

Agenda of Workshop Meeting

The Board of Trustees Abilene Independent School District

A Workshop Meeting of the Board of Trustees of Abilene Independent School District will be held Thursday, January 8, 2026, beginning at 5:00 PM in the Valley View Room, One AISD Center 241 Pine Street, Abilene, Texas 79601.

The subjects to be discussed or considered or upon which any formal action may be taken are listed below. Items do not have to be taken in the same order as shown on this meeting notice. Unless removed from the consent agenda, items identified within the consent agenda will be acted on at one time.

- I. Call to Order
- II. Oral Communication from the Public
- III. Board/Superintendent Announcements/Information
- IV. Board Workshop Items
 - A. Refunding Application for Head Start and Annual Update on Needs and Goals
 - B. Comprehensive and Targeted Schools
 - C. 2026 Board Election Timeline
- V. Business Items Requiring Board Action
 - A. The Board will consider the appeal to the decision on Challenged Books.
 - B. The Board will consider disposition of Challenged Library Material.
- VI. Adjournment

Abilene Independent School District Board Document – Agenda Item IV.A

Meeting Date: January 8, 2026 Meeting Type: Workshop

Item Type: Information Only Future Action Required: Yes If Yes, January 12, 2026

Subject: Head Start Refunding Proposal

Background Information:

The Office of Head Start provides notice to the program once the refunding process for the next fiscal year can begin. On November 25, 2025, AISD received the official note stating the annual funding and enrollment levels AISD is eligible to apply for Fiscal Year 26. The Head Start fiscal year is May 1, 2026– April 30, 2027. This refunding application is for year five of our five-year grant cycle. To ensure AISD is considered by OHS for funding, the application must be submitted in the Head Start Enterprise System by February 1, 2026.

The Head Start Policy Council reviewed, discussed, and approved the application on December 15, 2025. In January, they will review, discuss and approve the projected Head Start budget.

Attached Supporting Documents:

AISD Funding Guidance Letter Notice (information only)

Head Start Non-Competitive Grant Application Instructions 4.0 (information only)

Abilene ISD Head Start Goals, Objectives, and Action Plan

AISD Head Start Organizational Chart

AISD Community Needs Assessment 2025-2025

Refunding Proposal including Program Planning Decisions and Proposed Head Start & Early Head Start Budgets

Fiscal Implications:

AISD Early Head Start and Head Start Program Refunding: \$6,092,844

Administrative Recommendation:

It is recommended to approve the 2026-2027, Head Start/Early Head Start Refunding Proposal, 2026-2027 Program Goals and Objectives, and updated 2025-2026 Community Needs Assessment.

Contact Person:

Julie Wilson, Director of AISD Early Childhood Programs



ADMINISTRATION FOR
CHILDREN & FAMILIES

Office of Head Start | 330 C St., SW, 4th Floor, Washington DC 20201 | headstart.gov

November 25, 2025

Grant No. 06CH012163

Dear Head Start Grant Recipient:

Your funding application for the upcoming budget period must be submitted by February 1, 2026. The following table reflects the annual funding and enrollment levels available to apply for:

Period of Funding: 05/01/2026 - 04/30/2027

Annual Funding	Head Start	Early Head Start
Program Operations	\$3,238,648	\$2,765,695
Training and Technical Assistance	\$36,359	\$52,142
Total Funding		\$6,092,844

Enrollment Levels	Head Start	Early Head Start
Federal Funded Enrollment	380	141

Application Submission Requirements

The application must be prepared and submitted in accordance with the Head Start Grant Application Instructions with Guidance, Version 4.0 (Application Instructions) for a continuation application. It must be submitted on behalf of the Authorizing Official registered in HSES. Incomplete applications will not be processed.

Application Instructions are available on the homepage and in the 'Resources' section of HSES. Please review the instructions carefully prior to preparing the application.

Funding is contingent upon the availability of federal funds and satisfactory performance under the terms and conditions of the Head Start award. Annual funding levels are subject to change because of Congressional action or program performance and may result in additional funding guidance from the Office of Head Start.

One-time Program Improvement or Health and Safety Requests

Grant recipients encountering program improvement needs that cannot be supported by the agency budgets or other resources are invited to apply for one-time funding. This funding must be applied for separately through the Supplement or Supplement-Facilities 1303 amendment

type in HSES. Please select the appropriate amendment based on the description.

Requests generally include but are not limited to:

- Facility projects (construction, purchase, or major renovations requiring 1303 applications)
- Minor repairs and enhancements
- Playground installations or upgrades
- Funding to support transportation needs with investments in buses or other vehicles necessary to operate the program
- Security and surveillance investments to assure maximum safety of children

Requests are prioritized and funded based on funding availability and may require additional time before a final decision.

For questions regarding application instructions or program improvement needs and requests, please use HSES Correspondence. For assistance submitting the application in HSES, contact help@hsesinfo.org or 1-866-771-4737.

Thank you for your cooperation and timely submission of the grant application.

Sincerely,

Office of Head Start



Head Start **Non-Competitive** Grant Application Instructions

Version 4.0

September 2025



ADMINISTRATION FOR
CHILDREN & FAMILIES
Office of Head Start



PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT OF 1995 (Pub. L. 104-13) STATEMENT OF PUBLIC BURDEN:

The purpose of this information collection is for eligible entities to apply for Head Start funding. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 20 hours per respondent, including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and reviewing the collection of information. This collection of information is required to receive funding under the Head Start Act (42 USC 9801 et seq.). An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information subject to the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

OMB Number: 0970-0207 Expiration Date: 09/30/2028

Overview of Non-Competitive Grant Application

The Office of Head Start requires recipients to submit funding applications for each year of the project period. Recipients applying for a **non-competitive** new grant must follow the instructions for submitting a [Baseline Application](#) for the first year of the new grant. These recipients are in the final 12 months of their current grant. Following the baseline, recipients submit a [Continuation Application](#) for the duration of the project period.

In the [Baseline Application](#), recipients describe the program design, approach to service delivery, and supporting budget. This is an opportunity for the recipient to present their strategies for meeting certain requirements and to ensure the delivery of high-quality services, including a program design that is responsive to the needs of the children and families in the community. In the [Continuation Application](#), recipients describe any changes and/or updates to their budget. The Office of Head Start analyzes each application to understand whether the recipient's proposal is reasonable, allowable, and allocable.

Recipients that received a grant through the **competitive process and are submitting their first grant application in HSES** must complete a [Baseline Application](#). These recipients will submit their baseline either a few months or up to a year after the start of their competitive new grant, depending on the length of their initial budget period. For example, a recipient awarded a new grant, through the competitive process, with an initial budget period of 07/01/2023—03/31/2024, must submit a baseline application to receive funding for their 04/01/2024—3/31/2025 budget period.

The Office of Head Start carefully considers each recipient's application to assure that agencies are meeting the intent of the Head Start mission, purpose, and regulations prior to issuing the Notice of Award.

Who should complete the grant application?

The completion of the grant application is a team effort. The application covers a wide range of topics and activities, and it represents a recipient's commitment to the implementation of the program and use of federal funds.

Are there general formatting requirements?

Yes, please adhere to the following:

1. Each page must be double-spaced, with one-inch margins on all sides.
2. Use a font size of 12 for narrative.
3. Each page must be numbered in the lower right corner.
4. Application Narrative and Budget Justification may not exceed 30 pages.

The application must follow the sequential order of the application instructions for the narrative. Tables, headers, and illustrations may have different formatting.

How do I receive assistance with application submission?

Please contact your Regional Office for assistance with the *Application and Budget Justification Narrative instructions*. For further technical assistance, please contact help@hsesinfo.org or 1-866-771-4737.

Instructions for Completing the **Baseline Application**

Submit the **complete grant application package** in an electronic format using the Head Start Enterprise System (HSES) at <https://hses.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hsprograms>. The grant application section is located under the “Financials” tab. Incomplete applications will be returned for correction.

[ACF-IM-HS-19-04](#) Accounting Simplification for Head Start and Early Head Start, announced the consolidation of the Operations CANs by program. Please note that the Program Schedule and budget projections (Budget tab) must still be completed by Head Start program operation and Early Head Start program operation within the application separately.

A **complete grant application package** requires completing the following application tabs in HSES:

- Program Schedule
- Budget
- Other Funding
- SF-424A
- SF-424
- Documents

Signed Assurances

After submitting the grant application, HSES automatically generates the following electronically signed assurances for download in the SF-424 tab

1. SF424B, Assurances – Non-Construction Programs;
2. Certification Regarding Lobbying;
3. Certification Regarding Compliance with Compensation Cap (Level II of Executive Schedule); and
4. Tax Certification Form

Reminders for completing application tabs in HSES

- Make relevant changes where needed (e.g., Budget, Other Funding, SF-424, Program Schedule).
- **Change in Scope:** If proposing a Locally Designed Option, Enrollment Reduction or Conversion, indicate the application includes a “Change in Scope” request in HSES by clicking the appropriate box within the Change in Scope section on the Summary tab.
- **Budget:** A comprehensive budget aligns with the proposed program approach and identifies allowable costs and is aggregated by object class budget category. Separate projected budgets for Head Start and Early Head Start by grant and by delegate must be

completed.

- **Budget:** Enter each partnership contract for direct services to children and families under the “Contractual” budget category tab, line “8. Other Contracts”. For each recipient or delegate budget, enter an individual financial line item in the budget for each contract over \$250,000 and briefly explain the services to be provided. For any single line-item costing more than \$250,000 in the “Other” budget category, please enter an individual financial line item. **Applications with consolidated amounts will be returned for correction.**

What documents do I upload in the Documents tab in HSES?

Upload the following documents in their respective folders of the Grant Application Documents tab in HSES. **Do not upload documents completed on-screen, such as the SF-424 and signed assurances.**

Cost Allocation Plan

Upload a written cost allocation plan, certified in accordance with [45 CFR §75.415](#) that describes how shared costs, including shared staff, are allocated based on proportional benefit as required in [45 CFR §75.405](#). Indirect cost must be included unless the applicant has a negotiated indirect cost rate agreement or has adopted use of the 15% de minimis rate.

Indirect Cost Rate Agreement

If applicable, upload a copy of the current or proposed negotiated indirect cost rate agreement between the agency and/or delegate agencies and the respective cognizant Federal agency. If using the 15% de minimis indirect cost rate, upload a copy of the policy or other written record indicating the date upon which the rate was adopted.

Application Narrative

Sub-Section A: Service Delivery

Describe your program’s approach to meeting the need for comprehensive child development services for eligible children and families in your service area by addressing the questions below.

1. **Service and Recruitment Area** (see [1302.11\(a\)](#) and [1302.13](#))
 - a. Identify the service and recruitment area for proposed program operations.
 - b. List your service locations. If applicable, include proposed child care partners and identify the number of children proposed to be served through partnership slots.
2. **Needs of Children and Families** (see [1302.11\(b\)](#) and Special Instruction on Community Assessment)

- a. Provide a summary of data from your community assessment that informs the program's selection criteria and design, such as:
 - i. The estimated number of eligible children under five years of age and pregnant women by geographic location, spoken language, and other demographic variables as appropriate, including children experiencing homelessness, in foster care, and with disabilities;
 - ii. Data regarding the education, health, nutrition, social service, child care, parent schedules, and other service needs of the proposed children, families, and pregnant women; and
 - iii. The availability of other child-development, child-care centers, and family child care programs that serve eligible children, including home visiting, publicly funded state and local preschools, and the approximate number of eligible children served.

3. Proposed Program Option(s) and Funded Enrollment Slots (see [1302 Subpart B](#) and [the HSPPS Compliance Table](#))

- a. Specify the proposed program option(s) (i.e., center-based, home-based, family child care, and slots for services to pregnant women) and describe how your program will ensure compliance with [1302 Subpart B](#) requirements and other applicable requirements.
 - i. **Locally Designed Option.** If requesting a locally-designed program option variation (LDO) waiver under [1302.24\(c\)](#), explain the rationale and address the questions outlined in [Locally-designed Program Option Considerations](#).
- b. Discuss how your program option(s) will meet the needs of children and families in the communities served including how these options support populations identified in the community assessment and selection criteria.
- c. **Enrollment Reductions and Conversions.** If proposing to reduce or convert the number of funded enrollment slots, explain the rationale, and address the considerations outlined in ACF-IM-HS-22-09 and Enrollment Reduction and Conversion Considerations Appendix. Applications that do not fully address such consideration will be returned for correction, and in some cases the Regional Office may require recipients to submit a separate Change in Scope Application.
- d. **Migrant and Seasonal Head Start.** List centers and crops in the center service area. For each center, include dates that the center is open and closed, hours of operations (e.g., 6:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.), and number of infants, toddlers and/or preschoolers expected to enroll. You may upload this as a supporting document in the MSHS Center Service Area folder.

4. Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, and Attendance (see [1302.13](#), [1302.14](#), [1302.15](#), and [1302.16](#))

- a. Describe the recruitment process to ensure services will be provided to those in greatest need of program services, including specific efforts and expected challenges to actively locate, recruit, and enroll children experiencing homelessness, children in foster care, and children with disabilities.
- b. Describe your program's strategy to promote regular attendance, including special efforts for chronically absent children.

5. Education and Child Development (see [1302 Subpart C](#))

If center-based or family child care program option is chosen, respond to item a, and c through d. If home-based program option is chosen, respond to items b through d. If locally-designed program option is chosen, respond to items that apply. Programs that serve American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) children also respond to item e.

- a. Center-based or family child care programs:
 - i. Identify the curriculum(s) your program will use including, if applicable, curricular enhancements and/or significant adaptations.
- b. Home-based programs:
 - i. Identify the home-based curriculum(s) your program will use including, if applicable, curricular enhancements and/or significant adaptations.
 - ii. Describe group socializations to be offered.
- c. Identify the developmental screenings and assessments your program plans to use and why, including how the program addresses screening and assessment for children who are dual language learners.
- d. Describe opportunities offered to parents and family members to be engaged in their child's education such as participation in screenings and assessment and providing feedback on the selected curriculum and instructional materials.
- e. For programs serving AIAN children, and where applicable, describe efforts for Tribal language preservation, revitalization, restoration, or maintenance.

6. Health (see [1302 Subpart D](#))

- a. Describe how your program will, in partnership with parents, meet the oral health, nutritional, mental health, social and emotional well-being, health status and care needs of children and support each child's growth and school readiness:
 - i. Include how your program will ensure up-to-date child health status, ongoing care, and timely follow-up care.

- ii. For mental health and social and emotional well-being, describe how a program will provide mental health consultation services in partnership with staff and families.
- b. Describe your program's timeline for conducting screenings of the health and safety environments of each center and/or family childcare home where services are provided using the [Health and Safety Screener](#). Health and Safety screenings must be completed within 45 days of:
 - i. the start of the school year;
 - ii. children receiving services in a new environment; and/or
 - iii. start of project period when the project period begins during the program or school year.

7. Family and Community Engagement (see [1302 Subpart E](#))

- a. Describe key program strategies for building trusting and respectful relationships with families and for providing program environments and services that are welcoming and culturally and linguistically responsive to families, including those specific to fathers.
- b. Describe engagement activities to support parent-child relationships, child development, family literacy, and language development.
- c. Describe how your program has selected and is implementing a research-based parenting curriculum. Describe how your program engages parents in a research-based parenting curriculum.
- d. Describe key program strategies for family partnership services, including:
 - i. Procedures for conducting the family assessment and family partnership process and aligning activities to the [Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework](#) outcomes; and
 - ii. Tracking progress toward individual family goals and needs.
- e. Provide a few examples of community partnerships that facilitate access to services or resources in the community that are responsive to family partnership goals and children's needs. Identify any challenges to necessary partnerships and how the program plans to address those challenges.

8. Services for Children with Disabilities (see [1302 Subpart F](#))

- a. Describe how your program will ensure full participation in program services and activities for enrolled children with disabilities, including but not limited to those who are eligible for services under IDEA and those who already have an IFSP or IEP.
- b. Describe how your program will ensure the individualized needs of children with disabilities are met, including how the program will collaborate with and help parents in the process

and how the program will coordinate and collaborate with the local agency responsible for implementing IDEA.

9. Transition (see [1302 Subpart G](#))

Describe strategies and practices to support successful transitions in:

- a. Transitions to and from Early Head Start;
- b. Transitions from Head Start to kindergarten; and
- c. Transitions between programs.

10. Services to Enrolled Pregnant Women (see [1302 Subpart H](#))

- a. Describe how your program facilitates access to a source of ongoing care for enrolled pregnant women that do not have existing access to such care.
- b. Describe your program's strategy to provide prenatal and postpartum information, education, and services such as those that address fetal development, nutrition, risks of alcohol and drugs, postpartum recovery, and infant care and safe sleep practices.
- c. Describe how your program's family partnership services include a focus on factors that influence prenatal and postpartum maternal and infant health, includes other relevant family members, and support the transition process.

11. Transportation (see [1303 Subpart F](#))

- a. Describe the level of need for child transportation services.
- b. Describe how your program will either directly meet transportation needs or assist families in accessing other transportation so that children can attend the program.

Sub-Section B: Governance, Organizational, and Management Structures

Describe the governance, organizational, and management structures that support quality services and maintain accountability, efficiency, and leadership within your program by addressing the questions below.

1. Governance (see [45 CFR Part 1301](#) and [Section 642\(c\)-\(d\)](#) in the Act)

Structure

- a. Identify the member
 - i. with expertise in fiscal management or accounting;
 - ii. with expertise in early childhood education and development, and
 - iii. the licensed attorney familiar with program governance issues in the governing body/tribal council.

- b. Describe how your program ensures additional members on the governing body reflect the community, including parents, and representation from other key programmatic areas.
- c. Describe the makeup of the policy council or if applicable, the policy committee. Include how each program option is represented.

Processes

Governing Body

- a. Describe how the governing body receives key program information as outlined in [1301.2\(b\)\(2\)](#) to inform their ongoing responsibilities including how decisions submitted by the policy council are incorporated into the decision-making process.
- b. Describe other key processes to ensure the governing body maintains effective ongoing oversight of program operations and accountability for federal funds.
- c. If applicable, describe and explain the responsibilities delegated to any advisory committee related to program governance and improvement of the Head Start program. Include how the governing body maintains its legal and fiscal responsibility in the process.

Policy Council and Policy Committee

- d. Describe how the policy council, and if applicable, the policy committee, receives and shares key program information as outlined [1301.3\(c\)\(2\)](#) to inform their ongoing responsibilities.

Parent Committees

- e. Describe how the parent committees communicate with staff to inform program policies, activities, and services to ensure they meet the needs of children and families.
- f. Describe the process for communication with the policy council and policy committees.

2. Human Resources Management (see [1302 Subpart I](#))

- a. Provide an organizational chart identifying the management and staffing structure including the Executive Director, the Program Directors, managers, and other key staff. Include assigned areas of responsibility and lines of communication. You may upload this as a supporting document.
- b. Describe your program's approach to establishing pay scales, determining compensation rates, and wage comparability within service area.
- c. Describe systems developed to ensure criminal background checks occur prior to hire for all staff, consultants, and contractors in the program.
- d. Describe orientations provided to new staff, consultants, and volunteers.

- e. Describe key features of your program’s approach to staff training and professional development. Describe your program’s approach to implementing a research-based coordinated coaching strategy, including the approach to the delivery of intensive coaching for identified staff.

3. Program Management and Quality Improvement (see [1302 Subpart J](#))

- a. Describe key features of your program’s systems for ongoing oversight, correction, and assessment of progress towards your program’s identified goals. Include approaches that promote effective teaching and health and safety practices.
- b. Describe key features of your program’s management process and system to ensure continuous program improvement that relate to effectively using data and ongoing supervision to support individual staff professional development and promote staff retention.
- c. Describe how the management system ensures budget and staffing patterns that promote continuity of care, allow sufficient time for staff participation in training and professional development, and allow for provision of the full range of services.
- d. If applicable, describe any internal controls findings/issues identified through ongoing monitoring, self-assessment, or recent audits and describe plans to address such findings/issues.

Budget Justification

Separate projected budgets must be completed for both Head Start and Early Head Start program operations and Head Start and Early Head Start training and technical assistance by grant and by delegate.

Upload a detailed narrative to explain the costs by object class budget category identified within the SF-424A Section B-6. The total amount of funds detailed in the budget narrative must equal the total amount requested in the SF-424A.

Program Operations

- 1. Explain significant personnel and fringe adjustments for this budget period for lines a and b on the SF-424A. Please identify salaries that are cost allocated amongst other programs, federal and non-federal.
- 2. For each line c through h on the SF-424A, ensure the narrative aligns with the amounts requested for direct and, if applicable, indirect costs. If applicable, identify cost allocated

expenses, federal and non-federal.

3. If applicable, describe the planned use of cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) funds based on the related Program Instruction.
4. Identify each source of non-federal match, including the estimated amount per source and the valuation methodology. Explain how your program determined that proposed non-federal match is allowable per [45 CFR §75.306](#), [2 CFR § 200.306](#), and [Section 1303.4](#).
5. **Enrollment Reductions and Conversions.** If requesting an enrollment reduction or conversion, explain the rationale and address the budget considerations outlined in [ACF-IM-HS-22-09](#) and [Enrollment Reduction and Conversion Considerations Appendix](#). **Applications that do not fully address such consideration will be returned for correction and in some cases the Regional Office may require recipients to submit a separate Change in Scope Application.**
6. If requesting funds for equipment as defined in [2 CFR § 200.439](#), identify each item individually and describe the procurement procedures to be followed for the purchase of such equipment. See equipment definition at [2 CFR § 200.1](#).

Training and Technical Assistance

7. Training and technical assistance funds are awarded separately by program. Describe the use of these funds, by object class budget category identified within the SF-424A Section B-6, to support the recipient's training and technical assistance activities.

Sample Delegate and/or Partnership Contracts

If applicable, upload sample delegate and/or partnership contracts.

Other Supporting Documents

If applicable, upload other supporting documents as needed.

Instructions for Completing the **Continuation Application**

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Application Narrative

1. **Locally Designed Option.** If requesting a locally-designed program option variation (LDO) waiver under [1302.24\(c\)](#), explain the rationale and address the questions outlined in [Locally-designed Program Option Waiver Considerations](#)
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Other Supporting Documents

If applicable, upload other supporting documents as needed.

Abilene ISD's Head Start

Goals, Objectives, and Action Plan FY 2026-2025

The Abilene ISD's Early Childhood Program has many strengths including strong community partnerships and tenured employees who have extensive experience with Early Head Start and Head Start children and families. The programs also have a long history of high performance and excellent on-site reviews with the most recent being a CLASS (Class Assessment Scoring System) onsite review December 2-6, 2019, and a Focus Area Two (FA2) monitoring review January 27-31, 2020. In October 2023, the program participated in a Focus Area One (FA1) monitoring review and was fully compliant on all Performance Standards. The program will participate in a CLASS review November 25, 2024-February 21, 2025. The program also participated in a Focus Area Two (FA2) review March 3-7, 2025. Both reviews resulted in full compliance.

The AISD's Early Childhood Program's Annual Self-Assessment was completed during the spring of 2025 and approved by the Policy Council in August of 2025. Data analyzed from staff, community members and families revealed there were no non-compliance issues. Data from both programs indicated that all learners demonstrated growth in all school readiness goals. The area for continual instructional growth and training in Head Start was found in the Language and Literacy area. The programs determined that mentor coaches and staff development training would, over time, strengthen staff's abilities to teach children needed skills. Parental involvement and development of parenting skills were also noted areas for growth.

The Community Assessment, discussed and approved by the Policy Council on November 18, 2025, revealed a growing trend from parents expressing significant needs in a wide range of areas including knowledge of community resources and childcare. Data collected through the Community Assessment also revealed that children need strong academic, social, and emotional skill development.

Based on data collected, analyzed, and disaggregated, AISD Early Childhood leadership team determined that the following goals, objectives, and action steps would be used to strengthen the teaching and learning processes. The goals and objectives were reviewed and approved by the Policy Council on December 15, 2025.

Goal 1: Early Childhood Program will use the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework to ensure all children receive quality comprehensive services, integrated across all program areas.

Measurable Performance Objective 1:

- Children's outcome data, from the beginning of the year to the end of the year, will demonstrate an average of 15% increase in cognitive, social/emotional, and physical development skills based on the school readiness plan.
- Early Head Start child's outcome data is determined where children are developmentally through the use of the GOLD assessment tool that compares their progress to other children in their age group nationwide. This assessment determines where they are within widely held expectations. Children will demonstrate skills in social/emotional, physical, language, cognitive, literacy, and math within the upper 75% as compared to other children in their age group nationwide.

Expected Outcome(s):

- Typically developing students will transition from the program(s), demonstrating age-appropriate school readiness skills.

Progress/Outcomes:

Challenges:

Measurable Performance Objective 2:

- The percentage of Early Head Start/Head Start parents indicating that they have the skills to support the needs of their children on the Family Strengths/Needs Outcomes data will increase by 10% from the beginning of the year to the end of the year.

Expected Outcome(s):

- Parents will indicate they have gained additional skills to support the needs of their children.

Progress/Outcomes:

Challenges:

Goal 2: The AISD Early Childhood Program will create and maintain a positive classroom environment that strengthens social/emotional, communication, and problem-solving skills for children and staff.

Measurable Performance Objective 1:

- Through staff development and coaching, Head Start instructional staff will obtain an average Emotional Support domain score on CLASS observation of at least 6.0, as demonstrated through formal/informal observations and assessment data.
- Through staff development and coaching, Early Head Start instructional staff will demonstrate an average score on ITERS-3 of at least 5.0.

Expected Outcome(s):

- Staff outcomes data will demonstrate competency in social/emotional, self-regulation, and problem-solving skills. Increased staff competency will result in improved classroom instruction and support students' progress toward school readiness goals.

Progress/Outcomes:

Challenges:

Measurable Performance Objective 2:

- Through the implementation of a social/emotional curriculum, Head Start students' initially demonstrating social emotional needs on eDECA will show an increase in total protective factor, self-regulation, initiative, behavior and attachment by 10% from the BOY to EOY assessments.
- Early Head Start students initially demonstrating social emotional needs on e-DECA will demonstrate a 10% increase in initiative, attachment and self-regulation skills from the BOY to EOY.
- eDECA definitions:
 - ✓ Self-regulation: being able to manage/regulate emotions
 - ✓ Attachment: healthy bond with caregivers
 - ✓ Initiative: independent care
 - ✓ Behavior: ability to function appropriately in any/all settings
 - ✓ Total Protective Factor: resiliency

Expected Outcome(s):

- Student outcomes data will demonstrate an increase in age appropriate social/emotional, self-regulation, and problem-solving skills.

Progress/Outcomes:

Challenges:

Goal 3: The AISD Early Childhood Program will engage with the community to provide comprehensive services needed by children and families to promote School Readiness.

Measurable Performance Objective 1:

- Head Start/Early Childhood will secure and maintain a minimum of 70 partnerships with community resources, enhancing service delivery to families.

Expected Outcome(s): Children and families will be connected to community services needed for self-sufficiency and to be school ready.

Progress/Outcomes:

Challenges:

Measurable Performance Objective 2:

- Head Start/Early Head Start will increase engagement with community partners/agencies by providing training opportunities at a minimum of 3 times per year for staff and/or community members.

Expected Outcome(s):

- Staff and community partners will have a deeper understanding of family needs and the services available to address those needs.

Progress/Outcomes:

Challenges:

Goal 4: AISD Early Childhood Program will fully integrate technology for the purpose of high student and family engagement, academic success, and safety.

Measurable Performance Objective 1:

- Head Start/Early Head Start will increase staff knowledge through professional development related to technology utilized in the program by providing a minimum of 5 trainings per year.

Expected Outcome(s):

- Staff will be proficient in the use of technology needed to complete job-related responsibilities.

Progress/Outcomes:

Challenges:

Measurable Performance Objective 2:

- The Head Start/Early Head Start Program will increase opportunities for children to explore innovative, developmentally appropriate technology and learning materials by utilizing a minimum of \$45,000 a year to purchase high-quality instructional materials.

Expected Outcome(s):

- Children will have the age-appropriate technological skills necessary to be successful in a twenty-first century classroom.

Progress/Outcomes:

Challenges:

Measurable Performance Objective 3:

- The Head Start/Early Head Start Program will utilize innovative technology and procedures during the instructional day 100% of the time to ensure the safety of students, parents and staff.

Expected Outcome(s):

- Students, parents, and staff will be able to teach and learn in a safe environment.

Progress/Outcomes:

Challenges:

Measurable Performance Objective 4:

- The Early Childhood Program will utilize technology to complete data checkpoints and aggregate and disaggregate program data three times a year to inform continuous growth and improvement across all program areas.

Expected Outcome(s):

- The Program staff will monitor and adjust all aspects of program planning based on data outcomes.

Progress/Outcomes:

Challenges:

Goal 5: AISD Early Childhood Program will recruit and employ high-quality, effective staff who utilize best practices, and understand the importance of student, family, and community engagement.

Measurable Performance Objective 1:

- The Head Start/Early Head Start Program will strengthen and enhance professional development, classroom environment and effective teaching practices by providing practice-based coaching to classroom staff 1 to 4 times monthly, depending upon the level of intensity needed by individual staff members.

Expected Outcome(s):

- Staff will demonstrate progress toward individualized professional development goals.

Progress/Outcomes:

Challenges:

Measurable Performance Objective 2:

- 100% of Head Start/Early Head Start instructional staff will be highly qualified to provide a rigorous and relevant learning environment.

Expected Outcome(s):

- Instructional staff will demonstrate knowledge and implementation of best practices, which support student/family engagement within the Early Childhood Program.

Progress/Outcomes:

Challenges:

**AI SD HEAD START/EARLY HEAD START
Organizational Chart**

Policy Council

Abilene ISD Board of Trustees

AI SD Accounting

Supt. of Schools
Dr. John Kuhn

Assoc. Supt. for C & I
Patricia Blue

Dir. Federal Programs
Shannon Marshall

Dir. of Early Childhood Programs/HS Director
Julie Wilson

Asst. HS Director/Staff Dev.
Jana Nicole Churchill

EHS Director
Dusty Fahey

Asst. EHS Dir/FCP/Staff Dev
Melanie Adkins

EC Development & Health Services

Community & Family Engagement

Program Design & Management

Program Design & Management

Community & Family Engagement

EC Development & Health Services

- Education/Curric. Coords.
- Disabilities Coordinator
- Health/Nutr. Coordinator/RN
└ RN/LVN
- Mental Health Professionals
└ Mental Health Aides
- Transition/ Motor Lab Coord.
└ Motor Lab Tutors
- Mentor Teachers/Coaches (Title 1)

- Family & Comm Engagement
 - └ Master/Family Advocates
- ERSEA Coordinator
- Family Lit/Fatherhood Spec. (Title 1)

- HS Bookkeeper
 - └ Fiscal Assistant
- Facilities/Transp. Coordinator
 - └ Maintenance (AISD)
 - └ Bus Drivers (AISD)
 - └ Custodians (AISD)
- Campus Secretary
- Data Clerks

- EHS Bookkeeper
- Center Secretaries
- Operations Manager
 - └ Maintenance (AISD)
 - └ Bus Drivers (EHS)
 - └ Custodians (AISD)

- Family & Comm Engagement Coord. - Transition
 - └ Master Family Advocates

- Disabilities/Mental Health
- ERSEA Specialist
- Education Spec. & Education Coach
- Health Coordinator/RN
└ RN/LVN
- Nutrition Consultant (contracted)
 - └ Food Svc. Mgr.
 - └ Head Cooks
 - └ FS Helper

Long Early Learning Center
Instructional Staff

Crockett EHS Center
Instructional Staff

Parent/Child

Parent/Child

Abilene Independent School District

**Community Assessment
2025-2026**



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History of Taylor County & Abilene, Texas

The geographical area now known as Taylor County was created in 1858. It was named for Edward, James and George Taylor, defenders of the Alamo. Dozens of families settled in the southern part of the county in a cut or gap in the Callahan Divide. This settlement was named Buffalo Gap. It became the county seat in 1878.



In the years between 1878 and 1880, the Texas and Pacific Railroad considered two possible routes through West Central Texas. One route was by way of Buffalo Gap and the other was by way of Fort Phantom Hill. When it looked probable that the route would be developed through Buffalo Gap, land values around the settlement began to increase. People fought over land ownership which resulted in litigation and caused a delay in the construction of the railroad.

The Railroad met with landowners and civic leaders in the summer of 1880. The Railroad negotiated with property owners to the north of Buffalo Gap. When the dust settled, the thriving community of Buffalo Gap was bypassed.

One of the landowners, Caleb Merchant, chose the name for the new community. He named the area "Abilene" in honor of the Kansas town to which ranchers had been driving their cattle. The name means "grassy plain" and originally came from a Biblical reference in Luke 3 to a Middle East tetrarchy (empire ruled by 4 rulers).

The area was advertised in newspapers across the state as the "Future Great Town of West Texas." People came in trains and by wagons to buy lots. Over a two-day period of time 319 lots were sold for a total of \$51,310. The profits were split between the railroad and the landowners.

On October 31, 1883, the county seat was moved to Abilene from Buffalo Gap. The Railroad gave the city a solid foundation from which to grow.

In 1891, the beginnings of the educational community began with Simmons College. Over the years, the school grew into Hardin-Simmons University. It was followed by Abilene Christian University and McMurry University. In recent years, Abilene leaders were successful in bringing branches of Cisco College, Texas State Technical Institute, and Texas Tech University to the town. The educational community meets educational needs of citizens of Abilene, surrounding communities and international students. The student population adds to the economic growth in Abilene and holds a wealth of volunteers for various community groups and activities within the school system. In the 1950's community members began working to get an Air Force base in Abilene. Residents raised \$839,261 (an equivalent of \$7 million today) to buy 3,400 acres for the base. Today, Dyess Air Force Base holds the distinguished honor of being the city's

largest employer. The Base is home to the C-130s, B-1 Bombers and the training grounds for all B-1 air crews. Also, during the 1950's, oil was discovered within a 75-mile radius of Abilene. Many were drawn to the area due to oil related jobs. Abilene became the headquarters for independent operators and major oil companies. Refining plants were also established in the area.

Since its beginnings in 1858, Taylor County and Abilene have grown to populations of 143,326 and 128,207 respectively. Agriculture, the military, and the oil industry set a solid economic foundation. The most common occupations are educational services, health care and social assistance; arts, entertainment, recreation and accommodation and food services; professional, scientific, management and administrative waste management, public administration, retail trade, construction, manufacturing, and other service-oriented occupations. Civic leaders continue to encourage business growth in the area.

History of Head Start Grant in Taylor County & Abilene Independent School District

In 1965, the community Head Start grant was awarded to the Taylor County Community Action Program (CAP). That same year, Taylor County CAP delegated full operation of the local Head Start program to Abilene Independent School District (AISD) and the “pass-through” relationship established continued for 45 years.

In 1999, the Taylor County CAP released the service area outside of the AISD attendance boundaries to the Region 14 Service Center. The rural areas were released because, at that time, 90% of Taylor County’s population was located within the AISD boundaries and a long waiting list of eligible children was maintained with students within the AISD attendance zone. As well as the limited funds resulted in the service area being redefined in grant applications as those areas of the county that were “within the AISD attendance boundaries.” However, any parent wanting to enroll a child residing outside of AISD’s attendance boundaries may fill out an application for possible enrollment and be placed on the waiting list, with the understanding that students living in AISD boundaries will be served first.

In 2010, the Taylor County CAP relinquished the Head Start Grant. AISD applied to be the grantee and was awarded the grant to serve the AISD boundaries within the city of Abilene, Texas. The partnership/Local Education Agency (LEA), with AISD, was already established making this transition seamless.

As of today 87.6%, of the population still resides within the AISD boundaries. Although there are now two grantees in the county, Head Start services are not currently available for all eligible students in Taylor County. In the Taylor County area that Region 14 serves, two of the school districts have Head Start programs. Three do not have Head Start, but they have ECSE and Pre-K programs in place for students.



Profiles of the Head Start Campuses

There are two sites in Abilene that serve Head Start (HS) eligible children. In total, the two sites are funded to serve 521 students and pregnant teens. Long Early Learning Center (Long ELC) is located in Northwest Abilene (3600 Sherry Lane). The original building was built in 1959. In 2017, Long ELC was renovated, to meet the needs of small children, as well as a new wing built so all the early childhood programs/classrooms would be in one site.



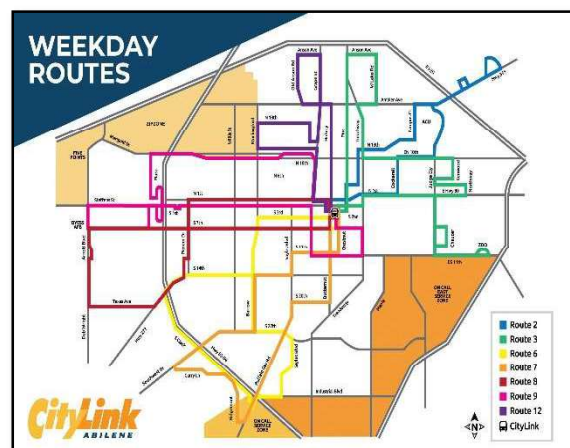
Long ELC encompasses the Head Start funded program (380 three and four-year-old children) and multiple other programs: Pre-Kindergarten, Dual Language One-Way, Early Childhood Special Education and the Regional School for the Deaf.

Crockett Head Start located in South Abilene (3282 S 13th), was built in 1950 and a second wing was added in 1953. It was fully renovated in 2001 and 2015. The 2001 renovations were funded by federal funds and local foundation monies. The 2015 renovation were funded by a local bond election. Crockett is funded to serve 132 infants and toddlers as well as up to 9 pregnant teens.



Head Start teen parents and their infants/toddlers can ride buses together from their homes to Crockett HS. Parents sign their infant/toddlers in with the campus staff and then ride the school buses to a middle or high school campus where they attend classes. Crockett is also on the route for the public transportation.

Within the past year Long is no longer on the CityLink Bus route, making it harder for families who rely on public transportation. The LEA assists by providing HS and PK students' transportation services from elementary campuses to Long ELC. According to the 2024-2025 PIR HS provided transportation for 146 families.



AISD Early Childhood Mission Statement

Long and Crockett promotes and advances the school readiness skills needed by young children. This is accomplished through enhancing students' cognitive, social, and emotional development while also supporting and strengthening parent-child relationships.

AISD Mission Statement

AISD will equip learners to make a positive impact in the world through relevant, innovative, and challenging learning experiences.

AISD Board Goals

- AISD will develop a strong literacy and numeracy foundation for every student.
- AISD will advance character development by nurturing habits of mind and ethical, principal-based leadership.
- AISD will prepare all students for success in college and the workforce.
- AISD will fully integrate student-led technology and development innovative learning environments and facilities for the purpose of high student engagement, safety, and academic success.
- AISD will secure high quality, effective staff who embrace diversity, are reflective of and responsive to the district's student body, utilize best practices and understand the importance of student engagement, rigorous and relevant learning environment, and the significance of connecting with students to foster a desire to learn.

AISD Strategic Priorities

- Establish a culture of collaboration between students, teachers, administrators and the AISD community.
- Learners will be actively engaged in classrooms.
- AISD will develop intentional strategic partnerships which capitalize on the strengths, resources, and talents of all stakeholders.
- Tell the AISD story of being a school district of choice that provides unparalleled opportunities for all students, staff, and parents.

1302.11 Determining community strengths, needs and resources & 1302.11 (3)(4)(5) Program Strategic Approach

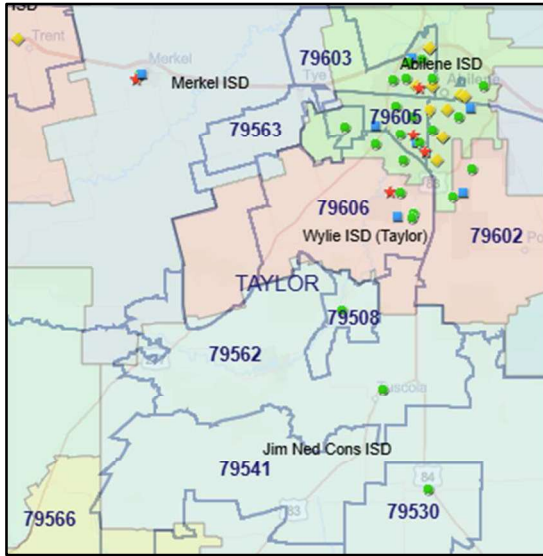
The Head Start Community Needs Assessment (CNA) is conducted to help the leadership and decision-makers better understand the needs of the community, as they seek to provide quality comprehensive child and family development services.

The CNA includes research designed to evaluate the perspectives and opinions of community stakeholders especially those from underserved populations. It is used in planning and developing philosophy statements for the HS programs, as well as determining short- and long-term goals for the programs.

Below is the process for conducting the Early Childhood Head Start CNA

- **Define the community:** AISD boundaries
- **Engage the community:** Families, community agencies who work with our population, LEA, staff, Policy Council, LEA School Board, Parent Committees
- **Collect data:** Community agencies CNA, interviews, and Program Information Report (PIR), LEA data, Community Agencies data, US Census, and other data as show in Sources.
- **Analyze the data:** Analyze the data you've collected.
- **Report and share your findings:** Health/Mental Health & Community Advisory Committee, Policy Council, Parent Committees, LEA School Board, Early Childhood Website
- **Develop an action plan:** development of the program short- and long-term goals, as well as design in services
- **Periodically assess:** Annual review using the previous year's Program Information Report (PIR), with a 5-year comprehensive assessment completed the 2025-2026 school year

1302.11 (a)(1) Service Area for Head Start



The AISD HS program serves children and families residing within the AISD attendance boundaries, located in Abilene, Texas. Abilene is the largest city within Taylor County, which has a total population of 148,813, while Abilene itself is home to approximately 130,501 residents. Taylor County ranks 35th in population among all counties in the state of Texas, indicating a mid-sized urban community surrounded by smaller rural towns.

Economic data reveals that Abilene experiences a higher rate of poverty than both the state and county averages. The poverty rate in Texas is 13.7%, while Taylor County's rate is slightly lower at 13.5%. However, within the city of Abilene, the poverty rate rises to 15.9%, according to the U.S. Census Bureau and Data USA. These figures demonstrate that a significant number of families within the Head Start service area experience economic hardship.

Taylor County includes five independent school districts that collectively serve students from urban, suburban, and rural communities. While all school districts in Taylor County offer Pre-Kindergarten (PK) and Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) programs, Head Start services are only available within AISD and Merkel ISD. This makes the AISD Head Start program a critical provider of comprehensive early learning and family support services within the service area, particularly for children from low-income households.

School Districts within the Taylor County, Texas

Independent School District	Early Childhood Programs Available	Early Childhood Students Served 2024-2025	Student Population 2024-2025
AISD	PK, ECSE, Early Head Start & Head Start	874	14,559
Merkel ISD including Tye	PK, ECSE & Head Start	74	1118
Trent ISD	PK, ECSE, no Head Start	11	144
Jim Ned ISD including Buffalo Gap and Tuscola	PK, ECSE, no Head Start	23	1633
Wylie including Potosi	PK, ECSE, no Head Start	178	5506

Source: ISD Administrative Offices: Enrollment Information 2024-2025

In addition to public early childhood programs, several private and charter schools in Abilene offer services for three- and four-year-old children. However, many of these programs charge substantial tuition fees and require uniforms, creating potential financial barriers for low-income families.

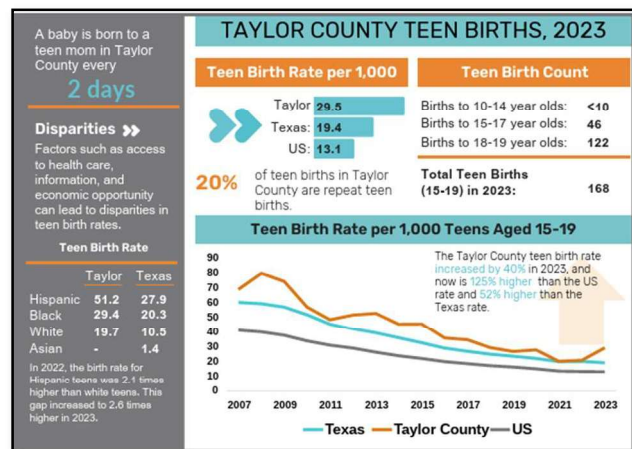
Private Tuition Schools & Charter Schools offering 3-4 yr. old services				
Private School	Early Childhood Programs Available	Offering	Price	Student Enrollment Capacity
Abilene Christian Schools *uniforms required	PK 3 & PK 4	3 days, 4 days, full week	\$4,700 \$5,400 \$6,100	80
St. John's Episcopal School *uniforms required	PK 2, PK 3, & PK 4	3 days Full week	\$6,450 \$8,350	128
Cornerstone Christian School *uniforms required	PK 3 & PK 4	5 ½ days 5 full days	\$4,680 \$6,480	30
Texas Leadership of Abilene (Charter) *uniforms required	PK 4	4 days M-Th	No cost	44
Abilene Classical Academy *uniforms required	Jr. Kindergarten	½ day	\$3,250	Enrollment unavailable

Source: Administrative Offices: Enrollment Information 2024-2025

1302.11 (2)(i) Expectant Mothers

Teen pregnancy continues to be a significant concern for both the State of Texas and Taylor County. In 2023, the Texas teen birth rate was 19.4 births per 1,000 females, while Taylor County's rate was considerably higher at 29.5 births per 1,000 (Healthy Futures of Texas). This elevated rate within the county highlights the ongoing need for comprehensive support systems, preventive education, and accessible reproductive health resources for adolescents. ([Healthy futures of Texas](#))

Within AISD, the number of pregnant students has fluctuated over the past five years, with a general downward trend. The district reported 18 pregnant students last year, 8 of whom were served through the HS program, emphasizing the importance of early intervention and family support services. While current numbers are lower than in previous years—particularly compared to the 2021–2023 period—teen pregnancy remains a reality for many AISD students, impacting educational outcomes, physical and emotional well-being, and long-term family stability.



Teen Pregnancy Numbers

School Year	Crockett HS	AISD
2024-2025	8	18
2023-2024	23	25
2022-2023	25	38
2021-2022	22	41
2020-2021	23	25

Source: AISD

The decline in districtwide numbers may reflect increased access to resources, prevention efforts, and strengthened partnerships with community agencies; however, the teen birth rate in Taylor County remains significantly higher than the state average, indicating that challenges persist.

This data highlights the necessity for continued collaboration between AISD, Head Start, public health agencies, and community organizations to ensure that students receive the academic, social, and health support needed to stay engaged in school and promote positive outcomes for young parents and their children.

1302.11 (2)(i)(A) Race & Ethnicity

The Abilene community is characterized by its growing racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity. This diversity continues to expand as the community welcomes individuals and families from around the world. Abilene serves as one of the locations for the International Rescue Committee (IRC), an organization that provides essential support for refugees, asylees, and survivors of human trafficking.

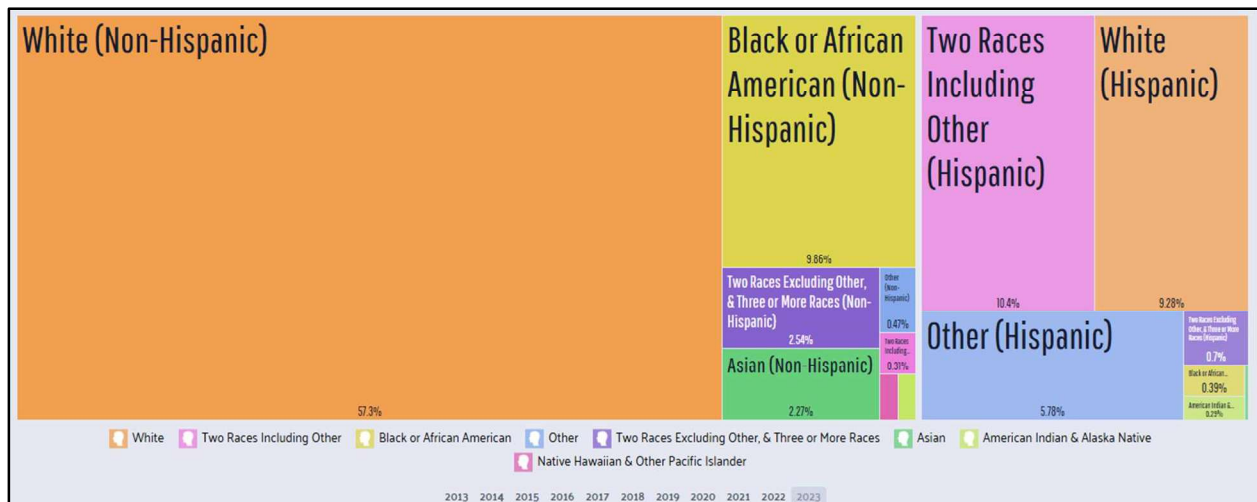
The decision to establish an IRC site in Abilene was influenced by several key factors, including strong community support from local religious organizations and universities, a reasonable cost of living, and accessible medical and community services. Abilene’s job market and established community networks have made it well-suited to support the needs of incoming refugee populations. The IRC plays a vital role in helping newcomers navigate their new surroundings, access education and employment opportunities, and connect with the LEA to ensure successful transitions for families and children.

Within AISD’s HS program, the racial and ethnic composition of enrolled children closely reflects the community’s overall demographics as reported by the U.S. Census. For the 2024–2025 school year, the largest group served within Head Start identifies as White (both Hispanic and Non-Hispanic), followed by African American, children of two or more races, and smaller populations of American Indian, Asian, and Pacific Islander students.

RACE & ETHNICITY OF AISD HS CHILDREN SERVED 2024-2025 SCHOOL YEAR

Subject	Hispanic	Non-Hispanic
RACE & HISPANIC/LATINO ORIGIN		
One race		
White	267	117
Black or African American	57	162
American Indian and Alaska Native	4	2247/620
Asian	1	1
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	1	0
Other		
Two or more races	10	26

Source: AISD PIR 2024-2025



Overall, the data illustrates that Abilene’s HS enrollment mirrors the diversity of the broader community, demonstrating the program’s ability to effectively engage and serve families from a wide range of cultural and linguistic backgrounds. The continued presence of organizations like the IRC, coupled with strong local collaboration, ensures that Abilene remains a welcoming and supportive environment for all families.

1302.11 (2)(i)(B) Eligible Children

Early childhood education plays a critical role in supporting the development and long-term success of children and families in Taylor County. According to the Kids Count Data Center (2023), the total population of children birth through age 17 in Taylor County is 36,711. Of these, 5,418 children (15.3%) live below the federal poverty level. This rate of child poverty highlights the ongoing need for high-quality early childhood education and family support services that address the social, emotional, and developmental needs of young children.

Data from Neilsberg Research (2023) indicates that the population of children under age 5 in Taylor County is 8,206, with an estimated 1,231 children (15%) living below the federal poverty. These young children represent the age group most directly impacted by early childhood programs such as HS, which are designed to provide comprehensive education, health, nutrition, and family support services to families facing economic challenges.

AISD’s early childhood programs served 1,057 students, reaching a significant proportion of the county’s youngest and most vulnerable children, particularly those in low-income households. The HS program not only provide educational readiness but also connect families to community resources, health care, and social services—creating a foundation for long-term stability and success. [Kids Count Data Center](#) [Neilsberg Research](#)

NUMBER OF CHILDREN SERVICED IN AISD IN 2024-2025 SCHOOL YEAR (birth-4)

Crockett HS site (0-3 & pregnant teens)	
0-3	166
Pregnant teens	19
Long HS site	
2-year-olds	7
3-year-olds	156
4-year-olds	272
Long LEA	
4-year-olds	309
ECSE	128
Total Served in Community	1,057

Source: AISD PIR 2024-2025, AISD data

1302.11 (6) Diverse Economic Backgrounds

There are typically not any over income families being served within the HS programs, unless there is a significant family need noticed on the application. Families who are over income in HS, but within the guidelines for the State funded prekindergarten program are placed with the LEA. If someone applies and they are over income for both programs, the application is kept and could be reviewed if opening occur and there is no waitlist.

302.11 (2)(i)(C) Homelessness & 1302.11 (2)(i)(D) Foster Care

The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) Region 2—Abilene area encompasses 28 counties; however, the following data focuses specifically on Taylor County. Recent trends indicate a continued need for early intervention and family support services, particularly for children ages birth through five, who represent a significant portion of those impacted by child welfare involvement.

Department of Family and Protective Services Taylor County, Texas		
	2023	2024
Children served by CPS	1,017	1,176
Birth - 5 served by CPS	436	492
Families Served by CPS	391	438
Children Removed	213	281
Birth - 5 removed	106	134
Children in state conservatorship	615	668
Birth - 5 in state conservatorship	265	261
Total CPS Intakes	3,038	2,801
Of those intakes opened investigations	2,114	1,970
Total Foster Care Homes	188	224

Source: Department of Family Service Data, [DFPS](#)

In 2024, 42% of children served by Child Protective Services (CPS) in Taylor County were between the ages of birth to five. Similarly, 47% of children removed from their homes and 39% of children in state conservatorship fell within this same early childhood

age range. These numbers highlight the vulnerability of the youngest population and underscore the importance of preventive, family-strengthening programs.

While the total number of children served by CPS increased by 15% from 2023 to 2024 (1,017 to 1,176), the number of families served rose by 12%, suggesting broader family involvement and service needs. The number of children removed from homes rose sharply by 31%, from 213 in 2023 to 281 in 2024, with the birth to five population increasing by 26%. In contrast, the number of children in state conservatorship increased modestly by 9%, while the birth to five group in conservatorship decreased slightly by 2%, possibly reflecting reunification efforts or changes in placement practices.

Notably, 70% of CPS intakes in 2024 resulted in open investigations, even as total intakes declined by 8%. This suggests that, while the number of reports decreased, the severity or validity of those reports remained high. The number of foster care homes in Taylor County increased from 188 to 224, indicating a positive response to the rising need for placement options.

AISD Homeless & Foster Care	2024-2025
Children serviced experiencing homelessness	
• Crockett HS	26
• Long HS	73
• Unaccompanied Youth (AISD)	194
• Homeless in other AISD programs	1,175
Total in AISD	1,468
Service Children in Foster Care	
• Crockett HS	7
• Long HS	28
• LEA (less HS)	169
Total in AISD	204

Source: AISD PIR 2024-2025, AISD data

The Head Start program maintains a strong partnership with the AISD Title I and Homeless Liaison, providing coordinated services to students who are homeless, unaccompanied, or in foster care. These partnerships ensure that children have access to basic needs such as school supplies, clothing, and community-based support services, along with family training on available local resources.

The 2024–2025 PIR data indicates that the HS program served a total of 620 children and pregnant teens, exceeding the funded enrollment of 521. The program experienced a 16% turnover rate among students, which aligns closely with the overall mobility rate in Taylor County for 2023, also reported at 16%. This consistency suggests that student transitions within the program reflect broader community movement patterns. Despite the turnover, the program maintains full enrollment and has a lengthy waitlist, demonstrating strong demand and continued community reliance on HS services. [Census Reporter](#)

1302.11 (2)(i)(E) Children with Disabilities

AISD continues to see an increase in the number of students identified with disabilities across its early childhood programs. During the 2024–2025 school year, a total of 3,226 students with disabilities were served districtwide, reflecting AISD’s strong commitment to inclusive education and early intervention.

Of this total, 81 children were served through HS programs. These students were supported through services provided under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), representing 13% of the year’s cumulative HS enrollment, as reported in the PIR.

Beyond the HS grant, the district served an additional 122 preschool students (ages 3–4) through the LEA and 3,023 students from kindergarten through graduation who received special education and related services.

Number of Children with Disabilities

	2024-2025
0-2 (Crockett HS)	27
3-4 (Long HS)	54
Total served by HS Grant	81
3-4 LEA (less the HS Grant students)	122
K-graduation (less the HS & LEA students)	3,023
Total served in AISD	3,226

Source: AISD PIR 2024-2025 & AISD

Under IDEA’s Child Find mandate, AISD actively collaborates with community agencies to identify, locate, and evaluate all children with disabilities who may require special education services. Disabilities identified among children include, but are not limited to: autism, hearing and vision impairments, deaf-blindness, emotional disturbance, intellectual disability, multiple disabilities, orthopedic impairment, speech or language impairment, traumatic brain injury, specific learning disabilities, and noncategorical early childhood (ages 3–5) classifications.

The Abilene community demonstrates a strong commitment to supporting children with special needs and their families. A wide range of community resources are available, including Early Childhood Intervention services (ECI), diagnostic evaluations, speech and language therapy, occupational and physical therapy, music therapy, vision and mobility training, audiology services, respite care, adaptive equipment, orthotic and prosthetic services, childcare assistance, advocacy programs, parent training, and case management.

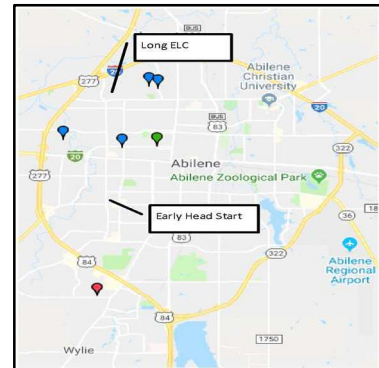
While AISD and its community partners provide a system of supports for children with disabilities, the increasing number of identified students highlights a growing need for expanded early intervention and specialized services. The rise in IDEA-eligible children within HS, coupled with the overall districtwide increase, suggests that families are both more aware of developmental concerns and increasingly reliant on school-based resources.

To meet these needs, there is an ongoing demand for additional qualified special education staff. Likewise, continued professional development is essential to ensure that all early childhood educators are equipped to identify developmental delays and implement inclusive classroom practices.

Overall, the data underscores the importance of sustaining and expanding early identification, intervention, and inclusive education services to ensure that every child in AISD—regardless of ability—has access to the resources and support necessary for lifelong success.

1302.11 (2)(i)(F) Geographic location

Children who turn 5 on or before September 1st of the school year, transition into one of AISD’s 11 elementary schools. Of these, 4 campuses are located on the north side of the city, and 7 are on the south side. The majority of HS eligible students reside in the northwest part of Abilene, which encompasses the Long ELC attendance area and three nearby elementary schools. This area also contains three federally subsidized housing complexes, which provide homes for many HS families, including a significant portion of the refugee population.



Although concentrations of eligible children exist in the northwest, low-income families are dispersed across the city, reflecting the broader distribution of affordable housing. AISD has been intentional in determining the placement of Long ELC and Crockett HS to ensure accessibility for families while addressing the needs of children from both concentrated and dispersed communities.

Abileneha.org/communities

2024-2025 Long ELC & Crockett HS Geographical Enrollment according to household zip codes

	AISD Long ELC	Crockett HS
79601	103	13
79602	91	15
79603- Long ELC zip code	201	38
79605- Crockett HS zip code	200	57
79606	71	9
79607	36	0

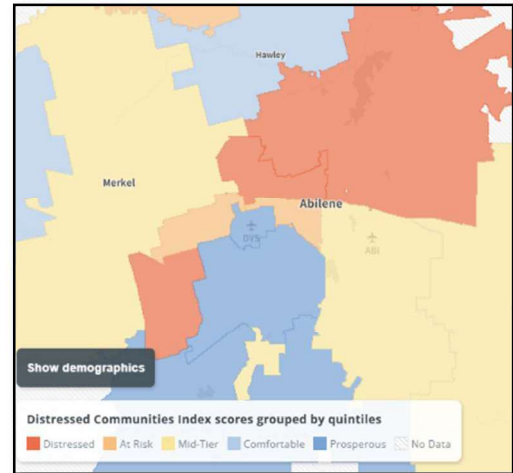
Source: AISD PIR 2024-2025

According to the Distressed Communities Index, Taylor County experiences a 33.1% overall distress, higher than both the national (15.4%) and Texas (22.3%) averages.

Distressed Communities Index:

<https://eig.org/distressed-communities-interactive/?regions%5B0%5D=48&geo=states&lat=35.558&lon=-96.428&z=3.69>

- 79601 - 90.2%- AISD boundary is only part of this zip code
- 79602 - 49.6%
- 79603 - 84.4%
- 79605 - 72.1%
- 79606 - 29.4%
- 79607 - 14.9%



1302.11 (2)(i)(F) Languages

The AISD Early Childhood programs serve a linguistically diverse population, with students speaking at least 12 identified non-English languages. To address the educational and language needs of these children and their families, AISD maintains a dedicated Bilingual/English as a Second Language (ESL) Department, ensuring that students have educational and language needs are being met.

During the 2024–2025 school year, the HS program employed 12 certified ESL teachers, while the broader Early Childhood Program employed an additional 12 certified ESL teachers. Teachers who are not yet ESL certified have been given one year to obtain certification, with ongoing support from the LEA to ensure they are fully prepared to meet the needs of Emergent Bilingual (EB) students.

Languages spoken by children enrolled in AISD Head Start Programs	
	Number of Students
English	587
Spanish	24
Native Central America, South American and Mexican Languages	2
Caribbean Languages (e.g. Haitian-Creole, Patois)	0
Middle Eastern & South Asian Languages (e.g. Arabic, Hebrew Hindi, Urdu, Bengali)	0
East Asian Languages (e.g. Chinese, Vietnamese, Tagalog)	0
Native North American/Alaska Native Languages	0
Pacific Island Languages (e.g. Palauan, Fijian)	0
European & Slavic Languages (e.g. German, French, Italian, Croatian, Yiddish, Portuguese, Russian)	2
African Languages (e.g. Swahili, Wolof)	15
Other (e.g. American Sign Language)	0

Source: AISD PIR 2024-2025

Emergent Bilingual

Crockett HS	13
Long HS	30

Source: AISD PIR 2024-2025

As the number of EB students continues to grow, AISD has prioritized providing interpreter services to support families. The Early Childhood programs offer staff interpreters for Spanish, Swahili, Kirundi, French, Amharic, and American Sign Language, while the LEA provides additional interpreter support for Spanish, Swahili, Kinyarwanda, Kirundi, Pashto, Dari, and other African languages. For languages not readily supported within the district, HS programs collaborate with the IRC and, when needed, local universities to connect families with appropriate interpreting services.

1302.11 (2)(ii) Education

The family education levels for HS are similar to the numbers within the community. AISD worked hard during the pandemic to help students graduate. AISD has worked diligently to support students in achieving educational success by increasing the number of learning environments. Through flexible learning opportunities, AISD maintained a dropout rate of less than 1% (89 students) during the 2024–2025 school year. These efforts underscore the district’s commitment to supporting students and families in completing their education in ways that meet individual needs.

Head Start Family Education

Highest level of education obtained by the child’s parent or guardian	# of families at enrollment
Advanced degree or Baccalaureate degree	36
Associate degree, Vocational school, or some college	108
High School Graduate or GED	277
Less than High School Graduate	121

Source: AISD PIR 2024-2025

AISD provides a wide array of career and post-secondary opportunities. The Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs, offer specialized technical and trade classes to prepare students for high-demand careers. During the 2024–2025 school year, students enrolled in 6,561 CTE classes, demonstrating students’ engagement in a variety of career pathways. The district also supports pathways to higher education through dual credit courses, making both two-year colleges and four-year universities more accessible. Additionally, programs such as Holland Medical School support students pursuing careers in healthcare.

The Abilene community offers multiple post-secondary education options, including four-year universities, as well as two-year colleges and a variety of trade and technical schools and local cosmetology programs.

For families who have less than a high school diploma, AISD provides Adult Education programs, offering GED preparation and career services at no cost for instruction or

materials, ensuring that all community members have opportunities to advance their education and career potential.

1302.11 (2)(ii) Health Conditions/Nutrition

Ensuring that children are healthy physically, socially, and emotionally is a central focus of the HS program. Health staff work closely with families to screen, monitor, and document children’s well-being, while also connecting families to resources as needed. During the 2024–2025 school year, HS demonstrated growth in access to essential health services. The number of children with dental homes increased from 500 at enrollment to 554 by the end of the year, while those with medical homes rose from 574 to 593. Children up to date on EPSDT exams and immunizations increased from 531 to 554, and those on a catch-up immunization schedule decreased from 37 to 27, indicating improved overall health compliance. Immunization exemptions remained low at nine.

	HS enrolled children	
	# of children at enrollment	# of children at end of enrollment year
Dental Homes	500	554
Medical Homes	574	593
Up to date on EPSDT/Immunizations	531	554
Immunizations on a Catch-up Schedule	37	27
Immunization Exemption	9	9

Source: AISD PIR 2024-2025

Nutritional monitoring showed that among Head Start children, 64 were identified as obese, 54 as overweight, 288 as healthy, and 15 as underweight. To address food insecurity, AISD participates in the Care Packs program, providing supplemental weekend snacks to students in need; in 2024–2025, 99 students, or 15% of the early childhood program, received Care Packs. Food insecurity in Taylor County mirrors statewide trends, with 17.7% of households overall and 22.3% of children experiencing insecurity [Feeding America, 2023](#)

Nutritional Conditions of Head Start

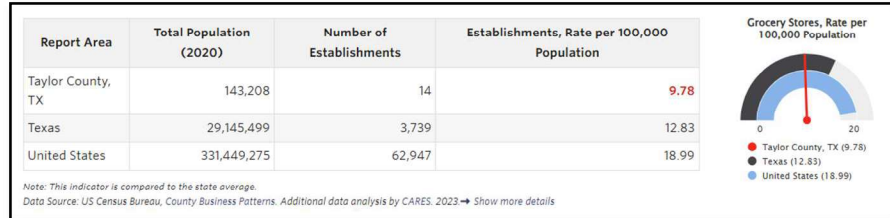
Number of HS children obese	64
Number of HS children overweight	54
Number of HS children healthy	288
Number of HS children underweight	15

Source: AISD PIR 2024-2025

Broader community data contextualizes these findings within the environment of Taylor County, Texas, where the overall food insecurity rate stands at 17.7%, slightly higher than the statewide average of 17.6%. Similarly, child food insecurity in Taylor County is 22.3%, just above the Texas average of 22.2%. These rates suggest that more than one in five children in the area experience uncertainty about consistent access to nutritious food. Additionally, the average meal cost in Taylor County (\$3.36) exceeds

the state average of \$3.11, further compounding challenges for families with limited financial resources.

Access to healthy food options also presents a community-level concern. Taylor County maintains 14 grocery store establishments, equating to a rate of 9.78 grocery stores per 100,000 population—a figure notably below both the Texas average (12.83) and the national average (18.99). This limited access may contribute to food deserts or reduced availability of fresh produce and healthy food options for many families. The scarcity of nearby grocery stores, combined with higher average meal costs and above-average food insecurity rates, may directly influence the nutritional outcomes observed among Head Start children. [SparkMap](#)



1302.11 (2)(ii) Social Service Needs

Families in the HS program are experiencing increased needs due to the rising living costs and inflation in comparison to the minimum wage remaining the same. This is leading to greater reliance on community agencies—many of which are underfunded or not widely known to families. The HS PIR reports 1,579 services provided to 531 families, though recurring supports such as Care Packs are counted only once, indicating actual service levels are higher. HS Family Services continues to focus on connecting families with community resources and providing emergency support.

	Head Start Families
TANF	7
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance (SNAP)	353
WIC (birth-4 years)	263
Children receiving SSI	32
Medicaid/CHIP	568
State only funded, private or other	23
Children with no insurance	10

Source: HS PIR

In Taylor County, 2,219 children under age five are eligible for SNAP, yet HS is only funded to serve 521 of them, though roughly 1,000 children are served annually across early childhood programs. County SNAP data show 7,872 cases supporting 16,860 individuals, with an average benefit of \$329 per case, below the state average. Compared to the state uninsured rate of 9.9% for children under six, HS has a significantly lower rate of about 2%, demonstrating effective outreach and resource connection.

Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) Enrollment

	Texas	Taylor County
Total Cases	1,630,732	7,872
Eligible Individuals	3,657,320	16,860
Age Groups		
Under 5	506,244	2,219
Average Payment / Case	\$376	\$329

Source: [Texas Health and Human Services Dec 2024](#)

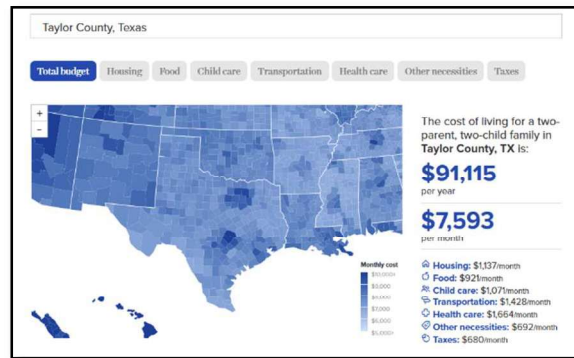
Family structure data reflect changing household dynamics: 72% of HS children live in single-parent homes, with single mothers (382 households) far outnumbering both two-parent households (155) and single-father households (12). A smaller number of children live with grandparents, other relatives, or foster parents.

	HS Families
Two Parents	155
Single Parent	395
Mother (biological, adoptive, stepparent, etc.)	382
Father (biological, adoptive, stepparent, etc.)	12
Non-Parents	
Grandparents	12
Relative other than grandparents	2
Foster parents not relatives	8
Other	

Overall, the data show increasing family need, strong reliance on public assistance, shifting family structures, and the crucial role HS programs and community partnerships play in supporting economically vulnerable families.

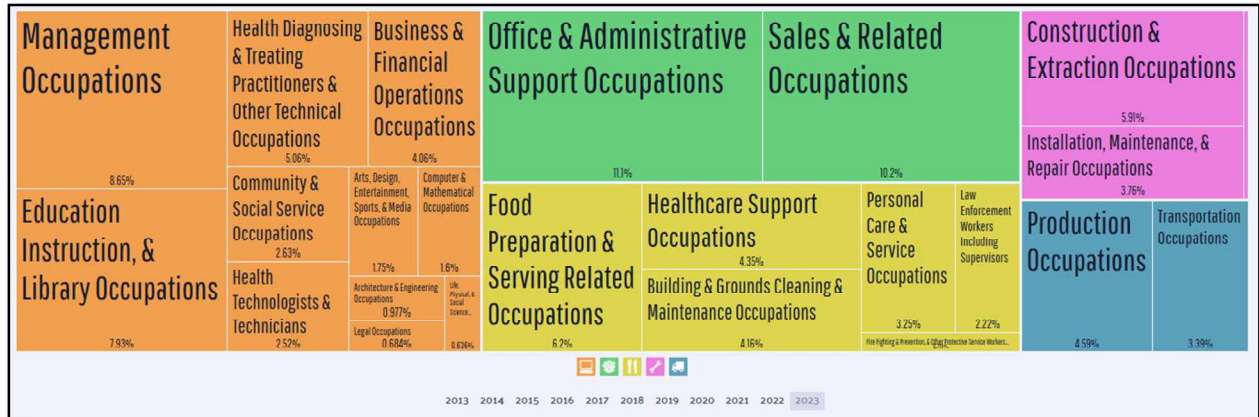
1302.11 (2)(ii) Economic Factors

The economic landscape of Taylor County presents both opportunities and challenges for families living within the Abilene area. While Texas maintains a minimum wage of \$7.25 per hour, the cost of living far surpasses what a minimum-wage income can support. As of January 2025, the annual cost of living for a two-parent, two-child household in Taylor County is \$91,115, or approximately \$7,593 per month, according to the Economic Policy Institute. This cost places Taylor County as having the 100th highest cost of living among the 254 counties in Texas. While the county's median family income ranks 80th highest in the state, this income level does not keep pace with its cost of living. When cost of living is measured relative to median income, Taylor County drops to 174th, indicating that many families face affordability gaps despite the region's moderate-



income rankings. This discrepancy highlights the financial strain felt by households, particularly those earning at or near minimum wage.

Within the Abilene community, a wide range of employment opportunities exists across levels of education, skill, and experience. Job sectors include both unskilled and skilled labor positions. Many entry-level or manual labor jobs—such as construction laborers, farm and crop workers, cleaning staff, cooks, or oil-and-gas roustabouts—require little to no specialized training. However, a significant portion of the local job market demands post-secondary education or technical certification.



<https://datausa.io/profile/geo/abilene-tx>

Despite affordability challenges, Taylor County continues to maintain a relatively stable labor market. Unemployment in the Abilene area has remained consistently lower than both state and national averages. In 2023, the unemployment rate in Abilene was 3.8%, decreasing to 3.4% in 2024. This is lower than the Texas unemployment rate of 4.2% in 2023 and 4.1% in 2024, and below the national rates of 4.1% in 2023 and 4.3% in 2024. These consistently lower unemployment levels show that while jobs are available, the disconnect between wages and cost of living remains a significant concern for many families.

Overall, the economic and workforce data emphasize the need for continued community support, access to training and education programs, and family-centered services that help bridge the gap between employment opportunities and the rising cost of living in Taylor County.

Average Unemployment Rate	2023	2024
Abilene, Texas Unemployment Rate	3.8%	3.4%
Texas Unemployment Rate	4.2%	4.1%
National Unemployment Rate	4.1%	4.3%

[Texas Workforce Commission, Bureau of Labor Statistics](https://www.texasworkforcecommission.com/bureau-of-labor-statistics)

1302.11 (2)(iii) Typical Work, School and Training Schedules

The data shows that 75% of HS families were engaged in the workforce, education, or job training at the time of enrollment. This aligns closely with U.S. Census findings, which report that 73% of families living in poverty are also active in the workforce, demonstrating that employment does not always guarantee financial stability.

Employment	# of families at enrollment
One or more parent is employed	326
One or more in job training	34
One or more parent is in school	50
One is a member of US military or active duty	0
Neither parent is employed, in job training, or in school	208

Source: AISD PIR 2024-2025

Only 26% of HS families have education beyond a high school diploma, which suggests that many parents are working in positions that offer low wages, limited benefits, and often nontraditional or inconsistent schedules.

The combination of a low unemployment rate in Taylor County and the HS parent employment data reinforces the understanding that the majority of families served are working or pursuing education, often under conditions that make balancing work, training, and childcare particularly challenging. Ensuring availability of full-day programming remains essential for supporting these families' ability to maintain employment, advance their skills, and improve their overall economic stability.

1302.11 (2)(iv) Other child development, childcare centers & family childcare programs

Access to affordable, high-quality childcare remains a challenge for families within the AISD HS service area. According to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, Abilene currently has 17 licensed childcare centers and 18 licensed, registered, or listed child-care homes. Of these programs, 17 meet the criteria to accept Child Care Services (CCS) funding, and all 17 provide full-day services. Together, these full-day CCS accepted centers offer a total capacity of 2,575 slots, which includes after-school care for students in grades K–5. With another 228 slots provided by child-care homes. Despite this capacity, the demand for full-day, affordable, high-quality childcare continues to exceed availability.

For the 2024–2025 school year, the Crockett HS waitlist held 257 children, while Long Head Start had 98 three-year-olds waiting for services. There were no 4-year-olds on the waitlist due to the LEA PK services. Altogether, the total HS waitlist for the year is 355 children, highlighting the significant gap between available services and family needs.

Workforce Solutions of West Central Texas provides critical financial support through CCS, helping eligible families pay for childcare while they work, attend school, seek

employment, or participate in job training. Because CCS eligibility closely aligns with HS income and need requirements, many HS-eligible families also qualify for CCS assistance.

	2024-2025 Waitlist numbers
Crockett Head Start	257
Long Head Start	
• Three-year-old	98
• Four-year-old	0
Total	355

Recent birth data for Taylor County shows a clear downward trend over the last five years, reflecting both state and national patterns of declining birthrates. According to population estimates, Taylor County recorded approximately 1,933 births in 2020, followed by a decrease to 1,866 births in 2021. While births rose slightly in 2022 to 1,963, the numbers again declined to 1,909 births in 2023.

This steady reduction in annual births indicates a shrinking pool of eligible young children entering early childhood programs each year. Despite the decline, the demand for high-quality childcare and early education remains high in our service area, as evidenced by the continued growth of Head Start waitlists and the limited availability of full-day childcare options.

The decreasing birthrate presents both challenges and opportunities for community planning. While fewer total births may eventually reduce overall childcare demand, the persistent need among economically vulnerable families underscores the importance of maintaining strong Head Start services and ensuring equitable access to early childhood education. [Health Data](#)

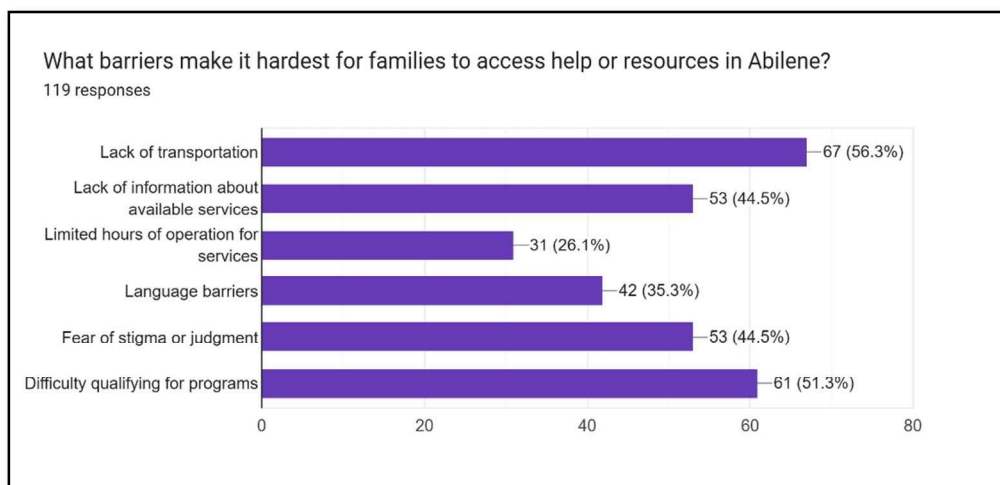
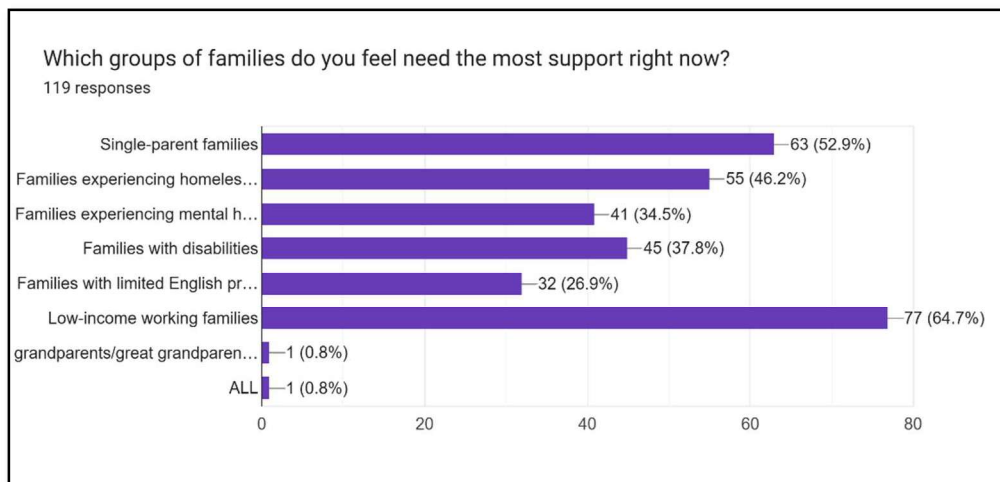
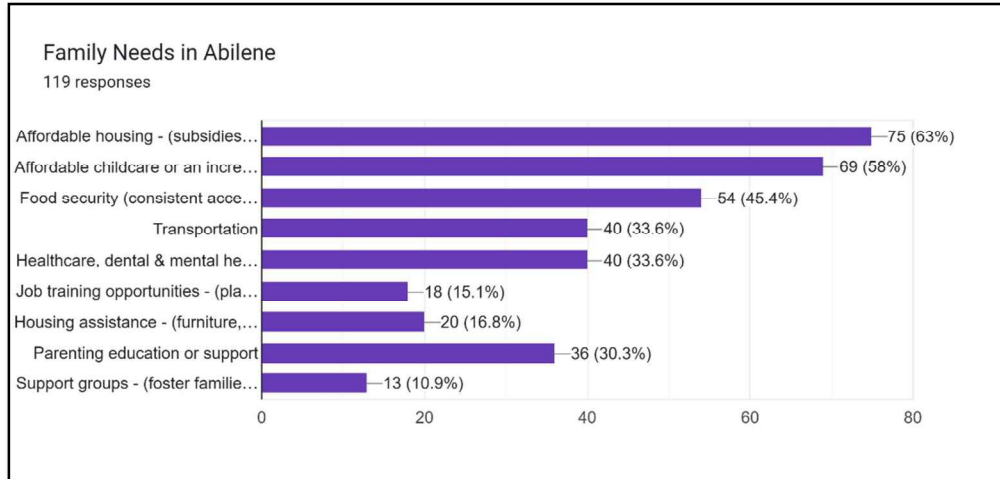
1302.11 (2)(v) Community Resources

A [Community Resource Directory](#) has been developed in both English and Spanish to help families easily identify local agencies and programs where they can receive support. The directory serves as a comprehensive guide and is available in both digital and print formats.

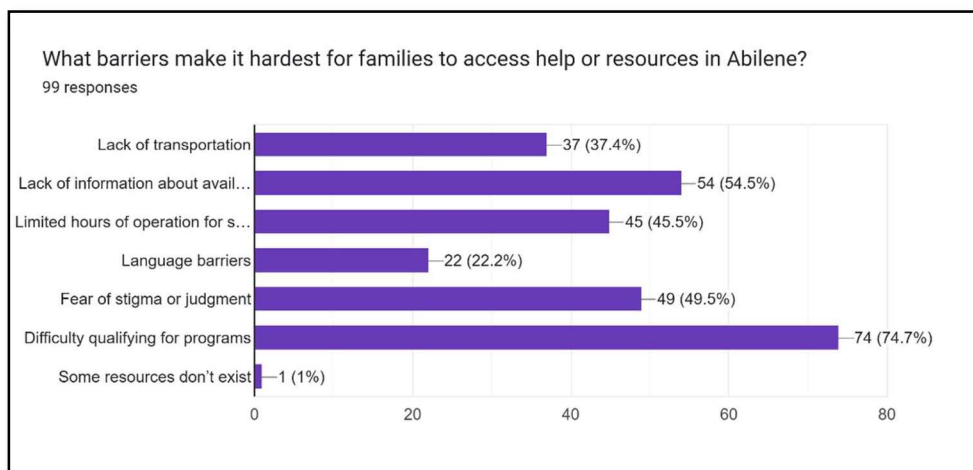
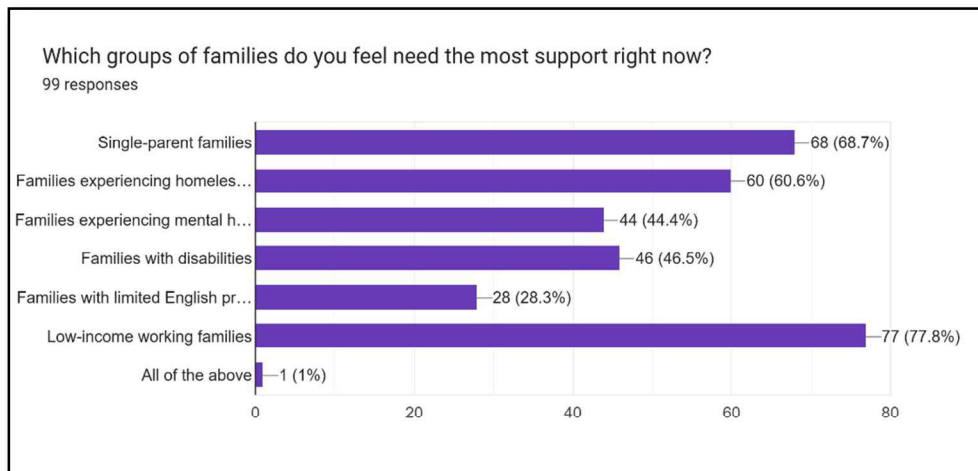
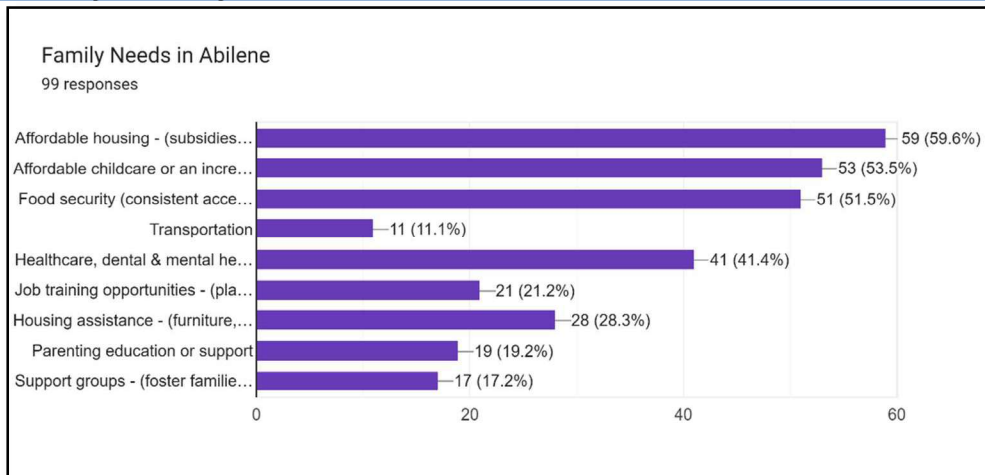
In addition to listing community partners, the directory includes agencies with which Long ELC has established long-term relationships. The Family Services department works closely with families to ensure they are aware of the resources and services available to them throughout the Abilene community.

1302.11 (2)(vi) Strengths of the Community 1302.11 (2)(vii) Gaps in Community Resources

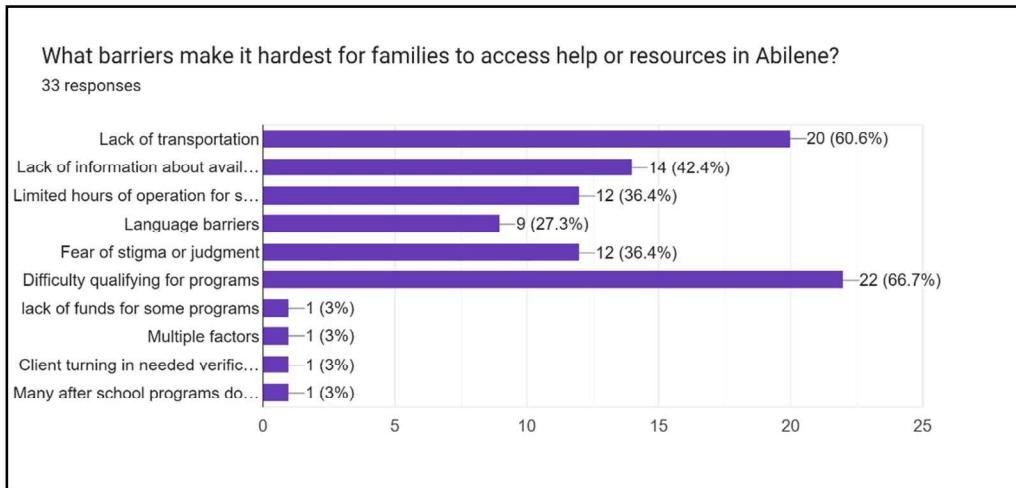
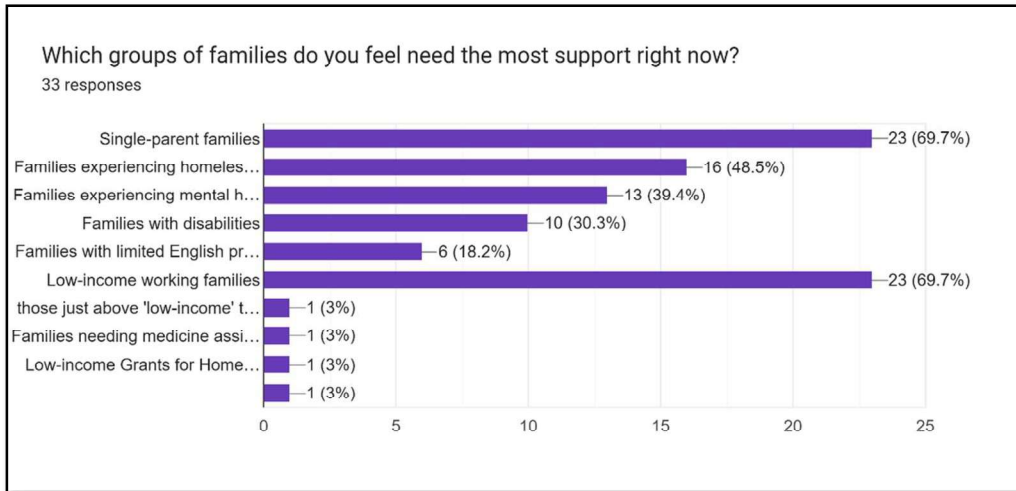
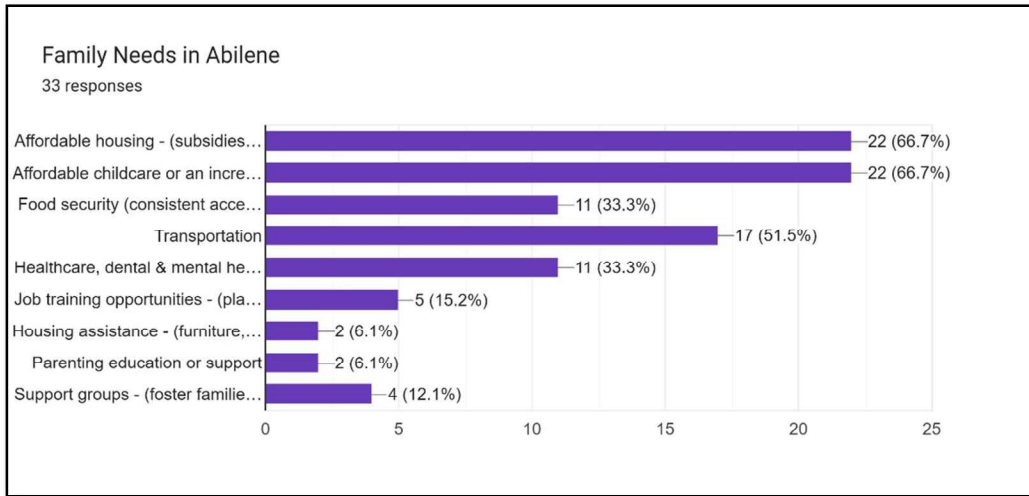
Staff Survey Results



Family Survey Results



Agencies Survey Results



Community Needs Assessment Summary: Staff, Community Agencies and Families Surveys

The surveys conducted among AISD Early Childhood staff, community agencies, and Abilene families provide a detailed view of the resources currently supporting families and areas for improvement within the community. Across all three groups, there is strong agreement about the programs and services that are working well and the barriers that remain.

Resources and Programs Working Well

Respondents consistently highlighted the following resources as effective and impactful for families:

- **Food and basic needs assistance:** Food pantries, food banks, CarePacks for Kids, and Christian Service Center. Programs that provide clothing, school supplies, and emergency assistance were also valued.
- **Early childhood and educational programs:** AISD early childhood programs, Alliance for Women and Children, and ECI programs provide structure, stability, and connections to additional resources.
- **Childcare support:** Affordable childcare, Child Care Services (CCS), and after-school care programs were recognized as essential in helping parents work or attend school.
- **Housing and financial assistance:** Low-income housing, Section 8, Abilene Housing Authority, and transitional housing programs support family stability.
- **Health and social services:** WIC, pregnancy resources, mental health programs, and ABA therapy help meet physical, developmental, and social-emotional needs.
- **Community partnerships and outreach:** Churches, nonprofits (e.g., United Way, Global Samaritans, Love & Care Ministries, Mission Abilene, New Horizons), and AISD liaisons were praised for accessibility and responsiveness.

Opportunities and Needs Identified

Despite the availability of programs, all three groups reported barriers and gaps that limit families' access to services:

- **Communication and awareness:** Families often do not know where to start or how to navigate resources, and agencies sometimes operate in isolation. Staff emphasized the need for centralized, updated resource guides, multilingual materials, and clear communication between agencies, schools, and families.
- **Childcare and early education:** There is a high demand for affordable and accessible childcare, including before- and after-school programs, which remains a critical barrier for working parents.
- **Housing and basic needs:** Families continue to face limited low-income housing options, and food insecurity remains a concern, especially during crises like government shutdowns.
- **Transportation:** Many families lack reliable transportation, making access to programs and employment difficult. Suggestions included improving public transit routes, offering carpool options, and bringing services to local neighborhoods.
- **Collaboration and coordination:** Survey responses emphasized that stronger collaboration among agencies, schools, and nonprofits could streamline services and

ensure families receive comprehensive support without repeating paperwork or navigating multiple systems.

Immediate Actions Recommended

Survey respondents from all three groups suggested actions to enhance support for families in Abilene:

1. Expand affordable housing and childcare options.
2. Improve communication and coordination across agencies, schools, and the community, including centralized resource hubs and regularly updated guides.
3. Increase access to basic needs such as food, clothing, healthcare, and winter necessities.
4. Provide transportation solutions to remove barriers to accessing services.
5. Engage families directly through surveys, community events, resource fairs, and parent education programs to ensure services align with real needs.

Conclusion

The combined results of the surveys show that Abilene has a network of community resources that are valued by families and staff. Programs addressing food security, housing, childcare, early childhood education, and social services are particularly effective. However, barriers related to accessibility, communication, transportation, and affordability remain. Strengthening collaboration, centralizing information, expanding affordable services, and engaging families directly are key strategies that can further enhance support for Abilene families and ensure resources are both accessible and effective.

Sources

AISD Head Start and Early Head Start Program Information Report (PIR)

AISD Administration Office

241 Pine Street, Abilene, TX 79604

Merkel ISD Administration Office

300 Ash Street, Merkel, TX 79536

Trent ISD Administration Office

12821 Interstate 20, Trent, TX 79561

Jim Ned ISD Administration Office

830 Garza Street, Tuscola, TX 79562

Wylie ISD Administration Office

6251 Buffalo Gap Road, Abilene, TX 79606

Abilene Christian Schools

2550 N Judge Ely Blvd, Abilene, TX 79601

St. John's Episcopal School

1600 Sherman Dr, Abilene, TX 79605

Cornerstone Christian

718 Barrow St, Abilene, TX 79605

TLCA

1840 N 18th, Abilene, TX 79603

Abilene Classical Academy

1425 S 7th, Abilene, TX 79602

United States Census Bureau

www.census.gov

Texas State Historical Association

<https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/taylor-county>

AISD Elementary School Boundaries

<https://www.abileneisd.org/o/aisd/page/attendance-zones>

Community Health Needs Assessment: Hendrick Hospital Abilene Market

<https://www.hendrickhealth.org/documents/chna/2025-Community-Health-Needs-Assessment-Hendrick-Medical-Center.pdf>

Texas Health Data

<https://healthdata.dshs.texas.gov/dashboard/births-and-deaths/live-births>

Kids Count Data Center

<http://datacenter.kidscount.org/>

Texas Department of Family and Protective Services

https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Care/Search_Texas_Child_Care/ppFacilitySearchDayCare.asp

Workforce Solutions of West Central Texas

<https://wfswct.org/faq.aspx?qid=76>

Development Corporation of Abilene

<https://developabilene.com/>

The Texas Campaign

<https://txcampaign.org/research-data/data-map/>

International Rescue Committee

www.rescue.org

Abilene Housing Authority

www.Abileneha.org

Census Reporter

<https://censusreporter.org/profiles/06000US4844190010-abilene-ccd-taylor-county-tx/>

Food Bank of West Central Texas

<https://fbwct.org/food-pantry-and-meal-site-schedules/>

Texas Workforce Commissions

<https://www.twc.texas.gov/>

Bureau of Labor Statistics

<https://www.bls.gov/>

Distressed Index

<https://eig.org/distressed-communities-interactive/?regions%5B0%5D=48&geo=states&lat=38.55&lon=-96.42&z=3.69>

Neilsberg Research

<https://www.neilsberg.com/insights/abilene-tx-population-by-age/>

**ABILENE ISD
HEAD START/EARLY HEAD START
REFUNDING PROPOSAL
PROGRAM PLANNING DECISIONS AND BUDGETS FY 26
(May 1, 2026- April 30, 2027)**

PROGRAM PLANNING DECISIONS:

ANNUAL FEDERAL FUNDING (May 1, 2026-April 30, 2027) \$ 6,092,844

1. Continue to define the service area as those areas of Abilene within the AISD attendance boundaries.
2. Continue the program design and program services as currently implemented, serving 380 children in Head Start, and 141 infants, toddlers, and pregnant women in Early Head Start.
3. Continue to operate a center-based program option in 20 HS classrooms and 16 EHS classrooms, and implement an OHS approved locally designed center-based option in one EHS classroom to meet the needs of parents and guardians, the majority of whom are working or in school.
4. Continue to utilize in-kind campus space donated by AISD at Long Early Learning Center and Crockett EHS.
5. Implement the Goals, Objectives and Action Plans as presented.

PROPOSED HEAD START BUDGET FY 2026:

	FTE	PROGRAM OPERATION	TRAINING	IN-KIND MATCH
a. PERSONNEL	68.49	\$ 2,294,680	\$ -	\$ 664,772
b. FRINGE BENEFITS		\$ 597,048	\$ -	\$ -
c. TRAVEL/TRAINING		\$ 15,000	\$ 15,009	\$ -
d. EQUIPMENT		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
e. SUPPLIES		\$ 222,500	\$ -	\$ -
f. CONTRACTUAL		\$ 25,000	\$ -	
h. OTHER		\$ 84,420	\$ 21,350	\$ 153,980
TOTAL FEDERAL FUNDS		\$ 3,238,648	\$ 36,359	\$ 818,752
TOTAL IN-KIND REQUIRED (OTHER FUNDING SOURCES)		\$ 809,662	\$ 9,090	\$ 818,752

PROPOSED EARLY HEAD START BUDGET FY 2026:

	FTE	PROGRAM OPERATION	TRAINING	IN-KIND MATCH
a. PERSONNEL	72.71	\$ 2,147,250	\$ -	\$ 366,799
b. FRINGE BENEFITS		\$ 505,117	\$ -	\$ -
c. TRAVEL		\$ 3,000	\$ 21,725	\$ -
d. EQUIPMENT		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
e. SUPPLIES		\$ 89,578	\$ 300	\$ 60,000
f. CONTRACTUAL		\$ 6,150	\$ -	\$ -
h. OTHER		\$ 14,600	\$ 30,117	\$ 277,660
TOTAL FEDERAL FUNDS		\$ 2,765,695	\$ 52,142	\$ 704,459
TOTAL IN-KIND REQUIRED (OTHER FUNDING SOURCES)		\$ 691,424	\$ 13,036	\$ 704,460

Abilene Independent School District Board Document - IV.B.

Meeting Date: January 8, 2026

Meeting Type: Workshop

Item Type: Board Workshop Item

Future Action Required: NO

If Yes, Month: N/A

Subject: Comprehensive and Targeted Schools Explanation

Background Information: Not only are schools rated A-F in the State Accountability System, they are also rated in a Federal Accountability System. Both systems look at STAAR data, but it is analyzed in different ways.

Attached Supporting Documents:

NONE

Fiscal Implications:

NONE



Administrative Recommendation:

NONE

Contact Person:

Patti Blue



Board of Trustees Workshop Meeting

January 8, 2026



Comprehensive and Targeted Schools

*Patti Blue, Associate Superintendent for Curriculum
and Instruction*



Purpose of This Presentation

- Explain the biggest difference in Federal Accountability and State Accountability
- Define Targeted Support & Improvement (TSI)
- Define Additional Targeted Support (ATS)
- Define Comprehensive Support & Improvement (CSI)
- Review Abilene ISD current and historical identifications



Targeted Support & Improvement (TSI)

State Accountability

holds a school and/or district accountable for the big picture

Federal Accountability

holds a school accountable for the smaller details

Targeted Support & Improvement (TSI)

- Identified due to consistent underperformance of one or more student groups
- Based on Closing the Gaps indicators over multiple years
 - Closing the Gaps is Domain 3 in State Accountability System
- Requires a Local Improvement Plan (LIP)
- Focuses on closing achievement gaps for specific student populations



Additional Targeted Support (ATS)

- Identified due to consistent underperformance of one or more student groups
- Based on Closing the Gaps indicators over multiple years
- Campus as a whole does not meet the criteria for Comprehensive Support & Improvement (CSI)
- Requires a Local Improvement Plan (LIP)
- ATS represents a more serious level of concern than Targets Support (TSI)
- Signals need for intensified interventions
- Focuses on closing achievement gaps for specific student populations

Comprehensive Support & Improvement (CSI)

- Identified under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)
- Bottom 5% of Title I schools in Closing the Gaps statewide **OR**
- Graduation rate below 67%
- Requires a TEA-approved Targeted Improvement or Turnaround Plan
- Comprehensive for 3 years usually requires the development of a Turnaround Plan
- Comprehensive for 5 years subject to more intensive intervention that could include closure



How Schools Are Identified

TSI

ATS

CSI



How Schools Are Identified

- Based on the Closing the Gaps domain
- Evaluates academic achievement, growth, graduation, and English learner progress
- Looks at individual student groups, not just overall campus performance

Historical & Current Abilene ISD Federal Identifications

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Alcorta	Comprehensive	Comprehensive Progress			
Austin				Targeted	
Bassetti			Targeted	Targeted	Targeted
Bonham	Targeted	Targeted	Targeted	Targeted	
Bowie	Targeted	Targeted	Targeted	Comprehensive	Comprehensive
Dyess					
Martinez/ Ortiz	Additional Targeted/ Targeted	Targeted	Comprehensive	Comprehensive Progress	Additional Targeted
Purcell	Targeted	Targeted		Targeted	
Stafford	Targeted	Targeted			
Taylor		Targeted		Targeted	
Ward				Targeted	
Clack	Targeted	Additional Targeted	Targeted	Comprehensive	Comprehensive
Craig	Targeted	Targeted			
Madison	Targeted	Additional Targeted	Targeted	Targeted	Additional Targeted
Mann	Targeted	Targeted	Targeted	Targeted	Targeted

Coupled with State Accountability Ratings

CAMPUS	2022 RATING	2023 RATING	2024 RATING	2025 RATING	Change from 24 to 25
	(2021-2022)	(2022-2023)	(2023-2024)	(2024-2025)	
Bowie	85 B	76 C	57 F	63 D	6
Ortiz	72 C	48 F	65 D	59 F	-6
Clack	63 D	78 C	60 D	66 D	6
Madison	67 D	67 D	71 C	65 D	-6
Mann	64 D	65 D	65 D	66 D	1



Why Federal Identification Matters

- Highlights achievement gaps among student groups
- Drives targeted instructional and leadership support
- Provides access to federal and state improvement resources



What are we doing?

- Improvement plans have been developed
- Implementation of the plans is being monitored



Questions?

Abilene Independent School District Board Document - Agenda Item II.C.

Meeting Date: January 8, 2026 Meeting Type: Workshop

Item Type: Report Future Action Required: No If Yes, Month: N/A

Subject: School Board Election Calendar Timeline

Background Information: This item is a short presentation of the important dates in the School Board Election timeline for May 2026. The presentation also includes important Board Policy relating to Board candidacy eligibility and election details.

Attached Supporting Documents: Presentation

Fiscal Implications: None

Administrative Recommendation: N/A

Contact Person: Dr. Joe Waldron

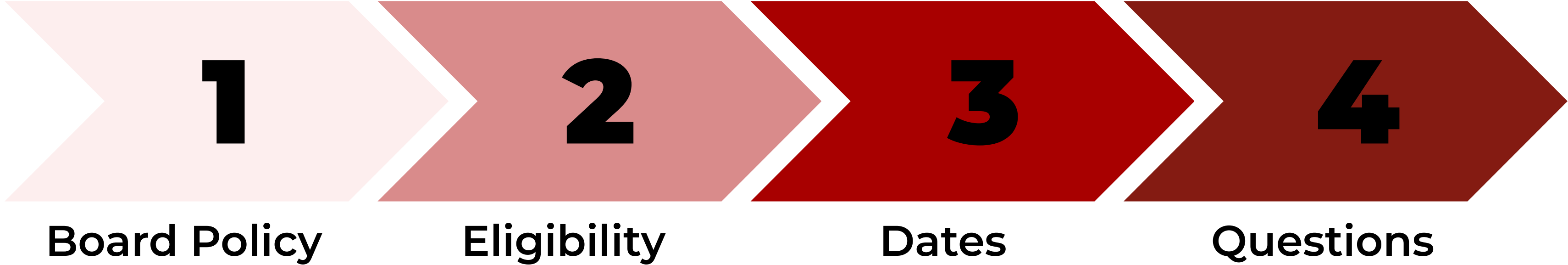




School Board Election Calendar - May 2026

Dr. Joe Waldron

Agenda



BBB - Board Members: Elections

A trustee of a district serves a term of three or four years.

Elections for trustees with three-year terms shall be held annually. The terms of one-third of the trustees, or as near to one-third as possible, expire each year.

Elections for trustees with four-year terms shall be held biennially. The terms of one-half of the trustees, or as near to one-half as possible, expire every two years.

Board policy must state the schedule on which specific terms expire.

Education Code 11.059

BBB - Board Members: Elections

In a district in which the positions of trustees are not designated by number or in which the trustees are not elected from single-member trustee districts, the candidates receiving the highest number of votes shall fill the positions the terms of which are normally expiring.

Education Code 11.057(b)

The positions on the board shall be designated by number in any district in which the board by resolution orders that all candidates for trustee be voted on and elected separately for positions on the board and that all candidates be designated on the official ballot according to the number of the positions for which they seek election.

Not later than the 60th day before the date of an election, the board must make the resolution and number the positions on the board in the order in which the terms of office expire. Once a board has ordered the election of trustees by numbered positions, neither the board nor their successors may rescind the action.

Education Code 11.058(c)–(f)

BBB - Board Members: Elections

Methods of Voting—Options

Plurality

Except as otherwise provided at Majority, below, to be elected to a public office, a candidate elected at large, at large by position, or by single-member districts must receive more votes than any other candidate for the office. *Education Code 11.057(a), (b); Election Code 2.001*

Cumulative

The board of a district that elects its trustees at large or at large by position may order that elections for trustees be held using the cumulative voting procedure.

If a board adopts an order requiring the use of cumulative voting, only the board member positions that were scheduled to be filled at the election are filled through the use of cumulative voting.

BBB - Board Members: Elections

BOARD MEMBERS ELECTIONS

BBB
(LOCAL)

Membership

The Board shall consist of seven members.

Method of Election

Election of Board members shall be by place.

Election Date

General election of board members shall be on the May uniform election date.

Terms and Election Schedule

Board members shall be elected for four-year terms, with elections conducted biennially, as follows:

Places 4, 5, and 6

The election for places 4, 5, and 6 shall be held in 2018, 2022, 2026, and in four-year intervals thereafter.

Places 1, 2, 3,
and 7

The election for places 1, 2, 3, and 7 shall be held in 2020, 2024, 2028, and in four-year intervals thereafter.

Method of Voting

Plurality

To be elected, a candidate must receive more votes than any other candidate for the place.

Eligibility

To be eligible to be a candidate for, or elected or appointed to, the office of school board member, a person must:

1. Be a United States citizen.
2. Be 18 years of age or older on the first day of the term to be filled at the election or on the date of appointment, as applicable.
3. Have not been determined by a final judgment of a court exercising probate jurisdiction to be totally mentally incapacitated or partially mentally incapacitated without the right to vote.
4. Have not been finally convicted of a felony from which the person has not been pardoned or otherwise released from the resulting disabilities [but see Ineligibility below].
5. Have resided continuously in the state for 12 months and in the territory from which the office is elected for six months immediately preceding the following date:
 - a. For an independent candidate, the date of the regular filing deadline for a candidate's application for a place on the ballot.
 - b. For a write-in candidate, the date of the election at which the candidate's name is written in.
 - c. For an appointee to an office, the date the appointment is made.
6. Be registered to vote in the territory from which the office is elected on the date described at item 5, above.

Important Dates



Candidate Filing

1st Day to File - January 14, 2026

Last Day to File - February 13, 2026



Early Voting Dates

Starts - April 20, 2026

Ends - April 28, 2026



Voter Registration

Last Day to Register - April 2, 2026



Uniform Election Date

May 2, 2026



Candidate Packets

Available in person at the
Superintendent's Office



Canvass Dates

1st Day - May 5, 2026**

Last Day - May 15, 2026**

Board Meeting - May 12, 2026**

** Canvass dates subject to change

Questions





School Board Election Calendar - May 2026

Dr. Joe Waldron

Abilene Independent School District Board Document

Meeting Date: January 8, 2025

Meeting Type: Board Workshop

Item Type: Board Action (no presentation) Future Action Required: No If Yes, Month: n/a

Subject: Appealed Library Materials Board Decision on December 8, 2025

Background Information:

At the December 8, 2025, board meeting the SLAC's recommendations on challenged library materials were presented to the board. The board voted to approve the recommendation of the SLAC regarding which challenged materials should remain in the district's library catalog and which titles should be removed. The board voted to keep the following titles in the high school libraries:

- I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter
- The Bluest Eye
- The Glass Castle
- Kite Runner
- The Lovely Bones
- Nineteen Minutes
- Poet X
- Sold
- Speak
- Will Grayson, Will Grayson

Per SB 13, if an appeal is made, the board of trustees shall take action at the first open meeting of the board held after the date the appeal is filed. If the decision is to not remove the library material(s), the board is not required to take any action in response to a written challenge of the library material(s) submitted before the second anniversary of the date of the determination to not remove the library material.

School board members have been given access to the challenge forms that were submitted to the district, SLAC notes, the SLAC meeting audio recordings, and access to the books assist them.

Attached Supporting Documents: None

Fiscal Implications: None

Administrative Recommendation:

After reviewing the materials, uphold the recommendation of the SLAC unless they agree that any title(s) is not appropriate to remain in the district's library catalog.

Contact Person:

Lyndsey Williamson

Abilene Independent School District Board Document

Meeting Date: January 8, 2025

Meeting Type: Board Workshop

Item Type: Presentation/Approval Future Action Required: No If Yes, Month: N/A

Subject: SLAC Recommendations- Challenged Library Materials

Background Information:

The School Library Advisory Council met on December 15, 2025. During this meeting the committee considered challenged library materials.

The committee reviewed 10 of the 27 titles that have been formally challenged. The following titles were considered and voted on by the SLAC:

- *The Haters*
- *Me and Earl and the Dying Girl*
- *Tricks*
- *Suicide Notes from Beautiful Girls*
- *99 Days*
- *Crank*
- *Like a Love Story*
- *Black Flamingo*
- *Yolk*
- *Forever*



Attached Supporting Documents:

Curriculum & Instruction: Presentation

Fiscal Implications: None

Administrative Recommendation:

Consider and approve the recommendations of the SLAC regarding the challenged library materials discussed.

Contact Person:

Lyndsey Williamson