

AISD PARENT SUPPORT SPECIALIST DISTRICT-LEVEL REPORT 2012–2013

Overview

Austin Independent School District (AISD) employed parent support specialists (PSSs) at 64 schools in 2012–2013.¹ An end-of-year report was administered electronically in Spring 2013 to the PSSs. In the online form, 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 58 staff responded to the report, representing 64 schools (i.e., seven PSSs worked at two schools): 48 elementary, 11 middle, and five high schools. Two PSSs did not complete the online report and two schools did not have a PSS employed at the time of the report. This research brief provides a district-level summary of all the 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 ² number of family members involved
Activities that link or refer families to service providers (e.g., school, district, community; social, health, academic)	District	3,598	55	47,829	736
	Elementary	3,031	63	35,061	730
	Middle	409	34	6,704	559
	High	158	32	6,064	1,212
Events with family resource centers; community groups; associations (e.g., neighborhood associations, faith-based institutions, universities)	District	1,365	21	28,055	432
	Elementary	1,089	23	18,201	379
	Middle	176	15	4,768	397
	High	100	20	5,086	1,017
Home visits for Child Study Team process ³	District	2,967	46	3,143	48
	Elementary	2,271	47	2,428	51
	Middle	529	44	533	44
	High	167	33	182	36
Any additional home visits ²	District	3,296	51	3,470	53
	Elementary	2,520	52	2,235	47
	Middle	674	56	1,151	96
	High	102	20	84	17

Source. *Parent Support Specialist Report, 2012–2013*

¹ AISD allocated PSS staff positions to Title I and Account for Learning schools.

² Average represented is by activity type by PSSs who responded.

³ The most common reason for home visits was for student attendance issues.

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	Average⁴ number of family members involved
Classes or workshops organized or presented for parents and/or families	District	2,021	31	19,444	299
	Elementary	1,465	30	16,483	343
	Middle	383	32	1,886	157
	High	173	35	1,075	215
Adult or family literacy classes or workshops	District	1,030	16	2,242	34
	Elementary	739	15	2,005	42
	Middle	156	13	177	15
	High	135	27	60	12
- Family members completed literacy classes	District	-	-	1,562	24
	Elementary	-	-	1,405	29
	Middle	-	-	123	10
	High	-	-	34	7
- Family members completed literacy classes and entered the workforce	District	-	-	242	4
	Elementary	-	-	199	4
	Middle	-	-	37	3
	High	-	-	6	1

Source. Parent Support Specialist Report, 2012–2013

⁴ Average represented is by activity type by PSSs who responded.

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	Average⁵ number of family members involved
Events or meetings in which information was provided to campus staff relating to parent involvement	District	310	5	7,182	110
	Elementary	258	5	6,068	126
	Middle	44	4	766	64
	High	8	2	348	70

Source. *Parent Support Specialist Report, 2012–2013*

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	790	12	22,618	348
	Elementary	635	13	19,889	414
	Middle	116	10	1,385	115
	High	39	8	1,344	269
Austin Council of Parent-Teacher Association (ACPTA) vertical team meetings with principals and PTA members ⁶	District	223	3	585	9
	Elementary	162	3	454	9
	Middle	39	3	69	6
	High	22	4	62	12

Source. *Parent Support Specialist Report, 2012–2013*

⁵ Average represented is by activity type by PSSs who responded.

⁶ Only PSSs from Title I schools and Account for Learning schools reported this information, thus it does not represent ACPTA participation across AISD.

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	Average⁷ number of family members involved
Transition activities that support families of students moving from elementary to middle to high to college or career	District	201	3	7,366	113
	Elementary	132	3	4,066	85
	Middle	40	3	2,053	171
	High	29	6	1,247	249
Coordinated Approach to Child Health (CATCH) activities	District	1,804	28	10,313	159
	Elementary	1,753	36	9,035	188
	Middle	21	2	1,157	96
	High	30	6	121	24
Parent Connection, Gradespeed, Parent Cloud activities	District	281	4	1,381	21
	Elementary	144	3	794	16
	Middle	79	7	473	39
	High	58	12	114	23
Parenting with Love and Logic classes	District	109	2	539	8
	Elementary	76	2	393	8
	Middle	10	1	81	7
	High	23	5	65	13
Attendance awareness workshops	District	296	5	2,822	43
	Elementary	165	3	1,297	27
	Middle	33	3	644	54
	High	98	20	881	176
Dual language program activities (elementary only)	District	121	2	2,934	45
	Elementary	120	2	2,924	61
	Middle	1	< 1	10	1
	High	-	-	-	-
Activities to support families of special education students	District	241	4	3,954	61
	Elementary	154	3	3,212	67
	Middle	60	5	650	54
	High	27	5	92	18

Source. Parent Support Specialist Report, 2012–2013

⁷ Average represented is by activity type by PSSs who responded.

Title I Support for Parent and Family Involvement

PSSs at Title I schools only were asked whether they had input on how Title I funds were used to support parent and family involvement activities. A summary of these results is presented in Table 6.

Table 6. 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	43	46	8	3
	Elementary	43	46	6	4
	Middle	42	42	16	0
	High	33	67	0	0

Source. *Parent Support Specialist Report, 2012–2013*

Family Friendly School Environment

A district parent support initiative implemented in 2011–2012 was still in place in 2012–2013. This initiative 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 to report information related to how the district's *Family-Friendly School Environment and Practices Guide* was used. During 2012–2013, only the Environment portion of the guide had been implemented. Sixty-eight percent of PSSs reported that the guide was used during the year, with approximately 1,919 people (i.e., parents, staff, and community members) across the district completing the guide's campus rating form. When asked how useful the guide was to their work, 36% of PSSs reported it was very useful, 62% indicated it was somewhat useful, and 2% 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: reviewing the results with school administrators, making plans for improving the welcoming environment of the school, and offering more workshops and events for parents.

District Support for Parent and Family Involvement

PSSs' responses about support from AISD's Parent Support Office staff are summarized in Table 7.

Table 7. 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	53	47	0	0
	Elementary	45	55	0	0
	Middle	20	80	0	0
	High	20	80	0	0
The staff development training sessions provided by the AISD Parent Support Office have been useful and relevant.	District	52	48	0	0
	Elementary	45	55	0	0
	Middle	30	70	0	0
	High	20	80	0	0

Source. *Parent Support Specialist Report, 2012–2013*

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 8 summarizes these results.

Table 8. Parent Support Specialists’ (PSSs) Professional Development Needs, by District and School Level

Professional development needs	Level	Percentage
District initiatives (e.g., Parenting with Love and Logic, attendance)	District	35
	Elementary	30
	Middle	42
	High	0
District, campus, or Title I budget to support family involvement	District	35
	Elementary	30
	Middle	42
	High	17
Delivery of services (e.g., how to conduct a workshop)	District	28
	Elementary	24
	Middle	17
	High	17
Technology resources and use	District	67
	Elementary	59
	Middle	58
	High	50
Tracking my work efforts (e.g., portfolio, reporting, organization)	District	33
	Elementary	29
	Middle	33
	High	17
Gaining a better understanding about PSS major duties	District	26
	Elementary	23
	Middle	33
	High	0
Talking to parents about End of Course (EOC) exams and State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR)	District	57
	Elementary	50
	Middle	50
	High	67
Talking to parents about graduation requirements	District	28
	Elementary	24
	Middle	25
	High	17

Source. Parent Support Specialist Report, 2012–2013

Family and Parent Needs

Table 9 summarizes PSSs' reported information topics that parents from their schools requested.

Table 9. Topics or Activities Requested by Families and Parents, as Reported by Parent Support Specialists (PSSs), by District and School Level

Family requested topic or activity	Level	Percentage
Better communication with school staff	District	74
	Elementary	77
	Middle	75
	High	50
Better access to school staff	District	50
	Elementary	48
	Middle	75
	High	17
Language support (e.g., Spanish, Vietnamese)	District	59
	Elementary	52
	Middle	92
	High	50
Parenting skills classes	District	61
	Elementary	62
	Middle	67
	High	33
Attendance information	District	45
	Elementary	37
	Middle	67
	High	67
Special education information	District	42
	Elementary	33
	Middle	67
	High	67
Gifted/talented information	District	29
	Elementary	33
	Middle	8
	High	33
Achievement test information	District	61
	Elementary	58
	Middle	67
	High	67
Graduation requirements information	District	21
	Elementary	10
	Middle	33
	High	83
College and career information	District	42
	Elementary	35
	Middle	50
	High	83

Source. Parent Support Specialist Report, 2012–2013

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