

DISTRICT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

December 17, 2009

Members Present: Johnnie Mae Carter, Tony D'Angelo, Roseline Emeghebo, Nimfa Gallardo, Mary Hacopian, Pamela Johnson, Roslyne Kennedy-Taylor, Carolyn Love, Danette Maldonado, Ron Parnell, Wanda Thomas, Mark Smith, and Sylvia Valverde

Mark Smith called the meeting to order at 3:40 p.m. He introduced Georgia McGlasson from Policy Coordination, and said she would be talking about graduation and transfer policies later today. He also stated that grading policies would be discussed at the January meeting.

Update on District Reorganization

The Board has approved the new job descriptions/titles. Board approval is not necessary for the reorganization plan. The new job descriptions are already posted and advertised---Chief School Officers (CSO's) for elementary, middle and high schools as well as the School Improvement Officers (SIO's). We will be moving from a geographical structure to a functional structure. All elementary schools will report to the Chief of Elementary Schools, etc. The Chief of High Schools will have the atypical schools and charter schools like Harper Alternative, HP Carter, CLC, Community Services, SOARS, and Liberty HS, which serves overage and recent immigrants.

The SIO's will serve under each Chief. They will have to have experience at the level they serve and will each have a certain number of schools under them. They will be coaching, mentoring, evaluating and supervising principals. There will be 11 elementary SIO's with 15-16 schools each, six middle school SIO's with about 7 or 8 schools each and four high school SIO's.

HISD has a lot of Exemplary and Recognized elementary schools so they don't need as much supervision. Since there are more facets to secondary schools, those SIO's will have fewer schools to supervise.

Dr. Morris has told the Executive Principals (EP's) that we need quality control so they may have a random clustering of schools. SIO's may have 3-4 clusters of schools in different parts of the city so that when they visit the schools, they can talk about schools in the district and not just a particular area.

The Chief Compliance Officer will be over charter schools but won't evaluate them. Will look at their contracts to see if they're being implemented, will see if the school is working, do we need to keep their contract, etc.

Both Dr. Grier and Dr. Morris have told the Principals Ad Hoc Committee and the EP's that the SIO's will be there to help principals make good decisions on their campus but not to do their work; not to micro-manage. The SIO's will not be there to evaluate and supervise teachers but to assist principals with teachers that need additional help. Dr. Grier stated that the role of the SIO is to make sure principals are successful and if they're not, to remove them. There will be a re-tooling of these positions. Interviews will take place in February.

Question: Where will they be housed?

Throughout the district in various HISD facilities.

Question: How do you see the support structure with this new system?

Example: Business Managers assist schools with different issues. There are a lot of functions that the regional offices currently take care of. Some make sense to run centrally like Special Ed, Community Involvement, and Parent Involvement. Some of these functions will go to the schools and some to the central office. Chief School Office (CSO) functions like parent assistance and Special Ed., LEP, etc., will be done centrally as will other functions that provide immediate assistance to principals. For the reorganization to be successful, we need to re-tool central office roles as well.

Evaluation Specialists will probably be dealt with like Speech Therapists at the central office level.

The district is looking at “beefing up” school budgets for additional support .

Question: Is it too early to discuss Literacy Coaches and curriculum?

Yes, it's too early but right now the curriculum department will reside with the Chief School Officers.

Question: K-8 schools---will they fall under the elementary or middle school Chief?

All of them will fit under one CSO. Originally they were going to be with the Elementary CSO but they need to know about dual credit and other secondary issues. Some K-8 schools are majority elementary schools but other schools are majority middle schools. If all fall into one SIO, they will have a person that knows their needs. This is also true of the Early Childhood Centers though one ECE principal has stated that it would be better if they were with the elementary principals.

2010-2011 Instructional Calendar

There will be a formal calendar meeting in January. The DRAFT calendar has 81 days in the fall and 95 days in the spring. We need to have 80 days in the fall so another holiday needs to be added. Dr. Grier has made it clear that we will have to have best practices with the calendar.

Things to consider when developing the calendar:

1. If we have five staff development days we'll only have 175 instructional days, and not 180; and
2. Is there a benefit for altered school days for students? Is it a good trade-off?

If we have a 180 instructional day calendar, the days highlighted in blue would be school days for students---two in December, one in February, and one in April.

Comments about the five days?

- one week of staff development, August 16-20, 2010;
- school would start August 23, 2010; and
- can't require teachers to start August 9th unless you pay them.

Mark mentioned that research shows that you need 45 hours of training to make a difference.

There was no significant difference in attendance for the two days before Thanksgiving holiday.

If we had to decide between early dismissal days and 175 days?

Parents dislike early dismissal days but some DAC members that work in schools that have early dismissal, like it. Other members stated that a lot of the training doesn't pertain to all the employees so it's time that's wasted.

Mark then mentioned how the principal of Harvard ES, Kevin Beringer, has teachers on a 60-minute planning period four days/week and on the fifth day, uses it for staff development, if needed.

Middle schools have two planning periods/day.

Instructional time should be sacred.

Danette Maldonado suggested no early dismissal days to have staff development in August even if it's only 7-8 days and not 10. Or even 2-3 days.

There will be a lot of "push and pull" on this calendar. Mark asked the committee members to send him an e-mail with their suggestions/comments.

Mark then introduced Georgia McGlasson as a "pillar in the district." She works in the Policy Coordination department and was a principal for 21 years.

Georgia talked to the committee about graduation changes the state legislature has made. As of today, there are no changes to the HISD graduation plans because we're waiting to see what the State Board of Education does. She passed out a handout that shows the differences between HISD and TEA graduation requirements. Instead of an academic elective, HISD requires three science credits and 3.5 credits in social studies. The total number of credits is also shown. For those students entering the ninth grade in 2009 can see the changes the state made.

The first page shows the changes made at the November 20, 2009, meeting. The first reading was in September and the final adoption will be done in January 2010. HISD hasn't adopted any of the state changes. If they're adopted, HISD will look to see what changes need to be done.

HISD Transfer Policy – The different types of transfers are:

1. Court-ordered for desegregation. We're no longer under court order for this;
2. AYP;
3. Violent crime victims;
4. Legally mandated (i.e. bilingual and school doesn't offer the program; Sp. Ed. placements, etc.);
5. Magnet Schools;
6. Minority-to-Majority;
7. PEG; and
8. Open Enrollment

Schools shouldn't continue to accept transfers if they're at 95% capacity because space should be reserved for students that move into the area.

At present:

- 38 schools are between 90% - 95% capacity;
- 56 schools are over capacity;

- 130 schools have space to accept more students;
- 94 schools don't have any space;
- 87 schools are capped; and
- 187 students have to go to another school because their home school is capped.

Who's entitled to attend school? FD Local lists all the requirements.

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

The next meeting will be held on January 28, 2010, at 3:30 p.m. in the Board Auditorium.