



**District Improvement Team (DIT) Meeting**  
**Minutes**  
**Thursday, December 1, 2016**  
**5:00 – 7:00 p.m.**

**ATTENDANCE:** Lori Brown, Roberto Carbajal, Mandele Davis, Katherine Dawson, Suzanne Farrow, Cynthia Fratina, Benjamin Garcia, Thurmeliues Glover, Allison Gower, Delfino Guillen, Melanie Harper, Sol Herrera, Mark Miller, Michael Moreau, Scott Muri, Jose Oxi, Mark Parenti, Pamela Pennington, John Pisklak, Jane Primrose, Kristi Robishaw, Donnie Roseman, David Sablatura, Maria Schick, Kate Sparenberg, Suzanne Stiles, Dmel Tatum, Jennifer Thorpe, Tam Tran, Chris Vierra, Esmerelda Warshaw

Percent of DIT members in attendance: **84%**

**GUESTS:** Lance Stallworth, Mike Thomas, Becky Wuerth

**WELCOME AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

John Pisklak, welcomed all in attendance and asked everyone to take a moment to review the draft minutes for the November, 2016, meeting. Jennifer Thorpe, moved to approve the minutes and the motion was seconded by Benjamin Garcia. DIT members then voted unanimously to approve the minutes.

**ACADEMIC CALENDAR:**

Lance Stallworth, SBISD Executive Director for Student Support Services, provided the DIT committee with a brief update of the findings of the calendar survey that was posted on the district website and emailed to all staff, as well as all parents and community members for whom the district has email addresses. The survey provided respondents with three options for an August 28 start date (current law), and three early start options in the event the Board of Trustees approves a District of Innovation exemption for school start date. Lance gave the committee the opportunity to review the comments from the survey which were divided into those received from internal stakeholders and those received from parents/community.

Mike Thomas, Director of Research and Evaluation, then shared a brief presentation of the calendar survey results. He noted the survey was sent to 34,057 email address and that it was provided in English and Spanish. The survey was taken by 4,333 individuals, for about a 13% response rate. Mike then shared the findings of the survey. (Presentation Attached) Based on the survey results the most important criteria identified by respondents for their selection of the proposed 2017- 2018 academic calendar was two full weeks of winter break followed by having the academic school year end by June 1.

DIT committee members shared their opinions of the comments as well as their own personal interpretation of the results.

Dr. Muri requested that the DIT recommend to him one August 28 start date calendar and one early start date calendar.

In response to Dr. Muri's request, the DIT voted as follows:

- August 28 Start Date Calendar:
  - Draft # 1 –No Votes
  - Draft # 2 – 3 votes, no student votes
  - Draft # 3 - 21 votes, 3 student votes
- Early Start Date Calendar: The DIT had a split vote on the early start calendars as follows:
  - Draft #1 – No Votes
  - Draft #2 – 16 votes, 3 student votes
  - Draft #3 – 10 votes, 0 student votes

Based on the votes noted above, the DIT recommended the following calendars to Dr. Muri: Aug 28 Start Date Calendar #3 and Early Start Calendar #2.

Along with the selection of the two base line calendars the DIT committee had various recommendations of adjustments to be made to the baseline calendar selections as noted below:

**SUGGESTIONS PUT FORTH BY DIT MEMBERS:** *(The following represent individual comments and considerations)*

- In favor of full week Thanksgiving holiday in an effort to be uniform with other Houston area school districts and allowing staff to be home with their children.
- In favor of at least one day off every month for students.
- In favor of eliminating full week of Thanksgiving on Aug 28 start #3 draft and using one day for an October day off for students as well as one day off in April.
- In favor of MLK day being a staff development day, student day off.
- In favor of eliminating Columbus Day as a holiday, and or using it as a staff development day
- In favor of ending the school year before Memorial Day, May 28, rather than a June 1
- In favor of early start calendar #2, with start date on Wed. having Labor Day off, an Oct holiday, and full week thanksgiving, not having a 2 week winter break.
- In favor of Good Friday off and ending school by Memorial Day. Top priority was not there in this selection.
- By adding minutes to instruction we would then just need to pick an option for staff development day. Tradeoff is the 2 days in November and adding minutes to the school day.
- In favor of early start calendar #3 but having students start school on August 23 and staff on 21 and 22 for staff development days as well as adding 6-7 minutes to bell schedule.

**ADDITIONAL COMMENTS BY DIT Members:** *(The following represent individual comments presented by a DIT committee member.)*

- No direct question was presented in the calendar survey asking respondents to pick an early start vs. and Aug 28 start calendar
- Based on the calendar survey results, parent's considers 2 weeks off for Winter break as a priority. However parents selected a calendar that did not offer 2 full weeks. It is important to consider why they decided to pick another calendar, was it due to Memorial Day?
- Adding minutes to the school day is definitely an option to consider, in an effort to have breaks within the calendar like one/month or full week in November and 2 full weeks in December.
- Respondents seem to be in favor of ending the academic year prior to June 1 and starting the academic year mid-week rather than on Monday.
- Other districts are working on transitioning into Districts of Innovation too, in order to start school early, i.e. Katy ISD, CY-Fair ISD
- Early Start calendar #2 gives the most balance for academic days per semester
- Could we apply Flex days and staff development days during summer break and into the school year? Could teachers have additional flex days?
- Compressing on both ends, starting later and finishing earlier works for students but a specific number of days is required for teachers' contracts.
- Data affirms being in favor of a week off during Thanksgiving based on student absences the week of Thanksgiving this school year.
- Partnership with charter schools should be considered as they currently have the full week off during Thanksgiving, and SBISD teachers can't move forward with their curriculum because students are not in class (merged classes).
- If new calendar is provided well ahead of time parents should be able to make child care plans.
- The 2 extra days during the week of Thanksgiving, allows for travel for staff, families and students. Ultimately parents will need to pay for childcare whether it is at Thanksgiving or during the school year – it's the same number of days during the year.
- The Harris County academic calendar compiles all school districts in Houston per their current academic calendar. Out of the 25 school districts 4 did not have a full week off in observance of Thanksgiving this year.

#### **SUPERINTENDENT'S COMMENTS:**

Dr. Muri shared his experience at the recent Staying Connected visit at Hollibrook Elementary. Dr. Muri was asked "why would a district not want to be a district of innovation?" Dr. Muri affirmed his answer pointing to the DIT as an example. "It's hard work," he said. The DIT committee has experienced the hard work associated with being a District of Innovation and having the added flexibility it brings when consideration development of the academic calendar.

Dr. Muri thanked all DIT members for their hard work and noted how very rewarding it was to see their continued and sustained efforts. He noted that the next steps will be to take into account the two calendar options selected at tonight's meeting, together with the comments and suggestions made by the DIT, to develop a final recommendation for the Board. The Board will hear a presentation about the calendar development process and participate in a discussion at their December Board Retreat.

All are welcome to attend the January Regular Board meeting at which time the Board is expected to vote on the 2017-18 Calendar. It is also the Joint Public Hearing of the DIT and District on the TAPR report. DIT members are encouraged to attend.

John Pisklak provided final comments and expressed gratitude for the DIT's hard work. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.