AUSTIN ACHIEVE

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

School Health Advisory Council

2025-2026

Annual Report

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Mission

The mission of the AAPS SHAC is to foster a healthy, safe, and supportive school environment that empowers scholars with the physical and mental wellness necessary to excel at top universities.

Vision

Austin Achieve SHAC envisions a community where every scholar has the health and wellness foundation to reach their highest academic potential.

Overview

In compliance with Texas Education Code § 28.004, this document serves as the official annual written report for the Austin Achieve Public Schools (AAPS) School Health Advisory Council (SHAC). The fundamental mandate of the SHAC is to ensure that local community values are directly reflected in the district's health, wellness, and instructional frameworks. Over the course of the 2025–2026 school year, the council structured its operations, established clear parent-led governance for leadership, conducted rigorous reviews of evidence-based adolescent health education, and audited local campus compliance with the district's Local Wellness Policy (LWP).

I. Governance, Composition, & Legal Compliance

Texas statutory law establishes definitive mandates regarding the composition and operations of local school health advisory councils. AAPS achieved comprehensive alignment with these state mandates during the current cycle

1-Appointments & Non-Employee Parent Majority

5 active members to the local council were appointed. To satisfy the legal requirement that the majority of members must be local parents who are not directly employed by the school district, the council's structure maintains a 60% parent majority:

- Ellen Bond Harsch (Parent Member): Parent of an AAPS 8th-grade scholar. Formalized as SHAC Co-Chair via a unanimous 5-0 vote on January 29, 2026.
- Ashley Harmon (Parent Member): Parent of an AAPS Pre-K 3 scholar.
- Teresa Cantu (Parent Member): Parent of an AAPS 12th-grade scholar.
- Tyler Heath (District Staff): Chief Operating Officer.
- Rafael Aldana Zayas (District Staff): Child Nutrition Compliance Manager.

2. Composition Metrics

AAPS SHAC MEMBERSHIP COMPOSITION		
Parent Members (Non-Employees)	3 Members	60%
District Staff Representatives	2 Members	40%
Total Appointed Voting Council Seats:	5 Members	

II. Academic Year Meeting Matrix

Meeting Session & Date	Primary Agenda Focus	Core Outcomes & Actions	Attendance Count
Session 1 January 21, 2026	Governance Baseline	Reviewed initial operational protocols and prepared prior timeline documents.	4 of 5 Members
Session 2 January 29, 2026	Adolescent Health & Curriculum Audit	Unanimous appointment of Ellen Bond Harsch to Parent Co-Chair & Formal consultation with Austin Public Health regarding evidence-based instruction.	5 of 5 Members
Session 3 May 4, 2026	Local Wellness Policy Review & Audit	Comprehensive presentation of current goals, USDA lunch standards, and campus activity data & Parent-led deliberation on field rules and teacher enforcement parameters.	4 of 5 Members
Session 4 May 27, 2026	Annual Report Evaluation & Approval	Council executed a final evaluation of the compiled 2025–2026 Annual Report & Report and its structured recommendations were unanimously approved for direct submission to the Board of Trustees.	5 of 5 Members

III. Detailed Coordinated School Health Program Audits

1. Coordinated Health & Mental Wellness Curriculum

The council conducted an intensive structural review of the district's partner instructional programming, examining modules provided through the Austin Public Health (APH) Austin Healthy Adolescent (AHA) initiative. This evidence-based framework is supported via federal Teen Pregnancy Prevention (TPP) grants and general City of Austin funding lines.

HEALTH EDUCATION ARCHITECTURE: INTEGRATED PILLARS	
MENTAL HEALTH	Cultivates goal-setting, critical thought, and rigorous choices.
EMOTIONAL HEALTH	Addresses interpersonal social dynamics and mindfulness methods.
PHYSICAL HEALTH	Somatic changes, abuse identification paths, and bodily protection tools.
SPIRITUAL HEALTH	Explores core morals, standards, and identity without specific religious doctrine.

- **Age-Appropriate Sequential Layout:**

- Middle School (6th Grade Base): Concentrates heavily on general anti-bullying tactics, online behavioral parameters, cyberbullying strategies, and building exit pathways from peer pressure. The curriculum frames bullying from both the target's and the instigator's perspectives to supply comprehensive behavior modification.

- Middle School (7th & 8th Grade Base): Extends into substance abuse prevention, the physical changes of puberty, and early awareness regarding sexually explicit materials or physical/sexual abuse hazards.

- High School Base: Delves deeply into comprehensive relationship choices, standard birth control selections, STI/HIV testing logistics, and the structural "wheel of power and control" to mitigate financial or emotional abuse scenarios.

- **Legal Compliance Safeguards:**

The council verified that the program complies fully with strict Texas state legislation requiring an explicit parent Opt-In signature. Standalone consent sheets must be delivered completely unattached from other general school documents, and parents retain the statutory right to opt into or out of individual lessons independently. Reference workbooks remain openly accessible in the front lobby for community auditing.

2. Child Nutrition & Local Wellness Policy (LWP) Oversight

The SHAC performed an exhaustive audit of food service deliverables, ensuring close coordination with USDA mandates and child wellness goals.

- Universal Food Program Access: Through the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP), AAPS safely serves 100% free breakfast, lunch, and supper to all scholars without cost. This includes the National School Lunch Program, the School Breakfast Program, and the CACFP At-Risk Supper Program, which extends into after-school learning windows. Comprehensive meal service is also safely maintained across summer instruction blocks throughout June and July.

- Competitive Food Parameters & Campus Restrictions: To counter childhood obesity and maintain standard compliance, competitive foods (outside commercial items) are restricted from property grounds from midnight until 30 minutes after the official final period. Deliveries from off-campus phone applications are prohibited for elementary and middle school scholars; high school scholars can earn application access strictly by accumulating performance-based merit points ("Achieve Bucks").

- Campus Celebration Rules: Birthday parties must be scheduled strictly during the final instructional block to minimize academic disruptions. All items brought to the classroom must be commercially packaged and prepared within a licensed facility to guarantee safety standards; home-baked cakes are explicitly prohibited.

- Physical Education Activity Metrics: Physical metrics are safely managed through the state-aligned Healthy Wise and Wise physical curriculum. The district intentionally balances caloric intake with structured energy expenditure, driving participation via elementary running programs and secondary soccer clubs

IV. Core Council Observations & Official Board Recommendations

Based on direct public health metrics, operational audits, and systematic review of parent member input, the SHAC submits the following formal action items to the Board of Directors:

- **Recommendation 1: Add Wellness Policy Training to Back-to-School Staff Training:**

- **Core Finding:** The council reviewed the wellness policy and found that schools are getting confused about food rules. Specifically, some schools are inadvertently applying strict rules (such as nutritional standards and commercial packaging requirements) to lunches brought from home. Those strict rules apply only to school-provided food, cafeteria programs, and official celebrations—not to what students pack for themselves. The council wants to fix this so the rules are applied correctly and consistently everywhere
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- **Official Recommendation:** The SHAC recommends adding wellness policy training to back-to-school professional development for all staff to ensure food rules are applied consistently across the board. This training will clearly teach staff that strict guidelines, like requiring store-bought or commercially packaged items, apply only to school-sponsored events and classroom-wide treats. Meals brought from home are completely exempt, ensuring the school properly follows its health policies while fully respecting each family's personal food choices for their children.

- **Recommendation 2: Utilization of the Completed SHAC Public webpage**

- **Core Finding:** We are happy to report that our new, dedicated SHAC webpage is now live on the district website. Working with the IT department, we created this centralized space to improve transparency by including clear online guidelines and an easy way for the community to view it.

- **Official Recommendation:** The SHAC recommends that school leaders use this new webpage to post all upcoming agendas, official meeting minutes, and video recordings within the legally required 10-day window. Doing this creates a permanent, easy-to-access record that keeps the community informed and ensures the district stays fully compliant with the law.

- **SHAC Webpage Link: https://www.austinachieve.org/about-us/departments/child-nutrition/shac**

- **Recommendation 3: Inter-Agency Support Pathways for Parenting and Expectant Scholars**

- **Core Finding:** To help prevent students from leaving school and support their overall well-being, the council saw a need to connect community care resources more directly with students who may need them most.

- **Official Recommendation:** The council recommends that campus health services and counseling teams set up formal referral pathways with regional health organizations. The district should work with Nurse-Family Partnership to support first-time expectant student parents from pregnancy through the child's second birthday and use networks such as Planned Parenthood for additional student wellness referrals.

V. Council Conclusion & Future Outlook

The Austin Achieve Public Schools SHAC has completed its oversight, curriculum review, and policy evaluation work for the 2025–2026 instructional cycle. By strengthening parent-led co-chair governance, reviewing evidence-based health education frameworks, and launching its public webpage, the council has built a strong foundation for long-term operations.

At our final session on May 27, 2026, the council conducted a rigorous review of this compiled document and unanimously approved its findings and recommendations for submission to the governing board.

The council respectfully requests that the Board of Directors formally accept this annual report, the recommended staff alignment regarding wellness policy scopes, and continue to champion the strategic development of our coordinated school health and transparency initiatives.

Respectfully submitted by unanimous alignment and final approval of the Austin Achieve Public Schools School Health Advisory Council on May 27, 2026.