

Austin Independent School District

Office of the Superintendent



April 10, 2007

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to let you know that I fully support GENaustin in its plans for the expansion of its *clubGEN* after-school program. The Austin Independent School District (AISD) values GENaustin as our partner in helping prepare young women for college, meaningful careers and civic participation. GENaustin has been doing an excellent job serving 250 middle school girls through 16 clubs. I look forward to the expanded impact and benefits which would result from the creation of up to 100 middle school clubs reaching almost 2000 girls.

Sixty-one percent of AISD students are from low-income homes, and the number of our low-income students is steadily increasing. At the same time, the National Center for Education Statistics reports that girls' positive attitudes toward school have decreased dramatically since 1980. In a recent poll, 29 percent reported liking school, compared to 50 percent when the survey was first conducted. As the number of girls in need of resources rises, and girl's positive attitudes about school decline, GENaustin brings valuable services to AISD campuses.

The Central Texas Afterschool Network (CTAN) has shown that students in after-school programs are much less likely to perpetrate or become victims of crime and are much less likely to become teen parents. Students in after-school programs generally show improved school attendance and higher academic achievement. Yet seventy percent of school-age youth in surveyed low-income Travis County zip codes do not have access to after-school programming.

That's why I'm excited GENaustin plans to implement a new research-based curriculum with broad program content which will reach a large number of AISD's young women students. With this expansion, GENaustin

(more)

will also offer workforce development for high school girls, parent education workshops, and support for other AISD after-school programs. We will also practice ongoing evaluation of our program and its effect on indicators of success for young women in AISD.

I hope that you will be able to join me and the Austin Independent School District in supporting this important initiative.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Pascal D. Forgione, Jr." with a stylized flourish at the end.

Pascal D. Forgione, Jr., Ph.D.
Superintendent