

**AUSTIN SCHOOL BOARD COMMITS TO POLICY GOVERNANCE
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The Austin School District Board of Trustees recently began an exciting process with the community. Meeting with a group of 25 students from AISD's 11 high schools, the Trustees started a new way of connecting with stakeholders. This community meeting is only the beginning of many such meetings. The Board has initially identified six such groups for this semester. They include middle school parents, Austin area employers, teachers and staff, Spanish-speaking parents and representatives from higher education. The high school students brought a refreshing outlook to the Trustees. We look forward to a new insight from all of the identified groups.

At these community meetings, the Board asks for input/reaction to our results policies. These results policies are goals the Board has determined for the Austin Independent School District. These goals will continue to be refined to ensure that they reflect the values and expectations this community holds for education in the Austin ISD. They include a new mission statement, goals for academic achievement, college and career preparation, arts education, citizenship, essential life skills and health and safety.

Community meetings are only one of the ways the Board of Trustees is approaching self-improvement. In addition, the Board spends a great deal of time assessing its internal governing practices. This includes evaluating each meeting's effectiveness, assessing its own governance process policies and determining the Board's overall performance. The AISD Board of Trustees is committed to performing the important governance work of the District and intends to hold itself accountable for doing the defined job and doing it well. It is in this way that the Board begins with the sense that it is itself responsible for its direction and success.

Things will look different at each Board meeting. The Board will spend its time on important leadership work; spend far more time on the important, client-centered issues. It will stop intruding into staff work and engage both proactively and constructively with those people we both serve and represent. And, the Board will free itself from the usual "fixing things" routine most Boards fall into. At our meetings, we will discuss the future, monitor the progress of the Board and the Administration, connect with the community, discuss resource allocation and determine our priorities.

Our new way of doing business provides us with a framework by which we should operate. In this article, a few of the approaches have been highlighted. In future articles, we will continue to describe our mission to governing with excellence. For more about this governance structure, visit the District website at www.austin.isd.tenet.edu.

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Austin School Trustee Ave Wahrmond