

**Community Committee on Neighborhoods and Schools**  
**Community Conversation on Draft Report**  
**Martin Junior High School**  
**March 25, 2008**  
**Summary**

**Member Attendance:**

*(See attached list)*

**Others in Attendance:**

Hilda Alvarez, DAC, Ortega ES

Jennifer Bennett, AISD, Office of Planning and Community Relations

Joey Crumley, AISD, Office of Planning and Community Relations

Raffy Garza-Vizcaino, AISD, Martin JH

Dr. Janis Guerrero, AISD, Office of Planning and Community Relations

Juanita Hernandez, Ortega ES

Linda Karstensen, AISD, Ortega ES

Jennifer Kim, Austin City Council

Daniel Machuca, AISD, Martin JH

Rosa Montoya, AISD, Office of Planning and Community Relations

Anna Pedroza, AISD, Ortega ES

Maria-Elena Ramon, AISD, Office of Planning and Community Relations

Maria Rodriguez, Ortega ES

Janie Serna, AISD, Ortega ES

Zoila Trejo, Ortega ES

Avareli Vega, Ortega ES

Rick Wood, AISD, Ortega ES

**Proceedings:**

- The meeting was called to order at 6:02 p.m. in the cafeteria of Martin Junior High School.
- Andy Anderson thanked everyone for attending. He began by explaining the purpose of the committee and said that the committee began meeting on May 22, 2007. He said the committee's final report, to be submitted to the Board, is targeted for the end of April 2008.
- Mr. Anderson then provided an overview of the committee's draft report, including he following points:
  - A considerable amount of information and data the committee considered
  - Extensive community input, including: all committee meetings open to the public with opportunities for citizens communications; updates to the Board of Trustees and Joint Subcommittees; joint meeting with the Facility Use and Boundary Task Force; community survey; focus group discussions and individual interviews; community forums; and online comments.
  - Several findings relating to school enrollment and capacity, community participation and engagement, communications, and collaboration with other entities.

- Recommendations in direct response to the committee’s charter relating to community participation, review criteria for school utilization, communications, collaboration with other entities, and neighborhood schools.
- Rachel Proctor May continued with the presentation and provided a more in-depth review of the committee’s recommendations, including the following points:
  - There are four major categories of recommendations: review criteria, ongoing communications system, decision making process, and community collaboration.
  - *Review Criteria* – The enrollment and accountability status (state and federal) of a school are the threshold criteria which, if triggered, would kick-off a community involvement process. As part of the process, additional criteria would then be considered.
  - *Ongoing Communication System* – This system would establish a knowledge base and relationship between the community and the district. In particular, the committee recommends an annual “State of the Campus” event for each school and stronger involvement from each Campus Advisory Council.
  - *Decision Making Process* – This process begins if a school has reached certain threshold points. The process would begin with the “State of the Campus” event and would follow with community notification, information gathering, and an initial community meeting to assess the situation. Then, the process would continue with more information gathering, a second meeting to develop recommendations and action plans, more meetings as necessary, implementation of action plans, briefing to the Board of Trustees, and an annual reassessment.
  - *Community Collaboration* – This was an important theme for the entire committee. Particularly, the committee recommends that the district recognize the importance of neighborhood schools and that community planning, school planning, and neighborhood determination be in cohesion.
- Ms. Proctor May ended the presentation by explaining that the main purpose of this community conversation was to obtain feedback and ideas relating to the draft report. She also recognized City Council Member Jennifer Kim as being present.
- The presentation was then followed by community questions and input: Highlights included:
  - The main purpose of the report is to establish a formalized process that the district and the community can use for the public to have input, to provide facility-use balances.
  - Most of the people attending were from the Ortega Elementary School community, and they felt that Ortega might be a school that would end up applying the committee’s recommendations.
  - An important factor impacting school communities, and Ortega in particular, is the inability of families to live in certain areas because of a lack of affordable housing. Transportation can also be an issue for many families.
  - Ortega is a Recognized campus and parents would like to be able to keep their children enrolled at the school.
  - In response to what can the city do to make housing more affordable, Council Member Kim said that the city is conducting a study to find opportunities for affordable housing and affordable child care, and that a special task force is

currently developing specific recommendations. She also emphasized the need for preservation of family-sized housing. She mentioned that the city is getting ready to update its comprehensive plan, and that it would like school communities to be very involved. Finally, she pointed out opportunities to address affordable housing and child care in transit-oriented developments.

- Many single-family houses in the Ortega community are being sold to people without children, and rents are very high.
  - The community needs to become more involved in researching other possibilities and uses for under-enrolled schools and to revitalize schools and neighborhoods.
  - For Ortega's situation, perhaps boundary adjustments could be made.
  - Ortega might serve as a good test case for how the city, neighborhood, and school district could work together to solve a problem.
  - The committee is greatly interested in what is going on at certain schools but, by its charge, its recommendations are not campus-specific.
  - Overcrowding at some campuses can affect the quality of education.
  - The affordable housing issue is affecting all of East Austin, not just the Ortega community.
  - Housing affordability is about the whole community and is a broad issue, involving the market, planning, and external factors.
  - The community appreciates that the committee's recommendations are very transparent.
  - Perhaps landlords should be invited to meetings related to school issues, and make them stakeholders.
  - Ortega might want to consider adopting a "sister school" in another part of town in order to share insights.
  - Perhaps it would be a good idea to hold another public meeting at Ortega.
  - Ortega is doing well in reaching out to its community.
  - The Ortega community happens to be in hot real estate market.
  - Although AISD may not be in direct control of housing, at least it can be supportive.
  - This meeting did not seem to be publicized as much as the Middle Level Education Plan meetings.
- The meeting was adjourned at 7:16 p.m.

**CCNS Member Attendance Record:**

	2007												2008						
	5/2 2	6/1 2	6/2 6	8/1 4	8/2 8	9/1 1	9/2 5	10/ 9	10/2 3	11/1 3	11/14	11/2 7	12/4	1/8	1/29	2/12	2/26	3/25	4/8
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