

Austin Independent School District

The Problem

The Austin Independent School District Board of Trustees, and nearly 4,000 people from all segments of the Austin community collaborated together to create a Strategic Plan that provides real solutions to the challenges the school district are currently facing. The plan provides real ways to measure the districts performance along the way.

While the Strategic Plan was developed and adopted by the stakeholders, there needed to be a vehicle for the students to provide their ideas and feedback periodically to the school administration to help ensure that the Strategic Plan goals and objectives were being met. One of the key plan strategies is to build strong relationships with students, families, and the community to increase trust and shared responsibility.

The Process

District administrators approached the concept of having an open forum for students to talk and comment freely about their ideas and suggestions very cautiously. After all this was an open forum for teenagers.

With the backing and participation of the District Superintendent, Maria Carstarphen and other district administration and staff, a 72 hour IdeaJam was held in May 2010. Several hundred students from district middle and high schools shared their ideas with each other in an on-line forum.

Students were challenged to share their ideas and thoughts in several areas:

- Boosting Student Attendance
- Budgets and Resources for Your Campuses
- College and Career Readiness
- Course Weighting and Class Ranking
- Dropout Prevention
- School Facilities
- Student Rights
- Student Safety
- Teacher Quality
- Technology

The Results

In the 72 hour period the students submitted over 85 ideas which were then further discussed with over 700 individual comments, including those of district school administrators. There was a constructive conversation between the students, school administrators and Superintendent Carstarphen.

There was no misuse of the IdeaJam by the students and the popular ideas bubbled to the top and are now in the process of being implemented by the district.

They plan to run further IdeaJam events in the future to continue building the relationships between the members of the Austin Independent School District community.

Region

United States

Sector

Education

IdeaJam™ Awards

Lotus CTO Innovation Award 2009

Lotus Breakout Technology Award 2009

Finalist Best of Lotusphere Showcase 2009

IBM Beacon Award for Innovative Software Solution 2009

Finalist Best TOTAL Lotus Collaboration Solution 2010

Finalist Best End-User Solution 2010

Elguji Software, LLC

Established in 2007, Elguji Software creates and sells social networking software. Elguji is a symbol of innovation in software development and has become a market leader with their IdeaJam, IQJam and LinkJam products.

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