



District Improvement Team (DIT) Meeting
Thursday, February 4, 2016
5:30 – 7:00 p.m.

ATTENDANCE: : Roberto Carbajal, Melissa Cisneros, Beth Cole, Katherine Dawson, Christopher Evers, Allison Gower, Kenneth Jones, Samuel Karnes, Scott Kennedy, Scott LeMaire, Benjamin Leung, Maria Limon, Maria Luna, Ana Medrano, Rachel Miller, Dmel Tatum, Jerry Van Casteren, Kristina Van Arsdel

Percent of DIT members in attendance: **43%**

GUESTS: Julie Jaehne

WELCOME and REVIEW OF MINUTES:

DIT Co-Chair Scott LeMaire welcomed everyone to the February DIT meeting. He then asked the DIT members to review the January 2016 meeting minutes. It was noted that the April 3 date located on Page 2, Paragraph 3, of the minutes was not correct. The correct date is April 7. With this correction being made, the January minutes were approved unanimously.

DISTRICT UPDATE

Co-Chair LeMaire introduced and welcomed Dr. Tyler Ream, Associate Superintendent for School Performance, who provided discussion involving the strategic planning process and updates to the DIT. A tentative April 21, 2016, DIT meeting date is set so that DIT and Board of Trustees meetings remain in calendar proximity. A Board of Trustees meeting vote involving the strategic plan/District of Innovation is scheduled for April 25. The DIT is by law required to vote in advance of the Board of Trustees vote on the same matter. In other update news, Dr. Ream reported that four Community Feedback meetings will be held during a 30-day period of public review during late March or early April.

STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE

Dr. Ream was followed by Dr. Scott Muri, SBISD Superintendent of Schools, who spoke on several key components to the success of strategic planning. These important key supports include a Resilient Foundation and Enacting Maximum Local Control. Dr. Muri reviewed the components that are central to an effective strategic plan. These include a foundation which reflects the district's five Core Values and three related components – Learning Ecosystem, Extraordinary People and Customized Supports.

The Resilient Foundation focus includes specific initiatives and actions explicitly designed to improve interdependent aspects of the district. Dr. Muri said this basic infrastructure must be established for other components to work well. The foundation has six categories. The first is Organizational Autonomy, or the development and definition of a clear and transparent model relating to autonomy in SBISD. Dr. Muri noted that an exercise with district principals showed

that the group's views of autonomy as campus leaders ranged from a 3 up to 8 on a 10-point scale, suggesting autonomy is not clearly defined. Enhanced School Supports, another of the foundation categories, describes an organizational structure that ensures optimal support. The Policy Engagement Process is focused on improving and maximizing public input/involvement from Board policies to campus-level engagement.

On Research and Development, another of the categories, Dr. Muri said a healthy structure is needed to evaluate the work we are doing in the system. Do we have evidence that the work we are doing or will be doing is effective, he asked rhetorically. School Redesign, the fifth category, involves local capacity to improve or redesign key elements of schools and district programs. In general, Dr. Muri noted, educators are not the best school and program designers. How should schools be guided through this process to create designs that work best for students? Finally, a data platform that includes multiple measures, real-time data and refined analysis is reflected in a foundation category known as District Data Platform and Strategy. Senior Staff and district staff are focused on these six categories, the DIT was advised. Dr. Muri then took questions on unrelated topics including the It's Learning content management and delivery system, selection of secondary student courses, and the varied expectations of autonomy across the district.

Dr. Muri then spoke on Enacting Maximum Local Control, which included traditional and living strategic plans, and the pros and cons between the two types as they might impact House Bill (HB) 1842, the Districts of Innovation initiative now under review and study in SBISD.

Under Traditional Strategic Plans, some positives include consistent targets, generally accepted practices, and predictable development and implementation. Cons may include lack of flexibility, long-term implementation, and lack of emphasis on continuous learning. Under a Living Strategic Plan, targets are dynamic, and as an organization changes over time targets may shift to keep up with change. Other positive features are adaptable work streams, and a requirement for continuous learning. On the other hand, this plan may be less traditional in practice and less predictable in design, and it requires careful monitoring to be successful.

Current state law on public education is compiled in an Education Code book that weighs in at 8.4 pounds and runs up to 1.2 million words, the equivalent of War and Peace, Gone With the Wind, and the entire U.S. Constitution. Under HB 1842, Dr. Muri noted that more than a dozen exclusions must still be followed under the state law, ranging from required election of a Board of Trustees to following open public meeting rules. At this time, Dr. Muri said, most state public school districts interested in HB 1842 District of Innovation designation are interested solely so they might change or move up the start of school date. Many of them will elect a code-by-code exemptions process to meet that goal. SBISD, on the other, is on a broader path to enact what is called Maximum Local Control, under which much Texas Education Code will fall away. This path will require a transparent district policy process favoring public engagement, Board action before an area of exemption can develop, and places more policy responsibilities on Trustees. Dr. Muri said that implementing a Living Strategic Plan would give the district a strong platform to tailor the education path of our students. In addition, it would allow the district to avoid a six-month long process to seek or implement needed changes.

DIT members then met in small groups to brainstorm around a series of questions, and report

out group views. Questions asked: What are the benefits of seeking maximum local control, or what are the potential points of caution in seeking maximum local control? Benefits included a greater community voice by all stakeholders, increased adaptation and flexibility, opportunities for schools to push change from the grass roots, and additional student learning engagement. Cautions ranged from increased communication needs to family/school scheduling issues if a family has children at different schools with varied yearly calendars and plans.

Finally, DIT members were asked to brainstorm in groups around this question” What systems and processes are needed to mitigate the points of caution that you identified? A few answers included improved Campus Improvement Team (CIT) and PTA engagement, using a structure like the Campus School Health Advisory Council (C-SHAC) to increase campus outreach, and increased stakeholder feedback.

DIT members were reminded that approximately half of current membership by state law must be replaced in May. New local elections are under way. Future DIT Meeting dates are set now for March 3, April 7, and May 5, 2016.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.