



**District Improvement Team (DIT)  
Meeting  
Thursday, September 4, 2014  
5:30 – 7:30 p.m.**

**ATTENDANCE:**

In attendance: Linda Buchman, Naycy Chavez, Shikonya Cureton, Katherine Dawson, Stephanie Hoang, Penne Irvin, Virginia Johnson, Kenneth Jones, Samuel Karnes, Duncan Klussmann, George Kurisky, Scott LeMaire, Benjamin Leung, Ester Loreda, Maria Luna, Ana Medrano, Angelique Moulton, Rachel Miller, Anthony Ortega, Georgia Polley, Karen Rodriguez, Elaine Sorsby, Shelly Tornquist, Kristina Van Arsdel. Other SBISD Staff attending included Jennifer Blaine, Patti Pace, Elliot Witney, Becky Wuerth and Mandele Davis.

Percent of DIT members in attendance: **68%**

**WELCOME:**

Linda Buchman called the meeting to order and noted a change in the agenda order to accommodate Dr. Klussmann returning from a downtown Greater Houston Partnership meeting. Linda welcomed returning and new DIT members and especially thanked the students for the significant perspective they bring to the DIT. All members introduced themselves.

**DIT CHAIR SELECTION:**

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 and Kenneth Jones both self-nominated to serve as the staff chair. A paper ballot was conducted. Elaine Sorsby was the winner by a vote of 14-7; Elaine will serve as the staff co-chair. Scott LeMaire self-nominated for the parent co-chair and was unopposed. Scott will serve as the parent co-chair.

**REVIEW OF DIT ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:**

DIT members were provided with three documents – 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 on AEIS** (Academic Excellence Indicator System). Each year, the DIT must hold a joint public hearing with the Board of Trustees on the AEIS. 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. Members should feel free to communicate individual or campus concerns to Duncan, but should not use the DIT forum for such communication.

- **Waivers.** From time to time the DIT may be asked to provide comment on waivers prior to submission from the Texas Education Agency. Linda, together with Jennifer Blaine and Patti Pace, noted that the waiver process has changed at the state level, so there may not be as many of these requests going forward.
- **Advisory Role.** The role of DIT is an advisory one.
- **Task Forces.** From time to time, there may be task forces implemented to study a particular subject, and often to make a recommendation to the district or the Board of Trustees. Should task forces form in the future, we will seek DIT representation.

- **TEACHER EVALUATION**

Dr. Jennifer Blaine, Associate Superintendent for Administration and Operations, led the DIT through a discussion and exercise relative to the development of a new teacher evaluation model for the district. Jennifer reminded the DIT that last year, and in the spring of the prior year, the DIT affirmed the desire for SBISD to develop its own teacher evaluation model, rather than using the state model. The DIT by law has to be the driver in development of the teacher appraisal system.

Jennifer reminded the DIT that the Teacher Development/Evaluation Cross Functional Team (CFT), for which she is the facilitator, is supporting the DIT's efforts and has been studying the topic of teacher evaluation since the middle of last school year. She reminded the DIT that they have had a teacher panel, on which Elaine Sorsby participated, and surveyed all teachers on the pros/cons of the current system. Several noteworthy items out of this research affirm that: (1) the current evaluation process is cumbersome, (2) there is lots of debate around the use of data in teacher evaluation – there are pros and cons, and not a model that has been done “right” yet developed nationally, and (3) teachers want more choice and individualization in teacher development. In the past it has been too top down, and maybe not as relevant for all teachers.

Jennifer's ask of the group was to review a draft rubric that the CFT has developed. Jennifer explained the rubric, how it tied to the four beliefs, and aligned with TEKS domains. There are four categories to reflect the teacher's developmental level, and Jennifer described examples of what you might see in each. She noted they are not about student behavior, but rather about the teacher. The four categories are: Foundational, Developing, Performing, and Refining.

The DIT broke into four groups, with each assigned one domain. They were asked to complete a chart with two questions for their domain as follows: (1) “What are some positive aspects of what you are seeing,” and (2) “What changes do you think we should consider making?” The charts attached as an Exhibit to these minutes reflects their feedback.

Following the break-out activity and share out of results, Jennifer stated that the CFT will continue to work on the rubric on the DIT's behalf, and will get feedback from the teachers. Jennifer reminded the DIT that the CFT meets from 8:15 – 10:15 weekly on Tuesday mornings. She stated that teachers are welcome to attend with principal permission. The DIT will work on the teacher evaluation model throughout this year.

- **CALENDAR DEVELOPMENT PROCESS**

Patti Pace, Associate Superintendent for Teaching and Learning, introduced the DIT to the calendar development process and provided an overview of the work the DIT is charged to do in developing the academic calendars for the next two school years.

Patti noted that Trustees have expressed interest in added spring conference days for elementary schools. They are also interested in our consideration of additional elementary professional development time allowed, similar to the secondary campuses' late arrival days. This could be realized through either waivers or built into the calendar as a full day in the fall and in the spring. Full days allotted for professional development would require board approval to reduce the current 178 day parameter that guides our work.

Following the introduction, Becky Wuerth walked the group through the extensive information she has collected/provided in the "Calendar Red Folder" each member was provided. This includes information such as FAQs about the process, holidays, Board Parameters, historic spring break dates, a development process timeline and calendar development considerations that have been developed over time working through this process. She affirmed that there are not as many choices as there were years ago due to the state law that schools may not begin prior to the fourth Monday in August. Also mentioned was a desire to have regional alignment for spring break.

Dr. Klussmann noted that this is a legislative year, and that there is a chance legislation may be introduced to provide some flexibility in the start date. A hope would be for a start three days earlier. Dr. Klussmann also noted that if the upcoming legislative session yielded a change in the law, the DIT may have to recommend a calendar reflective of this change.

He also noted that if they developed a calendar that did not align with the current 178 days of school designated by the current Board parameters, they could present sound reasons for changing that parameter for his and the Board's consideration.

Mandele Davis, SKY Partnership Coordinator, spoke about the SKY partners' calendar development process. She noted that KIPP and YES have a longer academic calendar with 181 days, with their school year beginning two weeks earlier than traditional systems. This provides for professional development for teachers and training for students. Teachers attend 6-7 days in August without students. Mandele also noted that the charters have weekly early dismissal days for staff development, with students leaving at 1 p.m. on Fridays. Landrum and Northbrook Middle Schools will have six early release days this year for joint professional development with their SKY partners.

Patti noted that the elementary schools would like more early release days. Duncan noted that the secondary schools at KIPP and YES have embedded full day teacher led professional development, an example being around common assessments, which he believes contributes to their success.

Patti divided the DIT into two groups, with one charged to develop two options for the 2015-16 school year, and one charged with doing the same for the 2016-17 school year. The groups began the work of calendar development, and members agreed to stay beyond 7:30 to continue their work.

At the close of the meeting, Dr. Klussmann gave a brief overview of the district, stating that the school year had begun quite smoothly, with our enrollment steadily increasing each day. He noted the bond program is going well, and responded to a few general questions from DIT members.

There being no further business, the meeting concluded at approximately 7:50 p.m.

**NEXT MEETING DATES:**

Thursday, Oct. 2

Tuesday, Nov. 4

Thursday, Dec. 4