



Greater Austin Hispanic  
Chamber of Commerce  
*Expanding Business Culture*

# The Greater Austin Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

## Position Statement

Trustees of Austin Independent School District:

Recent statistics demonstrate what you and your teaching professionals work with every day: Nearly 60% of the students at AISD identify as Hispanics. That figure is staggering – especially for those of us who were born and raised in Austin or have lived here for many years – the demographic changes are dramatic. The Greater Austin Hispanic Chamber is calling upon you tonight to consider these children as you make decisions about the 2010-2011 budget. They are a growing portion of our student body at AISD and they present a challenge to your ability to succeed in educating them.

You have the most daunting job in our region: leading a growing school district that is critical to our economic well being and quality of life. We would ask the following of you as leaders of a district in one of the greatest cities in the country that is only projecting to experience further growth:

- Please adhere to your strategic plan. There are many critical goals in the plan and voters will be more trusting and supportive of a district that stays true to its goals.
- Please demonstrate further efficiencies before seeking a tax increase. The economy is still recovering from the greatest and deepest recession of our lifetime. AISD is faced with potential shortfalls in tax revenue due to dropping property valuations. We look to the District to implement strategic solutions that demonstrate true stewardship to the voters in these tough economic times.
- Limit your use of the reserve fund. Dipping into reserves too frequently or too deeply will only hurt our future options.
- Continue the positive changes, including the increased transparency, higher graduation rates for all students and especially your initiatives regarding East Austin, the pre-K Program and underrepresented students.
- Aggressively pursue funding from external sources, such as federal funding for teacher support so we may equitably compensate our teachers.

We are heartened by the District's improvement in college and career readiness rates along with its strong ratings in math and science on the Nation's Report Card. Progress is indeed being made across many fronts, but unfortunately, many challenges still lie ahead. These challenges call for creative solutions as described in the strategic plan to positively impact all of the students within the District.



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Therefore, we recommend that the District commit unwaveringly to the pursuit of their strategic plan; to adhere to their goals, for example, to drive educational equity to all segments of the student body by providing accomplished teachers, especially in underperforming schools. We understand that this type of focus and leadership commitment calls for difficult and hands-on decisions by the District leadership, but our children deserve nothing less.

We fully recognize that by issuing this public statement, we are also expecting to hold ourselves accountable to being visible and supportive as you make the difficult decisions that lie ahead. Thank you for all that you do for all of our children and for the future viability of our economy.

Sincerely,

Andrew Martinez

President, CEO

Greater Austin Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

Pilar Sanchez

Board Chair

Greater Austin Hispanic Chamber of Commerce