

# Family Engagement Services by Parent Support Specialists

2019–2020

## Overview

Austin Independent School District (AISD) staff provide community and parent engagement support and learning opportunities to families of students attending district schools. AISD's Parent Engagement Support Office (PESO) staff, within the Department of Communication and Community Engagement, coordinate many of these support and learning activities. Using a combination of federal, district, and city funding, AISD employed parent support specialists (PSSs) at most of its Title I elementary, middle, and high schools during the 2019–2020 school year. PSSs help enhance school-family communication, partnerships, and relationships by connecting families, schools, and community resources, with the goal of increasing student achievement.

This report summarizes some of the parent and family engagement services provided by

family engagement support to schools, communication and outreach to families and community members, parent and family education opportunities (e.g., workshops, classes), and professional development sessions for AISD staff. The 2019–2020 school year also included COVID-19 pandemic support services for families and students. PESO staff also provide guidance and monthly training to PSSs about engaging parents through partnerships to strengthen students' academic success. PSSs use the district's eCST data system to record their parent and family engagement activities. Each time PSSs provide an individualized service to a student's family (e.g., home visit, referral to a social service agency, translation service, one-on-one meeting), they document the service on the student's service tracking record. For 2019–2020, AISD PSSs provided services to 19,832 students' parents, families, or legal guardians, of whom 72% had students at elementary grade levels. The number of services to parents, families, or legal guardians increased significantly after COVID-19-related school closures in the spring of 2020. PSSs provided services to 15,503 individuals after school closures on March 13, 2020, compared with 8,324 prior to school closings (note that some students received services both before and after school closings; therefore, the unique number of services provided for the entire school year is lower than the combined number of services provided before and after campus closures).

In addition, PSSs helped organize and/or conduct classes, trainings, and workshops to

