



## **District Improvement Team (DIT) Meeting**

**Thursday, October 6, 2016**

**5:00 – 7:00 p.m.**

**ATTENDANCE:** Lori Brown, Beth Cole, Suzanne Farrow, Cynthia Fratina, Thurmeliues Glover, Allison Gower, Melanie Harper, Nathan Mesler, Mark Miller, Scott Muri, Davis Palmie, Mark Parenti, Pamela Pennington, Jane Primrose, Kristi Robishaw, Donnie Roseman, Glenn Ryan, David Sablatura, Kate Sparenberg, Rachel Stone, Dmel Tatum, Tam Tran, Diane Thelen, Chris Vierra, Esmerelda Warshaw

Percent of DIT members in attendance: 61%

**GUESTS:** Lance Stallworth, Becky Wuerth, Marianne Cribbin, Mandele Davis

### **WELCOME:**

John Pisklak, the co-chair of DIT committee, welcomed all in attendance and apologized for his absence at the September meeting. John welcomed everyone to the October meeting.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

DIT members were asked to review the draft minutes for the September 1, 2016, meeting. It was noted that Rachel Stone and Allison Gower were in attendance and that their names needed to be added into that section of the minutes.

**MOTION:** Following a motion and a second to approve the minutes with the additions noted above, DIT members voted unanimously to approve the minutes..

### **DISTRICT UPDATE:**

Dr. Muri provided a district update. He noted recent good news about student achievement, specifically 2015-16 school year ACT scores. SBISD students have posted scores higher than the state and national averages, even as the number of SBISD students taking the test reached an all-time high (1,110). Four years ago, 887 SBISD students took the ACT. This year, SBISD's student's composite score was 23.2, above the Texas average of 20.6 and the ACT national average composite score of 20.8. Separately, Dr. Muri informed the DIT that October is Principals Month, and encouraged DIT members to thank their principal for their hard work.

Dr. Muri informed the DIT about his recent testimony on District of Innovation (D of I) before the Senate Education Committee in Austin. Dr. Muri plans to meet with the Lt. Governor to discuss the importance of expanding the D of I opportunity throughout the state. Dr. Muri affirmed that SBISD is unique in its approach to D of I, where we have developed our plan to leverage the ability to enact exemptions as we come across a barrier we want to remove in state law. Eighty-two percent of the 31 districts who have become districts of innovation have

leveraged the law for an earlier start date. Some legislators are disappointed to have not yet seen true innovation beyond start date and others may desire to eliminate this opportunity from the D of I opportunity going forward.

Dr. Muri also affirmed our Board of Trustees efforts and commitment to being strong advocates for our legislative agenda. In response to a question about when we might see some relief on school finance, Dr. Muri noted that if there were any movement by the upcoming legislature, the earliest we could see anything change would be July 1, but it could be another year. He also noted that two districts are facing loss of as much 50% of their budget due to recapture.

#### **TEACHER EVALUATION SYSTEM UPDATE:**

John introduced Marianne Cribbin, Associate Superintendent for Human Resources, to provide an update on T-TESS, the Texas teacher appraisal system that SBISD adopted last spring. Ms. Cribbin reminded the DIT that the state's work on T-TESS Teacher Appraisal was in alignment with DIT work of the past few years on the teacher appraisal, and that the DIT had recommended last spring that the district go with the state system. For the next school year (2017-18), under state law, 20 percent of a teacher's evaluation will be based on student learning objectives (SLOs).

All principals have received training on T-TESS and, they have provided positive feedback.

Ms. Karen Heath, HR Director, noted that a survey will be sent out to gain feedback on how the appraisal system is working. The district will monitor and support T-TESS implementation through an Appraisal Committee. Any DIT members interested in serving on the Appraisal Committee should notify her. Ms. Heath also noted the district has purchased a license with BloomBoard, an online platform that will enable teachers to access micro-courses aligned to T-TESS. Teachers will set goals, and teachers will have numerous resources within BloomBoard.

Spring Woods High, Spring Branch Middle as well as Frostwood and Edgewood are piloting SLO's this year. They will provide updates throughout the year. Ms. Heath noted that while there were student learning requirements before, it was really about one lesson being observed. The new system is much larger. The system is designed to measure whether students learn. The 20% measure was originally from NCLB, but now is coming as a state priority. There are four ways to measure student growth. There's also the question about how to measure in non-STAAR tested areas.

#### **ACADEMIC CALENDAR:**

Lance Stallworth, Executive Director of Student Support Services, and Becky Wuerth, Community Relations Specialist, reminded the DIT about their progress during the September meeting. Ms. Wuerth reviewed a handout with data requested by the DIT during the September meeting, which explained data about employee absences during the Thanksgiving holiday week vs. student absences. The committee noted that the handout did not show enough detail about actual teacher absences. The DIT requested for Ms. Wuerth to provide teacher specific data.

Mr. Stallworth went over some of the group findings from the September meeting. Mr. Stallworth asked the DIT to provide feedback from their groups prior to breaking off into separate groups.

An overall agreement throughout all three groups as they have developed their calendars to date seems to be around a start date prior to the last Monday in August. Mr. Stallworth asked the DIT to articulate the “Why’s” behind this sentiment, which included:

- Balancing the Fall and Spring semesters in terms of days to teach content so as not to disadvantage students who take one semester courses. Fall’s shorter semester length would disadvantage students who take these courses in the first semester.
- High school students need more days to learn content prior to AP and IB examinations
- Are energy costs different in June vs August
- In the future, endorsements may result in more one semester classes

Concerns noted are the need for students who need to earn money in the summer to have as close to 3 months to work and being aware of summer camp sessions ending close to school. Mr. Stallworth explained that with an earlier start date the summer break may be shorter during the inaugural year with a June 1, 2017 ending date this year. A few of the groups proposed a 5-day break during Thanksgiving. It was noted that there are only five districts in our area that do not have a week at Thanksgiving. Mr. Stallworth explained the need to communicate with neighboring school districts and see how their 5 day break works for their students and staff. It was also noted that districts who do not require 178 school days have more flexibility for the Thanksgiving week off.

The DIT was instructed to work in their three groups to continue their version of the 2017-2018 Academic Calendar. Each team was encouraged to focus on creating the best calendar to serve an educational tool.

Following their group work, the DIT reconvened. Based on the DIT membership unanimously favoring a calendar with an earlier start date, Mr. Stallworth stated that the DIT needed to introduce and pass a formal motion to recommend to Dr. Muri, who would in turn recommend to the Board of Trustees,

Co-Chair John Pisklak asked for a motion to formally request that the SBISD Board of Trustees enact a District of Innovation exemption for TEC 25.0811(a). The motion was made by Nathan Melser and seconded by Anne Daily. The motion passed with a unanimous affirmative vote.

Following the vote, Mr. Stallworth encouraged the members to brainstorm ideas on their own and bring any new ideas to their groups at the next meeting in November.

Linda Buchman addressed concern that not all DIT members were receiving her emails. She noted she would re-set the DIT distribution list and that she would send a link to the ACT article online related to Dr. Muri’s earlier comments.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.