



HousingWorks
AUSTIN

Housing Works for Schools Summit **A PLACE TO DO HOMEWORK:** (Housing + Schools) x Planning = Community Success

2008 Summit Report Executive Summary

More than 100 concerned citizens gathered on Saturday, November 15, 2008 to explore the intersections between school success, housing, and neighborhoods. Recommendations were discussed, and a diverse group of stakeholders agreed to actions that will move Austin forward in promoting educational and housing neighborhood stability.

Below are the recommendations that were developed from the 2008 Summit. These recommendations, some borrowed from the City of Austin's Families and Children's Task Force and from AISD's Community Committee on Neighborhoods and Schools, others originating with HousingWorks' 2007 Summit, and others added by stakeholder participants during the 2008 Summit, provide the framework for moving forward on housing and education issues.

1. Use Planning Tools for Housing and Schools to Improve Student Success

- **Encourage leadership from the Joint Subcommittee of AISD, City, and Travis County.** The elected official subcommittee needs to be more engaged and active. Elected leaders should direct their respective staff to meet jointly and advise them how to better integrate and coordinate housing and schools planning.
- **Use Educational Impact Assessments.** The City and AISD should develop and use an assessment tool where each can jointly identify and evaluate the educational impact of building code changes and larger-scale developments on school performance. Each should devise strategies for how elected officials, city staff, and citizen boards and commissions would use assessment tools as a planning tool at multiple levels. The tool should be used to help ensure a diversity of housing types is available within close proximity to all schools. The assessment tool should be developed early so they are not perceived as an impediment, and guard against unintended consequences that might result because of lack of information.
- **Share Use of Facilities for Multiple Purposes (using Pickle, Overton, and the new Performing Arts Center as examples).** Explore 1) ways that schools operating under capacity can be used more effectively and productively; and 2) how new facilities can be

jointly planned to allow for a range of housing options and multi-functional school uses (for example, housing and school development and planning in Colony Park).

- **Support School Campus and Nonprofit Partnerships.** Explore ways that the City's housing department and AISD can create incentives and policies that encourage greater collaboration between individual schools and housing nonprofits e.g., creating a "Family Housing Stability" rental assistance program (City of Austin) or a Targeted Supportive School Services to Program Participants (AISD).
- **Coordinate City and AISD Comprehensive Planning.** Use planning documents to strengthen housing and education linkages. AISD should be an active and integral partner in creating the City's Comprehensive Plan and Housing Consolidated Plan; the City should be an integral planning partner in AISD's strategic plan and master facilities plan; and planning at multiple levels will better diversify housing types properly linked with schools.

2. Collaborate to Support Successful After School Programs

- **Develop a Comprehensive Strategic Plan for Youth** that includes criteria for the following: How many children will be school ready; How many will receive school services; How many will attend after school programs; How many will graduate from high school; Identifies financial resources for after school programs; Identifies measurable criteria to determine which after school services/programs are effective; Improves coordination of all programs so that one school is not over-served while another is underserved; and incorporates use of non-school facilities, especially housing and neighborhood facilities, for after school programs.
- **Standardize After School Programming Performance Metrics.** A small set of measurable standards are needed for all after school programs as part of the strategic plan for our youth. Evaluators have pointed to a handful of measurements: Attendance, school behavior, promotion from one grade to the next, and TAKS scores. All funded services should be held accountable to the same measures. If the program is not meeting those measures, there should be a way to alert service providers when a child is failing or not attending so that appropriate remedies and supports can be put in place.
- **Increase After School Program Funding.** Funding would be evaluated as part of a strategic plan; however, it merits explicit mention because it is estimated that about 40,000 students who should be served by an after school program are not served. We know that participation in an after school program has a very high bearing on student success. Therefore, a hard look at the funding question is needed. For example, would funds from crime prevention be better used for after school programs? The long term savings of keeping students in school are potentially significant.

Summit Conclusions and Next Steps

Summit Participants agreed to take specific actions. Those representing entities such as HousingWorks, city departments (Neighborhood Zoning & Planning and Neighborhood Housing and Development Office), the Housing Authority of the City of Austin, and others made commitments to follow through on a variety of areas. HousingWorks agreed to encourage policy makers to provide directives and to create the institutional will to move forward.

A plan for integrated planning, such a comprehensive city wide plan (which is currently being undertaken by the City of Austin), is important to both housing and education. Completing a comprehensive city wide plan provides another chance to involve more, educate more, and build on existing recommendations and successes.

At the conclusion of the 2008 Summit, City of Austin, AISD, and HousingWorks all committed to collaborate and to enlist key policy makers (City Council, County Commissioners, and AISD Board) to move forward with joint planning efforts and increase after school programs with successful performance measurements. The aim of these efforts is to establish a common understanding of trends facing Austin and the broader metropolitan area so that Boards and Commissions may adjust their 2009-2010 workplans to better address the area's critical needs, and to enhance learning possibilities for all children.

HousingWorks committed to the following:

- Reconvene the entities in six months for a status report.
- Coordinate and maintain on-going work groups.
- Identify and communicate with elected leaders to create mandates.

The City of Austin representatives committed to the following:

- Convene with AISD for dialogue.
- Include discussion of recommendations from reports.
- Explore using educational impact as a tool for planning and identify ways to move forward on this.
- Coordinate more with the Community Development Commission to make housing a priority.

AISD representatives committed to the following:

- Voice its commitment to the concepts discussed at the Summit.
- Continue and more regularly partner with the City.
- Consider the community's input.