

Aldine Independent School District

AISD's Continuous Improvement Journey



The implementation of the Malcolm Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence has served to accomplish the following four key tasks:

- Provide a districtwide systems approach for management through a focus on the district objectives and goals.
- Strengthen the organizational structure, processes and procedures.
- Ensure all processes and resources are aligned to meet the district's objectives, improve overall performance, and satisfy key stakeholders.
- Ensure the five broad district objectives and more specific goals under each objective with measurable actions are based on data and are aligned from the district level to the department, campus, teacher, and student levels.

In 1995-1996, data on both the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) and the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) indicated that AISD students were not making significant achievement gains; there were also major achievement gaps between student groups.

Based on these findings, Aldine ISD initiated district reform in the 1996-1997 school year by refining the curriculum and aligning the written, taught, and tested curricula. This process took several years and included many hours of aligning benchmark targets with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), providing staff development on effective instructional strategies, and writing district common assessments. This resulted in improvements in student academic achievement. The district also began to see the gaps in achievement between student groups close.

In 1999-2000, feedback from the following three sources provided valuable data indicating the district, as an organization, had areas that needed improvement:

- The Texas Award for Performance Excellence (TAPE) feedback indicated that trendline data used in decision making was only available for student achievement and not other measurable areas.
- The teacher survey pointed out that many wanted more input in the decision-making process.

- The Baldrige Self-Assessment illustrated that the operations and instruction components of the district did not communicate well and the operations personnel did not participate fully in the strategic planning process.

In the spring of 2000, every department and principal as well as the District Educational Advisory Committee participated in an activity known as "What's Important Around Here?" Participants identified all of the issues important to them within their work environment. The cabinet used input from this activity to draft new vision, mission, and belief statements. The Board of Trustees (BOT), operations, departments, campuses, and district stakeholders reviewed the initial draft of the revised vision, mission, and belief statements for suggestions and feedback. This led to the new vision, "Producing the Nation's Best", being implemented in 2003.

During the fall of 2000, AISD implemented the Baldrige in Education Initiative to improve the district's planning processes. Aldine ISD leaders concentrated their efforts to accomplish this task for nearly a year. During the summer and fall of 2001, the cabinet along with every department and vertical area developed action plans and scorecards to address the district objectives and goals.

By 2001-2002, the BOT and superintendent began a quarterly scorecard measurement system and implemented the district's balanced scorecard.

During 2002-2003, other district-level administrators began using a quarterly scorecard for individual appraisals, and area superintendents started using scorecards with principals.

Leaders at all levels trained on team building, using leading and lagging data, collecting data through surveys, teacher efficacy, and engaging students in the learning process. Two key messages resonated from the training: 1) let the data drive the decisions and 2) give data a voice.

School and department assessments based on Baldrige Education Criteria were imple-

mented in 2005 through a process called Peer Review where schools assess schools and departments assess departments.

The continuous improvement journey aligns processes and approaches across every level of the district. Data drive all decisions as they pertain to strategic planning, accountability, professional development, curriculum alignment, and customer service.

The district's successful journey has been recognized locally as well as at the state and national levels with the following awards and distinctions:

- 1995-1996, Texas Monthly named AISD elementary schools among best in state
- 1996, Region 4 Superintendent of the Year Award presented to M.B. "Sonny" Donaldson
- 1996-2003, AISD earned seven TEA "Recognized" ratings
- 1998, Outstanding School Board Award by the Texas Association of School Administrators (TASA)
- 1999, Magna Award from the American School Board Journal (AISD Board of Trustees)
- 2000, UT-Austin Dana Center names AISD one of five model school districts in Texas (Report "Equity-driven Achievement-focused School District: A Report on Systemic School Success in Four Texas School Districts")
- 2000-2001, Education Trust names AISD a top performing school district
- 2001-2002, AISD named to The Learning First Alliance Study "Improving Teaching & Learning: A Preliminary Look At the Practices of Five School Districts" due to the district's focus on student achievement
- 2002-2003, National Center for Educational Accountability (NCEA) named AISD a "Best Practices District"
- 2002-2003, Excelling District Award by Texas Education Agency's Division of Migrant Education
- 2004-2005, Mayor's Award for Excellence
- 2004-2005, Distinguished Achievement Award by the Texas Business & Education Coalition (TBEC)

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*Producing the
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- 2005, Harvard Business Review examined AISD's efforts to sustain and accelerate significant increases in student performance [Case "Meeting New Challenges at the Aldine Independent School District (A), published Oct. 14, 2005]
- 2006, National Center for Educational Accountability and Data Quality Campaign cite Aldine ISD for Best Practices ("Data Use Drives School and District Improvement, Sept. 2006)
- 2006 Texas Quality Award of Excellence (TAPE)
- 2006, Region 4 Superintendent of the Year Award presented to Nadine Kujawa
- 2008 H-E-B Education Excellence Award
- 2008-2009, Texas Educational Excellence Project (TEEP) Study (Texas A&M University)— AISD rated best among large districts for educating Latino students; fourth among the state's largest districts in educating African American students (reflects data from 2005-2007)
- 2004, 2005 & 2008, AISD a three-time finalist for Broad Prize for Urban Education
- 2009 Broad Prize for Urban Education
- 2010-2011, TEA Best Practice Award for Collaborative Monitoring & Intervention Model
- 2010-2011, Superior rating from Schools FIRST (Financial Integrity Rating System of Texas; eighth consecutive year AISD receives Superior rating)
- 2010-2011, AISD earns 4.5 Stars out of 5 Stars from Financial Allocation Study of Texas (FAST)
- 2010-2011, AISD earns Texas Comptroller Gold Leadership Circle Award for fiscal transparency
- 2011, Harvard Business Review continued its Public Education Leadership Project (PELP) — Case "Meeting New Challenges at the Aldine Independent School District (B)," published July 14, 2011, serves as a follow-up to "Meeting New Challenges at the Aldine Independent School District (A)," published in 2005
- 2011, Region 4 Superintendent of the Year Award presented to Dr. Wanda Bamberg

Aldine ISD continues the Baldrige journey toward excellence and strives to maintain high academic achievement for all students by "Producing the Nation's Best".

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