School Rightsizing
Why Now?

Media Kit and Data for the Community
June 20, 2023
The Basic Story

San Antonio ISD wants to deliver on the promise of an excellent education to our students and our families, but we are faced with a fundamental problem.

Our enrollment and school aged population have been declining for more than two decades...
  ...and will continue to do so for at least five or ten more years.

We have resisted closing schools as our enrollment declined...
  ...so our schools have gotten emptier.

We invested in innovation, and it worked...
  ...but we have not recovered enough students to reverse the trend.

So our resources are spread too thin...
  ...creating inequities experienced by our students and their families.
Not a New Story
An SAISD study as early as 2008
Declining Enrollment

Since 1998, our enrollment has dropped every year, and we have lost a total of 18,326 students

- In 1998, our first grade cohort was 5,147. This year it was 3,006, down 229 from last year alone.

- **Our current enrollment, 45,285 is 3,381 less than the worst case estimate made in 2010-11 of 48,666.**
The Promise
The San Antonio ISD is an inclusive familia that is the destination for transformational learning that makes the impossible a reality by demonstrating an urgent and relentless commitment to love, nurture, and teach all our students as if they are our own so that they realize their power to shape the world.
Improve **reading and writing** outcomes for all students

Improve **math** outcomes for Black students

Improve **college readiness** for students with disabilities

Improve **social emotional readiness** in all students

Embrace our **community**

Support **excellent schools** in every neighborhood

Create **safe environments**

Ensure **equitable funding**
is our 5-year strategic management plan that outlines how SAISD will meet the goals set by our Trustees.

There are four sections:

- Our Students, Our Future
- Our Staff, Our Strength
- Our Organization, Our Heartbeat
- Our Community, Our Familia
The Structural Problem
Declining School Age Population

According to Brian Eschbacher, a demographic researcher who reported to the Board of Trustees in November and January, our enrollment decline is tied to historic decreases in birthrates and school aged children across the United States, Texas, and our region and county, as well as within our district.

- The under 18 population has declined 14 percent since 2010.
- Births have declined 36 percent in San Antonio zip codes since 2007
  - REMEMBER: it is infants who become first graders, so if that number is dropping faster than the number of big kids...
  - ...and in 1998 we had 5,147 first graders. In 2023 we had 3,221.
Roughly the Same Number of Schools

- As District membership declined...
  - 56,812 students enrolled in 2003-04
    SAISD was ranked 10\textsuperscript{th} in the State
  - 44,568 students enrolled in 2021-22
    SAISD ranking fell to 24\textsuperscript{th} in the State

- ...the number of schools we operate remained roughly the same.
  - 106 Campuses in 2003-04
    SAISD was ranked 5\textsuperscript{th} in the State
  - 100 Campuses in 2021-22
    SAISD was ranked 7\textsuperscript{th} and remains among top 10
More Schools per Student

*Includes 2022 data for San Antonio districts and similar size districts in Texas.
Our Schools are Emptier

● In 2010-11...
  ○ San Antonio ISD had 55,086 students and...
  ○ ...8,908,000 total square feet of schools, not counting portable buildings, or...
  ○ ...161.7 school square feet per student

● ...in 2022-23
  ○ We have 44,676 students and...
  ○ ...9,490,000 total square feet of schools.

● If we kept the same ratio of square feet to students, we be 2,265,891 square feet smaller – an amount of excess space greater than all 13 of our middle schools or all 13 of our PK8 academies.
We Are Winning Back Families, but...

Since 2014, San Antonio ISD has transformed 35 schools, 28 of them using SB 1882 powers.

- This effort was successful, bringing in at least 2,244 in 2021 (more than our PK enrollment that year) out of district students. In 2022, largely due to the success of those transformed schools, San Antonio ISD leads the region in students who transfer in from another school district.
  - We do not have way to estimate the number of San Antonio ISD students who stayed within the district because of those offerings.

Even though SAISD’s out of district transfer is nearly four times greater than the closest ISD in the area, in the same period our enrollment still went down by 8,359 since 2014.
School Program Inequities

Even though our smallest schools are more expensive to operate, they offer fewer programs and services. Smaller schools are more likely to have...

- ...split classes, or mixed grade classrooms.
- ...teachers with no grade level or subject area partners to grow with and share responsibilities.
- ...fewer police officers or mental health and other student services.
- ...fewer electives or academic choice opportunities, including extra curricular activities.
Resource Inequities

The cost per student at our smallest elementary schools is **2.4 times higher** than the cost per student at our largest elementary school.

Largest elementary | 644 students | $6,888/st  
Smallest elementary | 109 students | $16,261/st

This inequity holds true for all school types

- **High Schools** | 2.3 times higher | $18,133 : $8,018
- **Middle Schools** | 1.4 times higher | $11,696 : $8,144
- **Academies** | 1.5 times higher | $10,643 : $7,667
The Process
Called for by Our Resolution
Governance Milestones and Communications Commitments

June 20: Board Acts on the Rightsizing Resolution
- After the Board of Trustees passes the Rightsizing Resolution, staff will develop a Rightsizing Framework – a decision making tool organizes criteria that will be used to identify schools, including both schools to be closed and schools suitable to receive students.
- Through the summer and into September, staff will gather extensive feedback on the Rightsizing Framework.
  - This will include, but not be limited to, holding two regional meetings in each of San Antonio ISD’s the geographic feeder patterns of our seven comprehensive high schools.
- This feedback will result in changes to the Rightsizing Framework that inform staff’s Initial Recommendation.

September 18: Staff Presents the INITIAL Rightsizing Recommendation
- Immediately after staff makes its Initial Recommendation to the Board it will inform the affected staff, families and students.
- Between September 18 and October 27, staff will gather extensive feedback on the Initial Recommendation.
  - This will include, but not be limited to, holding two regional meetings in each of San Antonio ISD’s the geographic feeder patterns of our seven comprehensive high schools.
- This feedback may result in changes to the INITIAL Rightsizing Recommendation staff presents to the Board of Trustees.

November 13: Board Acts on the FINAL Rightsizing Recommendation
- The Trustees will vote on Recommendation as a total package, not one school at a time.
- Should the Trustees approve the Rightsizing Recommendation, a Transition Team of experienced educators and leaders will mobilize immediately to support students, families and staff.
  - The Transition Team will pay special attention to vulnerable students and families, including recent immigrants, dual language students and families with students in self-contained classrooms.
  - District staff will meeting with each communities at each closed school and each receiving school at least twice after the Board’s decisions.
Many demographers have focused on the long-term risk to Social Security or Medicare posed by the lower birthrates, but K-12 education is actually the first institution to be dramatically affected. Shrinking is hard. But it does not have to be catastrophic and if done thoughtfully can even be an opportunity to restart or build higher-quality schools.

Van Schoales & Brian Eschbacher
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