



**District Improvement Team (DIT)  
Meeting  
Thursday, September 3, 2015  
5:30 – 7:00 p.m.**

**ATTENDANCE:** Paulina Briones, Linda Buchman, Roberto Carbajal, Beth Cole, Nick Cumberland, Katherine Dawson, Delfino Guillen, Amy Hulshizer, Kenneth Jones, Scott LeMaire, Maria Limon, Maria Luna, Ana Medrano, Ashton Moreau, Rachel Miller, John Pisklak, Georgia Polley, Glenn Ryan, Elaine Sorsby, Dmel Tatum, Jennifer Thorpe, Shelly Tornquist, Jerry Van Casteren

Percent of DIT members in attendance: 67%

**GUESTS:** Jennifer Blaine, David Sablatura, Karen Heeth

**WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS:**

Dr. Scott Muri, SBISD's new Superintendent of Schools opened the meeting and welcomed everyone back to school and to service on the District Improvement Team. Dr. Muri shared insights about his first weeks in the role, looking, listening and learning as much as possible about SBISD. Using the Covey Method of organizational entry, he noted his effort is to seek first to understand, meeting with numerous stakeholders and continuing focus groups over the next month, too. Dr. Muri noted he has been gaining insights about what we do well and where we have opportunities for growth.

In October, Dr. Muri will present the findings of his looking, listening and learning to Trustees at the Board's workshop session. Following will be a strategic planning process from October through January. He noted the DIT will be involved in this work. He also noted that it is not up to the Superintendent to create the strategic plan. It will be a collective plan that will engage others in addition to the DIT. Once finished, the plan will define our path forward for the next several years and help us focus on the needs of our students.

Dr. Muri noted that enrollment continues to increase -- we are three over our enrollment projections as of today. Elementary enrollment is a bit lower than we expected, secondary a bit higher. We monitor enrollment and make adjustments, if needed, to balance staffing across the system. Dr. Muri also noted that we opened the school year with a great Convocation to showcase our students and challenge staff to focus on Every Child through very powerful messages.

Dr. Muri is thrilled to be here and stated he feels very fortunate to call SBISD home as it is an amazing place to be.

**DIT CHAIR SELECTION, 2015-2016:**

Linda explained the DIT tradition of having one staff and one parent/community member serve as co-chairs of the DIT. She explained their main role to be facilitating the meeting agenda, and signing as the DIT chairs on any waiver applications that may come before the DIT for approval.

Elaine Sorsby, staff member, and Scott LeMaire, parent, will continue to serve as the DIT co-chairs for this school year.

#### **REVIEW OF DIT ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:**

DIT members were provided with three documents related to the District Improvement Team including the statute, and legal and local policies. Linda Buchman briefly reviewed the roles and responsibilities of the DIT and these documents.

Several noteworthy items include:

- **Joint Public Hearing** Each year, the DIT must hold a joint public hearing with the Board of Trustees after receipt of the annual district performance report from TEA. Typically, this is a joint meeting held with the district at the January Board of Trustees Regular Meeting.
- **District Focus.** DIT meetings are focused on district-wide programming and not individual or campus issues.
- **Waivers.** From time to time the DIT may be asked to provide comment on waivers prior to submission from the Texas Education Agency. Since the waiver process has changed at the state level, there may not be as many of these requests going forward.
- **Advisory Role.** The role of DIT is an advisory one.

#### **TEACHER DEVELOPMENT AND EVALUATION UPDATE:**

Dr. Jennifer Blaine, Associate Superintendent for Administration and Operations, together with David Sablatura and Karen Heath, provided an update and reviewed next steps in the process. They reminded the DIT members that a role of the DIT is to develop the instrument for the teacher evaluation, which the DIT has been working on for past 18 months with support from the Teacher Evaluation Cross Functional Team (CFT). We could have chosen either to go with the system being developed by the state, or develop our own. When this work started, the DIT agreed we would develop our own.

Karen Heath shared that a mini pilot was done in the spring semester last year to pilot the rubric. This semester we are piloting a full cycle of the process. Eleven secondary schools are participating as are 11 elementary schools and 2 Pre-kindergarten sites. Pre-ks are conducting the pilot with all teachers. After each step, the pilot participants complete a short survey to provide feedback on the process. Seventy-four teachers have started the self assessment, and 29 diagnostic conferences have been held.

As schools respond, the CFT is receiving comments. For example, there were some tech issues with teachers saving their information. Feedback affirms that teachers like that the process is more sequential and that they can edit the document while in their diagnostic conference and change goals as needed. Meetings are set with principals to continue to receive feedback on the process. It was noted the feedback has been much more positive than negative. In response to a question regarding how tiers are evaluated, Karen Heath noted, "Tiers have caused tears, so tiers are going away." The design is all-inclusive, from the newest to the

master teacher, so that the evaluation is as fair as possible. Karen affirmed that a key difference in the new evaluation is a more individualized plan for the teachers. When the teacher selects goals, there are criteria that principals will monitor and provide feedback on to provide growth.

Dr. Blaine noted that the current system is a state instrument that is 8-10 pages long, is a lot of checking boxes and doesn't give opportunity for reflective dialogue and a reflective process. Teachers desire constructive feedback which the current system does not provide for. In supporting the DIT in this work, the CFT conducted a 90-minute teacher panel comprised of representatives from all grades/content areas. There was also an online survey and focus group process at the start of the work.

Themes that emerged from the up-front feedback confirmed the current system doesn't help teachers grow. In response, the new model enables teachers to identify a few growth areas and set goals to master more deeply. This provides principals more time to give teachers more feedback. The new instrument is much reduced in scope. It is not designed for the whole instrument to be used with every teacher every year. Rather, it is a continuous growth model. In other words, if a teacher meets goals by February, s/he can set new ones.

This year the data piece will be a big focus. The state requires 20% of the evaluation be based on data. We can have more, but not less than 20%. Some districts are doing 50%, but the DIT agreed on a 20% model. Dr. Sablatura noted that the DIT did a lot of work on the data piece last year. Some consensus was reached by the DIT. They will bring this back to the DIT. It was noted that next year, we can implement the new instrument without the data piece. The following year, will be full implementation. Dr. Blaine noted that a big piece of the process will be professional development for our school leaders next August on reflective coaching.

Karen noted the DIT requested that teachers be able to give their own assessment of their walk-through. If a teacher chooses, this is an option, so they can have this information as part of the process to assure fairness and provide teachers the opportunity to have input on their growth and development.

Elaine Sorsby shared that the Stratford foreign language team engaged in the pilot process today. She stated that it was good to have peers together to walk through the process which looks different from anything we have ever done. She noted she really liked the summary toward showing where you are which made it easy to set a goal. The process took about an hour.

It was discussed that with self-assessment, sometimes people set themselves too low, sometimes too high. The new model enables the supervisor and teacher to have a conversation about the goals and adjust as mutually agreed, if appropriate. There are electronic signatures in the new system, too. Summary information will be sent to Teaching and Learning to inform professional development in alignment with teacher needs.

The process includes two walk-throughs and one 45-minute observation. Teachers must have 10-day notice that a 45-minute observation is scheduled. In response to a question from Dr. Muri regarding how the process differentiates for master teachers, it was noted they have the

same process but can differentiate in goals. This was based on feedback from master teachers who feel their level of expertise should not negate their desire for feedback and focus from their principal.

Karen Heeth affirmed that the pilot does not target brand new teachers. Pilot schools could pick a team or team leaders but needed to select from across the campus and different types of teachers. All pilot teachers agreed to sign a waiver acknowledging that for this pilot year they are not having an official appraisal as designated by State of Texas. Kenneth Jones affirmed that he is part of the pilot and working on his goals now. He stated there is more opportunity to be reflective than in the old model.

In response to a question regarding support for new teachers, it was noted that work is ongoing to assure a strong mentoring program is in place. Dr. Muri noted that mentoring and growing teachers and leaders starts with him and underscored the importance of providing quality feedback. All of Dr. Muri's direct reports have already had a one-on-one.

Feedback from the pilot will be brought back to the DIT in the months ahead.

DIT Co-Chair Scott LeMaire providing concluding remarks.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.