

## **Bouldin Creek Community Concerns About AISD Plan to Close Becker Elementary**

### **The process excluded stakeholder participation.**

- Boundary Task Force members did not solicit input, involvement, or information from the Becker PTA, Becker's Campus Advisory Council (CAC), Becker teachers, the Bouldin Creek Neighborhood Association (BCNA), impacted adjacent neighborhoods, social services, and other community groups while developing the proposal.
- AISD has restricted public feedback to one forum at Becker Elementary and the "Citizens Communications" portion of trustee meetings.

### **The timeline is too fast.**

- AISD has released little detailed information about the proposal or its supporting documentation.
- Calculations of capacity, enrollment, and utilization with regard to Becker Elementary are unclear.
- Cost analyses have not been shared with the public.
- No opportunity to communicate with and ask questions of the Task Force has been afforded to stakeholders.

### **The proposal contradicts City of Austin planning goals and analyses.**

- Rejecting the neighborhood school model does not reflect City of Austin and Envision Central Texas goals of encouraging vibrant, walkable (and bikeable) urban neighborhoods.
- Students who now walk or bike to school would be bused to schools in other neighborhoods.
- Students outside Bouldin Creek would be bused from their neighborhoods to attend the pre-kindergarten center.
- AISD has not addressed traffic and parking concerns or potential environmental impacts.
- Enrollment projections supporting this proposal do not appear to reflect City of Austin density surveys and other data.

### **The benefits seem uncertain.**

- Proposal could have a destabilizing effect on the lives and education of Meadowbrook children and other Becker students, 89 percent of whom are economically disadvantaged.
- Busing children from the Meadowbrook development to a different school than other Bouldin Creek children could have a divisive effect on the neighborhood.
- Moving away from a neighborhood school model would likely decrease parental involvement and create transportation difficulties for many families.
- Only Becker's first-floor classrooms could be used for a pre-kindergarten center, and the school would likely require extensive remodeling.

### **AISD bears some responsibility for underenrollment of central city schools.**

- Boundary re-drawings of the late 1980s sent children from a portion of Bouldin Creek neighborhood to Travis Heights Elementary.
- AISD has implemented no consistent, sustained plan to increase enrollment at Becker Elementary.

## **AISD, Becker Elementary, and the Bouldin Creek neighborhood should develop a five-year plan to increase enrollment at Becker Elementary.**

Zilker, Travis Heights, and Brentwood elementaries—and successful urban schools in other cities—can offer ideas for developing a comprehensive, collaborative plan to boost enrollment. Options could include:

- Bringing the sixth grade back to Becker Elementary, which would also ease overcrowding at Fulmore Middle School.
- Phasing in broader boundaries for Becker Elementary.
- Expanding the pre-kindergarten program at Becker Elementary and opening enrollment to families in other neighborhoods.
- Expanding Becker's special education inclusion program.
- Creating a magnet program through grants and relationships with the Armstrong Community Music School, Dougherty Arts Center, and other nearby cultural organizations.

