



JOINT SUBCOMMITTEE

Austin City Council

Austin Independent School District Board of Trustees

Travis County Commissioners Court

Joint Subcommittee Meeting Minutes

Friday, February 6, 2026

12:00 noon – 2:00 p.m.

Austin ISD, 4000 S IH-35 Frontage Road

Joint Subcommittee Members in Attendance:

Austin Independent School District (AISD)

Kathryn Whitley-Chu, AISD Board Trustee, District 4, Vice-President

Arati Singh, AISD Board Trustee, At-Large, Place 9

Andrew Gonzales, Board Trustee, District 6

Other:

Lynn Boswell, Board Trustee, District 5

Edna Butts, Director, Intergovernmental Relations and Policy Oversight

Mary Ann Maxwell, Assistant Superintendent, Teaching and Learning

Joshua Jeon, Executive Director, Government Relations and Board Services

City of Austin

Kirk Watson, Mayor

Jose Velásquez, Council Member, District 3

Ryan Alter, Council Member, District 5

Other:

Stephanie Hayden-Howard, Assistant City Manager

Travis County

Jeff Travillion, County Commissioner, Pct 1

Bridgid Shea, County Commissioner, Pct 2

Pilar Sanchez, County Executive for Travis County Health and Human Services & AgriLife Extension

Other:

Julie Wheeler, IGR Officer

Cicely Kay, IGR Specialist

The meeting was called to order by Trustee Whitley Chu at 12:09 p.m.

I. Public Comment

No speakers signed up for public comment.

II. Approval of Minutes

The June 16, 2025 minutes were approved unanimously on a motion by Mayor Watson and a second by Commissioner Travillion.

III. JSC Collaborative & Cost Sharing Opportunities

Mayor Watson commented that it is incumbent on the JSC entities to pursue this opportunity to collaborate as all our entities are facing budget constraints. In order for the public to have confidence in this effort, the process must be open, obvious and straightforward. The two or three items selected should be specific and not overly complicated.

Council Member Alter agreed with Mayor Watson and commented that the three entities do some of the same things. We need to identify discrete issues and give staff clear direction.

Commissioner Travillion stated it is important and we need to operationalize ideas. He mentioned both the City of Austin and Travis County have roles in economic development. Warming Centers and Child Care are also good examples of initiatives in which all three entities work. He stated the importance of understanding the condition of each of our budgets.

Commissioner Shea agreed with others' comments and stated that the taxpayers need to hear a clear and consistent message about the reason that the entities are in the condition they are because of efforts at the state level to take away local control. Commissioner Shea stated that the entities have a long history of cooperation and have many Interlocal Agreements (ILAs) totaling millions of dollars. We need to understand the current state so we have a deeper understanding of where to go from here. Travis County provided a list of social services contracts and ILAs with local nonprofit organizations and governmental entities.

Trustee Singh proposed an initiative regarding workforce development. Handouts from E3 Alliance, Opportunity Austin and the Central Texas Manufacturing Partnership were provided.

Commissioner Travillion suggested an asset map showing who is doing what, and where, who is teaching and training and what is needed in the workforce. He said there are a lot of good programs operating but they are not communicating, for example how are CTE programs connected to ACC.

Councilmember Alter suggested an initiative on open space management in order to pursue a more effective, efficient government for our community. He stated sharing costs and services would maximize savings for the three entities and to our taxpayers and provide enhanced services to our families.

Mayor Watson stated that in the past we were not specific enough. Regarding the homeless, we are all involved in the need to strengthen early intervention and prevention. We are all addressing these issues

in some way and we need to avoid duplicating efforts. Joint investment in family shelter capacity and identify what each entity is investing. Identify what other entities need to be invited to help, such as Central Health, Austin Community College and the private sector. Focus also needs to be on children aging out of foster care. We need to save dollars and create synergy.

Trustee Boswell shared that San Francisco Unified School District shelters families when the facilities are not being used for instruction and that it has increased student enrollment and attendance. She suggested that we should keep track of what has improved school attendance, e.g., healthcare. She mentioned that many of our buildings are not being used on weekends and the possibility of using them for healthcare when not in use by the school district.

Commissioner Shea shared that \$117 million has been invested in permanent supportive housing. 1,900 housing units are being built now.

Trustee Singh said we should keep our eye on what problem we want to solve. For example: We want to reduce the percentage of unhoused persons by x %. Be clear about outcomes and attach numbers.

Councilmember Alter suggested that on issues involving the homeless and healthcare, Central Health is unique and key. Commissioner Travillion added that Community Care, Sendero and Integral Care are also key.

Commissioner Travillion said we should focus on the breadth and depth of the problem and what we're doing. Be realistic Create asset map for (1) what is there, (2) what we do, and (3) what is the budget. He mentioned the LBJ School and Texas State have done this type of work for Travis County.

Mayor Watson observed the JSC seems to have settled on three potential issues:

1. Homelessness
 2. Workforce
 3. Parks/Land/Facilities
- Step One: Agree on the three issues.
 - Step Two: Asset mapping. Need professional staff to do this and the entities' commitment to make them available. We need to make sure we have capacity.
 - Step Three: Asset mapping. We do need to come back later and work on the metrics.

Commissioner Shea followed up that mental health diversion and intervention with the homeless is important. Capacity is an issue regarding revenue sources. We should identify what we spend now on the homeless and the effect of homelessness on AISD students and ratings.

Trustee Whitley-Chu raised the issue of hiring a staff member that would be jointly funded by the three entities. Mayor Watson does not believe the entities could afford to do so.

Councilmember Velasquez stated we need to take care of the children. 57,000 kids are unhoused. At Travis ECHS, 10% of students are housing insecure. The Mayor said about 2,000 students in AISD are homeless. We need early intervention and prevention.

Trustee Whitley-Chu stated that the data most predictive of a low rating from the state is mobility.

Staff of the respective JSC entities indicated that they will convene experts in each of the three identified areas and report back. Mayor Watson suggested that it be kept simple, e.g. bullet points. Trustee Boswell said mobility of our students is critical. 30% of our students do not end the school year where they started.

A suggestion was made that ACC be added to the JSC.

VI. Standing items

a. Unfinished business:

A report from staff on JSC Collaborative & Cost Sharing Opportunities

b. Future meeting dates:

Staff will poll JSC members for availability on Friday, May 1, Friday, May 8, and Friday, May 15. The next meeting will be at Travis County.

VIII. Trustee Whitley Chu adjourned the meeting at 1:26 pm.

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