



Monday, January 07, 2008

E3 Alliance meeting goal

Report submitted on education gaps

LAURI ZACHRY

Education Reporter

Monday, January 07, 2008

With the help of community and regional forums, the Education Equals Economics Alliance is closer to closing achievement gaps among Central Texas students.

In May through November 2007, the E3 Alliance, Texas Forums and Austin Voices for Education and Youth conducted deliberative dialogues on the impacts of education achievement gaps on communities throughout the Central Texas region.

More than 600 people participated in an ongoing series of dialogues to examine the issue and the objectives, identify the gaps seen, analyze potential approaches for improving gaps, and develop action plans to create a better future for our children and the Texas economy.

In launching this community engagement effort, E3 Alliance volunteers solicited information from Austin (Westbank), Manor, Round Rock and San Marcos ISDs.

Between 55 and 110 participants per night (plus moderators, district staff and volunteers) in each of the communities for a series of two or three discussions over six to nine hours. These "deliberative dialogues" were different from public hearings where citizens are given a two-minute window to speak, said E3 Alliance executive director.

"The main thing we gained from the E3 Alliance meetings was the depth of dialogue and that it had a focus on education," said Dawson. "This dialogue is really going to lead to some change and reform. This was a way, especially the conference in November, for community and education leaders to come together."

On the last night of the community dialogue session, after the third approach had been discussed, each community was asked to develop action items according to three key stakeholder groups. The moderators led them in a discussion about how to require community involvement, school and district involvement and what actions individuals could take to improve the situation.

Members of the E3 Alliance also asked each small team to nominate one to two delegates to represent their community at a regional forum of all of the six communities in November.

The delegates brought back to their own local community plans to describe how they could advance the them into the regional effort.

Each of the individual community gameplans are available at e3alliance.org/dialogues.html.

Common ideas from the Blueprint for Change Summit in November were:

- Prepare our students for success in real life
- We give you and ourselves permission to break the rules and be bold - don't be held back by perceive
- Relationships between schools, parents, and community entities are critical for success and need to b change effort, rather than on the margins. We also need more robust measures of parent and communi
- We can use our resources better than we do now
- What we do needs to be measured and communicated through transparent leading indicators

Since the regional summit occurred in November, the E3 Alliance plans to maintain the work and focus leaders and community volunteers by conducting a January summit for political leaders, CEOs and colle inform them about educational goals of Central Texas students - from early childhood to those preparing workforce, Dawson said.

She said those involved with the E3 Alliance also want to expand into Central Texas communities not hi while continuing to work with existing communities.

"Our No. 1 common action was to have more opportunities for people to come together and work for ch: "These dialogues this fall show people want to roll up their sleeves to cause a systematic change in edu work for this change."

The E3 Alliance started in May 2006 after Central Texas business leaders discussed their frustrations w losing ground on the global front regarding education, Dawson said. During this meeting and discussion education leaders decided to make that systematic change.

The E3 Alliance has based its platform for change around the Central Texas region, as well as the area: service area of the Austin Community College District. Together, this represents a population of about 1 with 275,000 public school kindergarten through 12th students in 35 school districts ranging from a rural students to Austin ISD, the large urban district with about 83,000 students.

Contact Lauri Zachry at 255-5827 or by e-mail at education@rrleader.com .

Related Links