

AISD PARENT SUPPORT SPECIALIST SURVEY DISTRICT-LEVEL REPORT 2011–2012

Overview

A survey was administered electronically in Spring 2012 to Austin Independent School District (AISD) parent support specialists (PSSs). In the survey, PSSs were asked to report the number of family involvement events that occurred at their school during the school year and the number of family members who attended. A total of 54 staff responded to the survey, representing 66 schools (i.e., 12 PSSs worked at two schools): 50 elementary, 10 middle, and six high schools. A few PSSs were not able to complete the survey. This report provides a district-level summary of all responses provided.

Outreach and Liaison to Families

PSSs reported activities related to conducting outreach and being a liaison to families. The summary of data reported for these activities and family members involved are reported in Table 1.

Table 1. Conducting Outreach and Being a Liaison to Families, by District and School Level

Activity	Level	Total number of activities	Average number of activities	Total number of family members involved	Average number of family members involved
Activities that link or refer families to service providers (e.g., school, district, community; social, health, academic)	District	6,549	99	44,798	679
	Elementary	5,985	119	36,444	729
	Middle	533	53	6,805	680
	High	31	5	1,549	258
Events with family resource centers; community groups; or associations (e.g., neighborhood associations, faith-based institutions, universities)	District	1,124	17	21,653	328
	Elementary	1,040	21	16,780	336
	Middle	71	7	4,714	471
	High	13	2	159	26
Home visits for Child Study Team process	District	1,794	7	1,668	25
	Elementary	1,429	28	1,401	28
	Middle	334	33	247	25
	High	31	5	20	3
Any additional home visits	District	3,415	52	3,663	55
	Elementary	2,991	59	3,348	67
	Middle	228	23	136	14
	High	196	33	179	29

Source. PSS Survey, 2011–2012

Classes or Workshops for Families

PSSs reported activities related to organizing, promoting, and conducting classes or workshops for families. Table 2 summarizes these types of activities.

Table 2. Organizing, Promoting, and Conducting Classes or Workshops for Families, by District and School Level

Activity	Level	Total number of activities	Average number of activities	Total number of family members involved	Average number of family members involved
Classes or workshops organized or presented for parents and/or families	District	2,688	41	45,044	682
	Elementary	2,078	41	37,550	751
	Middle	465	46	5,284	528
	High	145	24	2,210	368
Adult or family literacy classes or workshops	District	1,761	27	6,201	94
	Elementary	1,454	29	5,358	107
	Middle	209	21	718	72
	High	98	13	125	21
- Family members completing literacy classes	District			3,050	46
	Elementary			2,901	58
	Middle			112	11
	High			37	6
- Family members completing literacy classes and entered the workforce	District			188	3
	Elementary			148	3
	Middle			14	1
	High			26	4
Events or meetings in which information was provided to campus staff relating to parent involvement	District	327	5	8,571	130
	Elementary	273	5	7,056	141
	Middle	25	2	1,049	105
	High	29	5	466	78

Source. PSS Survey, 2011–2012

Classes or Workshops for Staff

PSSs reported activities related to organizing, promoting, and conducting classes or workshops for staff. Table 3 summarizes these activities.

Table 3. Organizing, Promoting, and Conducting Classes or Workshops for Staff, by District and School Level

Activity	Level	Total number of activities	Average number of activities	Total number of family members involved	Average number of family members involved
Events or meetings in which information was provided to campus staff relating to parent involvement	District	327	5	8,571	130
	Elementary	273	5	7,056	141
	Middle	25	2	1,049	105
	High	29	5	466	78

Source. PSS Survey, 2011–2012

Developing Parent Leaders

PSSs were asked to report activities relating to the development of parent leaders in their school. Results for these data are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4. Activities to Promote the Development of Parent Leaders, by District and School Level

Activity	Level	Total number of activities	Average number of activities	Total number of family members involved	Average number of family members involved
Parent-Teacher Association (PTA or PTSA)	District	793	12	29,785	451
	Elementary	664	13	23,415	468
	Middle	79	8	1,742	174
	High	50	8	4,628	771

Source. PSS Survey, 2011–2012

District Initiatives

AISD PSSs supported several district initiatives, and these activities are summarized in Table 5.

Table 5. Supporting District Initiatives, by District and School Level

Activity	Level	Total number of activities	Average number of activities	Total number of family members involved	Average number of family members involved
Transition activities that support families of students moving from elementary to middle to high to college or career	District	195	3	5,642	85
	Elementary	141	3	3,864	77
	Middle	36	4	1,404	140
	High	18	3	374	62
Coordinated Approach to Child Health (CATCH) activities	District	358	5	18,275	277
	Elementary	275	5	16,302	326
	Middle	48	4	1,761	176
	High	35	6	212	35
Parent Connection activities	District	196	3	1,861	28
	Elementary	119	2	1,161	23
	Middle	57	6	539	54
	High	20	3	161	27
Parenting with Love and Logic classes	District	237	3	1,322	20
	Elementary	181	4	1,007	20
	Middle	41	4	230	23
	High	15	2	85	14
Attendance awareness workshops	District	400	6	3,050	46
	Elementary	353	7	2,515	50
	Middle	22	2	333	33
	High	25	4	202	34
Social emotional learning, positive behavior support activities	District	419	6	2,369	36
	Elementary	345	7	1,475	29
	Middle	64	6	810	81
	High	10	2	84	14
Activities to support families of special education students	District	251	4	1,209	18
	Elementary	205	4	753	15
	Middle	40	4	188	19
	High	6	1	268	45

Source. PSS Survey, 2011–2012

Other Activities

PSSs responded to questions about their opportunities to be involved in other activities at their school. Table 6 summarizes this information for 2011–2012.

Table 6. Other Activities Involving Parent Support Specialists (PSSs), by District and School Level

Activity	Level	Strongly agree %	Agree %	Disagree %	Strongly disagree %
I was involved in reviewing and/or distributing our campus parent involvement policy and/or parent-school compact to parents.	District	44	35	15	6
	Elementary	44	36	14	6
	Middle	50	30	20	0
	High	33	33	17	17
I was involved in developing or reviewing my campus improvement plan (CIP).	District	35	35	24	6
	Elementary	36	36	20	8
	Middle	40	30	30	0
	High	17	33	50	0
I was involved in communicating to parents from my campus about the AISD district parent survey.	District	58	29	9	4
	Elementary	58	28	10	4
	Middle	70	20	0	10
	High	33	50	17	0

Source. PSS Survey, 2011–2012

School and Community Support for Parent and Family Involvement

PSSs were asked whether conditions existed in their school and vertical team that supported parent and family involvement activities. A summary of these results is presented in Table 7.

Table 7. School and Community Support for Parent and Family Involvement, by District and School Level

Support	Level	Strongly agree %	Agree %	Disagree %	Strongly disagree %
Title I schools only – I have input on how Title I funds for parent/family support are spent at my campus.	District	59	37	2	2
	Elementary	57	39	2	2
	Middle	60	40	0	0
	High	80	20	0	0
My school's staff supports family involvement activities.	District	51	44	5	0
	Elementary	52	42	6	0
	Middle	50	50	0	0
	High	50	50	0	0
Planning or meeting with my vertical team supports my work as a parent support specialist.	District	71	24	0	5
	Elementary	72	22	0	6
	Middle	90	10	0	0
	High	33	67	0	0

Source. PSS Survey, 2011–2012

Family Friendly School Environment

A new district parent support initiative implemented in 2011–2012 supported family friendly school environments, using tools developed from the Southwest Education Development Lab’s *Family Friendly School Environment and Practices Guide*. PSSs were asked six questions about their school’s support and collaboration to create a family-friendly environment. Table 8 summarizes PSSs’ responses to these questions. In addition, PSSs were asked to report information related to how the district’s *Family-Friendly School Environment and Practices Guide* was used. PSSs reported that the guide was distributed approximately 97 times, and a total of 1,876 people completed the guide’s campus rating form. When asked how useful the guide was, 36% of PSSs reported it was very useful, 52% indicated it was somewhat useful, and 12% did not think it was useful. PSSs also were asked how results from the completed guide were used at their school, and some of the following were mentioned: the process enabled parents to be involved; results were shared with staff, principal, and PTA members to plan school improvements; and changes were made to the school (e.g., improved signage, information used to improve customer service among staff).

Table 8. Support for Family-Friendly School Environment, by District and School Level

Family friendly characteristics	Level	High marks %	Getting there %	Needs work %	Needs lots of work %
The school looks welcoming from the outside: its name and entryway are clear to visitors.	District	62	30	8	0
	Elementary	68	26	6	0
	Middle	40	50	10	0
	High	50	33	17	0
There is parking for visitors.	District	42	24	21	12
	Elementary	42	26	20	12
	Middle	40	30	20	10
	High	50	0	33	17
School’s entry and halls are welcoming and have clear directions and signs for destinations.	District	45	44	9	2
	Elementary	46	48	4	2
	Middle	40	30	30	0
	High	50	33	17	0
Family members have an area to look at and pick up helpful resources.	District	70	23	3	4
	Elementary	70	24	4	2
	Middle	70	20	0	10
	High	67	17	0	17
Space is available for private conversations with parents and staff.	District	74	17	8	1
	Elementary	74	14	10	2
	Middle	90	10	0	0
	High	50	50	0	0
School shares information on parental involvement practices and opportunities.	District	74	23	3	0
	Elementary	74	24	2	0
	Middle	70	20	10	0
	High	83	17	0	0

Source. PSS Survey, 2011–2012

District Support for Parent and Family Involvement

In addition, PSSs were asked about support received from the district's Parent Support Office staff. Table 9 summarizes the PSSs' responses.

Table 9. Support from AISD's Parent Support Office Staff, by District and School Level

Support	Level	Strongly agree %	Agree %	Disagree %	Strongly disagree %
The AISD Parent Support Office staff has been responsive to and supportive of my work.	District	59	41	0	0
	Elementary	56	44	0	0
	Middle	70	30	0	0
	High	67	33	0	0
The staff development training sessions provided by the AISD Parent Support Office have been useful and relevant.	District	45	50	5	0
	Elementary	44	52	4	0
	Middle	60	40	0	0
	High	33	50	17	0

Source. PSS Survey, 2011–2012

Professional Development Opportunity Needs

To gauge the types of professional development opportunity support that PSSs need, they were asked to respond to several questions about whether they wanted professional development activities in the future on various training topics. Table 10 summarizes these results. In addition to those listed in the table, 24% of PSSs reported needs for the following specific professional development topics: local funding resources, district-allowed purchases, Excel and Word software, English as a second language (ESL), parental involvement strategies, communication with staff, and seeking community partners for grants.

Table 10. Parent Support Specialists’ Professional Development Opportunity Needs, by District and School Level

Professional development needs		Percentage of responses
Training about district initiatives (e.g., Love and Logic, attendance, PTA/PTSA)	District	38
	Elementary	40
	Middle	40
	High	17
Training about AISD or Title I budget supporting family involvement	District	30
	Elementary	28
	Middle	40
	High	33
Training about delivery of services (e.g., how to conduct a workshop, public speaking)	District	26
	Elementary	30
	Middle	10
	High	17
Training about technology resources and use	District	53
	Elementary	52
	Middle	50
	High	67
Tracking my work efforts (e.g., portfolio, reporting)	District	48
	Elementary	54
	Middle	50
	High	0
Gaining a better understanding about my major duties and key performance indicators	District	27
	Elementary	30
	Middle	20
	High	17
Talking to parents about End of Course exams and State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness	District	71
	Elementary	68
	Middle	80
	High	83

Source. PSS Survey, 2011–2012

Family and Parent Needs

PSSs were asked to report on topics or activities that parents and family members from their school requested. Table 11 summarizes the most commonly requested activities and topics, as reported by PSSs. In addition to the topics listed in the table, activities or topics reported by PSSs included ESL classes, General Educational Development (GED) classes, and computer classes; school-level transition; college awareness; and information about afterschool and summer activities for students.

Table 11. Topics or Activities Requested by Families and Parents, as Reported by Parent Support Specialists, by District and School Level

Topic or activity requested by parents or families	Percentage of responses	
Better communication	District	53
	Elementary	52
	Middle	60
	High	50
Better access to the school	District	26
	Elementary	28
	Middle	20
	High	17
Better access to the school staff	District	32
	Elementary	36
	Middle	20
	High	17
Language support (e.g., Spanish, Vietnamese)	District	33
	Elementary	30
	Middle	40
	High	50
Parenting classes	District	33
	Elementary	38
	Middle	30
	High	0
Attendance information	District	20
	Elementary	18
	Middle	40
	High	0
Special education information	District	38
	Elementary	36
	Middle	50
	High	33

Source. PSS Survey, 2011–2012

Working with Two Campuses

Twelve PSSs who worked at two campuses reported whether they felt their support to parents was equitable, adequate, or insufficient regarding schedule, home visits, and working with the Child Study Team. These results are summarized in Table 13. Although 75% of these PSSs said that overall they were able to provide adequate support to both campuses with which they worked, 25% indicated their support to both campuses was insufficient. PSSs served two campuses in one of the following combinations: two elementary schools, one elementary and one middle school, one elementary and one high school, and one middle and one high school.

Table 13. Support Ratings by Parent Support Specialists Who Worked at Two Schools, by District and School Level

Questions	Equitable %	Adequate %	Insufficient %
The weekly schedule for serving both campuses			
District	25	25	50
2 elementary	40	20	40
1 elementary and 1 middle	25	25	50
1 elementary and 1 high	0	50	50
1 middle and 1 high	0	0	100
The amount of home visits I conducted for both campuses			
District	33	50	17
2 elementary	20	40	40
1 elementary and 1 middle	50	50	0
1 elementary and 1 high	0	100	0
1 middle and 1 high	100	0	0
The amount of time spent working with the Child Study Team for each campus			
District	8	50	42
2 elementary	0	40	60
1 elementary and 1 middle	25	50	25
1 elementary and 1 high	0	100	0
1 middle and 1 high	0	0	100

Source. PSS Survey, 2011–2012

These PSSs were asked to comment about positive aspects of working with two campuses, as well as areas for improvement. PSSs reported several positive aspects of working with two campuses, including serving twice as many families, appreciating differences and similarities in serving families, and gaining new perspectives on how campuses sometimes operate differently. When asked about suggestions for improving parents' support for two campuses, several PSSs suggested improvements in scheduling so they could spend a longer period of time at a campus and reduce the amount of conflicting events or activities. In addition, one PSS said it would be helpful to provide better information to other campus staff about the time constraints involved in supporting two schools. Two PSSs indicated they preferred having one PSS per campus, as was the case in prior school years. Two PSSs indicated they would benefit from having more information and resources about available services at different school levels so they could serve more families.

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