

Education Roundtable Reviews Year One Results of AISD Four-Year Pilot Program

In a landscape littered with poorly thought-out attempts, Austin ISD has become one of a handful of innovative school districts nationwide experimenting with principal and teacher strategic compensation for those who meet or exceed key organizational and student performance goals.

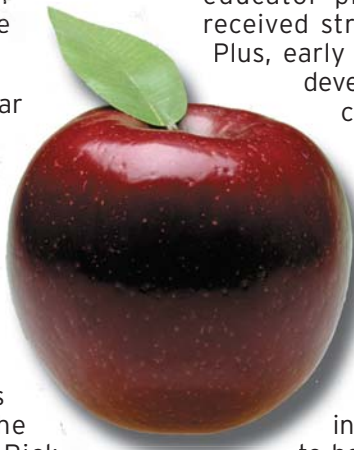
At the June 11 Chamber Education Roundtable, sponsored by IBM, a panel of business and community leaders provided an update on the Austin ISD major milestones in year 1 and expectations for success in the next three years.

The Roundtable reviewed the first-year results of Austin ISD's four-year pilot and its three program components: Student Growth, Teacher Recruitment & Retention at High Needs Schools and Professional Growth for Teachers. The results highlighted the program's successes, challenges and goals for the following year. Speakers included Marcia Silverberg, Human Resources Executive of Ascension Health - the Austin Chamber's representative; Rick Burciaga of StoneCrest National Bank of Austin (proposed); Austin Superintendent Pat Forgione; Austin ISD Program Director David Lussier; Education Austin President Louis Malfaro; and Austin ISD principal Sheila Anderson.

The first strategic compensation component involves payouts of up to \$4,000 each for each member of the campus team who reaches or exceeds school-wide student performance gains on the state's assessment, the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS). Additionally, teachers worked with their principals to create two 'student learning objectives' in subject content not related to student TAKS performance. Accomplishment of each Student Learning Objective could earn a teacher up to \$3,000. The second component is stipends for teachers to start or continue to teach in high-needs schools as well as to mentor successfully beginning teachers. The third component is to reward teachers who initiate work toward earning national certification. Upon an average base salary in the mid-\$40,000 range, these stipends can add up to \$12,000 if all performance standards are reached. For more detail, go to www.austinisd.org/inside/initiatives/compensation/.

The first incentive pay outs to the first round of Austin ISD educators will occur at the end of July.

Superintendent Forgione led off the Roundtable stating that Austin ISD was on the 'bleeding edge' of education improvement and management efforts.



He commended both the association representing educators and the Chamber of Commerce for their in-depth engagement in the development and marketing of Austin ISD's pilot to ensure its success.

David Lussier reported that staff at all 9 pilot campuses had endorsed their campus' involvement by votes of 85% or more, a strong initial sign. All 470 educators created two student learning objectives apiece, a significant change from previous educator practice. Ninety beginning teachers received structured mentoring through the pilot. Plus, early and frequent evaluation of the pilot's development and implementation have been conducted with program participants and the community.

The strategic compensation pilot has also required changes in Austin ISD practices, Lussier reported. The district's benchmark academic assessments needed to be reworked for year two to better quantify student learning gains throughout the school year. Austin ISD's transactional information systems were pushed to adapt to be able to locate and provide appropriate data in real-time. The overall professional development and human resources functions also were identified as areas that needed improvement to more appropriately support educators and maximize student achievement in this innovative management model.

Ascension's Marcia Silverberg, who has led the Chamber's Task Force to provide advice to the school district throughout the duration of the pilot, lauded the school district for its commitment over the long-term, focus on continual improvement. "I am impressed with the thoughtfulness of the approach," said Ms. Silverberg. "As someone who has helped create an incentive program for company employees in my career, I can appreciate the complexity and sophistication of the Austin ISD pilot. This will have a lot of successes and a few areas of improvement in its first year, as anyone can tell you. The key is to learn from them."

Rick Burciaga of StoneCrest National Bank of Austin (proposed), recognized and applauded the intensive and extensive self-evaluation model Austin ISD has created. "Austin ISD has extensively solicited the feedback of its employees for the betterment of this project. Austin ISD has been wise to listen to them and to act on as much of the feedback as possible."

Austin ISD also released a crucial self-evaluation of its efforts. Educators provided strong support and equally critical feedback of elements of the pilot which needed to improve for it to be successful.

Education Media Tour to New York August 5 & 6

Chamber Vice Chair of Education Gene Austin, CEO, Convio and Drew Scheberle, Chamber Sr. VP of Education and Talent Development will be in New York August 5 and 6 to meet with National Media about Austin.



The purpose of the trip is to target publications including Fortune, New York Times, Business Week and more and give them an in-depth perspective on the Chamber's initiatives such as 20,010 by 2010, Financial Aid Saturdays, talent attraction and more.

ETF Recipients — continued from page 1

"RFMicron is a perfect fit for Austin and we are proud to support such an innovative technology company in the Human Capital," said Jeff King, Partner Haynes & Boone, LLP and Chairman of the CenTex RCIC. "Business leaders and experienced investors assisting the Centex RCIC have committed a great amount of effort in helping these Central Texas technology companies and, in doing so, help this region to maintain its technology edge."

Image Trends Inc., a Central Texas company, provides innovative digital imaging tools and will receive a \$1 million project award in graduated installments for the commercialization of its pioneering innovations.

Image Trends, Inc. was formed with the goal to invent and develop creative tools and products that enrich our lives through improved digital imagery. Located in the heart of the Silicon Hills, Image Trends markets unique, patent protected tools that greatly improve the productivity of professional and advanced amateur photographers and adapts technologies to serve the imaging professional and advanced amateur markets by developing image correction and enhancement tools.