



Chambers of Commerce Position Statement

Adopted June 24, 2010 by Austin Chamber of Commerce Board

Endorsed by:

Capital City African-American Chamber of Commerce

Austin Asian American Chamber of Commerce

The Austin Chamber of Commerce has been pleased with the direction of Austin ISD. The Board of Trustees conducted a strong and successful search, unanimously hired a top-notch superintendent, created a five-year strategic plan with annual quantifiable metrics, reduced central administration by 30 percent and reduced its deficit spending.

Austin ISD is rated #1 or #2 among urban school districts in math and science on the Nation's Report Card. Austin ISD's college/career readiness rates continue to improve. 2010 TAKS passing rates have increased. The district embarked on its first facilities master plan, created greater budget transparency, and district leaders have continued support for pilot strategic compensation.

To build upon these strengths, the Austin Chamber of Commerce strongly encourages the Austin ISD Board of Trustees to take the following actions:

- **Accomplish district strategic plan and East Austin schools plan.** In December, Trustees unanimously approved a strategic plan. That plan calls for 90 percent of the Class of 2014 (today's rising ninth graders) to graduate, 77 percent of the Class of 2014 to enroll in postsecondary education, and more than 90 percent of students enrolled in the district for at least three years to be on grade level by 2015. Recently, Trustees approved specific strategies to improve East Austin school performance.

Trustees should continue to stand behind these decisions and continue to take the increasingly difficult steps necessary to ensure that students receive the educators they need to succeed and that instructional teams receive the management support they need to meet the district's goals.

- **Balance FY11 budget, cut spending further to focus on reallocation.** Trustees have reduced Austin ISD's annualized deficit from \$21 million to a projected \$7 million. Trustees should balance the FY 11 budget as a sign of sound fiscal stewardship. Additionally, to meet the strategic plan's goals, the Board and Administration will need to cut deeper into existing spending so they can reallocate spending to high-priority items in their strategic plan.

For example, 74 percent of the class of 2008 graduated high school and, of those, 50 percent graduated prepared for college and the high performance workplace. These are just two examples of areas that require immediate attention and additional resources if the district is to reach its goals.