

Spring Branch Independent School District Visioning Team Findings and Directions

In the fall of 2005, Spring Branch Independent School District embarked on a visioning process for a comprehensive 21st century educational program that is aligned with the expectations of the SBISD Portrait of the Graduate and the Core Commitments of the SBISD Board of Trustees.

Stakeholders representing the various sectors of the school system, including trustees, district administrators, teachers, students, parents and community members developed the series of findings and directions outlined in this document. These Findings and Directions will serve as a planning resource for the development of the District's long term strategic plans.

Draft Goal Statements (as approved by the SBISD Board of Trustees 3-1-06)

Safety

- SBISD will have a pervasive culture of safety

Student Performance

- SBISD will be a school district of excellence as measured by community, state, national and international standards for student achievement.
- SBISD will be the premier college-focused district in the State of Texas and will prepare all students for post-secondary success.
- SBISD students will be engaged in an enriched and relevant Pre-K-12 curriculum that promotes creativity and achievement.

Operations

- SBISD will be fiscally responsible and efficiently use all resources, human, time and monetary, to support student achievement.

Community

- Students, parents, and community will be active partners in student education.

People

- SBISD, as the employer of choice, will reward excellence and provide opportunities for continual growth.

General Issues

- 1. Finding:** **SBISD must offer programs at all campuses to meet the diverse needs and interests of the district's children with the goal of SBISD being the district of choice, and our schools being the campuses of choice in the Houston area.**

- Directions:**
- Develop specially focused campuses or specialized programs or academies within selected campuses (schools within a school) that can be vertically aligned and supported by all levels (elementary, middle and high school) that provide a concentration of study for student interest and advancement.
 - Provide programs and support for the social and emotional needs of all students (Character Education, Safe and Drug Free Schools, Leadership and Decision-Making Skills).
 - Utilize project based instruction/learning to develop creativity and problem solving skills
 - Emphasize creative and purposeful writing in all elementary, middle, high school grades and content areas
 - Expand the use of portfolios, narrative assessments, and exhibitions/presentations that more fully demonstrate student learning in addition to mandated tests
 - Ensure that research is an integral part of the learning process across content areas and grade levels.
 - Conduct ongoing program evaluation and research, and develop internal systems to monitor and assess the status and progress of schools and programs.

- 2. Finding:** **SBISD should tailor instruction to the learning styles, personal interests and capabilities of individual students.**

- Directions:**
- Provide a teacher/advisor/advocate for each PK-12 student. Study how the student and teacher/advisor relationship is to work to define the optimum ratio students to each teacher/advisor. Create for each PK-12 student a written personal learning plan. The teacher/advisor, student and parents should work together to create the personal learning plans.
 - The teacher/advisor and his/her students should meet regularly (daily, weekly) as a group and/or as individuals to plan studies, monitor progress, address problems, etc.
 - Modify school schedules (at the middle and high school levels) to provide some flexible time each school day to accommodate individual learning styles and multiple modes of instruction, and to allow teachers and students to work together as needed to assure student success.

- Create varied teacher and student instructional and working spaces (in new and existing structures) to accommodate multiple individualized instruction, multiple modes of instruction and flexible schedules.

3. Finding: SBISD expects all students to graduate prepared for post secondary education.

- Directions:**
- Provide all students with varied experiences and programs that develop a vision and understanding of their future potentials including post secondary opportunities and careers.
 - Provide every SBISD student with exposure to, knowledge of colleges, college life, fields of study, implications for careers, etc. beginning in PK. Provide multiple college exploration opportunities for every SBISD student during the middle and high school years.
 - As a condition of graduation, require that all high school students follow the Recommended High School Plan, which will earn them credits sufficient for college and increase the prospects for admission. Expand opportunities for students to earn college credit and to have “early college” experiences while in secondary school.
 - Provide every secondary student with advice/support regarding colleges, admission requirements, application procedures, costs and scholarships.
 - Ensure that each high school senior submits at least one formal application for admission to a post-secondary institution. Monitor and support students in the application process.
 - Closely monitor and support students academically so that they graduate from SBISD schools college-ready without the need for remedial work in college.

4. Finding: SBISD should provide or partner to provide community, health and/or social services at the campus and/or selected district sites for the benefit of students and families.

- Directions:**
- Where appropriate, integrate community, health or social services into school campuses.
 - Utilize school facilities beyond the current school day and school year to increase teaching/learning opportunities, and to optimize the value of the District’s extensive capital assets.
 - Design future facilities so that space to be used by the community during non-school hours will be accessible, but will still allow security for the core school area.

5. Finding: SBISD must provide opportunities for meaningful community

engagement that is vital to the success of the district.

- Directions:**
- Develop a comprehensive plan that promotes two-way communication and actively engages stakeholders in varied aspects of SBISD and the educational process.
 - Develop a marketing plan to attract and retain students.
 - Expand the use of technology to enhance internal and external communications.
 - Conduct follow-up surveys with recent graduates to assess performance after exiting high school.
 - Implement a systemic model for parent education and training that enables parents to be better engaged in and supportive of their child's learning experience.
 - Engage outside experts as mentors to broaden teaching capabilities and learning opportunities.
 - Expand programs that engage students in real-world experiences with experts in their fields of study both on-campus and in authentic environments.

6. Finding: SBISD must recruit, develop and retain a diverse and highly qualified staff.

- Directions:**
- Create a seamless transition in teacher professional staff development from novice to master teacher.
 - Provide a comprehensive professional development program and facility to assure that all SBISD teachers have the expertise to implement the goals of the five year education plan.
 - Provide a competitive compensation and benefits package.
 - Create and implement a recruitment plan to ensure a highly qualified teacher for every vacancy.

7. Finding: SBISD must continuously improve District facilities.

- Direction:**
- Provide facilities which are aesthetically pleasing and promote district pride
 - Provide state of art facilities for all students to meet their instructional needs
 - Plan all district facilities so that they will be flexible to avail themselves for future functional changes
 - Where appropriate, standardize materials and equipment to provide an efficient and cost effective environment
 - Select materials and building systems which provide the school district with best value for the dollar.
 - Floor plans should accommodate the opportunity for potential

future changes in partition materials, mechanical systems, electrical and plumbing systems.

- All school drives and parking areas should be concrete for durability and longer life expectancy
- All new buildings should be constructed of more durable material which requires less maintenance and upkeep
- Site plans should address all site drainage issues

8. Finding: The student enrollment of schools impacts operating costs, potential instructional offerings and the school environment.

- Directions:**
- Plan new and/or replacement schools for the following enrollment capacities
 - Elementary Schools – not to exceed 700
 - Middle Schools – not to exceed 1100
 - High Schools – not to exceed 2100
 - Do not modify existing schools to comply with these standards.
 - Some space in each school should be provided for non-capacity bearing (pullout) programs such as small group academic intervention.
 - Provisions should be made in the site plans for new campuses to accommodate temporary buildings if needed for short term solutions to enrollment increases, such locations need to be away from view
 - Maintain the District's core value of neighborhood schools with smaller settings.

Educational Programs

1. Finding: **Elementary instruction must be engaging, relevant, differentiated and student-centered with real-world application.**

- Directions:**
- Beginning in pre-kindergarten, build a college bound culture that exposes students to a variety of careers and a future vision of post-secondary education.
 - Inspire through instructional programs a curiosity for and a love of learning in every student.
 - Create instructional strategies focused on integrated units of study
 - Ensure that school day and co-curricular experiences are balanced with opportunities across all content areas, health fitness and the arts.
 - Provide quality after school programs at all sites that are consistent with district instructional programming.
 - Expose students to a wide variety of relevant and meaningful

- experiences on and off of our school campuses.
- Create positive, school environments that promote creative thinking.

2. Finding: The organization of instructional spaces and configurations for delivering instruction directly impacts elementary teaching and learning.

- Directions:**
- Consider expanding looping whereby teachers and students work together for more than one school year.
 - Provide opportunities for cross-grade level instruction
 - For future construction, provide:
 - Modify existing instructional spaces for multiple modes of instruction and a separate working/planning space for teachers in each house/family/pod.
 - Instructional spaces to accommodate varied size groups, multi-age groups, and team teaching.
 - Elementary campuses that are secure and aesthetically pleasing.
 - Natural light in instructional spaces.
 - Easy access to toilets for all students.
 - Access to a hand washing station in each grade level
 - Specialized spaces for fine/performing arts, health fitness, foreign language and other focused academics.
 - Flexibility in the number of classrooms in each grade level pod.
 - Parent/volunteer/PTA/community multipurpose room

3. Finding: Middle school instruction must be engaging, relevant, differentiated, and student centered with real-world application.

- Spatially organize and integrate instruction across core disciplines in houses/families/pods.
- Allow teachers within each house/family/ pod flexibility to plan teaching/learning schedules appropriate to the work to be done by their students.
- Create professional development to support the integrated team concept and the needs of middle level students.
- Establish and promote additional extra-curricular and co-curricular programs that meet the varied interests of all students.
- Use flexible scheduling to increase student access to teachers so that class sizes are appropriate for student needs.
- Create positive, school environments that promote creative thinking and enable students to explore their own talents across the content and elective areas.
- Provide instruction, schedules and spaces that invite appropriate movement for pre-adolescent students.

4. Finding: Middle school teaching and learning, and the configuration and organization of instructional spaces are integrally related.

- Directions:**
- For future construction, provide:
 - Varied spaces for multiple modes of instruction and a separate working/planning space for teachers in each house/family/pod.
 - Varied spaces for learning opportunities and collaboration among students
 - Flexible learning environments that include large and small group instructional spaces
 - As practicable, modify spaces in existing middle schools to create houses/families/pods.

5. Finding: High School instruction should be student-centered and individualized, with multiple modes of instruction, flexible schedules, the development of higher-order, real- world thinking skills, and the use of technology appropriate to meet the needs of tech minded students today and in the future.

- Directions:**
- Utilize multiple modes of instruction with varied sized spaces and time periods appropriate to the subject and individual student learning styles.
 - Make subjects and teaching/learning methods more diverse, relevant, and engaging for students by providing:
 - Expertise from the community/real world into the schools and by sending students into the community for portions of their studies.
 - Experts from the community as mentors for students.
 - Project based instruction within disciplines and/or across disciplines to develop higher-order thinking skills.
 - Students with an instilled sense of responsibility for their own learning.
 - Create positive, school environments that promote creative thinking and enable students to explore their own talents across the content and elective areas.
 - Establish and promote additional extra-curricular and co-curricular programs that meet the varied interests of all students.

6. Finding: High school teaching and learning, and the configuration and organization of instructional spaces are integrally related.

- Directions:**
- Modify spaces within each high school to create multidisciplinary vertical grade level (9-12) learning communities each with a full complement of core disciplines (including English, math, social studies, science and foreign languages).
 - Provide each core subject teacher with a work station (separate

from instructional spaces in which they may teach) for use during their unscheduled time each day.

- Provide work spaces students may use individually and in groups during their unscheduled time each day.

7. Finding: With the global economy, capabilities in multiple languages and cultural proficiencies are important for every student including those for whom English is their native language and those for whom English is a second language.

- Directions:**
- Promote a second language to all students in grades PK-12.
 - Expand dual language instruction programs for students in grades PK-12.
 - Explore computer-based language training.
 - Emphasize the cultural customs of the countries represented by the languages spoken.
 - Prepare staff in cultural competencies to support English Language Learners (ELL) and immigrant students and their families.
 - Continue the support and refinement of the bilingual/ESL program.

8. Finding: SBISD will identify and meet the unique needs of all students.

- Directions:**
- Enhance comprehensive plans for GT and special education programs.
 - Increase the participation of demographic groups under-represented in the G/T program.
 - Promote staff development on instructional strategies in an effort to continue to support inclusion activities for students.
 - Evaluate research-based assistive technological tools to enhance the education process of students.
 - Implement methodologies to better identify students and their needs
 - Provide opportunities for all students to explore and discover their unique talents.

9. Finding: The library should be the hub of each campus for research and collaboration. Students and community members access resources and spaces for a variety of purposes.

- Directions:**
- Transform the paper-based focus of libraries to a digital focus as the availability of personal digital devices increases in SBISD (see the Technology Findings/Directions). As libraries are transformed, the role of librarians should be transformed to foster expertise as digital research specialists.
 - Transform library spaces to support student/teacher collaboration,

- project work, conversation, research and reading.
- Integrate, where feasible/appropriate, libraries, dining areas and commons to increase/enhance opportunities for individualized and/or group learning activities.
- Offer extended library hours to accommodate the diverse needs within the community.

Technology

- 1. Finding: SBISD must seamlessly integrate technology into teaching and learning to achieve educational goals and objectives. Staff must be trained to maximize the potential of new technologies as they become available for educational applications.**

- Directions:**
- Make provisions such that students may access the technology tools they need from their classrooms, throughout the school and throughout the district.
 - Provide each student with a personal digital device.
 - Teachers and students will utilize technology daily to enhance and support rigor and relevance within the classroom.
 - Promote a wireless community.
 - Modify instructional methods and create staff development to realize the potential of technology to strengthen teaching, learning and assessment.
 - Convert computer labs to other uses, except for those serving special purposes requiring particular software or equipment as students are provided personal digital devices,.
 - Insure that the technology plan reflects the District's Instructional Plan.
 - Properly resource technology life cycles in order to provide current and relevant technology for instruction.
 - Provide instruction and curricular applications to assure that by the completion of elementary school, students are proficient in keyboarding, computing (spread sheeting, word processing) and digital research skills.
 - Provide staff development such that all employees of SBISD become effective users of technology.

- 2. Finding: SBISD should provide teachers with access to curriculum resources in an easy to use online format for planning and developing student lessons.**

- Direction:**
- Provide teachers with an online curriculum software system for planning lessons, writing lesson plans.
 - Utilize technology to support instructional practices to include problem solving, inquiry based learning and decision making.

- Utilize technology to support best practices in staff development.
- Provide access for teachers to on-going resources that assist in the integration of technology into teaching and learning.
- Provide teachers with immediate feedback to assessment.

3. Finding: SBISD should utilize technology to provide parents with information on student progress and school and district activities and information.

- Directions:**
- Provide parents with a way to access student information on grades, attendance, and assignments through the internet.
 - Provide schools with a system to automatically call parents when there are school functions occurring or alert parents of emergency information from the district or school.
 - Parents should have access to SBISD curriculum on-line.

4. Finding: SBISD must investigate and implement new strategies for providing and maintaining state of the art technology infrastructure for students and employees.

- Direction:**
- Migrate to a data center environment for all centralized systems.

5. Finding: SBISD district information systems should be evaluated for effectiveness. The availability and accuracy of School District data is critical to the running of the school system and reporting to the state and federal governments. Schools and the district need a student information system that provides information in a user friendly format with flexibility and ease of use for entering and retrieving information and for developing reports.

- Directions:**
- Provide new administrative systems to provide a system that is user friendly and comprehensive in meeting the district needs.
 - Provide new student information software applications that are user friendly and comprehensive in meeting needs at the campus and district level.
 - Create an informational data warehouse that can access data from multiple sources across the District to reduce time and staff hours currently required to bring information from different sources that currently don't communicate.

Support Services

1. Finding: Support Services should be strategically located, with

appropriate space to provide efficient and cost effective operations.

- Directions:**
- Construct a centralized facility to house all support services departments in order to provide efficient and cost effective operations.
 - Provide additional office space where needed.
 - Provide more storage space on the campuses for support service functions (ie: Custodial Storage Closets).
 - Provide a centralized training facility to be used for all Operations personnel.

2. Finding: SBISD should increase the security and efficiency for retrieving plans and specifications for district facilities.

- Direction:**
- Digitize all of the district's building plans and specifications with redundant copies on 2-3 secure servers to protect against loss from fire, flood or other catastrophe.

3. Finding: SBISD should address the District's aging athletic facilities by developing plans for updating them.

- Directions:**
- Assess current campus and central athletic facilities for needed renovations and develop an action plan for updating facility conditions.

4. Finding: SBISD should offer expanded athletic programs based on community input and student needs. SBISD should expand athletic facilities to meet the needs of current programs and additional programs which could be added in the future.

- Directions:**
- Investigate the interest and feasibility of adding additional Inter-scholastic soccer programs, wrestling programs, and other athletic programs or intramural clubs at the middle and high school levels.
 - Explore enhanced partnerships with the community to expand athletic opportunities and facilities for SBISD students.
 - Develop action plans for expanding facilities to meet current and future athletic program needs.

5. Finding: SBISD must enhance the receiving, storage, preparation, service, and dining areas of the schools to adequately serve the appropriate number of students required in the amount of time allotted.

- Directions:**
- Conduct a survey of all schools, based on the directions shown below, and determine which sites are in the greatest need for renovation/upgrade.
 - Design Campus plans so that delivery vehicles do not cross bus lanes, parent pickup lanes, or student access areas.
 - Design delivery areas free from overhead or vertical obstacles to assure adequate clearance from buildings.
 - Ensure that all sites must have enough storage to keep at least five serving days worth of food and supplies on hand at any given time.
 - Ensure that all new and existing (if possible) kitchens to utilize natural gas appliances.
 - Ensure that serving areas meet all current health department standards, and up-to-date code requirements.
 - Utilize “self service” as much as possible.
 - Ensure that all new and existing cafeterias will accommodate a serving rate of at least 10 meals per minute and will serve students within a 13 minute time limit.

Security

- 1. Finding: SBISD must continue to make safety and security a top district priority.**

- Directions:**
- Create a central monitoring station that will integrate digital security technology of CCTV, burglar and fire alarm access control monitoring into one similar system that will enhance the safety and security of the District
 - Provide a consistent visitor identification system at all sites.
 - Provide staff development on classroom management techniques to all staff.
 - Enhance the District’s Emergency Operation Plan to include annexes that will utilize District technology to provide immediate access by Emergency First Responders to Campus Site Plans, student and staff information and other information relative to the emergency situation.
 - Provide security office space on all secondary campuses that can be utilized by SBISD Police Officers as a sub station.
 - Enhance inter-operability and partnerships with area law enforcement and emergency services agencies to enhance security within the District.
 - Develop a Safe Schools Plan that will involve all stakeholders in providing a safe and secure learning environment.

