



Advocacy Advisory Committee

April 29, 2024
Meeting Minutes

The Advocacy Advisory Committee (AAC) met in person at Austin ISD headquarters, 4000 S. IH-35, and via Zoom on April 29, 2024, from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

The following attended the meeting:

AAC members: Sandy Dochen, Gabriel Estrada, Linzy Foster, Lisa Adams, Shannon Grethel, Lisa Hernandez, Heidi Langan, Sara Levithan Daniels, Sarah McKenna, Blanca Galvez, Ramya Nambala, and Joshua Jeon

AISD Trustees and Staff: Trustee Lynn Boswell, and Edna Butts,

The meeting was called to order by Co-Chair Joshua Jeon at 5:36 p.m. There was no public comment.

There was a motion by Heidi Langan and seconded by Linzy Foster to approve the minutes of the August 29, 2023 meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

Co-Chair Joshua Jeon provided a review of the AAC goals.

1. Becoming informed how local, state, and federal governmental action impacts Austin ISD;
2. Recommend legislative priorities to the district and the Board;
3. Connect with parents, teachers, administrators, taxpayers, and students, empowering them to engage with elected officials; and
4. Collaborate with the Austin community to advance the legislative priorities adopted by Board of Trustees.

Edna Butts provided a brief overview of the 88th legislative session and the special sessions, the primary focus of which was the lack of school funding and the efforts to pass a voucher bill. Trustee Boswell shared that Austin ISD spends \$70 million more for special education services than it receives from the State of Texas. Additionally, when fully staffed under of HB 3, relating to measures for ensuring public school safety, Austin ISD will spend \$7 million more than we receive from the State of Texas for implementing the bill. School districts state-wide are dealing with lay-offs, closing campuses, tax rate increases, and other measures due to the lack of increased funding from the legislature.

Co-chair Joshua Jeon reviewed the top ten priorities received from several AAC members. Staff will send a Google survey out to all members for additional input.

The AAC discussed actions to take during the interim in preparation for the next legislative session. Staff will research whether there are any legal impediments regarding what we can or cannot share in light of the lawsuits filed by the Attorney General against several school districts alleging electioneering.

We can share what public schools offer to prepare students to enter the workforce and the resulting boost to our economy. We can also share this and other information with the AISD Up Close class members, the Austin Ed Fund, and perhaps collaborate with Just Fund It and Raise Your Hand Texas. Sharing information on social media was discussed.

The group discussed reaching out to other school districts, other education advocacy groups and the importance of involving family and friends in other communities throughout Texas.

The possibility of a joint meeting with the Austin Council of PTA's was discussed. The next meeting will be in early June.

The meeting adjourned at 6:48 p.m.