

DISTRICT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

February 25, 2010

Members Present: Frank Bissell, Lonnie Burgett, Johnnie Mae Carter, Scott Rigrod (for José Contreras), Roseline Emeghebo, Nimfa Gallardo, Patrice Grove, Mary Hacopian, Ruth Henderson, Andrea Holberg, Sydne James, Earl Jimmison, Linder Johnson, Joyce Jones, Rhonda Jones, Keith Kalman, Roslyne Kennedy, Stacy Kent, Karen Lemons, Patricia Mitchell, Mary Nesbitt, Sheryl Oliver, Brenda Parker, Laurie Parkin, Ron Parnell, Jesus Soria, Kenyetta Thomas, Wanda Thomas, John Haro, Mark Smith and Sylvia Valverde.

Mark opened the meeting at 3:30 p.m. and introduced Georgia McGlasson, Senior Manager of Student Guidelines and Policies, to discuss the proposed recommendations to the HISD graduation requirements.

Proposed Recommendations to HISD Graduation Requirements

There are three choices for graduation plans:

1. HISD Core Plan
2. Recommended
3. Distinguished Achievement

Prior to school year 2007-2008, 24 credits were needed for the Core diploma and 22 credits to meet TEA's graduation requirements. The Recommended diploma required 24 credits. The differences between the graduation plans are highlighted in yellow on the handout that was given.

There is a new requirement for Fine Arts credit for school year 2010-2011. The Legislature is recommending the following changes to the Recommended High School Diploma program:

- 1.5 credits of PE to 1 credit
- .5 credits of Health to 0 credits
- 1.0 credits of Technology Applications to 0 credits

The State Board of Education has recently said that these changes will be made to the Minimum and the Distinguished diploma programs. They want all three programs to be consistent.

HISD has higher core requirements than the state and our school board can approve even higher requirements. The Task Force has met to discuss the issues and the consensus of the group is on page one of the handout. There has been no consensus on Health and Technology Applications. The pros and cons are on pages 3-5 of the handout.

Most school districts in Texas go with the TEA requirements on Health and Technology.

Only 46% of HISD students met proficiency in Technology in the 8th grade. If HISD moved this course to the middle school level, it would not be part of the graduation requirements but a part of the curriculum. There are technology TEKS that should be embedded in the curriculum. The Principals Ad Hoc committee met yesterday and they want to strengthen the curriculum and embed technology in all courses.

Health – Georgia has been visiting Health classes to talk to the students about the impact of these classes and most of the students feel that Health should be taught at the high school level

because they did not feel they were ready to discuss some of the topics in the 8th grade. They stated that they thought they knew about some of these topics but they didn't. Some of the health topics discussed in school are: pregnancy, diabetes, eating disorders, hand-washing, obesity, violent relationships, etc. At the middle school level the PE teacher teaches six weeks of Health and at the high school level there's a teacher certified in Health.

DAC member comments regarding Health:

- Middle school students aren't prepared emotionally or academically to deal with these health topics;
- Geographically may need to bring up some of these topics sooner;
- Health is important and needs to be taught before the senior year;
- HISD has the highest repeat pregnancy rate in the state;
- Would like to see it taught at every level and build upon it the following year;
- Obesity, hand-washing and diabetes need to be taught at the elementary level;
- Need to start at the elementary level; teaching students about making good life-long choices;
- Adolescents are sexually active between 3:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.;
- There is a K-8th grade Health curriculum available that's probably not being taught daily or properly; and
- 10th grade is the best time to teach Health and build and expound on it every year until the student graduates.

Mark stated that many high school principals, because of pressure to graduate students, see Health and Technology Applications as obstacles for graduation. They would prefer having flexibility in the scheduling of these courses. Principals in affluent schools say they don't need technology application courses and principals in low economic schools say they do. Students may not sign up for Health but they will for Technology because they know it will help them in their job search. Need to keep exposing students to technology and use Stimulus money to sustain computer technology. You can also sustain it by writing grants.

Update on Regional Office Reorganization

Two Chief School Officers (CSO) have been named: Sam Sarabia will be the Chief of Elementary Schools and Dr. David Simmons will be the Chief of High Schools. They are presently interviewing School Improvement Officers (SIO). The Chief of Middle Schools is currently vacant but should be filled soon. The School Improvement Officers, Parent Assistance liaisons and Accountability personnel will report to the CSO's and housed in the Hattie Mae White building.

The office building currently housing the West Region will be used to house the following departments: Testing, Technology, Chancery, Workers Comp and Medicaid. The Central and North Region offices may be used for specialty school programs.

The East and South Region offices will become Field Offices and they will house the instructional specialists that will support the schools: Math, Science, English Language Arts, Literacy, Student Support, G/T, Multilingual, Special Ed., Economically disadvantaged/at-risk and Data and Compliance. Eleven data and compliance personnel will oversee all compliance programs such as Special Ed, G/T and Multilingual.

The Dropout Prevention Caseworkers and the Attendance Caseworkers will be eliminated and replaced with 20 Student Caseworkers.

The district wants to create a system of support for our schools and not one of enabling.

Additional personnel will be added centrally to take care of other things like budgets.

The Parent Assistance liaisons will take care of written correspondence between schools and home.

Professional Development will be moving to Ryan ES and will have training rooms to provide all district training there. ACP and new teacher training will be done at that location. The building will be used 12-15 hours/day and will have state-of-the-art technology available. The move will be done on April 1st.

Professional Development will now be under Human Resources which is how it's typically done in most school districts. Sharon Koonce will manage all district training.

Question: Will principals have less choice? It appears that things are becoming more centralized.

Right now we may have 30-50 reading programs going on in the district and we don't know how effective they are. The district will research the best programs and make 3-4 available for schools to choose from. High performing schools will be left alone but parameters for these schools haven't been defined.

There will be tiered level differences of authority based on principal needs.

Summer School

The summer school program will stay the same as it's been in previous years. It will be held in June with a six-hour instructional day. We need to increase the rigor of curriculum and create better ways to evaluate---maybe include pre/post testing. Summer school needs to focus on the objectives that students didn't pass; make instruction more purposeful. Some students may not need to stay for the entire day if they only need instruction in math or reading. Gradespeed should be available for Summer School.

Extended Year Calendar

Presently looking at schools with performance issues for optional year-round calendar and their feeder schools. Have had about 33 schools inquire about this option. Community Services may look at the year-round calendar.

Question: Any truth to teachers having to reapply for their jobs if the school goes year-round?

No. It may be true for other reasons such as performance, but not because of the year-round calendar.

Question: Have parents been surveyed on the year-round calendar?

No. The Superintendent wants to look at a pilot program and wants the principals' input first; will start with the schools with the greatest needs and financial constraints. We need to consider families and their other children.

Question: What causes low-performing high schools?

There are many reasons such as: low achievement scores in math, reading, language arts, graduation rates, dropouts, attendance, immigrants, school leadership, teacher quality, ability to keep zoned population, etc. The list is infinite.

Update on Special Ed Audit

The data audit is being done right now to know what questions to ask before they do the staff evaluation audit. HISD has lost 3200 Special Ed. students but the number of staff has remained the same. Funding is part of the data collection. The audit is being done out of Harvard University.

The meeting adjourned at 4:59 p.m. The next meeting will be held Thursday, **March 25, 2010**, at 3:30 p.m. in the Board Auditorium.