# Housing/Student Mobility Working Group
# White Paper

**February 19, 2010**

**Presented to the**

**Austin City Council**
**Austin Independent School District Board of Trustees**
**Travis County Commissioners Court**
**Joint Subcommittee**

# Executive Summary

**Introduction**

This white paper was co-authored by the members of the Housing/Student Mobility Working Group, a group of institutional and community members convened by the Joint Austin Independent School District (AISD)/Travis County/City of Austin Subcommittee (for more information about the makeup of the committee, see Appendix I). The report contains three main sections: an overview of the issue of student mobility in Austin, a proposed implementation plan to study a best-practice intervention method in a specified target area, and resources necessary to address student mobility over the long term.

*Overview of Student Mobility in Austin*

Student mobility refers to student turnover at a school during the academic year. This turnover can refer to a student changing schools within or between districts or dropping out of school completely. In Austin, high student mobility is clustered in distinct areas of the district, primarily in the northeast and central east sections of the city.

Addressing student mobility is important because high rates of mobility are linked to a range of negative outcomes for children and schools. Children who move frequently have lower attendance rates, exhibit poorer academic performance, and are more likely to drop out of school than are children who do not move frequently. They also are at increased risk of negative health outcomes (e.g., behavioral and emotional problems, teen pregnancy, adolescent depression, illicit drug use, and reduced continuity of health care). Teachers at schools with high rates of mobility are continually re-teaching material to new students, which harms other students through a slowing of the curriculum, and leads to low teacher morale and high rates of turnover. At the campus level, high rates of mobility are associated with low accountability ratings. Moreover, the shifting student population and associated staff turnover can undermine schools' abilities to implement curricular changes designed to improve academic performance.

*Proposed Student Mobility Implementation Program*

Best-practice research yielded several national programs targeting student mobility, including one best-practice program in Austin: the Family Resource Center (FRC) model, which was first established at Webb Middle School. The FRC contributed to a reduction in student mobility at Webb from 35% to 29%. More recently, the program has been extended to several other district schools, including Reagan High School and Pearce Middle School. FRCs provide student support services, family support services, and direct assistance to families experiencing mobility issues.

This working group proposes to use the FRC model as the centerpiece of a plan to reduce student mobility in a specified target area. The plan has four primary goals:

      1. Decrease student mobility – identify/document strategies
      2. Improve rates of student attendance

3. Improve individual student academic achievement
4. Improve campus-wide academic performance

The proposed student mobility program will expand an evaluation of the FRCs. It will collect data about families, using the FRC to assess the effectiveness of this best-practice program. It will be implemented in a specified target area, primarily located in zip codes 78723 and 78752. Within these zip codes, the proposed FRC evaluation will target Reagan High School, Webb Middle School, and Pearce Middle School.

### *Resources Needed to Address School Mobility*

To be successful, the school mobility implementation plan will require dedicated resources to successfully influence the school mobility rate in the target area. This includes both the strategic allocation of existing institutional and community resources as well as the allocation of new and yet-to-be-determined resource streams. As requested by the Joint Subcommittee, the student mobility working group has identified immediate as well as future funding needs. For more details about the timeline and budget for these resource needs, please see Appendices IV and V.

### **Immediate Funding Needs**

### *1. Information Infrastructure*

A major objective of the Joint Subcommittee has been to improve inter-institutional coordination to address cross-cutting community issues. The mobility working group has witnessed reductions in siloing of institutional knowledge. Service networking has increased, as exemplified by the "warm hand off" given when FRC staff seek utility assistance from the city, and by the prioritization of services to families with children at risk of homelessness. These coordination efforts should continue.

However, an information infrastructure that would enable true service coordination with results accountability still is lacking. Without an adequate information infrastructure, services will remain fragmented, less effective, and more costly; and child and family outcomes will not be optimized. Without an adequate information infrastructure, it is difficult to impossible to measure, monitor, and correct intervention approaches to achieve desired results, both within and across organizations.

- <u>Currently funded</u>: No

- <u>Projected need</u>: Technology that could ameliorate these issues is currently available and affordable. The technology could augment existing efforts (e.g., the Promise Neighborhood initiative) and leverage existing capacity and experience. Investment in an information technology project through the FRCs is recommended, with the intent that scalability of the information infrastructure be considered as a cross-cutting solution to inter-organizational effectiveness, based on client-centered outcomes. If the information infrastructure is correctly established, the measurement of outcomes will be intrinsic to its operation.

- Recommended institutional lead: AISD/FRC administration

## 2. Data Collection and Evaluation

It is critical to the success of the pilot program that data about families served through the FRCs in the target area are collected and tracked so the impact on student mobility in the pilot area can be measured and future needs can be identified more precisely.

- Currently funded: No
  However, a proposal is underway for a study to ascertain what value the provision of support services provided by Housing Authority of the City of Austin (HACA) has for AISD students living in HACA properties. This study will be funded by a collaboration between HACA, AISD, Communities in Schools (CIS), and the ACCESS project, in concert with Children's Optimal Health.

- Projected need: In order to successfully track and evaluate the success rates of students participating in the proposed pilot, the committee envisions at least two part-time staff members dedicated to the project: .5 FTE for FRC collection/tracking, and .5 FTE in AISD for evaluation/assessment. The committee envisions that this effort would be coordinated through AISD's Department of Program Evaluation (DPE), a department within AISD's Office of Accountability, which is charged with evaluating federally, state-, and locally funded programs in AISD.

- Recommended institutional lead: AISD/FRC administration

**Future Funding Needs**

## 1. Geographic Information System  (GIS) Technology

GIS technology is a strong tool for understanding the phenomenon of student mobility in our community and for guiding action decisions. Resources allocated to support evaluation of the mobility reduction efforts also could be leveraged to assist evaluation of efforts to address chronic absenteeism, pertinent to the Truancy Plus initiative.

- Currently funded: Yes. Resources from the AISD Safe Schools/Healthy Students ACCESS grant have allowed for the development of a student mobility mapping project. Initial maps have been produced that look at campus mobility in relation to school academic rating.

- Projected need: Sustainability of this effort beyond August 2011 will require .5 FTE for an AISD GIS position as well as .25 FTE for Children's Optimal Health to integrate multiple data sources in community maps.

- Recommended institutional lead: AISD

*2. Family Resource Centers*

- Currently funded: Yes. The current funding model for the FRCs is a collaborative effort that includes a combination of support from AISD and from other public/private partners. For instance, Austin/Travis County Health and Human Services provided a half-time social worker at Webb for two years to help the FRC begin. Staffing and administration for the three FRCs in the target area are currently funded as follows:

  o **Reagan High School**: Funded for two years through DOE stimulus funding, including a half-time director and a full-time social worker for family support; a full-time volunteer coordinator is funded through campus funds
  o **Webb Middle School:** Funded through the AISD Middle Level Education Plan (MLEP) and community/grant support; AISD provides funds for a half-time director and full-time social worker; a part-time administrator is paid through grant funding
  o **Pearce Middle School:** Funded for two years through DoEd stimulus funding, including a full-time director/volunteer coordinator and half-time social worker

- Projected need: Beyond the need for future staffing and administration of the FRCs, improved efficiencies are needed within the FRCs to improve linkages and referrals to local social service systems. There is an opportunity for the city and county to link and leverage these resources to systems and resources within the city and county that promote family stabilization. One way to address these needs is through the provision of grant writing assistance.

  Although the focus of the proposed program is on evaluation of the three schools in the pilot area, benefits are expected to extend to the other emerging FRCs (at Dobie, Martin, and Mendez) as well as to other potential areas of focus in the district.

- Recommended institutional lead: AISD/FRC administration

*3. Direct Assistance (rent and utility assistance)*

- Currently funded: Yes, through various local programs. Rent and utility assistance provided through the Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP) program are funded with stimulus dollars from HUD. The City of Austin and Travis County also provide a limited number of rent and utility assistance vouchers through the Tenant-Based Rental Assistance (TBRA) program, using federal funding.

- Projected need: The pilot program will help determine the assistance needs of the school mobility population. For instance, tracking and evaluating families who receive FRC assistance will help determine whether any gaps in current service (e.g., families experiencing mobility problems who require assistance but do not qualify for the HPRP program). This will help determine whether future resources should be designated for more flexible and/or targeted assistance programs.

- Recommended institutional lead: City/county

**Conclusion and Next Steps**

This white paper recognizes the early contribution of both AISD and the City of Austin in providing support to a grassroots community effort to develop a FRC for Webb Middle School. The Student Mobility Task Force encourages the Joint Subcommittee to link and leverage the existing systems and collaborative spirit present in this model, and to align efforts by AISD, the City of Austin, Travis County, and the broader community to grow resilient neighborhoods and effective schools. The Webb FRC model is being duplicated not only within the St. John Community, but also in the Dove Springs and Central East Austin communities. The support of the Joint Subcommittee will sustain and enhance one of Austin's most fertile cross-sector collaborations, and in so doing, will offer relief to Austin's most fragile families.

# Housing/Student Mobility Working Group White Paper

## I. Overview of Student Mobility in Austin

### *What is School Mobility?*

Student mobility refers to student turnover at a school during the academic year. This turnover can refer to a student changing schools within a district or between districts, or dropping out of school completely. Mobility occurs due to different reasons. "Strategic" mobility occurs when a student changes schools under a school choice policy, for reasons relating to the family's upward mobility. "Reactive" mobility occurs when a student is forced to move due to residential instability (e.g., the family moves during the school year due to socioeconomic barriers). Although parental choice does have an impact on student mobility, this paper generally focuses on the topic of reactive mobility, unless otherwise indicated.

When referring to the concept of mobility as it relates to school district administrative data, definitions vary according to the data source. For the purposes of this report, the following definitions of mobility are used:

- Student Mobility: mobility related to a change of school, residence, or both; only families who report a change in residence can be tracked

- Campus Mobility: official mobility rate tracked by the school; a student is considered mobile if he or she has been in membership at the school for less than 83% of the school year (i.e., has missed six or more weeks at a particular school); the Texas Education Agency (TEA) requires all Texas independent school districts to report on these data

- Residential Mobility: Change of residence

### *Why Focus on Student Mobility?*

An expanding body of evidence shows that high rates of school mobility are linked to negative outcomes in multiple spheres of a student's life. Mobility affects the academic performance and psychological well-being not only of mobile children, but also of teachers and other students, and affects the overall effectiveness of the school (Mueller & Tighe, 2007).

Much of the research in the area of student mobility has focused on academic outcomes, and substantial evidence of associations between high student mobility and poor academic performance has been reported (Mueller & Tighe, 2007). Mobility affects the individual student's educational experience, in terms of attendance, continuity of learning, and achievement (Family Housing Fund, 1998; Reynolds et al., 2009). Effects are particularly acute for students who move frequently: in an analysis of the academic performance of economically disadvantaged children in the Chicago public schools, children who changed schools three or more times during the elementary school years were nearly a year behind more stable children (Kerbow, Azcoita & Buell, 2003). Factors cited as potential contributors to the discrepancy

include insufficient exposure to foundational concepts, improper ability grouping, and other gaps in instruction. Students who are highly mobile or homeless exhibit lower scores in math and reading than do children of similar economic and ethnic backgrounds whose housing is stable (Obradovic et al., 2009; Reynolds et al., 2009). Not surprisingly, given the educational challenges they face, children who change schools several times are at heightened risk of dropping out (Ou & Reynolds, 2008). Importantly, associations between mobility and negative outcomes do not appear to be due solely to preexisting family characteristics. Although highly mobile families tend to be among the most fragile families, even when compared to other low-income families, mobility rates are important predictors of poor academic performance and higher drop-out rates above and beyond influences of family characteristics (Reynolds et al., 2009).

At the campus level, student mobility affects schools by impeding teaching effectiveness, leading to a slowing of the curriculum and an overreliance on testing that affects other students at the school (Kerbow et al., 2003; Rhodes, 2005). The frustrations of teaching a highly mobile student population can lead to low teacher morale; a high rate of staff turnover; and as a result, a high percentage of poorly qualified teachers in schools with high student mobility (Rhodes, 2005). The academic consequences of student mobility—for the mobile students, their classmates, and the schools as a whole—might be expected to affect No Child Left Behind school accountability ratings; indeed, high school mobility is a stronger predictor of low ratings than are school enrollment size, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status (Rhodes, 2005). High mobility not only contributes to the problems of at-risk schools, but also increases the difficulty of solving those problems by undercutting the effectiveness of programs designed to improve those schools (Kerbow et al., 2003).

In addition to affecting academic performance, frequent moves can have detrimental effects on children's psychological well-being. Children who move often have to deal with frequent disruptions of friendships and need to adjust to new schools and new social contexts. Some children adapt by developing strategies for making friends and gaining social acceptance at a new school, but others become angry and aggressive (Rhodes, 2005). In the long term, residential mobility is associated with negative health outcomes (e.g., high levels of behavioral and emotional problems, high teen pregnancy rates, adolescent depression, illicit drug use, and poor continuity of health care (Jelleyman & Spencer, 2008). Mobility also affects families: when students change schools frequently, parents have difficulty engaging with the school. The lack of engagement can further exacerbate mobility issues because disengaged parents are inclined to change schools when a child is having difficulties, rather than work with the school to resolve the problem (Kerbow et al., 2003). Finally, high rates of residential mobility affect entire communities when the above trends occur in the aggregate, affecting the safety, security, and sense of community of neighborhoods.

One of the major contributors to student mobility is residential mobility (i.e., moving from one home to another). Residential mobility is particularly likely when housing costs are high: families may move because (a) they cannot pay their rent and are evicted, (b) they are seeking a less expensive rent, (c) they are temporarily housed with family or friends, or (d) they are homeowners and their home has been foreclosed (Turner & Berube, 2009). In some instances, moves may be precipitated by redevelopment, condo conversions, or foreclosure of a rental

property. School changes also can be motivated by dissatisfaction with the current school or expectations of improved opportunities at another school. Unfortunately, for low-income families, these expectations typically prove false: students tend to move from one poorly performing school to another (Kerbow et al., 2003). Nonetheless, some researchers have argued for distinguishing between "reactive" and "strategic" moves because outcomes may differ, depending on whether school changes are in reaction to factors such as undesired residential changes, or result from efforts to achieve greater educational opportunity (Xu, Hannaway, & D'Souza, 2009).

*AISD ACCESS Grant/ Student Mobility Data Tracking*

In compliance with legal and regulatory guidance, AISD maintains and reports to the TEA information about campus mobility and student homelessness. The reports are produced annually, although a significant time lag can occur between the date range being reported and the state filing date for the report. Students may change campus and change residence independently. The greatest likelihood of a residential address change being reported to school officials is if it affects the campus of enrollment, or if the student is dependent on bus transportation. Other residential moves may or may not be reported to AISD. Despite this limitation, school district records of student residential change probably are the most robust data source available for tracking this issue.

Historically, AISD has not had the capacity to archive changes in student residential address. Using technology resources under the Safe Schools/Healthy Students ACCESS grant, a database has been developed within AISD to capture and archive student residential address changes, using a periodic, point-in-time data capture procedure. This database currently is being populated. By capturing and archiving residential address data in this way, more timely analysis and GIS mapping of student residential change will be feasible. This approach can help identify neighborhoods where residential mobility is concentrated, to guide resource allocation and to monitor change over time. After the data are available in a usable format, spatial analysis techniques can be employed to identify patterns in residential movement (e.g., average distance moved, and movement within versus into or out of neighborhoods).

Under the ACCESS grant, a student mobility mapping project is being developed. Initial maps have been produced that show campus mobility in relation to school academic rating. Similarly, campus-level representation of homeless students is feasible. Residential mobility by neighborhood also has been mapped, showing students who moved between school year 2007-2008 and school year 2008-2009. The project can continue while ACCESS resources are available.

*Mobility Rates in Austin*

Campus mobility rates, as defined by the TEA, are reported yearly. However, as indicated above, a significant time lag means the most recent data available are from school year 2007-2008. This most recent mobility rate data for AISD schools are listed below. Patterns of campus mobility in AISD, as indicated by these data, reveal distinct areas of high mobility at campuses in the east and northeast portions of the district (see Figure 1).

**Table 1: AISD High School Mobility Rates (2007-2008)**

| CAMPUS | Mobility Count | Mobility % |
|---|---|---|
| | # of students considered mobile | % of all students considered mobile |
| Garza | 372 | 78.8 |
| Reagan | 550 | 42.9 |
| Johnston (closed at the end of 2007-08) | 393 | 41.8 |
| International | 129 | 37.8 |

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|---|---:|---:|
| Lanier | 655 | 33.8 |
| Travis | 619 | 33.7 |
| Akins | 676 | 25.3 |
| Crockett | 522 | 23.4 |
| McCallum | 407 | 21 |
| Anderson | 319 | 14.7 |
| Austin | 340 | 14.7 |
| Bowie | 314 | 10.7 |

**Table 2: AISD Middle School Mobility Rates (2007-2008)**

| CAMPUS | Mobility Count | Mobility % |
|---|---|---|
| | # of students considered mobile | % of all students considered mobile |
| Pearce | 286 | 30 |
| Webb | 234 | 29.5 |
| Dobie | 309 | 29.4 |
| Martin | 217 | 26.3 |
| Burnet | 308 | 25.6 |
| Mendez | 310 | 23.8 |
| Fulmore | 270 | 22.3 |
| Paredes | 238 | 19.8 |
| Bedichek | 215 | 18.5 |
| Covington | 137 | 13.9 |
| Kealing | 178 | 13.4 |
| O. Henry | 107 | 12.3 |
| Murchison | 153 | 11.8 |
| Lamar | 83 | 11.4 |
| Bailey | 122 | 9.9 |
| Small | 112 | 9.3 |

**Table 3: AISD Elementary School Mobility Rates (2007-2008)**

| CAMPUS | Mobility Count | Mobility % |
|---|---|---|
| | # of students considered mobile | % of all students considered mobile |
| Linder | 261 | 36.7 |
| Blackshear | 78 | 33.8 |
| Ridgetop | 61 | 33.7 |
| Reilly | 85 | 33.5 |
| Andrews | 169 | 32.9 |
| Harris | 187 | 32.9 |
| Oak Springs | 83 | 32 |
| Barrington | 196 | 31.5 |
| Pecan Springs | 143 | 30.9 |
| Sanchez | 165 | 30.8 |
| Perez | 177 | 30.6 |
| Norman | 151 | 30.3 |
| Govalle | 100 | 30.2 |
| Allison | 131 | 30 |
| Becker | 59 | 29.8 |
| McBee | 183 | 28.9 |
| Pillow | 123 | 28.7 |
| Pickle | 154 | 28.6 |
| Pleasant Hill | 155 | 27.8 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Blanton | 129 | 27.6 |
| St. Elmo | 104 | 27.5 |
| Winn | 154 | 27.5 |
| Cook | 198 | 26.2 |
| Hart | 183 | 26.1 |
| Metz | 136 | 25.3 |
| Galingo | 157 | 24.8 |
| Jordon | 146 | 24.7 |
| Langford | 168 | 24 |
| Rodriguez | 181 | 24 |
| Brooke | 67 | 23.9 |
| Maplewood | 68 | 23.3 |
| Wooten | 109 | 23.2 |
| Ortega | 50 | 23.1 |
| Campbell | 79 | 23 |
| Walnut Creek | 197 | 22.8 |
| Graham | 125 | 22.6 |
| Sims | 82 | 22.6 |
| Joslin | 65 | 22.2 |
| Sunset Valley | 78 | 21.8 |
| Wooldridge | 155 | 21.7 |
| Mathews | 79 | 21.6 |
| Houston | 158 | 21.5 |
| Travis Heights | 103 | 21.4 |
| Odom | 140 | 21.2 |
| Brown | 85 | 21 |
| Zavala | 78 | 20.4 |
| Dawson | 60 | 20.1 |
| Allan | 66 | 18.6 |
| Kocurek | 109 | 18.4 |
| Palm | 108 | 17.8 |
| Casey | 135 | 17.5 |
| Widen | 112 | 17.3 |
| Cunningham | 72 | 16.3 |
| Oak Hill | 121 | 15.7 |
| Williams | 80 | 15.7 |
| Zilker | 61 | 15.2 |
| Boone | 65 | 14.4 |
| Patton | 98 | 14.4 |
| Davis | 78 | 14.2 |
| Summitt | 69 | 13.9 |
| Brentwood | 43 | 13.7 |
| Menchaca | 103 | 13.6 |
| Doss | 71 | 12.4 |
| Baranoff | 66 | 9.6 |
| Clayton | 44 | 9 |
| Cowan | 40 | 9 |
| Lee | 32 | 8.8 |
| Hill | 54 | 8.7 |
| Gullett | 32 | 7.9 |
| Mills | 57 | 7.7 |
| Highland Park | 32 | 7.1 |
| Bryker Woods | 24 | 6.3 |

| | | |
|---|---:|---:|
| Barton Hills | 17 | 5.3 |
| Kiker | 25 | 4.2 |
| Pease | 9 | 4.1 |
| Casis | 23 | 3.8 |

**Figure 1: School Mobility Rates and Affordable Housing in Austin**



School Mobility Rates and Affordable Housing in Austin

1 in = 3 miles

**AISD School Mobility Rate**
- 0 - 10%
- 10.1 - 20%
- 20.1 - 30%
- 30.1 - 40%
- 40% +

**Affordable Housing**
- Housing Tax Credit Properties
- Housing Choice Vouchers
- HUD Project-Based Section 8 Properties
- HACA Public Housing Properties
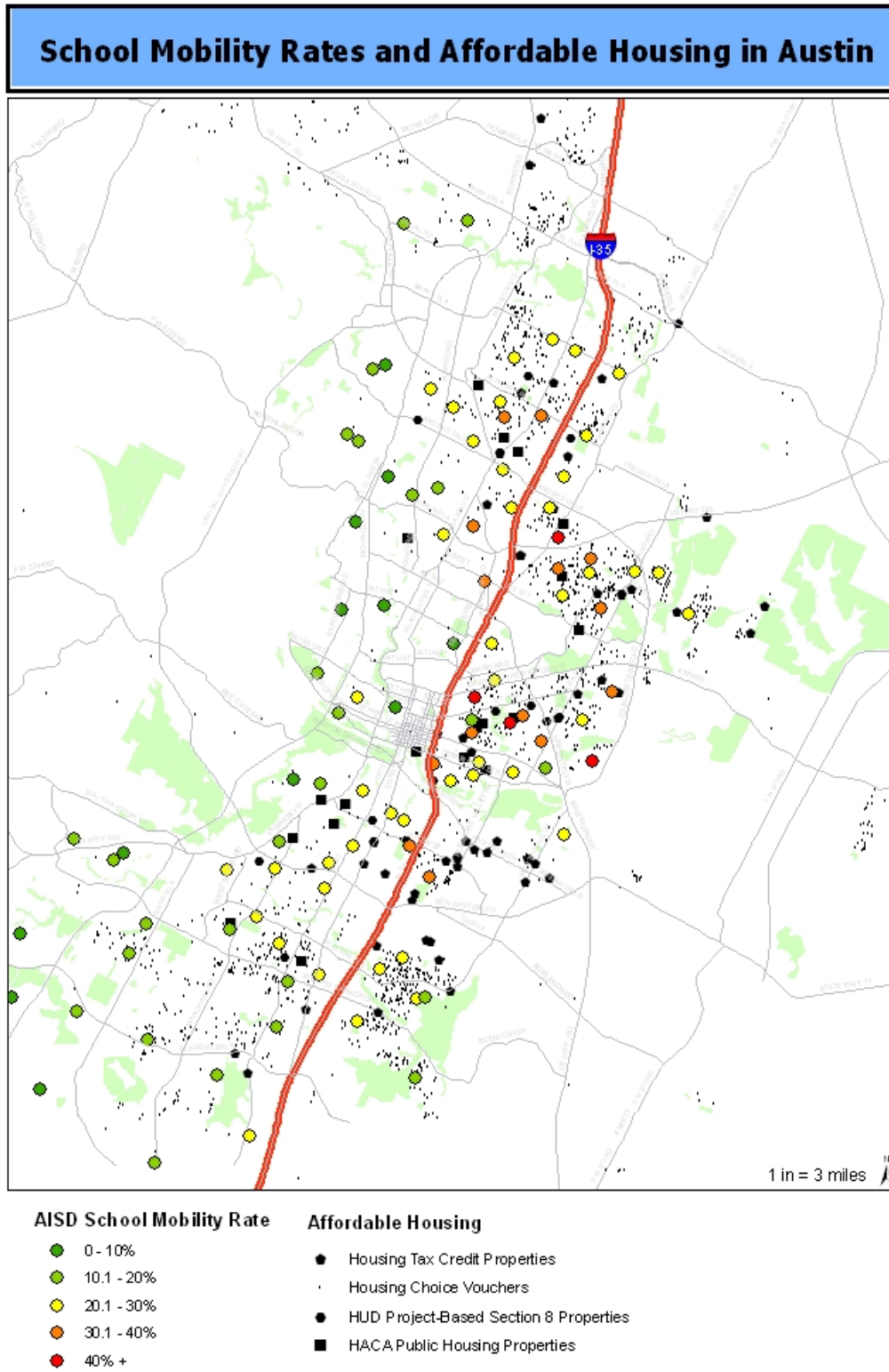
This map has been produced by the City of Austin
for the sole purpose of geographic reference. No warranty is
made by the City of Austin regarding specific accuracy or completeness. Map updated July 2009.

*What Does Student Mobility Look Like?*

The high rates of mobility at certain campuses only tell part of the story. A student may move once or multiple times during the year, and this may not be reflected in the TEA-reported mobility rate. Multiple moves likely mean significant gaps in attendance, with two to four weeks between leaving one school and settling in another. Other factors affecting mobility include:

- Moving often to chase free rent: low-income families with a clean rental history often move at the end of every six-month or annual lease to gain a free month, which can help with other bills
- Doubling up: two or three families often share housing or live with friends or relatives; when conflict inevitably occurs, families must move
- Eviction: being evicted leads to a poor rental history, which limits a family's housing choices
- Utility costs: high/low temperatures and poorly insulated homes can result in high utility bills, leading to financial crisis and mobility
- Inconsistent child support/unstable breadwinner: the loss of child support or the departure of the breadwinner can throw a family into crisis
- Catastrophic events: illness, accident, and house fire can cause mobility
- Teen parents: student who are parents themselves often shuffle between family, friends, and shelters, or may try to live on their own and end up in financial crisis

*Community Input on Student Mobility*

The committee solicited stakeholder feedback through a regularly scheduled Stand Up for Reagan meeting held on Thursday, October 29, 2009, at Reagan High School. The audience at the meeting consisted of students, parents, teachers, and community members. In facilitated small groups, participants were asked the following questions:

1. Why are families moving out of the neighborhood during the school year?
2. What assistance is needed to help families remain stable?
3. Are there resources in the neighborhood or community that can help?

Feedback received from the participants revolved around the following themes:
- Attendance is a major concern relating to student mobility.
- Rental incentives that encourage frequent moves (e.g., first month free) contribute to the problem.
- Many students live in one school zone but choose to attend school in another zone.
- Some students leave the district due to upward mobility.
- Reagan lacks the amenities of other AISD high schools.
- Any solution should focus on the entire family, not just on the student.

*Best Practices in Addressing School Mobility*

School mobility is a topic that has received increasing national attention in recent years. The Institute of Medicine of the National Academies recently convened a workshop of key researchers in the area and will be releasing a report on the topic.

A recent report by the Urban Institute entitled *Vibrant Neighborhoods, Successful Schools: What the Federal Government Can Do to Foster Both*[1] outlined four main areas in which policymakers can address student mobility:

      1. Provide housing assistance to reduce residential instability
      2. Allow children whose families move to remain in the same school
      3. Minimize school changes in housing redevelopment projects
      4. Help parents from poor neighborhoods make lasting school choices

Nationally, several programs have targeted student mobility in efforts to improve academic performance. Features of these programs lend credence to some of the Urban Institute's recommendations.

In Chicago, two initiatives have targeted student mobility. The first of these is Staying Put, an education campaign directed at parents, teachers, and school administrators. Its goals include raising awareness of rights and responsibilities, and developing a commitment to reduce student mobility (Kerbow et al., 2003). The initiative encourages schools to develop programs that foster stability, ease transitions for students, and provide lesson plans for teachers. A brochure was developed and distributed to parents to educate them about the negative effects of moving, offer alternatives, inform them about their child's rights when a move occurs, and offer suggestions to ease a transition. This initiative does not appear to have been evaluated, so the effectiveness of the educational efforts is unknown.

A second Chicago initiative, Community Schools in Chicago, has been credited with reductions in student mobility (Azcoitia, 2000; Whalen, 2002). Under this initiative, public schools become community centers by offering a range of services, including health and dental care, after school programs, tutoring, counseling, and summer camps. The schools also encourage parental involvement through adult education program, support groups, and other school-based activities. Importantly, because the school becomes a community gathering place, it fosters strong social ties for parents and children (Kerbow et al., 2003). In a pilot of this full-service school model, which involved three Chicago schools, the full-service schools showed lower student mobility and greater reductions in student mobility than did demographically comparable schools that did not use this approach (Whalen, 2002).

A pilot project in Flint Michigan combined rental assistance with services to families in an effort to promote student stability. The Genesee Scholars Pilot Project built on an existing FRC initiative in which family independence specialists were placed at academically challenged schools to assist with the social service needs of families and children. The Genesee Scholars Pilot Project targeted high-mobility students (defined as three or more moves during the prior

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[1] Turner and Berube, July 2009.

academic year) and provided $100 rent payments to landlords as incentives for working with the families to prevent relocation. In the first two-year cycle of the program, targeted children showed improved attendance and higher test scores, compared with results for non-targeted children; however, results from the second cycle of the project were inconclusive (Michigan DHS, 2008).

Portland, Oregon also has used financial assistance to reduce student mobility under its Schools Families Housing Stabilization Program. The financial assistance went to the targeted families and could be used for rent, deposits, mortgage payments, and move-in costs. This program has been credited with reducing mobility and improving academic performance, with 76% of targeted children showing improved math and reading performance, in comparison with performance by non-targeted peers (Schwartz et al., 2009).

Within Texas, the Fort Worth Independent School District (FWISD) has embraced the concept of FRCs. The FWISD FRCs work collaboratively with students, their families, and community resources to provide support for mental health and mental-health-related needs. The collaborative partners link academic, social, and emotional health by increasing access to mental health care and other support services in a school setting. As a result, these school-based centers remove barriers to learning, promote academic achievement, and increase graduation rates. They also promote healthy families and serve to engage families in their children's education. The link between the collaborative partners provides an atmosphere for compassionate and competent care that addresses the unique needs of individual children and their families. The centers offer evidence-based parenting support programs among their service mix.

Locally, the student mobility at Webb Middle School was reduced from 35% to 29% after a FRC was established at the school as part of a successful effort to improve the academic rating of the school. This program is described in greater detail below.

In summary, two components of programs that have been successful in reducing student mobility are (a) community schools or FRCs and (2) rental support to keep families in their home. Additionally, a key aspect to successful programs is the use of information technology to monitor individual- and aggregate-level outcomes for students, and to facilitate information exchange between providers, where appropriate, for those serving children with complex needs, as exhibited in the Harlem Children's Zone/Promise Neighborhood initiatives.

**II. Proposed Pilot to Address Student Mobility**

*Desired Outcomes of a Student Mobility Program*

Employing components of the strategies indicated above, the working group proposes to use the FRC model as the centerpiece of a plan to reduce student mobility in a specified target area. The proposed student mobility program has four primary goals:

1. Decrease student mobility – identify/document strategies
2. Improve student attendance rates
3. Improve individual student academic achievement
4. Improve campus-wide academic performance

The collection of both quantitative and qualitative data is necessary in order to track progress toward meeting the above goals. As such, a defined data collector role is necessary to effectively track and process data. This need will be further addressed in a later section.

*Target Area*

The proposed student mobility program will be implemented in a specified target area encompassing the St. Johns and Pecan Springs neighborhoods. This area is essentially the Reagan High School feeder pattern, which includes the three school-based FRCs at Reagan High School, Webb Middle School, and Pearce Middle School. The primary zip codes indicated are 78723 and 78752.

**Figure 2: Proposed School Mobility Target Area**
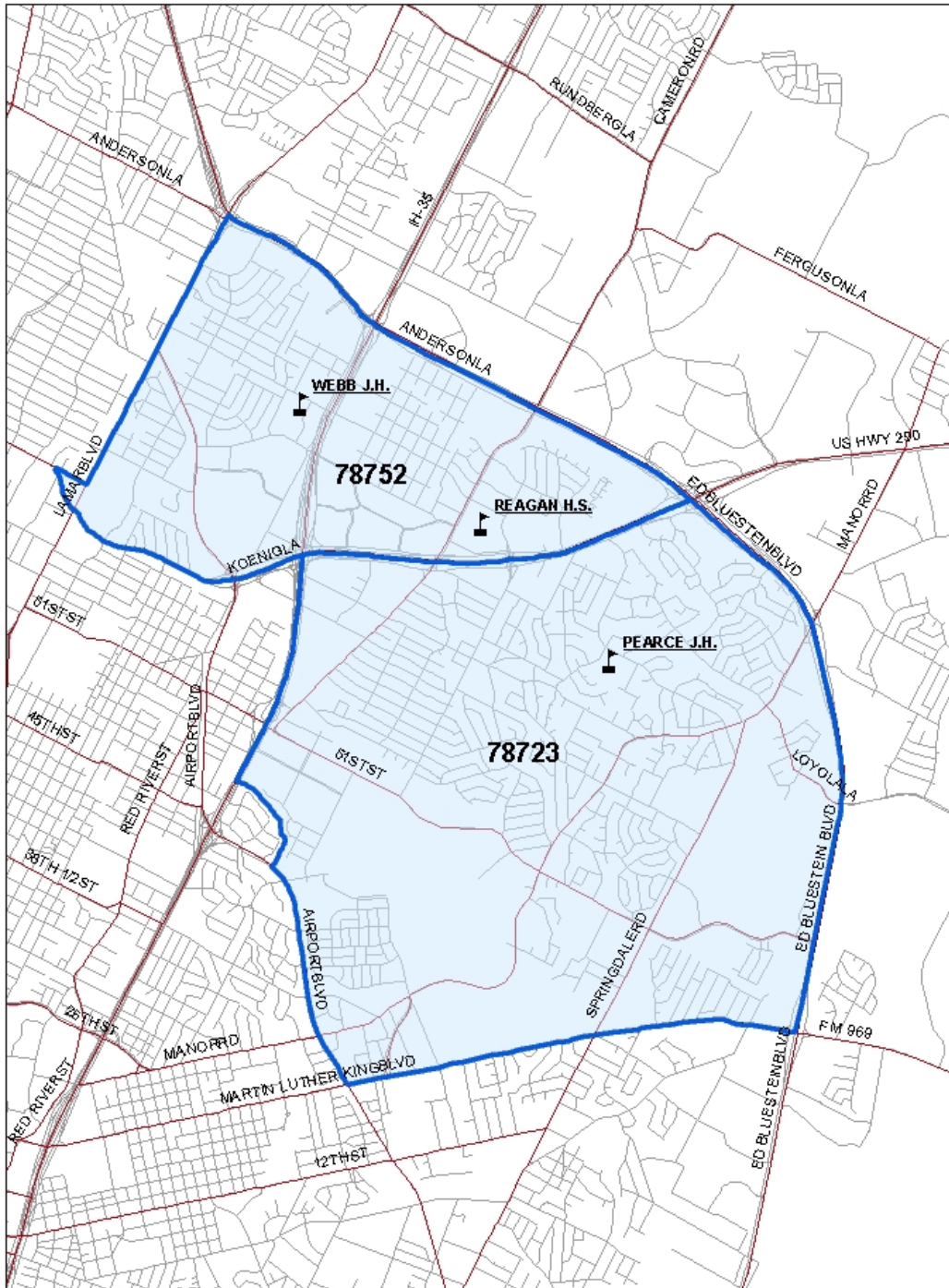
This study area was chosen for specific reasons:

- High rates of student mobility
- High rates of child poverty (45% to 48% in 2000; 60% to 90% free school lunch in 2007)
- Low school performance (Reagan High School was rated as unacceptable in 2008)
- Good record of cooperation with HHS and other local agencies (100 Best Communities for Youth Award from America's Promise Alliance)
- Two-year record of case management and improved mobility academics at Webb
- Infrastructure in place for Pearce and Reagan
- High rates of community participation
- Selection for the Promise Neighborhood initiative, which provides funds for coordination and evaluation of family support efforts[2]
- Disproportionately high rates of minority children from the area, as compared with the percentage of minority children in the general population, are in the CPS Foster Care system; these children are removed more often than are Anglos and stay in the CPS longer

### *Housing Opportunities in the Target Area*

Many of the factors above are affected by the location and type of housing that exists in the target neighborhoods. Below is a brief inventory of the type of apartments and housing providers that exist in the target zip codes.

*78723.* This zip code comprises 22 apartment complexes: 84% of the apartments have two bedrooms or fewer, and 56% of households in this zip code are renters. Of those apartments, all units are below the fair market rents for the Austin area (as determined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development). Two public housing properties are located within this zip code: one designated for elderly/disabled and one for families (Rio Lado, with 90 units). Rio Lado will be 100% vacated by March 2010 for a property-wide renovation. It will be retained as public housing. One project-based section 8 property (HUD subsided) for families is located in this zip code (Walnut Creek), and two other subsidized properties are designated for elderly or disabled. More than 300 tenant-based housing choice voucher residents (HUD subsidized) live within this zip code. Green Doors, a nonprofit housing organization, has a 70-unit redevelopment project targeted at individuals and families making less than 50% of the area's median family income.

*78752*. This zip code comprises 20 apartment complexes: 73% of the families in this zip code are renters, and 94% of the apartments in this zip code have two bedrooms or fewer. Of those apartments, all units are below fair market rents for the Austin area. One public housing property is designated for families in this zip code (Coronado Hills, with 48 units), and one subsidized apartment is designated for elderly residents, St. James Place. One single room occupancy (SRO) complex with 142 units for very low-income and homeless individuals, Spring

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[2] For more information about the federal Promise Neighborhoods Initiative, see Appendix II.

Terrace, is operated by Foundation Communities. Approximately 80 tenant-based housing choice voucher residents live within this zip code.

*Components of a Student Mobility Intervention Program*

The committee has identified a number of essential components for a school mobility intervention program, including parental involvement and education, wrap-around services, transportation services, and data collection and evaluation. These components are outlined below.

Family Resource Centers. Reagan, Pearce, and Webb FRCs provide a range of student and family support services.

Student support services include coordination with school dropout prevention, CIS, counseling, academic supports, pregnancy prevention and support, home-bound social services, college support, mentoring, afterschool tutoring programs, and student health.

Family support services fall into five areas: housing, employment/finance, health, education, and social networking. No matter what problem a family presents with, they are assessed for all areas and offered assistance or referrals that promote long-term stability.

The FRC also offers adult academic programs, aimed at expanding leadership skills and employability. Other services include orienting new families to the school; resource fairs, both at school and in the community; and volunteer coordination, with the FRC acting as a portal for community involvement and support.

The FRC delivers services through a combination of the FRC director, social worker(s), trained volunteers (including promotoras/family mentors), parent support specialist, and volunteer coordinator. Services from city and nonprofit agencies are leveraged and may share space with the FRC. Each FRC (or group of FRCs in a community) has a community partnership team that develops services, seeks additional funding, and coordinates events.

| Webb FRC Income 2008-09 | |
|---|---|
| ● Grants/Donations | $48,659 |
| ● Donated Professional Services | 90,624 |
| ● Volunteer Services | 25,342 |
| ● Gifts-in-Kind | 150,055 |
| Total: | 314,681 |
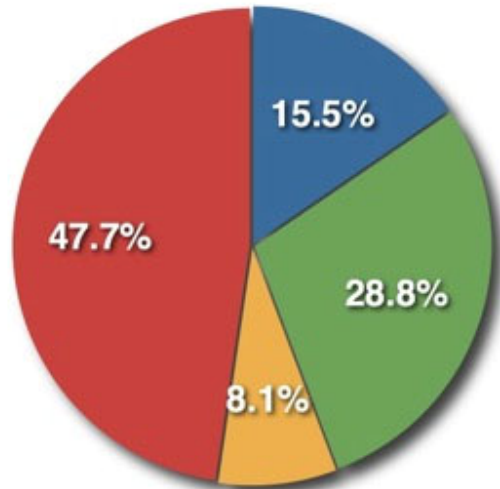


*In June 2009, AISD's Office of Middle Schools awarded a $193,200 contract to The Austin Project to develop new FRCs based on the Webb FRC model. Of that contract, $87,000 was dedicated to support the Webb FRC as a demonstration site. Since that time, an additional $99,232 in stimulus dollars was added to the FRC Development contract to support the development of an FRC for Pearce Middle School.

Direct Assistance. A number of options exist for direct assistance with basic needs in the community. These are community-wide resources, and staff at the FRCs will become familiar with the process and develop relationships with the providers in order to guide families through the process. Most of the assistance is restricted to families at 200% of federal poverty or less. All programs listed have unique eligibility requirements, intake processes, and target populations; resources listed below may or may not be available to a particular family seeking assistance.

Utility Assistance:
- The Austin Energy CAP program is available through designated nonprofit organizations.
- Utility assistance is available through the community's Best Single Source program, Caritas of Austin, Travis County, Catholic Charities, and many other faith-based organizations.
- The City Neighborhood Centers currently has limited funding for rent/utilities; it is funded in part with federal stimulus funds.
- The city's HPRP may provide assistance, and is funded with federal stimulus resources. One of the HPRP specialists is designated to work with families through schools.

Home Repair and Weatherization:
- Travis County provides home repair and weatherization through its seven Community Centers.
- The City Neighborhood Housing and Community Development Department (NHCD) has an ongoing home repair program.
- Austin Energy has temporary federal stimulus funds for weatherization.

Employment:

- Workforce Solutions is the primary provider of employment services in the community. It also works through Goodwill to focus help reach low-income workers and provide training.
- Goodwill Industries of Central Texas offers employment services.
- Through a temporary arrangement funded by CSBG-ARRA stimulus funds, Workforce Solutions is providing training, apprenticeships and employment through the City Neighborhood Centers.

Childcare/After School:
- CIS and AISD provide ongoing afterschool programs; some currently are partially funded with federal stimulus money.
- Workforce Solutions is the primary provider of federally funded childcare in the community. Both the city and county participate with Workforce Solutions to maximize federal matching funds.
- The CSBG-ARRA stimulus funds through the City Neighborhood Centers also include childcare funding through September 30, 2010.

Housing Assistance:
- Tenant/Landlord mediation and legal assistance are available through the Austin Tenants' Council and/or Texas RioGrande Legal Aid.
- Rental assistance is available through the community's Best Single Source program, Caritas of Austin, Travis County, Catholic Charities, and many other faith-based organizations.
- The city's HPRP can provide financial assistance and housing location services; it is funded with federal stimulus dollars. One of the HPRP specialists is designated to work with families through schools.
- Other community HPRP programs are funded by the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs through local nonprofit organizations. The lead agencies for TDHCA-funded HPRP projects are Caritas of Austin, LifeWorks, and Any Baby Can.
- Some local housing providers may have affordable units available for low- income families: HACA, Travis County Housing Authority, Foundation Communities, Green Doors, and others.

Transportation. Many families experiencing mobility problems are transit dependent. AISD currently has an administrative policy that allows students who move mid year to request to continue to attend their original school for the remainder of the school year. However, if a student is unable to arrange transportation back to the old school, that student will be able to take advantage of the policy. AISD policy does not provide transportation for students who transfer to a school other than their home school mid year.

The committee discussed these issues with the AISD Director of Transportation. Although a formal policy change would need to come from the AISD Board of Trustees, if current AISD bus routes are available, an ad hoc solution might be to be form partnerships with specific housing providers who are just outside the school boundary.

The federal McKinney-Vento Act requires school districts to address and support homeless students. AISD provides support to homeless students through Project HELP and coordinated student support services. The federal statute requires AISD to coordinate transportation needs for homeless students, and this effort currently is coordinated through internal AISD transportation services as well as through Capital Metro bus vouchers. However, the number of students who may need transportation assistance due to school mobility is much larger than the number who are officially categorized as homeless and thus qualify for McKinney-Vento assistance.

The main solution for addressing mobility-related transportation problems is to help families remain stable so students do not have to switch schools. In light of this recommendation, however, several other steps are needed to improve transportation for students facing mobility challenges:

- Educate families to alert the school about their new address when they move
- Identify transportation issues when students change schools
- Align CapMetro and other local transit opportunities with FRCs
- Encourage new, affordable housing near core transit corridors
- Designate safe routes to school for students who can walk or ride a bike to school (within a two-mile radius)
- Coordinate with the Austin Police Department and other City of Austin departments (Public Works, Code Enforcement) on crime and other safety-related barriers for students attending school


Figure 3 shows primary Capital Metro fixed bus routes that serve the Family Resource Centers.

**Figure 3: Capital Metro Transit Routes Serving Family Resource Centers**
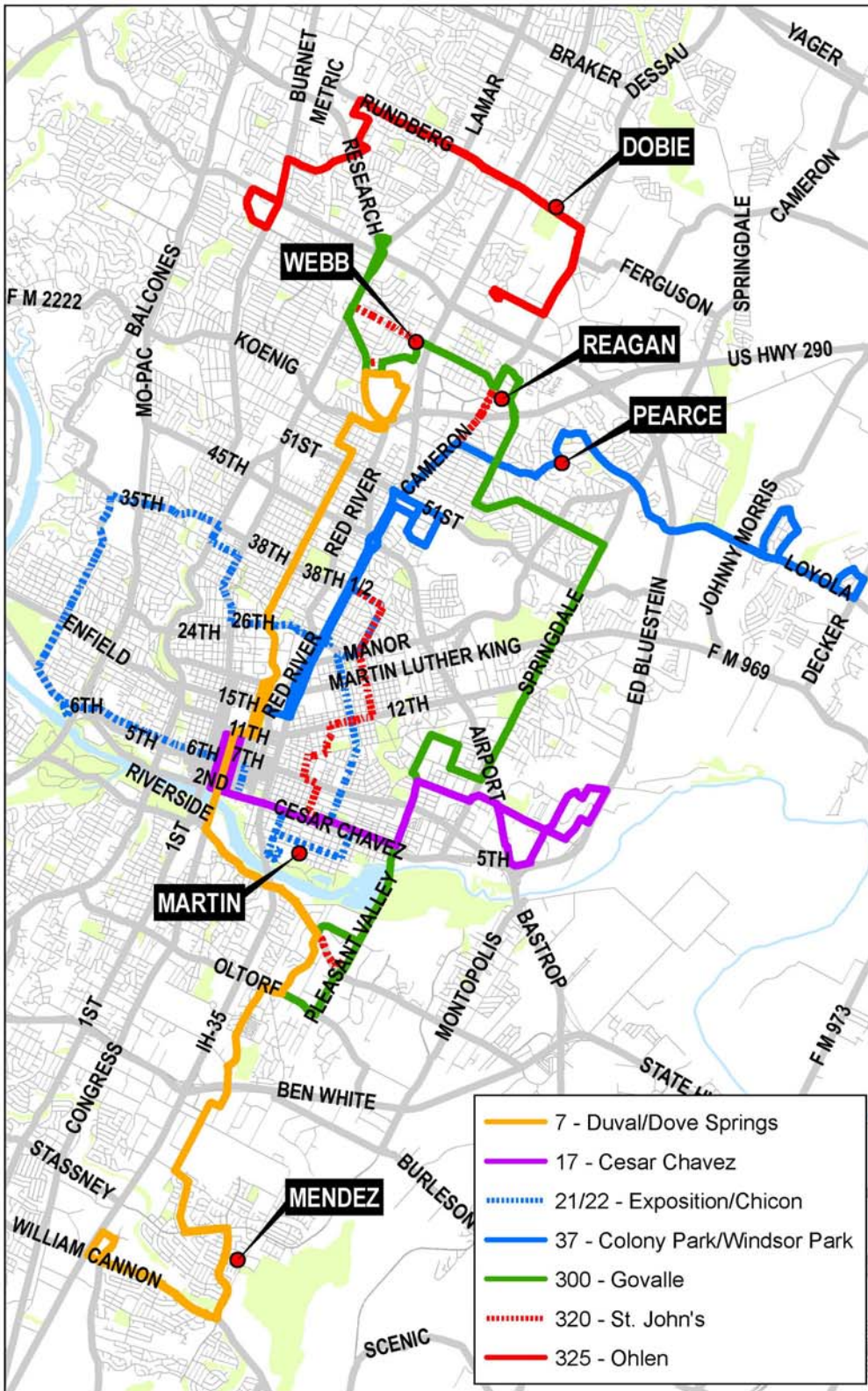
### *Data Collection/ Program Evaluation*

The importance of collecting accurate data from the FRCs and tracking it is critical to the success of the student mobility pilot initiative.

The data tracked through the FRCs are directly related to the desired outcomes for a school mobility program described previously:

- Decrease student mobility – identify/document strategies
- Improve student attendance rate
- Improve individual student academic achievement
- Improve campus-wide academic performance

The FRCs collect both quantitative data and qualitative data from client surveys. FRCs use tools adapted from the California Family Developmental Matrix that measure the progress of families from crisis to stability.

Potential variables to track:

- Campus mobility rates
- Student achievement
- Campus performance
- Number of moves within attendance zone
- Number of moves over a given period of time
- Forms of assistance provided

In addition to the qualitative and quantitative evaluation of the FRCs, the application of GIS mapping can assist the community in understanding the phenomenon of student mobility. As mentioned earlier, under the ACCESS grant, a student mobility mapping project is underway. By capturing and archiving residential address data in this way, more timely analysis and GIS mapping of student residential change will be feasible. This approach can help identify neighborhoods where residential mobility is concentrated, can guide resource allocation, and can monitor change over time. After the data are available in a usable format, spatial analysis techniques can be employed to identify patterns in residential movement (e.g., average distance moved, and movement within versus into or out of neighborhoods).

Because the FRC model is funded through AISD and because the outcomes relate to school performance, it is logical that the mechanism for collecting and tracking this data should reside within the AISD institutional framework. The AISD DPE has conferred with the school mobility group and offered suggestions for managing the data collection and evaluation component.

### *Proposed Study of Support Service Impact on Students Receiving Housing Assistance*

The HACA provides supported housing services through 15 housing communities, maintaining approximately 1,400 family units. These units include roughly 2,400 children under the age of 18, with about 1,800 school aged. HACA provides funds to CIS to provide services for some of

the AISD students living in HACA properties. Using existing resources collaboratively, it is recommended that HACA, AISD, CIS, and the ACCESS project, in concert with Children's Optimal Health, develop a study to ascertain what value the provision of these support services has on student attendance and behavior. Due to the high level of collaboration between these entities, the initial study could be conducted with existing resources, assuming appropriate agreements are in place. Sustainability or expansion of efforts may require additional resources. Results of the study could inform future action.

**III. Future Resource Needs to Address Student Mobility**
To be successful, the school mobility implementation plan will require dedicated resources to successfully impact the school mobility rate in the target area. This refers to both the strategic allocation of existing institutional and community resources as well as the allocation of new and yet to be determined resource streams. As requested by the Joint Subcommittee, the student mobility working group has identified immediate as well as future funding needs. For more detail on the timeline and budget for these resource needs, please see appendices IV and V.

*Immediate Funding Needs*

**1.** Information Infrastructure

A major objective of the Joint Subcommittee has been to improve inter-institutional coordination to address cross-cutting community issues. The mobility working group has witnessed reductions in siloing of institutional knowledge. Service networking has increased, as exemplified by the "warm hand off" given when FRC staff seek utility assistance from the city, and by prioritization of service to families with children at risk of homelessness. These coordination efforts should continue.

However, an information infrastructure that would enable true service coordination with results accountability still is lacking. Without an adequate information infrastructure, services will remain fragmented, less effective and more costly; child and family outcomes will not be optimized. Without an adequate information infrastructure, it is difficult to impossible to measure, monitor, and correct intervention approaches to achieve desired results, both within and across organizations.

- Currently funded: No

- Projected need: Technology that could ameliorate these issues is currently available and affordable. The technology could augment existing efforts (e.g., the Promise Neighborhood initiative) and leverage existing capacity and experience. Investment in an information technology project through the FRCs is recommended, with the intent that scalability of the information infrastructure be considered as a cross-cutting solution to inter-organizational effectiveness, based on client-centered outcomes. If the information infrastructure is correctly established, the measurement of outcomes will be intrinsic to its operation.

- Recommended institutional lead: AISD/FRC administration

2. Data Collection and Evaluation

It is critical to the success of the pilot program that data about families served through the FRCs in the target area are collected and tracked so the impact on student mobility in the pilot area can be measured and future needs can be identified more precisely.

- Currently funded: No

However, a proposal is underway for a study to ascertain what value the provision of support services provided by HACA has for AISD students living in HACA properties. This study will be funded by a collaboration between HACA, AISD, CIS, and the ACCESS project, in concert with Children's Optimal Health.

- Projected need: In order to successfully track and evaluate the success rates of students participating in the proposed pilot, the committee envisions one part-time staff member dedicated to the project: a 0.5 FTE for FRC collection/tracking. The committee envisions that this effort would be coordinated through AISD's DPE, a department within AISD's Office of Accountability, which is charged with evaluating federally, state-, and locally funded programs in AISD.

- Recommended institutional lead: AISD/FRC administration

### *Future Funding Needs*

### *1. Geographic Information System (GIS) Technology*

GIS technology is a strong tool for understanding the phenomenon of student mobility in our community and for guiding action decisions. Resources allocated to support evaluation of the mobility reduction efforts also could be leveraged to assist evaluation of efforts to address chronic absenteeism, pertinent to the Truancy Plus initiative.

- Currently funded: Yes. Resources from the AISD Safe Schools/Healthy Students ACCESS grant have allowed for the development of a student mobility mapping project. Initial maps have been produced that look at campus mobility in relation to school academic rating.

- Projected need: Sustainability of this effort beyond August 2011 will require .5 FTE for an AISD GIS position as well as .25 FTE for Children's Optimal Health to integrate multiple data sources in community maps.

- Recommended institutional lead: AISD

### *2. Family Resource Centers*

- Currently funded: Yes. The current funding model for the FRCs is a collaborative effort that includes a combination of support from AISD and from other public/private partners. For instance, Austin/Travis County Health and Human Services provided a half-time social worker at Webb for two years to help the FRC begin. Staffing and administration for the three FRCs in the target area are currently funded as follows:

  o **Reagan High School**: Funded for two years through DOE stimulus funding, including a half-time director and a full-time social worker for family support; a full-time volunteer coordinator is funded through campus funds

- o **Webb Middle School:** Funded through the AISD Middle Level Education Plan (MLEP) and community/grant support; AISD provides funds for a half-time director and full-time social worker; a part-time administrator is paid through grant funding
- o **Pearce Middle School:** Funded for two years through DOE stimulus funding, including a full-time director/volunteer coordinator and full-time social worker

- Projected need: Beyond the need for future staffing and administration of the FRCs, improved efficiencies are needed within the FRCs to improve linkages and referrals to local social service systems. There is an opportunity for the city and county to link and leverage these resources to systems and resources within the city and county that promote family stabilization. One way to address these needs is through the provision of grant writing assistance.

  Although the focus of the proposed program is on evaluation of the three schools in the pilot area, benefits are expected to extend to the other emerging FRCs (at Dobie, Martin, and Mendez) as well as to other potential areas of focus in the district.

- Recommended institutional lead: AISD/FRC administration

### 3. Direct Assistance (rent and utility assistance)

- Currently funded: Yes, through various local programs. Rent and utility assistance provided through the Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP) program are funded with stimulus dollars from HUD. The City of Austin and Travis County also provide a limited number of rent and utility assistance vouchers through the Tenant-Based Rental Assistance (TBRA) program, using federal funding.

- Projected need: The pilot program will help determine the assistance needs of the school mobility population. For instance, tracking and evaluating families who receive FRC assistance will help determine whether any gaps in current service (e.g., families experiencing mobility problems who require assistance but do not qualify for the HPRP program). This will help determine whether future resources should be designated for more flexible and/or targeted assistance programs.

- Recommended institutional lead: City/county

**Conclusion and Next Steps**

This white paper incorporates a collaborative, interdisciplinary approach to addressing student mobility in Austin. The committee has identified school-based FRCs serving as community portals for services as a best practice in addressing student mobility. Building on this approach, the committee recommends developing a "place-based" pilot initiative in the Northeast Austin sector (78752 / 78723) to support an integrated family services delivery model (FRCs), with a shared funding partnership between AISD, city and county, and the private/nonprofit sectors.

This white paper recognizes the early contribution of both AISD and the City of Austin in providing support to a grassroots community effort to develop a FRC for Webb Middle School. AISD provided space and administrative encouragement; the City of Austin and the Department of Health and Human Services lent the Webb FRC a part-time social worker from the St. John Community Center. The Austin Project and numerous other community organizations, individuals, and churches stepped in to provide infrastructure, resources, and hard work to help transform a struggling school and community.

The Student Mobility Task Force encourages the Joint Subcommittee to link and leverage the systems and collaborative spirit that have evolved into a framework that provides a model for engaging and aligning AISD, COA, and Travis County efforts with faith-based, community-driven efforts to grow resilient neighborhoods and effective schools. The seed planted by the Webb FRC is being duplicated not only within the St. John Community, but also in the Dove Springs and Central East Austin communities. The support of the Joint Subcommittee will help to grow and sustain one of Austin's most fertile cross-sector collaborations, and has the potential to offer relief to Austin's most fragile families.

As outlined in the resource needs section, an essential component of this proposal is to develop a system for tracking and evaluating students and families who access the FRCs, compared with students who do not. Another key focus will be to begin applying new technology tools being developed through AISD's ACCESS grant funds (e.g., the Youth Services Mapping database system and GIS mapping tools).

The Subcommittee also recognizes that multiple strategies exist to address student mobility, beyond the FRC model. We recommend further research and discussion about the following topics related to student mobility:
- The impact of school choice policies on student mobility
- Transit and transportation resources
- Making schools "sticky" (e.g., magnets, activities)
- Technological solutions that allow service providers to work together to coordinate care, especially for students with multiple providers
- The provision of funding to support the adoption and use of a shared, comprehensive, integrated case management system, like Efforts to Outcome (ETO), which is already in use by some key service providers for the FRCs and is a key component in the Harlem Children's Zone project, which Austin is attempting to replicate through a Promise Neighborhood grant submission (see Appendix II)
- The role that safety plays in student attendance/mobility issues, and the potential for Safe Routes to School and other similar measures to address this issue

AISD has looked critically at the negative impact student mobility has had on student academic outcomes and the ability of schools with high rates of student mobility and of families in poverty to meet state performance standards. Closing schools due to a failure to meet state-mandated standards is the worst sort of medicine for low-income families and communities. AISD, through MLEP, made a decision to pilot the development of FRCs for targeted campuses, to provide crisis intervention and to stabilize resources for families with youth attending those schools. The success of the Webb FRC in helping to turn the curve on student mobility and school climate

prompted Reagan and Pearce to implement FRCs in their Campus Improvement Plans with the TEA.

The negative impact on schools has been documented in this white paper, but we also know that the negative impact extends well beyond our schools and greatly burdens our social services systems, city and county resources, and our healthcare systems. Cycles of poverty require integrated intentional systems of intervention and stable support systems to arrest the spin of the cycle.

High rates of student mobility, coupled with lack of affordable housing and lack of access to health care by low-income working families, create havoc for schools and city/county services and greatly diminish the potential quality of life for whole communities.

We need to maximize efficient family-stabilizing resources in easily accessed, family-friendly areas so that student mobility will be diminished, families will be more resilient, students' academic performance will improve, schools will meet academic learning goals, and communities will become more vital.

To ensure long-term sustainability, we recommend capitalizing on the current contributions to the development of FRCs by establishing a system of cross-sector, shared funding partnership between AISD, COA, Travis County, private and nonprofit agencies, and organizations.

**Appendix I: Housing/School Mobility Working Group Members**

Vince Cobalis, City of Austin Health and Human Services
Cathy Echols, HousingWorks, Liveable City, Families & Children Task Force
Frank Fernandez, Green Doors, HousingWorks
Sherri Fleming, Travis County Health & Human Services and Veterans Services
Rebecca Giello, City of Austin Neighborhood Housing and Community Development
Donna Hagey, The Austin Project
Jim Lehrman, Travis County Health & Human Services and Veterans Services
Veronica Macon, Housing Authority of the City of Austin
Eric Metcalf, Communities in Schools
Susan Millea, Children's Optimal Health Initiative/AISD ACCESS grant
Kelly Nichols, City of Austin Neighborhood Housing and Community Development
Meng Qi, City of Austin Neighborhood Housing and Community Development
Cathy Requejo, AISD Project HELP
Allen Weeks, St. John Community-School Alliance
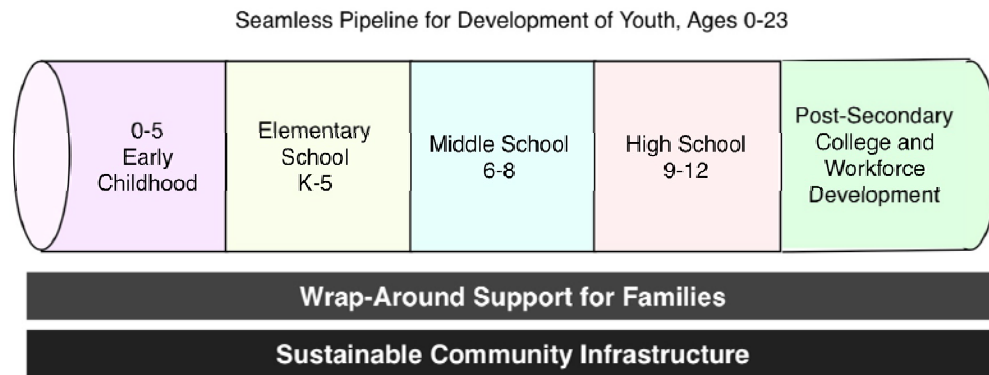Gloria Williams, AISD
Holly Williams, AISD

Guests:
Gerardo Castillo, Capital Metro
Liz Mueller, University of Texas, HousingWorks
Kris Hafezizadeh, AISD Transportation

**Appendix II: Promise Neighborhoods Initiative**

The Obama administration is developing the Promise Neighborhood initiative, through the Department of Education, to replicate the successful Harlem Children's Zone model in 20 cities. An RFP for a $500,000 planning grant will be released in February 2010, with grants awarded in Summer 2010. Cities successfully completing the planning phase will be eligible for 10-year federal grants (based on 50% municipal/private match) to take their projects to scale.

**Core Mission/Purpose:** The Promise Neighborhoods program seeks to provide children in poverty with every possible chance to succeed. It does this through the combined development of high-quality, comprehensive, coordinated, neighborhood-based programs for children, youth, young adults, and parents, and through combined efforts to rebuild the fabric of the community.

**Program:** Over time, each designated Promise Neighborhood would create a pipeline of accessible, linked, best-practice programs and high-quality schools for neighborhood children and young adults from 0 to 23 years old, starting when parents are pregnant and finishing when children graduate from college. The pipeline should be enhanced with additional programs to support parents, families, and the larger community.



Seamless Pipeline for Development of Youth, Ages 0-23

| 0-5 Early Childhood | Elementary School K-5 | Middle School 6-8 | High School 9-12 | Post-Secondary College and Workforce Development |

**Wrap-Around Support for Families**

**Sustainable Community Infrastructure**

Applicants can be a coalition of community-based organizations, nonprofits, municipal agencies, business supporters, school districts, and foundations, all of which have experience working together to improve the lives of children in their communities. A lead agency (not the school district) will coordinate funding and operations.

**Progress in Austin:** During Fall 2009, a coalition of city, county, AISD, nonprofit, foundation, and community partners formed around submitting a Promise Neighborhoods grant application. Through a careful selection process, the group has chosen the St. John neighborhood and the surrounding northeast Austin area as its target area for the proposal. A steering committee has been formed, consisting of 18 members who are evenly split between community representatives, municipal and school district officials, and nonprofit members. The steering committee will choose a lead nonprofit in February to act as fiscal agent for the grant. Community meetings gathering input from the St. John and surrounding communities began in January and will continue throughout February.

An additional grant application will be coming from the Johnston Terrace/Govalle neighborhood, with Southwest Key Programs as the lead agency. After meetings with the city/county/AISD team in December, Southwest Key and its community partners decided to submit their own application. It is likely that this scenario will be repeated in many other cities, with applications coming from multiple communities.

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