San Antonio Day

San Antonio ISD Seeks Turnaround Leader as Struggling Schools Face State Intervention

Trustees draft superintendent profile focused on academics, turnarounds, and community alignment ahead of tight search timeline

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San Antonio Independent School District trustees are searching for a new superintendent to lead the district's turnaround efforts as nearly a third of its campuses face the risk of receiving D or F ratings. The board is looking for an experienced, hands-on operator who can improve academic performance, steady the district's budget, and prepare students for life after graduation. Trustees are working with a governance consultant to draft a job profile centered on rigorous curriculum, aggressive turnaround plans, and post-graduation readiness, as they aim to avoid a short-term caretaker and find a leader who will stay long enough to see reforms through.

Why it matters

SAISD is facing significant challenges, with enrollment sliding and nearly 25 of its 86 campuses at risk of receiving failing grades under the state's A-F rating system. This puts many schools, and the district's autonomy, at risk of state intervention that could replace elected trustees and the superintendent. The district is under pressure to quickly find the right leader to reverse this slide and avoid losing local control.

The details

Trustees met with governance consultant AJ Crabill to draft a superintendent profile focused on rigorous curriculum, aggressive turnaround plans, and post-graduation readiness. They want someone who will stay long enough to see reforms through, not a short-term caretaker. The board also signaled the need for the next superintendent to help them exercise meaningful oversight of district progress. The district has also moved to partner with outside operators in an attempt to blunt consecutive failing ratings, a controversial decision that drew protests from parents and staff.

- Outgoing superintendent Jaime Aquino is set to retire in January 2027.
- The SAISD board has placed a recommendation to hire a superintendent search firm on a special meeting agenda for April 13, 2026.

- The board plans to launch community listening sessions and move quickly into candidate vetting ahead of Aquino's scheduled January 2027 departure.

The players

Jaime Aquino

The outgoing superintendent of San Antonio Independent School District, set to retire in January 2027.

AJ Crabill

The governance director for the Council of the Great City Schools, who is working with SAISD trustees to draft the superintendent profile.

SAISD Board of Trustees

The elected board overseeing the San Antonio Independent School District, who are leading the search for a new superintendent.

What they're saying

"We want someone who will stay long enough to see reforms through instead of a short term caretaker."

— *SAISD Trustee*

"The board wants a leader whose values line up with the community's, to avoid 'frictions day one'."

— *AJ Crabill, Governance Director, Council of the Great City Schools*

"Crabill urged trustees to prioritize student outcomes over 'adult comfort' and to insist on high quality professional development for teachers."

— *AJ Crabill, Governance Director, Council of the Great City Schools*

What's next

The SAISD board plans to approve the contract for a superintendent search firm at a special meeting on April 13, 2026. This will kick off community listening sessions and a compressed timeline to vet candidates ahead of Aquino's scheduled January 2027 departure.

The takeaway

SAISD is under immense pressure to find the right leader who can quickly turn around its struggling schools and avoid state intervention. The board is seeking an experienced, hands-on superintendent who can improve academics, manage the budget, and prepare students for life after graduation - all while aligning with the community's values. The tight timeline will test whether trustees can land an executive with both the will and the toolbox to reverse the district's slide.