline, sufficient for alternatives to be discussed and considered
- May need a different policy for smaller, central schools to determine status
- Reassess capacity formulas ✓
- Re-invest in central city schools
- Provide resources to identify/address problems with under enrollment
- Opening doors to mentoring ministers
- Smaller learning communities/class sizes
- Staff diversity/advancement
- Take preventative measures to avoid crises
- Clear, consistent use of terminology (e.g. under enrolled, overenrolled, over/under capacity)

### **Parking lot**

- Use Mueller development to test new policy on boundaries
- FAQ for issues outside the charge but germane
- What do we mean by central/city/neighborhood schools
- ‘Capacity’ vs. ‘utilization’
- Support for district African-American professionals
- Utilization of parent support specialists
- Choice and transfer issues

**CCNS Member Attendance Record:**

	2007											2008			
	5/22	6/12	6/26	8/14	8/28	9/11	9/25	10/9	10/23	11/13	11/27	12/11	1/8	1/22	2/12
Andy Anderson	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓						
Sally Brackett	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓						
Terry Clark	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓						
Christiane Woodley Erwin		✓		✓	✓	✓		✓							
Chiquita Watt Eugene															
Lourdes (Lulu) Flores	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓							
Linda Gibeaut	✓	✓		✓	✓										
Rev. Sterling Lands	✓			✓	✓			✓	✓						
José Marrero	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓						
Rachael Proctor May	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓						
Susan Moffat	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓						
Leroy Nellis	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓							
Yolanda Pedraza	✓	✓		✓											
Rev. Ivie Rich	✓		✓												
Paul Saldaña	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓						
Alfredo Santos	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓		✓						
Kathie Tovo	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓						
Jim Walker	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓		✓						

✓ = Present