

Abilene Independent School District Board Document – VIII.A

Meeting Date: March 6, 2025

Meeting Type: Meeting

Item Type: Report

Future Action Required: No

If Yes, Month:

Subject: HS Cell Phone Policy for 2025-2026

Background Information:

The Building Brighter Futures initiative was launched to provide families with greater flexibility in selecting the best educational environment for their children within Abilene ISD. The first step in this process was to sunset two campuses—Ortiz and Thomas Elementary Schools—and give families the ability to choose from a set of campuses rather than be assigned to a specific school. This was the major component of the initiative, ensuring that every impacted student had the opportunity to submit their top three campus choices.

Students from Thomas Elementary were given the option to choose from Taylor, Bowie, Martinez, and Purcell, while students from Ortiz Elementary could select from Martinez, Purcell, and Stafford. The goal was to empower families to make informed decisions while also managing campus capacities effectively. To accomplish this, the initiative prioritized a clear, structured process to eliminate confusion and ensure a smooth transition for all affected students.

To facilitate this transition, a dedicated School Choice website was created to provide parents with detailed information about their available options. The website and the accompanying Google Form were intentionally designed to funnel parents to only the information and choices relevant to their specific situations. Rather than presenting all possible options, the system directed parents based on their individual scenarios, ensuring they only saw the schools applicable to their child's transition. This approach made the decision-making process more straightforward and eliminated confusion. A dedicated hotline and email support system was also established to assist families with any questions or unique circumstances, providing reassurance and guidance throughout the transition process.

The submission window was open from January 27 to February 7. During this period, parents were able to submit their school choices via the Google Form. After the February 7th deadline, campus principals personally contacted every parent who had not yet submitted a form to ensure that all families had the opportunity to participate in the selection process. Once all responses were gathered, the data was compiled into a Google Spreadsheet, where it was compared against choice campus capacities. This data played a critical role in determining whether a student's first-choice campus had sufficient room. If capacity allowed, students were placed at their first-choice campus. Had space been limited, the second and third choices would be considered. We successfully placed each student in their first-choice selection.

Once this process was complete, a personalized notification system was used to inform parents of their child's school assignment. Using document merge tools, customized placement letters were automatically generated and distributed via regular mail and e-mail. This ensured that every family received timely notification regarding their child's placement. Additionally, campus

principals were asked to send parents a Remind message stating that they should have received this notification.

Collaboration was also key in the implementation of this initiative. Campus principals were granted real-time access to school choice data, allowing them to track submissions and communicate directly with families as needed. Furthermore, Human Resources utilized the data to inform staffing decisions, ensuring that schools were properly resourced based on student placements. This integration of student choice data with staffing plans helped ensure smooth transitions for both students and staff.

This process was well received by families and school leaders. Parents expressed appreciation for the clear, streamlined process.

Attached Supporting Documents:

The Building Brighter Futures website will be referenced:

<https://www.abileneisd.org/page/building-brighter-futures>
<https://www.abileneisd.org/o/aisd/page/choose-your-school>

The Google Spreadsheet and the Choice Application form will be referenced. Feel free to enter a fictional student or two to explore all the questions within the form.

<https://forms.gle/7a6LijN3F9PdDco86>

The Spreadsheet used to collect the data will be referenced. You will have the view only access to this spreadsheet. The information within the spreadsheet is confidential and should not be shared publicly or discussed with individuals outside the board.

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1bmdKjSneN6S8CWeDzfJGkIxVyGffVG0cnT88RI024aM/edit?usp=sharing>

Fiscal Implications:

N/A

Administrative Recommendation:

N/A

Contact Person:

Dr. Gustavo Villanueva
Mrs. Alison Camp