



To: AISD Board of Trustees

From: AISD School Health Advisory Council (SHAC)

Date: June 2, 2014

Re: Prioritizing health during Superintendent search

Austin ISD has a strong history of commitment to comprehensive school health and to educating the whole child. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) provides clear evidence that success of students, including academics, attendance, behavior, and overall performance, is linked with their mental and physical health, as described in CDC Adolescent and School Health online resource. In some of our schools, obesity rates are as high as 30%, and up to 74% of students at some schools will fail the cardio-vascular fitness testing. Additionally, in 2012-13, 25% of middle school students reported daily occurrences of bullying at their school (AISD Student Substance Use and Safety Survey 2012) and there were 278 injury incidents related to aggression (DCMC and AISD Student Health Services Annual Report). These statistics call for continued district support for physical and mental health programming, and leadership that prioritizes coordinated health among students, families, and staff.

Therefore, the Austin ISD SHAC recommends that the AISD Board of Trustees demonstrate a prioritization of health throughout the selection process for our new Superintendent. Specifically, we recommend issuing higher rankings for those candidates who have fulfilled a leadership role in districts that have a successful coordinated school health programs, and for candidates whose prior districts have documented sustained improvements in student health indicators similar to our own FITNESSGRAM testing and safety and substance abuse surveys. Further, the Austin ISD SHAC would like to participate in the selection process by designating a SHAC representative to serve on appropriate application review and interview teams during the selection process.

If we can provide additional information regarding these recommendations, please contact me at any time.

Sincerely,

Vivian Ballard, Chair  
Austin ISD SHAC