



Budget Stabilization Task Force

July 16, 2018

5:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Carruth Administration Center, Board Auditorium
1111 West 6th Street, Austin, TX 78703

MEETING MINUTES

IN ATTENDANCE:

Committee Members:

Cesar Benavides, Todd Bisang, K.C. Cerny, Michael Cranor, Vanessa Dainton Santamaria, Christina Dunigan, Bradley Dusing, Amir Emamian, Griselda Galindo-Vargas, Kevin Garcia, James Haynes, Dulce Hernandez, Claire Milam, Helen Miller, Larry Perez, Kazique Prince, Teresa Razo, Alda Santana, Alba Donajhi Sereno, Robert Thomas, Deborah Trejo, Cassie Wenmohs, Ken Zarifis

Staff:

Andrew Hoffman, Jeff Herbert, Travis Zander, Ali Ghilarducci, David Edgar, Nicole Conley Johnson, Christina Nguyen, Dr. Fernando Medina

Visitors:

Eric Ramos, Bergan Casey

1. Call to Order and Overview of Meeting Goals (5:33 pm)

Tri-Chairs called the meeting to order at 5:33 am.

Committee was asked to introduce themselves and describe their affiliation to AISD schools.

2. Appointment of Tri-Chairs

Members voted electronically prior to meeting to elect Kevin Garcia, Claire Milam and Robert Thomas to represent the Task Force as tri-chairs.

Cassie motions to approve. Amir seconds motion. Motion unanimously approved

3. Citizen Communication

BSTF member, Helen Miller addressed Task Force expressing concern about a lack of transparency in district contracts with vendors and about the makeup of the Task Force.

Member suggested adding a standing section to agenda specifically for Task Force member comment. Tri-chair, Claire agreed to review suggestion

4. Approval of Minutes

- Name spelling correction: Ken Zarifis
- Member would like to correct the omission of prior request to have more detailed budget summaries and raw data from last meeting.
- Committee motioned to approve minutes, all approved, none opposed.

5. David Edgar – Overview of Education Finance in Texas and the Austin Independent School District (Presentation)

Task Force was provided an overview of Education Finance in Texas and how it impacts AISD.

Questions and Comments from Members:

- Why do Charters get more money? What is the highest the rate can go?
 - Charters are allocated funds based on the state average. The per student allotment for AISD is less than that of the state average because the formula has not been updated since 1991. The rate can go up to \$1.17 per \$100 of property value.
- Is there anywhere in the budget that is not being maxed out? What's the strategy for retaining students?
 - AISD's M&O tax rate is 1.079. The Department of Communications and Community Engagement has a presentation regarding how marketing campaign has impacted enrollment. Can request that they present to Task Force.
- What percent of an increase in tax rate would go to the state?
 - The district would keep around 20% of any increased revenue levied through a tax increase due to recapture and that percentage is on a downward trend.
- Are the numbers provided on the slides the allocation plus what is collected from taxes? Why is that number different than other per child cost I've heard from AISD staff.
- Strongly suggested reading the document titled TTARA, An Introduction to School Finance in Texas

Requests

- Request to provide presentation before meeting for easier legibility.
- Request for future presentations to provide more complete and transparent information.
- Prefer oversharing rather than not sharing enough information. Would like to have information provided with enough time to review.

6. Nicole Conley Johnson – School Finance Committee Update (Presentation) (6:53 p.m)

Nicole offered the committee an update on the findings of the School Finance Committee.

Questions and Comments from Members:

- Why has the general administration budget increased 30% in the last few years. Can we look more closely at how we spend?
- Question about 3 sub-committees. How can we also focus on outcomes? How do we make recommendations for legislative changes that affect our students in the classroom.
 - It is far more powerful when parents address legislators rather than CFOs
- What can we do in collaboration with other entities that are not subject to recapture to bring more revenue to the district?
 - If Task Force members have ideas and in particular connections with people who could provide this kind of opportunity, please connect AISD staff with those people.
- Has the district looked at how foundation communities has affected enrollment in neighboring schools?
 - Not specifically
- How are we equipping our schools to be more welcoming and community centric to improve enrollment efforts?
 - This is something the district recognizes and has chosen to invest in AISD Cares professional development to help with this.
- What are the goals and the outcomes those vendors have been hired to achieve? Let's not forget the equity lens. What are the measures? Incentivizing is concerning! Incentivizing means test scores.

Request:

- Can we get performance grading for each vendor? Order of magnitude? Total budget?
 - The district does not have a standard of collecting this data from every vendor.
- Can we get a break down of central administration budget for principals who have been taken off campuses and given special tasks or special projects at Central Office?
- We have issues with the increasing numbers of retire-rehires. Budget reports requests: SEL and Vendors. Would like to see contracts over \$20K
- Less items/topics on agendas.

Kazique motioned to have equity discussion tabled to next committee meeting. Robert second motion to table discussion for next meeting. All approved. None opposed.

7. Break - skipped

8. Travis Zander – Forecast and Data Trends (Presentation and Activity) (7:45 p.m)

Travis began his presentation with an overview of comparison data but did not complete the presentation due to time restraints.

Questions and Comments from Members

- Does the data include federal funds?
 - Data provided does not include federal funds.
- Have we looked at a decrease in property value?
 - The district has not looked at data based on lower property value because it has not decreased in over 10 years and seems unlikely in the near future.

Suggestion for members to look into the option of continue conversations offline and not spend additional time in meetings talking about one topic for extended periods of time.

Alba, motioned that the committee submit suggestions to tri-chairs for subcommittee group work. Tables motion.

Requests:

- Provide comparison data based on demographics
- Comparison data on how other districts spend and get feedback from departments about how and why they spend how they do
- Resend MindMixer invitation.
- Establish basic criteria for visitors/presenters. They need to bring suggestions to the committee.
- Look at the key costs that can actually allow us to make recommendations for cuts
- Can we pull data on program evaluations? How effective they are and not just the dollar amount we spend?
- For contracts that come back, please indicate what is funded by grants so we can tell if we should be worried about it taking up space from the tax driven tax funding.
- Would like information on cities with comparable populations to Austin - do they have just one district or multiple districts and what does that do for the \$/students that get drawn down in those cities?

9. Defining Terms: Equity Lens - SKIPPED

10. Closure, Homework, Next Steps (8:40 p.m)

Tri-Chair - "we are not lacking opinions, which is good!"

- Let's target our questions so the team benefits more from the response.
- Let's avoid tangents and limit feedback.
- Will we continue with questions until there are none or will we cut people off and stick to the agenda?
- Can we push the use of MindMixer?
- Extension of committee time for more meetings and better understanding of the data provided.

Vanessa made a motion to keep questions and comments to 15 minutes after the presentation, even if that means cutting people off.

Member recommends that the tri-chairs bring a recommendation for how to deal with excessive questions and comments after presentations.

Tri-committee agreed to review method for dealing with questions.

11. Adjourn (8:58 p.m)

Parking lot:

Members had continued questions about how state finance laws impact district revenue. Tri-chair suggested topic be tabled and explored offline.