

MEETING MINUTES

**Austin Independent School District
Environmental Stewardship Advisory Committee**
General Marshall Middle School | 4401 Tilley St. | Austin, TX 78704
May 22, 2024 | 5:30-7:30 pm

The AISD Environmental Stewardship Advisory Committee met at General Marshall Middle School on May 22nd to consider, discuss, and take action on the items listed in the agenda below. These meeting minutes are supplemented by the meeting materials, which can be accessed on the [ESAC website](#).

Attendees

Members in Attendance

Arianna Colasanti
Bill Schnell
Bobby Sandoval
Catherine Martinez
Eileen McGinnis
Gretchen Calderon
Jeff Wacker *
Jen Cregar *
Kathleen Cane
Kevin Lanza
Kevin Tran
Kir Kraus
Matthew Garland
Melody Alcazar
Meredith Clarke
Mike Berryman
Monique Beacham
Rey Torres
Rue Nava
Tamera Tate
Tracy Geraldez
Yasmine Anderson

Citizens Communion

none

Visitors in Attendance

Paul Clarke
Colleen Garland
Jeffrey Richard

Staff Coordinators in Attendance

Darien Clary

Members Not in Attendance

Michael Eggen**
Nishtha Verma**
Amanda Brazier**
Ashleigh Cibelli-Pettus**
Carinne Maravilla**
Elizabeth Harper**
Nicole Howard**
Rica Sunga-Kwan**
Shaun Auckland**
Ana Echeverria**
Jacqui Willis**
Antonio Ross
Cheyenne Wright
Greg Behl
Kindal Keen
Laykha Chopra
Sahiti Karempudi
Vibha Sheth

* Indicates Committee Co-Chair

** Indicates excused absence

Minutes

I. Networking and Group check-ins

Members arrived, served themselves food, and participated in unstructured networking table conversations.

II. Welcome and Intros

Darien Clary called the meeting to order (following networking time) at 5:59 pm, and welcomed everyone to the meeting. Jeff Wacker walked through the agenda and provided an overview of ESAC and ESAC resources.

A quorum of members approved minutes from March 2024. Melody Alcazar motioned to approve, and Bobby Sandoval seconded the motion.

III. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

IV. Action Area, Working Group, and Partner Updates & Shareouts

- Renew America's Schools Grant (Darien Clary)
 - Currently solar at 14 schools that produce around 2 MW of energy
 - Grant will allow AISD to add solar to another 14 schools and implement building energy management systems for a total of 16 schools over 5 years
 - Just completed 10-month contract negotiation for DOE Renew America's Schools grant
 - 20 awardees nationwide, only one in TX
 - Big focus on career education and training for students.
 - Utilizing HUB vendors for implementation.
- Nature (Colleen Garland)
 - Repurposed Metz ES outdoor spaces for future districtwide use. Using grant from Austin Ed Fund, replanted and revived space using repurposed materials from Metz. Camps are now using the space (e.g., Earth School). Planted over 30 trees using CoA Urban Forestry Grant.
 - 25 field trips this school year through Girls+ Outside. Hired bilingual educator + expanding to 4 new schools next year.
- Urban Forestry (Sydnie Levell)
 - Been in her position for 3 months
 - Hoping to connect with local nonprofits and volunteers to take care of young trees at modernized campuses over the summer to correct things like mulch volcanoes. Please sign up to help!
 - Has no tools/equipment so looking for volunteers to bring their own equipment. Recommendation to partner with tool lending libraries.
 - Planted more than 1,200 trees since 2021 led by previous forester Matt Mears and others.
- Energy & Water (Rey Torres)
 - Have 2 new DCFC fast chargers and 1 Level 2 charger. Charging 1 bus pushes 60 kW. With 2, that's 120 kW which can be very costly (\$2K / month) because of peak demand.

Recommend managing charging to maintain lower peak demand. Open to students getting involved.

- Last school year, there were 9 schools participating in ENERGY STAR. Since 2018, been working with a company at no cost to improve energy efficiency at schools to improve energy performance to get certified (minimum ES score of 75). Hoping for 9-10 more schools by December.
 - Tamera shared that Memorial Day weekend is tax-free weekend for ENERGY STAR products.
- Food (Darien Clary)
 - Served 10M+ meals this year in part driven by new creative menu items.
 - Kitchen team has a 98.2% average for health inspections. Have state and Austin Ed Fund grant funding.
 - Held food of the future tasting event at schools during Earth Week. Sampled items like kelp shells, cricket brownies.
 - Food Services conducts site visits with their management team to connect with where food is sourced from.
- Amenity Mapping (Melody Alcazar)
 - Finished training and hoped to map all schools by the end of the summer with intention to update annually. Have completed 5 so far.
 - Look at the lat/long of each feature, its quality, how it's used, and other detailed notes.
 - Member question about recording whether schools and their amenities are open to the public. Yes!
 - Will have 2 EcoRise interns help with mapping for a month. Looking for other volunteers (will provide training)!
 - Will share info with schools once complete.
 - Member question about how to get word out for volunteers. Will share call for volunteers. Please don't go on your own. Coordinate through Melody & Yasmine because have to notify schools ahead of time.
 - Darien Clary reinforced the importance of the project to help AISD and partners know where opportunities and gaps exist to improve equitable access to outdoor learning.
 - Focused on sites being modernized first to get ahead of any issues.
- Air Quality (Eileen McGinnis)
 - Held 1st webinar. Not too big of a lift to put on a districtwide webinar. Kudos to everyone that helped!
 - Interest in whether could hold annual webinar/event. Could build off historical ESAC activities to host workshop/events each year.
 - Earth Week/Month is a good time to hold recurring events.
- Transportation (Darien Clary)
 - At Earth Week ATX, Executive Director Kris Hafezizadeh served on a panel about AISD's electric buses and had an e-bus on display at the festival.
 - Participated in Earth Week and had an event at St. Elmo that Austin Energy & PEAS joined. Students were really interested in checking out the new e-buses and seeing how things worked differently. Noticed you don't smell the exhaust getting on/off the bus.
 - Participated in a career fair at Oak Springs to show off e-bus as what drivers could drive.
 - Member noted it would be nice if the buses stood out more (e.g., painted green). Talking to AISD Communications about designing something, potentially including student artwork. Look for the 'e' next to the bus number.

- Other Updates
 - Bobby Sandoval: Excited about promoting bicycling at Marshall MS and shared what they were able to accomplish at school this year:
 - Riding bikes around the courtyard almost daily
 - Teach 5 students how to ride a bike
 - Offer Woom bike discount
 - Purchased tools like bikes, helmets, locks, etc. through grants
 - Bobby got a gift card and comedy club tix for biking dedication
 - Have about 10% of students riding bike to/from school; working on family engagement
 - Melody Alcazar: Have opportunity for schools to request nature play resources (e.g., logs). Email Melody with requests for implementation in September.
 - Rue Nava: LASA students held a prom dress drive. Acknowledged disparity and privilege being able to be involved in sustainability. Prom dress drive helps to improve equitable access.
 - Student visitor: Won an Earth Month contest through City of Austin Watershed Protection Dept.
 - Bill Schnell: 9 schools piloting something to help parents not drive alone. Will help mitigate impacts of all the transportation construction.

V: Elections

- Jeff Wacker introduced the co-chairs as 2-year terms and reviewed co-chair responsibilities. Jen is vacating one of the two co-chair positions.
- Jeff Wacker introduced one nomination for co-chair: Monique (Mo) Beacham (they/them)
- Darien Clary shared Mo's bio. Mo expressed their gratitude for the opportunity to serve and excitement for the role ahead.
- Members approved Mo as co-chair for SY 2024-25 & SY 2025-26.

VI: Awards and Peer Gratitude

- Jen Cregar shared the following recognition awards:
 - Dynamic Duo: Yasmine Anderson & Melody Alcazar
 - Clean Air Heroes: Eileen McGinnis & Nishtha Verma
 - Cycling Superstar: Bobby Sandoval
 - Perfect Attendance: many!
- Darien Clary shared the Three-Legged Stool award with Jen Cregar.
- Jen Cregar invited everyone to share peer gratitude by offering some lavender and a few words of appreciation with anyone they'd like.

VII: Reflection and Close

- Jeff Wacker expressed his gratitude for the group and reviewed the year's accomplishments.
- A Motion to end the meeting was made by Yasmine Anderson and the motion was seconded by Matthew Garland.
- Jeff Wacker closed the meeting at 7:31 pm.