

AUSTIN DISTRICT/CHARTER COMPACT: An Education Collaboration in Austin, TX

Austin, Texas is a city of unique character, with a prime location and business-friendly outlook. It is one of the fastest growing cities in the United States and has more than doubled in size in the last 20 years. It is home to successful businesses including Dell Computers, Freescale Semiconductor and Whole Foods Market to name a few. The City prides itself on being innovative, open-minded and entrepreneurial. To maintain such a climate, Austin's education system must be able to keep pace with the increasing needs of the business community. This goal can be accomplished by providing high-quality instruction and academic options that will allow all students to graduate from high-school ready for college, career and life.

To meet the needs of all students and accelerate achievement through educational innovation, the Austin Independent School District ("AISD" or "District") and the Austin area partner public charter schools ("Charters") have come together to share ideas, resources and infrastructure as a way to ensure that all students have viable educational options. The strained financial landscape in Texas, along with the increasingly high academic standards expected in schools, have encouraged partnerships that create both positive impacts in academic effectiveness along with financial and operational efficiencies. Schools are trying to do more with less, to keep pace with societal needs and require partners to help maximize options to address every child's needs. Schools must be creative and become more solution-oriented. It is in that spirit that the District/Charter Collaboration Compact ("the Compact") will be cutting-edge and beneficial.

Due to the alignment of our shared student-centered philosophies, the collaboration of AISD and Charters is innovative and constructive. The mission of AISD is to partner with parents and the community to provide a comprehensive educational experience that is high quality, challenging and inspirational in encouraging children to make a positive contribution to society. Similarly, the mission of the Texas Charter Schools Association and its member schools is to accelerate student achievement in Texas by empowering a diverse mix of highly effective educational options for students and families.

This Compact represents an unprecedented public commitment on the part of AISD and Charters to work together in a spirit of innovation and stewardship to ensure that all students benefit from the promise of Austin.

I. Joint Commitments Regarding Student Achievement, Human Capital, Financial Stewardship, and Collaborative Leadership and Problem Solving

District and Charter leaders in Austin agree that they have a collective obligation to ensure that all students in the City graduate from high school prepared to succeed in college, career and life. Having closely considered the myriad of current and potential challenges and opportunities, District and Charter leadership embrace and commit to accelerate progress towards higher academic standards and to be good stewards of public funds by collaborating in the following areas: 1.) Student Achievement through Teaching and Learning; 2.) Human Capital; 3.) Maximizing Resources; and 4.) Collaborative Leadership and Problem Solving.

- A. **Student Achievement through Teaching and Learning**- District and Charter leaders will research a wide array of school reform models and best practices designed to enhance the academic success of area students. These could include, but are not limited to, the development of in-district charters focused on college-preparation and/or alternative education. Key to student achievement will be the sharing of best practices and expertise around curriculum and pedagogy in the areas of science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM), dual language immersion, social and emotional learning (SEL), Early College High School and dual credit offerings, effective strategies for English Language Learners (ELL) and special education students, early warning systems for at-risk students, as well as alignment of curriculum to new state standards and accountability measures. As Texas transitions from the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) to the State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR) the District and Charters can collaborate on aligning curriculum and benchmark assessments to the rigorous college readiness standards found in STAAR and End of Course Exams (EOCs).
- B. **Enhancing Human Capital** – Through a Compact the signatories we will develop efficiencies in joint recruitment and retention of teachers and campus leadership. This will include the sharing of effective practices used by collaborating partners such as strategic compensation programs, use of value added data, and innovative teacher appraisal systems.

The Compact will also drive the development of a *Teacher/School Leader Training Institute* that will create opportunities to train teacher and school leaders in effective urban education practices. Training highly effective teachers and school leaders to positively impact high-needs students will bolster student achievement and help ensure college, career, and life readiness. The Compact expects that the training Institute will produce quality teachers and school leaders ready to serve in historically underserved areas of the city. Using national models, the components of the program will address the need to attract, develop and retain high impact teachers and school leaders and build a robust human capital pipeline in Austin.

The goal of the Institute will be to empower teachers and leaders as “change agents” who elevate school standards and expectations, motivate others, implement curriculum

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changes and make lasting improvements at the classroom, school and community levels. The program will significantly increase the number of highly-effective teachers available to Compact members, aid in the retention of those teachers, and lead to increased student achievement.

- C. **Maximizing Resources** – In addition to providing the best possible educational opportunities for area students and families, the Compact will define and enhance efficiencies in the use of scarce public dollars. This may include joint facilities access at reasonable fees; shared services contracts (e.g. special education, transportation, food service, landscaping, counseling, nursing, etc.); and collaborative pursuit of state/federal and private grant funding.

Resources and efficiencies afforded to the District due to the economies of scale would increase efficiency and effectiveness, as well as buying power for both Charters and the District. The Compact will allow Charters to partner in contracts for purchasing supplies, products, and services.

The Compact would also target collaboration in college enrollment activities such as college information days, college tours, SAT preparation, FAFSA assistance, college signing days, and sharing of best practices in college attainment and persistence.

- D. **Collaborative Leadership and Problem Solving** - The foundation of an efficient, effective, and sustainable compact must be solid. To move the Compact forward, a Compact Leadership Group (CLG) will be assembled to guide and oversee the creation and development of the Compact to ensure its success. The first step in assuring that a collaborative compact be successful in Austin is to create structures for building relationships, sharing information, progress monitoring, and goal setting.

The CLG will be responsible for convening regular meetings and setting agendas for these purposes. The CLG will appoint subcommittees in priority areas as appropriate, and take the lead in maintaining accountability and transparency through regular updates and reports to the District and Charters. The CLG will develop metrics to identify key measures of success. The CLG will develop a shared message to all stakeholders, and communicate progress on Compact projects.

In addition to the CLG, the compact seeks to establish a Board Leadership Advisory Group made up of representative District and Charter board members, who will come together at least once a year under the auspices of the Texas High School Project. This annual meeting will be designed to 1.) share national best practices through dialogue with national experts and other cutting-edge district leaders, 2.) prepare updates on Compact projects, and 3.) monitor of progress toward targeted compact goals.

II. District Commitment

District leaders agree to support the success of public school students in Austin by:

- a. Actively sharing best practices to scale-up successful programs and build capacity to serve all types of students;
- b. Advocating the removal of obstacles and barriers that hinder the other's success; and honoring the roles that each organization plays in the State's framework for providing the best public education possible to all students;
- c. Enhancing human capital through sharing teacher quality practices, and the development of a teacher/leader training program;
- d. Maximizing resources by leveraging, where possible, taxpayer dollars to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of services provided to students and families; ensuring transparency regarding academic, operational and financial outcomes;
- e. Participating in structures for collaborative leadership and problem solving through a Compact Leadership Group (CLP) and a Board Leadership Advisory Group hosted annually by the Texas High School Project.

III. Charter Commitment

Charter school leaders agree to support the success of public school students and fulfill their roles as laboratories for innovation and as providers of high-quality education options in Austin by:

- a. Serving all types of students, including students requiring special education services; students who are English Language Learners; and students in other underserved and at-risk groups;
- b. Ensuring transparency regarding student mobility and achievement, particularly college readiness, including publicly tracking and reporting these data
- c. Actively sharing best practices to scale-up successful programs and build capacity to serve all types of students;
- d. Advocating the removal of obstacles and barriers that hinder the other's success; and honoring the roles that each organization plays in the State's framework for providing the best public education possible to all students;
- e. Enhancing human capital through sharing teacher quality practices, and the development of a teacher/leader training program;
- f. Participating in structures for collaborative leadership and problem solving through a Compact Leadership Group (CLP) and a Board Leadership Advisory Group hosted annually by the Texas High School Project.

Proposed Timeline for Implementation

		<u>Q4 2011</u>	<u>Q1 2012</u>	<u>Q2 2012</u>	<u>Q3 2012</u>	<u>Q4 2012</u>	<u>2013</u>
Student Achievement Through Teaching and Learning	Key Actions	District determines viability of an in-district charter partnership	Create list of best practices to be shared; Design process to work together on recruiting high quality staff; Finalize possible in-district charter MOU	Begin process of sharing best academic practices	Execute on-going process to share best practices	Hold District Charter Academic Summit	Pursue joint staff development opportunities
	Deliverables	District determines in-district	In-district charter contract; Joint recruiting process document	Joint recruiting events and process			Possible opening of proposed first in-district charter school
Human Capital	Key Actions	Research best practice examples; Gauge interest from community and funding partners	Execute pilot of joint staff recruiting for 2012-2013; Engage consultant to assist with detailed project scope and plan	Formalize community and funding partnerships	Monitor and manage progress	Monitor and manage progress	Monitor and manage progress; Launch possible pilot programs
	Deliverables	Concept paper	Project plan and budget	Project plans and budgets with funding and partners identified	Progress report	Progress report	Progress report
	Key Actions	Identify AISD timeline for shared services processes; Finalize proposed facilities master planning AFRs;	Understand charter needs and design process for in-district charter application	Develop process and pricing for charters; Pilot first pooled shared service	Continue rolling through shared services as they come due for AISD RFP	Continue rolling through shared services as they come due for AISD RFP	Continue rolling through shared services as they come due for AISD RFP

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Maximizing Resources		Identify possible grant opportunities	for building usage	bidding process			
	Deliverables	AISD RFP calendar; AISD Facilities Master Plan for 2012-2013	Propose process for pooling and bidding; First in-district charter contract	Progress report	Progress report	Progress report	Year 1 summary report and public communication of compact financial impact
Collaborative Leadership and Problem Solving	Key Actions	Identify and recruit members of Compact Leadership Group (CLG); Develop common language to describe compact	Convene first meeting of CLG and orient new members to the compact; Begin building broader support for compact	Review and approve detailed project plans	Define areas of common interest for legislative session Monitor and manage progress	Convene Board Leadership Advisory Group Monitor and manage progress	Execute legislative strategies Measure first year results Assess new opportunities
	Deliverables	Create CLG structure, members, and high level 'rules'; Communications materials and plan	Baseline measures and success goals	Formal adoption of initiatives	Joint legislative priorities and strategies; Subcommittee progress reports	Subcommittee progress reports	Year 1 summary report and public communication of compact impact

IV. Signatures

We, the undersigned, agree to the terms of the Compact.

_____ Date _____
Meria Carstarphen, Superintendent
Austin Independent School District

_____ Date _____
Mark Williams, Board President
Austin Independent School District

_____ Date _____
John Wilson, Chairman of the Board
Eden Park Academy

_____ Date _____
Ramazan Coskuner, Austin Cluster Superintendent
Harmony Public Schools

_____ Date _____
Tom Torkelson, Founder and CEO
IDEA Public Schools

_____ Date _____
Mike Rhodes, Chairman of the Board
IDEA Public Schools

_____ Date _____
Steven Epstein, Interim CEO
KIPP Austin

_____ Date _____
Jack Cardwell, Chairman of the Board
KIPP Austin

_____ Date _____
Kathleen Zimmermann, Executive Director
NYOS Public Schools

_____ Date _____
Chuck Cook, CEO
Responsive Educational Solutions

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_____ Date _____
Marvin Reynolds, Board President
Responsive Educational Solutions

_____ Date _____
William Powers Jr., President
University of Texas-Austin

_____ Date _____
Melissa Chavez, Executive Director
UT Elementary School, University of Texas-Austin

_____ Date _____
Joe Gonzales, Superintendent
East Austin College Preparatory