

Austin ISD 2017 Bond Implementation
Brentwood Elementary School
Swing Space FAQ
June 2020



Swing Space Decision

On Feb. 7, 2020, AISD Superintendent Paul Cruz made the decision to relocate Brentwood Elementary School to a temporary swing space at Webb Middle School starting in August 2020 until construction is complete. The modernized school is scheduled to open for the Spring 2022 semester. This decision was announced in a letter to Brentwood families following a thorough community engagement process that analyzed multiple swing space options.

To read the letter shared with families announcing this decision, please click [here](#).

Please note: The first day of school of the fall 2020 semester is Tuesday, August 18. This is in line with the previously released 2020–2021 academic calendar. The AISD reopening task force — which is composed of teachers, parents, staff and community members — will provide further logistical details about the 2020-2021 school year on austinisd.org in the coming weeks. To learn more about the district's COVID-19 (coronavirus) response, please visit www.austinisd.org/covid19.

General Questions

What is a swing space? How will it benefit the Brentwood modernization project?

A swing space is an interim facility that temporarily houses some or all of a campus during the construction of a modernized school.

Because of safety concerns on the school site during construction planning and the size of the Brentwood student population, it has become clear that it is in the best interest of the campus community to use a swing space.

By moving the campus to an off-site swing space during construction, the new school can be built in approximately half the time (i.e., anticipated 14 months of construction vs. 28 months), while providing a safer, less disruptive environment for students, families, faculty, staff and the neighborhood residents.

Why wasn't the need for a swing space determined earlier in the modernization process?

AISD's goal for all modernization projects is to keep the campus community on-site whenever possible and that was the initial plan for Brentwood. However, several constraints were unknown during the planning process. These include:

- How the recently modified regulatory floodplain affects available space for portables on the Brentwood site;
- Location and quantity of stormwater detention that would be required during construction;
- City requirements for parking during construction;
- Extra fire lane access areas that would be necessary during construction; and
- Permitting challenges during construction phasing.

How and when was the decision made to use a swing space?

In early 2019, AISD Construction Management hired VLK Architects and Bartlett Cocke General Contractors to design and build the modernized Brentwood Elementary School. After many months of design development, permitting and careful study of the construction phasing process, it became apparent that there was not a safe, reasonable way to keep the Brentwood Elementary School community on-site during construction.

At the beginning of the 2019–20 school year, district leadership worked closely with the project team and campus leaders to determine the feasibility of staying on-site during construction. Once it became clear that a swing space was the safest choice for the project, district and campus leadership worked together to determine campus needs and priorities, which included keeping the campus together and as close as possible to the Brentwood neighborhood.

When was the deadline for making a decision about the swing space? Who was responsible for making the decision, and did it require board approval?

The final decision on swing space location was made on Feb. 7, 2020 by AISD Superintendent Paul Cruz. This decision was shared in written correspondence following a community meeting on Feb. 4, 2020.

The final decision was informed by recommendations made by AISD staff, and did not require approval by the AISD Board of Trustees.

What was the swing space decision-making process?

Since September, when the site constraints were identified, the district worked to evaluate potential swing spaces, presenting an initial recommendation to the community in November. Based on community input, the district formed a subcommittee, held additional community meetings and collected feedback through emails, phone calls and conversations with the subcommittee. The district then worked to vet new options and extended the decision-making timeline to February 2020.

What was the necessary criteria for a swing space?

For a swing space to be viable, there must be 42 classrooms (each measuring 800 square-feet for Pre-K through first grade and 700 square feet for second through fifth grade), a gym, a cafeteria, an administration area, a library, sufficient parking, a pickup and dropoff loop/drive and a play field/playscape.

Additionally, safety and security requirements include district-approved cameras, secure fencing with controlled access and secure access to the Greater Austin Area Telecommunications Network.

What AISD Facilities were considered for the Brentwood swing space?

Based on feedback from the community, AISD committed to exploring additional swing space options. Throughout December and January, the district narrowed down that list to four possible options:

- Brentwood Park (the current 100 wing and gym would be used, in addition to portables placed at Brentwood Park)
- Burnet Middle School (all Brentwood students would be housed in portables)
- Dobie Pre-K Center (all Brentwood students would be housed in portables)
- Webb Middle School (all Brentwood students would be housed in portables)

On Feb. 7, 2020, Superintendent Paul Cruz made the decision to officially relocate Brentwood Elementary to a swing space at Webb Middle School until construction is complete on the modernized school. The new Brentwood Elementary is expected to open for the spring 2022 semester.

How long will the construction take and when will the Brentwood Elementary School community be able to move into the modernized facility?

With an off-site swing space, it is anticipated that construction will take 14 months, once the general contractor can take control of the site. The new, fully modernized Brentwood campus is expected to open in spring 2022.

What is AISD doing to ensure student safety in the portables at the Webb Middle School campus? What safety standards/requirements must be followed?

Each campus works with the AISD Life Safety Department to ensure that all our students and staff work and learn in a safe and secure environment. AISD follows Texas Education Agency safety standards, as well as best practices, at each of our campuses. Additionally, campus staff are trained in safety and emergency procedures.

Have other Austin ISD schools used a swing space?

Yes. The district has experienced swinging entire school campuses prior to and during the current bond program. Elementary schools that have undergone swing space moves include T.A. Brown, Doss, Norman, Sanchez and Webb elementaries.

Is there a cost associated with using a swing space?

Yes. Costs include acquiring additional portables, fencing and other site work necessary to ready a space and make it usable for the Brentwood community. However, some of these costs were already included in the budget to account for the original construction phasing plan. If extra funds are required, they will come out of the 2017 Bond Program's contingency funds.

Will bell schedules be altered at the swing space?

It has been determined that the bell schedule will remain the same as it has in the past at the temporary off-site swing space campus.

Will AISD provide transportation for students attending a swing space?

Yes. Students who are zoned to attend Brentwood will have the option to ride the bus to the temporary off-site swing space campus. All routes will be finalized in summer 2020. Families are asked to please confirm that the district has the student's correct primary address and contact information.

Families are also encouraged to use the "Where's the Bus App" on their smartphone to track buses with live GPS. This app is available for eligible riders. [Instructions are on the district's website.](#)

Will Brentwood transfer students have access to transportation at a swing space?

Per district policy, transfer students are not provided transportation. However, there will be several routes created for this campus and children may ride on any route as long as there is space available on the bus. If a bus were to become overcrowded, non-eligible students would no longer be able to ride that bus.

What will happen to Brentwood's after-school programs?

There will be after-school programs available at the swing space. Conversations with after-school program partners have taken place to determine which ones will be available at the temporary campus.

Extend-a-Care and Creative Action will offer their services at the temporary campus. Due to the size of the cafeteria portable, we expect that Extend-a-Care will have the same capacity it has had in the past. Creative Action's enrollment will be 80 students and they were determined by a lottery. This was determined by the capacity of the spaces available at the temporary campus. Our hope is that all families find child care to meet their needs on- or off-site.

Will there be play areas at the swing space?

In addition to the Pre-K playground that is already on site at Webb Middle School, the AISD Construction Management Department is working with Principal Laroche and her staff to layout the play areas at the swing space which will include soccer goals, basketball hoops and tetherball poles. Brentwood also plans to work with Webb to share the track and field at different times, which will provide additional space for play.

How will items from the current campus be moved to the swing space?

AISD will contract professional movers to relocate all items. Boxes and labels will be provided for teachers and staff to pack all classroom materials.

A similar protocol for moving items would have taken place even if the school were able to use the original construction phasing plan. With the swing space, items will only need to be moved twice (off-site, then back into the modernized campus) rather than moving multiple times.

Miscellaneous Questions

Why doesn't AISD invest in a common swing space for schools undergoing modernization?

AISD's goal for all modernization projects is to keep the campus on-site whenever possible. Dobie Pre-K is an approved AISD facility that was considered for the Brentwood off-site swing space and can accommodate other future school communities with a similar population that may need a swing space.

What capacity is the new Brentwood campus being built for and why?

The modernized Brentwood Elementary is being built to a capacity of 696, per the Board approved 2017 Facility Master Plan. This capacity was set based on most recent demographics, but the design is also intended to be flexible, with the ability to accommodate additional students over time.

Additional studio space is being built to accommodate the district-wide auditory impairment program that is currently housed at Brentwood, which could potentially be relocated to another facility at some point in the future. The AI studios will be the same size as the standard studios and can easily be transitioned to accommodate future campus growth, if needed.

Has the district already received contractor bids for the Brentwood modernization project?

The General Contractor (Bartlett Cocke) is under contract and provides market validated cost estimates at each design deliverable phase. Market bids (i.e. "hard bids") from trades and subcontractors will not be solicited until closer to design completion, which is anticipated to be in Spring 2020.

Will the \$32 million budget allocated for the Brentwood modernization project generate interest if construction is delayed?

No, the \$32 million budget for the project does not generate interest over time, but because of ongoing inflation and escalating construction costs in the region, it is not in the interest of the district or the school community to delay the project any further.

Is the district considering potential cost escalation or labor shortages during a delayed construction timeline?

Yes, this is why the district is unable to further delay the project or the decision-making process.

Are there documents of the original intention for Brentwood during the bond planning process?

Yes, [the documents can be found online in a Google Drive related to the project.](#)

Is the district concerned about Brentwood enrollment going down from parents looking to send their students to other schools?

The district has an open transfer policy and encourages families to pursue the right campus for their students. If enrollment declines significantly, it will affect the number of teachers and staff a campus can retain.

Will Brentwood Elementary families receive priority transfers if they want to send their child(ren) to another school in the district?

No, Brentwood families will be eligible to apply for a transfer at the same time as all other AISD families.

I still have questions about the Brentwood modernization project. Where should I direct those questions?

Please reach out to the bond communications team at future@austinisd.org or call 512-414-9595 with questions. For more information on the 2017 Bond Program, visit www.AISDFuture.com