



District Improvement Team (DIT) Meeting
Thursday, September 5, 2019
5:00 – 7:00 p.m.
MINUTES

Member Attendance: Paula Baker, Melanie Bash, Jennifer Blaine, Tamesha Bullock, Carrie Campbell-Bishop, Kristin Craft, Ivone Davis, Cassidy Donalson, Crystal Fain,, Molly Ferguson, Michelle Garcia, Bibbin Gill, Chris Gonzalez, Tammy Hampton, Yvette Harris-Frank, Tamma Howell, Shaundra Jacobs, Rahil Jagetia, John Jenna, Barbara Kennedy, Kim Lemex, Meg Maguire, Leslie Marquez, Clifford Nickel, Karen Peck, John Pisklak, Christian Rice, Holly Saunders, Betty Smith, Abby Sparks, Dan Tatulescu, Jennifer Thorpe

Percent of DIT Members in Attendance: 76.2%

Non-member Attendance: Linda Buchman, Lawanda Coffee

Welcome and Introductions:

Linda Buchman, SBISD Associate Superintendent for Community Relations welcomed our new and returning DIT members. Members each introduced themselves by name and role on the DIT.

Approval of Minutes:

Linda Buchman asked returning DIT members to review the May 2019 meeting minutes, noting that Lawanda Coffee's name needed to be updated so as to be spelled correctly throughout the document. As no additional changes were recommended by the committee, a motion was made by Holly Saunders to approve the minutes, and the motion was seconded by Leslie Marquez. The minutes were approved unanimously.

DIT Roles and Responsibilities:

Linda Buchman provided the committee with a high level overview of the DIT's role and responsibilities per the board policy. The items mentioned included the DIT's role as an advisory committee to the Superintendent in relation to district level matters and the annual joint public hearing on the TAPR report in January.

Superintendent's Welcome and Priorities:

Dr. Jennifer Blaine, SBISD's new Superintendent of Schools, welcomed everyone to the DIT. Dr. Blaine then reviewed her history in the district as a parent and 20-year leader in the system. She reviewed her various roles leading to her being named Superintendent of Schools in June 2019.

Dr. Blaine shared with the DIT the way in which she solicited feedback given the short timeline between her being named sole finalist and beginning her role on July 1. She reviewed feedback she had received from district and campus leaders, including feedback around the system's structure, internal communications/mixed messages, and culture and climate. She noted the need to speak more directly about T-2-4. Dr. Blaine reviewed the district's new organizational chart, and better alignment of senior staff members, all of whom now have an "Associate Superintendent" title. She also noted that feedback from teachers and principals included concerns that there is too much going on and asked of campuses, without enough focus.

In response to the feedback received, and based on her belief that schools and school systems need focus and clarity to effectively serve students academically and socially/emotionally, Dr. Blaine shared affirmed a narrowing of district focus. At the elementary level, the focus will be on literacy and numeracy, supporting English Learners, and social and emotional supports. At the secondary level, the focus sustains on literacy and social and emotional supports, with major areas of focus including digital expansion/consistent implementation of itslearning, expansion of Career and Technical Education.

Members of the DIT had opportunities to ask questions of Dr. Blaine.

John Pisklak questioned use of social media and how to balance use of technology/screen time for students. Dr. Blaine affirmed that technology is not always the right tool.

Bibbin Gill asked whether the district is considering review of the cell phone policy. Dr. Blaine noted that there is no plan to review the cell phone policy at this time.

Chris Rice noted he was pleased to see focus on social/emotional learning. He indicated a desire to increase parental involvement at his school, and commented on the importance of culturally responsive pedagogy in the classroom. In response to questions around increasing parental engagement, Linda Buchman mentioned the district's Family Education, Engagement and Empowerment (Family E3) efforts, and Tammy Hampton referenced the PTA Sister Schools Solution.

Additional comments were made regarding use of technology and the itslearning platform. Dr. Craft noted that all district curriculum lives in itslearning. Student DIT members shared input about itslearning, and one student noted their school seemed to have more engagement/problem based learning that it has had recently.

Other comments focused on how to better engage children with disabilities in school experiences. It was noted by Cassidy Donalson that at Spring Woods High School, there is a student-led effort to better involve disabled students in sports and other aspects of school life. Dr. Blaine noted that we have programs in place, but noted this was an area where we could probably do more, in terms of engagement in school life. Dr. Craft affirmed the district's commitment to inclusive practices. John Kenna noted that there is currently underway a study of E-Sports as an option for special needs students.

District Improvement Plan Process and Goal Input:

Dr. Kristin Craft, Associate Superintendent for Academics, and Lawanda Coffee, Director for External Funding, co-presented on the process for developing the District Improvement Plan. Dr. Craft provided a brief overview of the district's multiple measures strategy. Dr. Craft and Ms. Coffee then provided an overview of the draft District Improvement Plan goals and performance objectives. DIT members were then asked to work in table teams to review the draft goals and provide feedback on the goals and any opportunities to make them better.

The DIT members worked on the goal document, and their feedback was given to Dr. Craft and Ms. Coffee to bring back to staff for consideration as the process of developing the District Improvement Plan continues. Dr. Craft and Ms. Coffee will return to the DIT for input at an upcoming meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.