

# Vision Statement

Austin will be recognized as a leader in education with a culture of educational excellence, cradle to career, embraced in every aspect of our community.

# Mission Statement

Austin Aspires will bring together community resources and families to challenge all learners to seek excellence and equip them to achieve results through shared community vision, evidence-based decision making, collaborative action, and investment and sustainability.



**Austin Aspires**  
**December 2015**

## IN THIS ISSUE

### Austin Aspires Goals and First Action Team Meeting Dates

*All learners will be ready for kindergarten.*

January 6 at noon, Town Center

*All learners will be challenged to achieve their academic potential.*

January 7 @ noon, Town Center

*Our community will support and enhance parents and mentors in their role as primary influencers of our learners.*

January 8 @ noon, Town Center

*Our community will provide equal access to opportunities which encourage our learners to explore areas of personal interest and prepare for post-secondary education or career.*

January 15 @ noon, Town Center

*Our community will address social, emotional, mental and physical barriers to success for all learners.*

January 19 @ 5pm, Town Center

### Goals, p.1

Our Leadership Table selected five aspirational goals to support as a community. Action Teams will determine indicators and measures for these goals and strategies for achieving growth in our community.

### Focus Groups, p.2

Focus groups were held in the Austin community during the 2014-2015 school year around the topic of educational excellence. Participants included students, school staff, parents, and community members.

### Leadership Table, p.2

Our Leadership Table convened in the summer of 2015 to review data from our focus groups and select common aspirational education goals for our community. Membership included leaders from business, philanthropy, faith communities, government, and schools.

### Action Teams, p. 3

Our Action Team network was launched in November of 2015. Community members were invited to join Action Teams in one of our five goal areas. Teams will begin meeting in January. All are invited to work with us.

## Focus Groups

Throughout the 2014-2015 school year, our organization hosted focus groups throughout the community of Austin. In meetings with students, school staff members, teachers, parents, community members, and local organizations, we asked the question “What do students in Austin need to achieve educational excellence?”

It was critical that we collect this information in order to address the specific needs of our Austin community. We are so thankful for the honest, open, and insightful feedback we received from our supportive community.

In order to achieve the goal of educational excellence for all, our community identified the following areas of need with great frequency:



- basic needs
- interest exploration
- healthy adult relationships
- access to opportunities
- resources for health care
- access to transportation
- mentors
- job shadowing

### FOCUS GROUP DATA SUMMARY

If you are interested in reading a full summary of the data collected from our focus groups, please contact our office or download the documents from our web site.

WWW.AUSTINASPIRES.ORG  
507.437.0920



## Leadership Table

The Austin Aspires Leadership Table was convened on July 23, 2015. Members included representatives from business, philanthropy, faith communities, non-profit agencies, government, and education. These leaders spent time reviewing feedback from adult and student focus groups held during the 2014-2015 school year. Based on this data, they have selected five education goals to support in our community.

### Our Leadership Table Members:

- Dr. Adenuga Atewologun
- Ms. Diane Baker
- Ms. Amy Baskin
- Dr. Mark Ciota
- Ms. Gail Dennison
- Mr. Jeffrey Ettinger
- Mr. Sandy Forstner
- Mr. Todd Hepler
- Ms. Ann Hokanson
- Mr. Nate Jansen
- Mr. David Krenz
- Mr. Brian Krueger
- Ms. Laura Marreel
- Mr. Tedd Maxfield
- Mr. Craig Oscarson
- Mr. Gary Ray
- Pastor Mike Sager
- Mr. Matt Schmit
- Mr. Tom Stiehm
- Mr. Jake Vela

# Action Teams

Austin Aspires Action Teams were launched in November 2015. These collaborative networks are groups of community members who work together to achieve a common goal. The network exists to review data; commit to common outcome measures; identify best practices within priority areas; and align, coordinate and leverage resources. By working together, the network can eliminate duplication of services and unnecessary strain on existing resources while still being able to serve the largest number of students with the best services possible. Each Action Team will determine indicators and measures for each goal, map the assets related to each goal in the community, and determine strategy for aligning our work as a community and enhancing and expanding successful programs.

Our Action Teams will begin meeting in January of 2016. If you are interested in serving on one of these teams, please call or email the Austin Aspires office.



## Austin Aspires Board of Directors

Gema Alvarado

John Engelstad

LeeAnn Ettinger

Jana Haynes

Craig Johnson

Chad Sayles

## Austin Aspires Executive Director

Jennifer Lawhead

## Our Partners



# Austin Aspires Past, Present, and Future



Austin Aspires was formed in 2014 to meet the goals of Vision 2020's Education Leaders. Austin Aspires is a local non-profit agency using collective impact to effect education in our community. Collective impact is the commitment of members from different sectors of our community to the same set of goals. The StriveTogether Partnership in Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky uses collective impact as a means to improve education outcomes in their communities. Austin Aspires is an exploring member of the StriveTogether network.

This newsletter provides a summary of our work in 2015 and our plans for 2016. Please contact us if you would like more information or would like to join one of our Action Teams.

[www.austinaspire.org](http://www.austinaspire.org)  
[lawhead@austinaspire.org](mailto:lawhead@austinaspire.org)  
507.437.0920

**Austin Aspires**  
December 2015

301 North Main Street  
Austin, MN 55912