

Austin Independent School District
Environmental Stewardship Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

March 28, 2019
5:30 – 7:30 pm

Carruth Administration Center, 1111 W. 6th Street, Board Auditorium

Attendees

Members in Attendance

Aimee Aubin
Karen Bishop
Rob Borowski
Jake Carter
Alecia Casper
Irene Dooling
Colleen Garland
Sherry Lepine*
Monica Lopez Magee*
Anne Muller
Mary Priddy*
Richard Shearman
Ilya Schmulenson
Dub Taylor
Jeff Wacker
Jessica Wilson

Visitors

Shaun Auckland
Juliana Auckland
Cassidy Ellis
Sara Hildebrandt Gaspar
Amanda Frederick

Staff Coordinators in Attendance

Christian Casarez Clarke
Bob Cervi
Darien Clary

Members Not in Attendance

Pamela Abee Taulli
Bianca Bidiuc Peterson**
Liz Cardinal**
Sam DeSanto
Amir Emamian
Charlie Gutierrez
Kris Hafezizadeh
Kristi Hibler-Luton
Cari Land
Lauren Maples**
Kate Martin
Amanda Mortl Walker**
Susan Peterson
Justo Ramirez
Carrie Schreiber
Louis Zachary
Anneliese Tanner**

Citizens Communication

Jessica Wilson
Juliana Auckland
Ilya Schmulenson
Shaun Auckland

* Indicates Committee Tri-Chair
**Indicates excused absence

Minutes

I. Welcome and Approval of Minutes

The ESAC Tri-chair Dr. Sherry Lepine facilitated the meeting and called the meeting to order at 5:30pm. Dr. Lepine reminded the committee of upcoming Tri-chair elections in May for a parent representative. She also shared that the Outdoor Learning Specialist position would be preserved and thanked the ESAC members for their advocacy. Dr. Lepine also thanked AISD Food and Nutrition Services for providing the delicious dinner at the ESAC meeting. Guests were welcomed and asked to introduce themselves. January meeting minutes were not approved as the group did not reach quorum.

II. Public Comments & Announcements

Jessica Wilson spoke as an East Austin resident regarding Zavala, Metz, Sanchez. She announced pre-design meeting April 4th in the Sanchez library and encouraged ESAC members to attend. Air quality is a concern because of its proximity to I35, and there are discussions underway to support reforestation and transportation strategies to help mitigate air pollution around the school. Also, Metz and Zavala will co-locate while the new campus is being modernized.

Juliana Auckland, Blackshear 2nd grade student, shared her concerns that urban wildlife at her school are getting harmed. She reported that a fox den was filled in with concrete and that she has seen bats getting harmed when AISD teachers and staff try to remove them from the school. Ms. Auckland asked that AISD staff be more considerate of wildlife at our schools and consider the value they bring to the student experience.

Ilya Schmulenson shared that PEAS is in the process of building a dedicated kitchen space at Cunningham. The kitchen is funded by the Emeril Legasse Foundation and is expected to open this time next year. They will post a farm-to-table educator position so every K-5 student at Cunningham will go through the program.

Aimee Aubin announced that the City of Austin will be hosting a tree climbing course.

Shaun Auckland shared information about the partnership between AISD and Williamson County for making gently used binders available to schools. The request for is on the AISD Sustainability Website and can also be requested via email to sustainability@austinisd.org. The county generates about 600 binders a quarter. Please request binders!

III. Action Area Updates

Sara Hildebrandt Gasbar presented about paper saving in the AISD Construction Procurement Department with the use of docu sign. By going paperless, the initiative has decreased the time to execute a contract from 23 days to 3 days; increased the number of contracts executed in one month from 14 to 59; and saved 15, 870 sheets of paper in one month. Ms. Hildebrandt Gasbar noted that AISD is also encouraging other departments to go paperless in advance of the Administration move to the new headquarter building. It has also increased the ability for people to be productive from any location, as they can sign documents from their phone.

Dr. Sherry Lepine provided the additional updates for Waste and Procurement. These include a

reminder that AISD staff can access reuse materials from the UT JJ Pickle campus and from the AISD warehouse. Texas Disposal Systems (AISD waste services provider) has also hired a trainer to provide training for AISD custodial and food services staff. Trainings can be requested by contacting Gregory Behl gbehl@texasdisposal.com. Dr. Lepine also highlighted the success of Burnet Middle School for their excellent teamwork to reduce landfill pick-ups from 5 to 2 times per week. This means more waste is getting recycled and also helps decrease haul costs. Blanton Elementary also started cafeteria compost, and Allison Elementary head custodian produced a teacher training to staff about composting for Breakfast in the Classroom.

AISD Sustainability Manager, Darien Clary, provided the update for the Food Action Area in the absence of subcommittee leader, Anneliese Tanner. Compostable utensils will arrive to the AISD warehouse in April with anticipated delivery to schools in May.

AISD outdoor Learning Specialist and Nature subcommittee leader, Anne Muller, shared updates. Ten families participated in the recent Girls Outside campout at Inks Lake. It was the first time any of the families had camped, and they said they couldn't wait to take their family camping again. All camping equipment was supplied to the families by the Parks and Recreation Department. The AISD Sustainability website also has the toolkit for how to host a campus campout. Also, Ms. Muller announce that the Monarch Heroes applications are now open for schools. AISD Sustainability Manager also shared an update of the Urban Forest Grant and Tree Inventory. To date, AISD has inventoried over 8,000 trees at 96 schools. Urban Forest Specialist, Kelly Sloan, is conducting the inventory and has also conducted tree ID activities with students and teachers.

AISD Energy and Water Manager, Richard Shearman, presented the Energy & Water Action Area updates. This subcommittee garnered feedback about the AISD Sustainability Plan from over 200 people at the City of Austin science fair. Mr. Shearman also shared the scope of the energy performance contract that includes LED lighting retrofits, power conditioning, water conservation, building automation system, and energy leadership. The payback for most items included are about 10 years and brings guaranteed savings to the District. The energy leadership section supports the energy staff that will help monitor building systems and target problems. The measurement and verification plan will ensure AISD is achieving the savings needed.

Transportation and Air Quality subcommittee leader, Rob Borowski, shared information about the Electric Vehicles (EVs) for Schools program and announced that the future Volkswagen mitigation funds may be of interest to AISD to fund future electric vehicle charging stations. Bike to school day is May 8th, and fellow ESAC member and City of Austin Safe Routes to Schools coordinator, Amir Emamian, is helping to coordinate. Mr. Borowski also announced that the website for Commute Solutions multimodal transportation partnership is fully launched. This tool will track users commuting progress and will enable them to participate in commute contests. The Denver area has a great example of this program. Potentially, each AISD school could set up its own site. The AISD Transportation Department is also investigating alternative fuels for its fleet, currently has an idling policy, and is taking steps to lower emissions of fleet vehicles. For additional information, see the presentation slides in the meeting materials.

IV. Watt Watchers

Dun Taylor and Juan Garcia (Disco learning media company) presented about the Watt Watchers of Texas program. This is a state-sponsored energy-efficiency program to help boost energy literacy for K-12 students, and to help schools save money by saving energy. The online

curriculum includes TEKS-aligned lessons, activities, and digital resources guided by six modern energy themes. All the lessons and activities are free and available to all schools. Mr. Garcia shared that Galveston was the first school district to use the program and saved \$25k in their first year. If every school in TX used it, it would save millions in the state. Cypress Fairbanks ISD is currently using the program. In 4 months, their savings was \$200k.

For additional information, see the presentation slides in the meeting materials.

V. Sustainability Manager Update

AISD Sustainability Manager, Darien Clary, announced the AISD and City Resolution to work collaboratively and how this could intersect with sustainability work, especially in the areas of affordability and access to greenspace. Ms. Clary also shared plans for this year's AISD Earth Week celebration that includes student contests, daily PA announcements, activity ideas, and featured events. Ms. Clary received work from the AISD Campus and District Accountability Office that the Campus Improvement Plan system is getting revamped and that we are awaiting further direction. She thanked members for all their work to highlight strategies that we could include in the Campus Improvement Plans thus far. Ms. Clary will send out a survey link for member organizations to indicate monetary and in-kind resources they provide for sustainability initiatives at AISD schools.

For additional information, see the presentation slides in the meeting materials.

VI. Subcommittee Time

Due to time constraints, subcommittees were encouraged to meet outside of the general meeting.

VII. Requests for Future Meeting Topics

The Energy and Water subcommittee proposed a presentation about the EV for Teacher program that could include EcoRise, Austin Energy, and AISD staff.

ESAC Tri-chair, Monica Lopez, Magee, motioned to adjourn the meeting. ESAC member, Rob Borowski, seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 7:26 pm.