

## 7-27-16 CCCN – UTSPH MEETING NOTES

UTSPH Professor Alfred McAlister met with Julia Campbell (PARC CCCN Project Coordinator), Margaret Russel (PARC Nature Program Manager) and Hayden Brooks (CinNCA) to discuss plans for research on a new initiative in the Rundberg area of Austin, where nature deprivation is acute.

The plan calls for significant new resources to be allocated at one elementary school and surrounding neighborhoods for improved green space, better access to nature and enhanced recreational usability of public space there—as well as education and outreach for children and families to increase connection with nature.

Research options for this, in order of ascending scientific rigor, are (1) case study design in which the selected school and surrounding neighborhoods are assessed at baseline and then over time as changes are made, (2) case-control design in which the most nature-deprived school where suitable improvements are feasible is selected to receive the new resources and two or more other comparable schools agree to also accommodate baseline and follow up data collection—with the understanding that they are at the front of a waiting list for new resources if they become available, (3) randomized case design in which three (or more) comparable schools with nature deficits are identified, all agree to accommodate data collection, and one is randomly selected for new resources now—and the others are on a waiting list for new resources when available. Any of these designs can be acceptable depending on resources and cooperation of schools.

Baseline and follow up data collection can potentially consist of these components (1) GIS/mapping and other objective measures of green space and its quality tracked over time, (2) twice annual surveys of children (and possibly parents) to measure the duration, quality and restorative outcomes of experiences that connect them with nature, (3) observation of green space utilization numbers, duration, activities, (4) data from schools on indicators of wellbeing and academic achievement, such as absence rates, suspensions, grade completion rates, achievement scores or others selected by school principals, (5) data on obesity and related factors collected by the UTSPH as part of the CATCH and SPAN projects, (6) data collected in AISD surveys of health behaviors.

A potential timetable was discussed, which called for beginning baseline data collection in late Autumn, with action in the selected school early next year.

Ways that UTSPH can assist include in the refinement and planning of measurement instruments, and with potential student involvement in observations of green space utilization—as well as the design of communication, social marketing and educational experiences for children, parents and the broader community.