

# Youth Equity Summit-Team Guidelines

Thank you for your interest in putting together a team for the upcoming Youth Equity Summit. The goal of the summit is to bring student voice into conversations around equity that are influencing important decisions in our school district and city.

**What do we mean by equity in education? It means that ALL students, no matter their race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, ethnicity, language, religion, family background, or family income, have access to the educational resources they need to be successful (Aspen Institute).**

All AISD high schools are being invited to have teams. We expect to have at least 7 teams, and hopefully more, as well as individual participants from all high schools.

A team should consist of the following:

- At least 5 students, along with with a teacher/staff/ volunteer adult coordinator. Teams can be as large as 15 or more. Two students should be designated as team leaders who will speak for the team in presentations.
- Some level of diversity that is reflective of the student body. We will leave that up to the team to decide what that looks like, but considerations should be given to the mix of grade levels, gender, race, ethnic identity, neighborhood, interests . . . in other words, your team should bring with it a variety of voices and opinions.
- Ability to attend the summit on March 28 from 11:30 am to 3:30 pm.
- A willingness to read a few documents in preparation, and complete your team survey.



At the summit, we will have time when participants are in mixed discussion groups, in order to be with students from other schools, as well as time together as a team.

**A significant part of the summit (90 minutes) will be working together as teams with a facilitator to begin brainstorming and developing presentations on an equity issue that each team will choose. Towards the end of the afternoon, each team will have a chance to present the progress they have made, and to hear reflections from other students.**

After the summit, teams may choose to continue developing their presentations for a future event that would include school, city and county leadership.

**All notes from the Youth Equity Summit, including small group and team sessions, will be part of an equity report that will be delivered to the AISD Board of Trustees in May. Students will be invited to be part of that presentation. Our hope is that students at the summit will also form a team to plan next steps, including a follow-up summit.**

While teams are free to brainstorm around any equity issue they choose, here are some examples of possible issues/topics:

1. Austin is the #1 city in the U.S. for economic inequity. In other words, the difference between “haves” and “have nots” is extreme in Austin, based on average family income. At the same time, the cost of living in Austin is rising.
  - a. How do you think economic inequity affects students from your school, and from different parts of our city? Do opportunities differ from one school to another?
  - b. Are there ways, in the short term, to make sure that students have more equitable opportunities?
  - c. Are there ways, in the long term, to reduce economic inequity in Austin?
2. Many people in Austin have cars, but others depend on public transportation. Our public transportation system, compared to many large cities, is underdeveloped, preventing people from being able to easily access jobs, clinics, grocery stores and other resources.
  - a. Does the experience of students at your school match the above statement? Is it true for students and families at other schools? What are examples of how it affects people from your school and community?
  - b. Are there ways, in the short term, to make transportation more equitable?
  - c. Are there ways, in the long term, to make transportation more equitable?
3. In AISD (and many Texas school districts), students who live 2 miles or closer are asked to provide their own transportation or walk to school. For some families unable to drive their children to school, this may mean as much as 8 miles of walking per day for a parent accompanying a child, no matter the weather. It should be noted that other states and localities vary, with some offering bus transportation to all students, no matter the distance.
  - a. What is the experience at your school with transportation? Do you find instances where transportation inequities affect a student’s ability to be at school or take part in after-school, weekend or summer activities?

- b. Are there ways, in the short term, to make transportation to school more equitable?
- c. Are there ways, in the long term, to make transportation to school more equitable?

**There are many other areas where equity can be addressed. For example, how do the following issues intersect with educational and economic equity in our city and our schools?**

- Climate change
- Gender issues
- Race and ethnicity
- Gentrification
- Immigration and Refugees
- School closure and facilities
- Access to college
- Affordable housing
- Neighborhood safety
- Gun violence
- Our legal system