

# **The Austin Blueprint: Improving Student Achievement in Under- Performing Schools**

**The Austin Independent School District  
Austin, Texas**

**<http://www.austin.isd.tenet.edu>**

**Pascal D. Forgione, Jr., Ph. D., Superintendent**

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# **AISD: Who are we?**

- ◆ **103 regular campuses**
  - 74 elementary schools
  - 17 middle schools
  - 12 high schools
- ◆ **5400 classroom teachers**
- ◆ **80,000 students**
  - 53% Hispanic
  - 14% African American
  - 33% White
  - 56% Poverty
  - 20% English Language Learners

# **AISD Board Directive**

**On February 26, 2002, the AISD Board of Trustees directed the Superintendent, Dr. Pat Forgione, to develop a plan to address chronically low performing and underachieving schools beginning with the 2002 –2003 school year.**

# **AISD's Blueprint Schools Initiative – Fall, 2002**

- ◆ **The superintendent identified the four neediest elementary and two neediest middle schools to be included in the Blueprint Schools Initiative.**

## **Student Demographics:**

- **93% - 99% Minority**
- **80+% Low Income**

# Components of the Austin Blueprint

- 1. Guaranteed improved student achievement to meet rigorous state standards.**
- 2. More time for Reading, Writing, Grammar, and Math every day for every child.**
- 3. Required, rigorous, and proven curricula in Mathematics, Reading and Writing.**
- 4. Every new teacher with at least two years' experience. All teachers certified in the subjects they are teaching.**
- 5. Required, targeted training – including 10 additional days – and on-going support for teachers.**
- 6. Strong, experienced principals under the direction of a Master Principal.**
- 7. Frequent assessment of students and immediate interventions.**
- 8. Enhanced technology to monitor and improve student achievement.**
- 9. Partnerships with parents and community to assure student success.**
- 10. Signed compacts with principals, teachers, parents, and students.**

# Blueprint Progress: State Assessments

- ◆ **All Blueprint schools demonstrated gains, when comparing TAKS 2003 to TAKS 2004.**

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Gain</b>
<b>Reading</b>	<b>Up to 21 percentage points</b>
<b>Math</b>	<b>Up to 29 percentage points</b>
<b>Writing</b>	<b>Up to 28 percentage points</b>
<b>Science</b>	<b>Up to 22 percentage points</b>

# **No Child Left Behind Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)**

- ◆ **Under the new accountability standards of the No Child Left Behind federal education reform legislation, all Blueprint Schools met the AYP for performance in Reading and Math in 2003.**

# Lessons Learned

- ◆ **The power of synergy:  
Changing the paradigm  
of principals working in isolation  
to that of principals working as a  
team with a focused leader.**

# Lessons Learned

**The positive impact of implementing consistent systems, structures, and supports through:**

- ◆ ➤ **Curriculum aligned to state standards**
- ◆ ➤ **Focused instruction with instructional planning guides**
- ◆ ➤ **Explicit use of time for core instruction**
- ◆ ➤ **Intensive, targeted training**

# Lessons Learned (cont.)

- **Frequent assessment and immediate interventions**
- **Non-negotiables for principals, teachers and students**
- **Partnerships with parents and community**

# Critical Questions

- 1. How can we best use research to determine what has been most effective in the improvement of student achievement? What kinds of data would help us understand what's most effective and why?**
- 2. Are our hypotheses based on the first implementation of the Blueprint provable based on data?**

# Critical Questions

- 3. How do we compare results of Blueprint intervention to the District's initiatives in other similar schools in order to judge Blueprint effectiveness?**
- 4. How can research help us understand the fidelity of the implementation and the variability in outcomes based on that fidelity?**
- 5. How do you tie outcome data to the contextual variables of schools in order to understand what is most effective in raising student achievement?**

# Critical Questions

- 6. Given budgetary limits, how do we determine which of the components are most important to replicate in other under-performing schools?**
- 7. How can we put into place a more powerful research method to enable us to have more confidence in the implications and effectiveness of our initiative?**

# The Role of Research

**Given budget constraints, federal, state and local mandates for ongoing performance data, and the need to maximize dollars going directly to the classroom, school districts are ill-equipped to undertake long-term, deep research on the permutations of school practices and their effectiveness in meeting varying student needs. Independent, well-planned research programs tied to school practices could play a very important role in the future success of public schools.**