

## Proposed Process for Evaluation of District Initiatives

This proposal is offered in response to the charge by the Austin Independent School District’s (AISD) Board of Trustees (October 6, 2008) regarding **Cost Effectiveness Evaluation of Initiatives to Improve Student Achievement**. The charge is as follows:

**Cost Effectiveness Evaluation of Initiatives to Improve Student Achievement -**  
Develop and/or recommend a method and frequency for periodically evaluating the efficacy and cost of all programs initiated by the district to improve student performance. The CBRC (Community Budget Review Committee) shall work with the Interim Chief Academic Officer to develop its recommendations.

The current AISD data systems environment is not always conducive to thorough “cost effectiveness” evaluations. The feasibility of carrying out a “cost effectiveness” evaluation can be investigated on a program by program basis. Cost information such as total program cost and funding sources can, however, be included in many evaluations.

Staff in AISD’s Department of Program Evaluation (DPE) are currently evaluating or have evaluated most federal and state grant programs and most of the major district priorities and strategies as described in the AISD Strategic Plan, 2005-2010, Revised, 2007. The complete evaluation plans for the current school year are available online in the Department of Program Evaluation Plan of Work: 2008–2009 at <http://www.austinisd.org/inside/accountability/evaluation/agenda.phtml>. Evaluation reports can be found on the Department of Program Evaluation’s website <http://www.austinisd.org/inside/accountability/evaluation/>.

An *expanded* process is proposed to ensure the programs that are most critical to district success will be evaluated. An overview of the process is displayed in the following figure and steps are delineated in the following table. The process will culminate in an annual review and presentation of evaluation findings with key district leaders (e.g., executive directors, associate superintendents, etc.).

Draft

### Overview of Process for Evaluation



The details of the process, responsible parties, and timeline are detailed in the following table. The current process will be expanded to include additional elements; these new elements are identified by green shading in the cells.

**Proposed Evaluation Process, Responsible Parties, and Timeline**

Components of Process	Responsible Parties	Timeline
1) Annual identification of major district initiatives and programs supporting these initiatives, guided by <i>current district initiatives</i> described in the <u>Strategic Plan</u> and the <i>action plans</i> included in the <u>District Improvement Plan</u> .	Superintendent and his or her Cabinet	During the strategic and budget planning process for the coming year (early spring)
2) Prioritization of these initiatives/programs in terms of need and funding for evaluation in the coming school year.	Superintendent and his or her Cabinet with assistance from DPE staff	March
3) Comparison of and identification of gaps between list of priorities and list of evaluations mandated/planned for the coming school year.	DPE and other Accountability staff	April
4) Investigation of resulting list for feasibility of evaluation, especially in terms of cost and effectiveness.	Accountability staff (especially DPE staff) and Finance staff	April
5) Development of evaluation plans through the regular interactive process with DPE staff and program managers (which includes a review of reporting requirements, assurances, and evaluation needs) for the programs that do not already have a plan in place for the coming year.	Accountability staff (Anne Ware and DPE staff) and Program Staff	April/May
6) Review of plans by high level district staff, including executive directors, associate and assistant superintendents, and the superintendent to make sure that the plans include the broader district perspective and will meet the broader district needs.	Accountability staff and cabinet-level staff	June
7) Provision of formative evaluation results to program managers during the school	DPE staff	Throughout the school year

Components of Process	Responsible Parties	Timeline
year in written and oral form. Presentation of summative results to program managers.		
8) Presentation of evaluation findings and final draft of report to key district leaders (e.g., executive directors, associate superintendents, etc.) can be made on a regular basis (e.g., to cabinet on a quarterly basis). If the evaluation is an ongoing project with multiple years of evaluation results, a 3-year summary of trend data will be presented to decision makers. If appropriate or requested, other presentations of findings can be made to selected committees or to the Board of Trustees by program and evaluation staff.	DPE staff, cabinet-level staff and program managers	September and October

A summary of completed, ongoing and proposed AISD evaluations are presented on the following page.

Draft

### Current Evaluations of Major District Initiatives

Evaluations of the following major district initiatives were carried out in 2007-2008.

1. ACCESS Grant Initiatives
2. High School Redesign:
  - Math Improvement Initiative
  - First Things First
  - Student Advisory
  - Quality Teaching for English Learners (QTEL)
  - Professional Learning Communities (PLC)
3. Institute for Learning:
  - Disciplinary Literacy
4. Positive Behavior Support
5. Strategic Compensation or REACH

Evaluations of the following major district initiatives are currently underway in 2008-2009 and will continue to be evaluated in 2009-2010. For the complete list of programs to be evaluated and the evaluation plans, please see <http://www.austinisd.org/inside/accountability/evaluation/agenda.phtml>.

- ACCESS Grant Initiatives
- After School Programs
- Bilingual Education and English as a Second Language Programs
- High School Redesign
- Positive Behavior Support
- Strategic Compensation or REACH

In addition, use of data by campus staff to improve student achievement is being investigated as part of several evaluation projects in the current school year. Leadership Academy is being evaluated by an external evaluator in conjunction with DPE staff. DPE staff will provide data for the evaluation under an appropriate data sharing agreement. The evaluation plan already has been reviewed and approved by the grantor and district staff.

Several additional projects are currently being planned or discussed for 2009-2010. Because the demand for evaluation exceeds current staffing levels, we propose to address additional evaluation needs by folding additional evaluation questions into current grant funded projects or by carrying out smaller studies that investigate extant outcome data for groups of students served (e.g., content focused coaching). If neither of these solutions is possible, additional funding may be necessary.

### Proposed Evaluation Process, Responsible Parties, and Timeline

Proposed Project	How to Address Need	Prioritization
Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID)	Funding has been requested in the proposed budget	
Best Practices/Indicators of Teacher Quality	Additional funding required	
Class Size Reduction	Fold into current Title I evaluation, if appropriate	
8 <sup>th</sup> to 9 <sup>th</sup> Grade Academic Interventions	Additional funding required or smaller study carried out on an ad hoc basis*	
Indicators of 9 <sup>th</sup> Grade Success	Fold into current project	
Mentor Program	Although some data collected through ongoing	

Proposed Project	How to Address Need	Prioritization
	evaluation projects, additional funding required	
Middle School Plan	Replacing High School Redesign work	
Read 180 Curriculum Project	Obtain data from external curriculum company sponsor/vendor; smaller study carried out on ad hoc basis*	
Special Education Evaluation	Additional funding required and/or smaller studies carried out on an ad hoc basis*	
Stimulus Projects	Additional funding required and/or smaller studies carried out on an ad hoc basis*	
Summer School Programs	Fold into current project and/or smaller study carried out on ad hoc basis*	
Targeted State Compensatory Education Funds	Fold into current project	
Targeted Title I A Funds	Fold into current project	

\*Ad hoc request must be routed through cabinet level staff