

LOCAL

COMMUNITY NEWS

SISD sets sights on community engagement

School district, COPS/Metro partner to improve communication

By: Edmond Ortiz - February 9, 2021



Southside Independent School District Superintendent Rolando Ramirez (left) listens to comments from COPS/Metro parent Estela Sanchez (center). She is joined by fellow COPS/Metro parent Montserrat Amador. Courtesy photo

A South Side school district and a grassroots activist group are partnering to improve students' academic performance and enhance connections with parents and the community.

Leaders from the Southside Independent School District and **COPS/Metro** announced their new working relationship at a Dec. 3 physically distanced press conference.

Together they plan a listening tour, including monthly gatherings where district officials can get direct input from learners, their families and other residents about local educational needs.

There also would be what COPS/Metro calls "civic academies" as part of the collaboration.

The long-term goal, according to officials, is to educate families about the school system, various issues being addressed and how best to advance pupils' studies.

"We are a team and we believe in the triangle of students, parents and the district working together," SISD Superintendent Rolando Ramirez said.

Estela Sanchez, a COPS/Metro organizer and SISD mother, said she looks forward to partnering with the district to empower other parents, getting them and neighbors more involved in school-community initiatives.

Another COPS/Metro member and SISD mom, Montserrat Amador, said the importance of education can't be stressed enough.

"Just a year ago, I was not allowed to enter the school premises for not having an American ID. Today, I am where the decisions are made and I will work with the district's administration and Superintendent Ramirez to improve the quality of education of my children," Amador said.

She added, "We don't have to conform with the minimum. Our children from the South Side deserve the same education as children in the North (Side) of San Antonio."

Vicente Arreguin, an SISD grandfather, said he is "glad we have a seat at the table and (can) build a relationship with the school district that plays a big part in our daily lives."

Arreguin said it's important for moms and dads to understand the requirements of students and teachers, and for the school district to realize parents' needs.

"We've kind of been the forgotten ones," Arreguin said.

He noted some Southside ISD families lack technological savvy or have no web access, so their children struggle to keep pace with remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Arreguin also added he hopes the collaboration will prompt SISD to consider more ideas about innovative educational programs and practices the school district could adapt to benefit instructors and students.

"It's just a matter of getting together and talking about these things," he said.