



COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

AFRICAN AMERICAN RESOURCE ADVISORY COMMISSION

Recommendation Number: 20200504-03ci: Support for Human Rights Commission Recommendation 20191125-003b: Race and Equity Within Austin Independent School District's Closures and Consolidation Plan

WHEREAS, the African American Resource Advisory Commission (the "Commission") is authorized by Austin City Code § 2-1-101 to advise the City Council on issues related to the quality of life for the City's African American community; and

WHEREAS, the Commission is specifically authorized to recommend programs designed to alleviate any inequities that may confront African Americans in social, economic, and vocational pursuits, including (1) health care; (2) housing, including affordable housing, home ownership, and homelessness; (3) entertainment opportunities for professionals and students; (4) employment; and (5) cultural venues, including museums, theaters, art galleries, and music venues; and

WHEREAS, on Tuesday, January 7th the African American Resource Advisory Commission received a presentation from the Human Rights Commission which identified actions that could be taken by the City of Austin to address the inequities caused by the actions of the Austin Independent School District as a result of the Board of Trustees vote on school closures on November 18, 2019; and

WHEREAS, on November 18, 2019, the Austin Independent School District Board of Trustees approved (in a 6-3 vote) a plan to close, consolidate and repurpose four elementary school campuses: Brooke Elementary School, Metz Elementary School, Pease Elementary School and Sims Elementary School; and

WHEREAS, Brooke E.S., Metz E.S., and Sims E.S. (3 out of the 4 schools that were approved for closure that reside within the city's historically segregated East Austin neighborhoods; and

WHEREAS, nearly 95% of the students at Brooke E.S., Metz E.S., and Sims E.S. campuses identify as being either Hispanic and/or African American students, and nearly 90% or more of the students at each of these campuses identify as being economically disadvantaged

WHEREAS, 51.3% of all AISD Students are at risk, 53.4% Economically disadvantaged and 27.5%; and

WHEREAS, Sims Elementary School has 59.8% of students are considered at risk of dropping out of school and 29.9% of students enrolled in bilingual and English language learning programs. Above average.

WHEREAS, Metz Elementary School has 71.2% of students are considered at risk of dropping out of school and 41.4% of students were enrolled in bilingual and English language learning programs. Above average; and

WHEREAS, particularly communities of color, and communities in East Austin, have been vocal about their mistrust of Austin ISD due to its history of segregation, discrimination, and a lack of robust and authentic community engagement; and

WHEREAS, the Austin ISD Chief Equity Officer, Dr. Stephanie Hawley, stated moments before the Board of Trustees decision to approve the 'School Changes': Closures and Consolidations plan that, "...the map that you have of the [school] closures, is a map of what 21st Century racism looks like...", "Our process for selecting schools was flawed and it was inequitable...", and "I can't find any documentation of how those selections were made, and I talked to all of our staff."; and

WHEREAS, data from Census 2020 will show updated and useful in making informed decisions. **WHEREAS**, Austin City Council Members Natasha Harper-Madison, Leslie Pool, and Kathie Tovo all publicly joined forces with other state representatives, county commissioners and local community leaders by asking Austin ISD to postpone its vote for more consideration;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED,

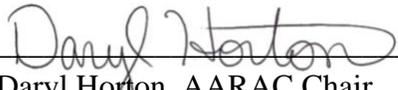
THAT THE AFRICAN AMERICAN RESOURCE ADVISORY COMMISSION, IN SUPPORT OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION, RECOMMENDS THAT THE CITY COUNCIL REVIEW AND ACCEPT THE PROPOSED ACTIONS AND SUPPORT THEIR VISION AND EFFORT TO DEVELOP A COMMUNITY THAT INTENTIONALLY SUPPORTS AND PROVIDES EQUITABLE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL STUDENTS AND FAMILIES AROUND EDUCATION.

Date of Approval: May 4, 2020

Record of the vote: 8-0 vote (Commissioner Daryl Horton, Miriam Conner, Nelson Linder, Greg Smith, Elaina Fowler, Dr. Chiquita Eugene, Clifford Gillard, and Cherrille VanBrakle) Commissioner Rashida Wright did not vote.

Absent: Volma Overton, III, Elton Randal, Ellen Sweets, Aaliyah Nobles, and Tam Hawkins

I affirm this recommendation was approved by the African American Resource Advisory Commission.


Daryl Horton, AARAC Chair

May 4, 2020 _____
Date