

River Oaks Elementary

SDMC Minutes

Thursday, May 14, 2020

6:00 PM

***(To be approved at the next SDMC meeting)***

The virtual, General SDMC/PTO meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM through the Zoom platform. There were over 87 families in attendance/logged into Zoom.

Dr. Fovargue introduced Lacey Website, 2021-2022 PTO President. Ms. Webster introduced the new PTO Slate.

Secondly, Dr. Fovargue shared the agenda, and she gave an overview of ROE’s transition and barriers to remote learning. She also shared the faculty and staff’s journey throughout the Covid-19 *Instructing* *while* *Closed* utilizing the theme: leading and teaching with resilience, empathy, and compassion. She shared district resources regarding how remote learning may look in the future with upcoming district training, the addition of an academic instructional technology department in HISD, and stated the curriculum, schedules, resources and platforms will be more centralized and streamlined district-wide.

For the community to better understand district decisions, Dr. Fovargue shared the HISD Superintendent’s Emergency Constraints which include Social Emotional Needs, Health and Safety Needs, Engagement in Learning and Protecting Health and Safety of Employees. Additionally, TEA’s school calendar proposal was shared. Special attention was given to short term disruptions, impact on student achievement, and recommended intersessional calendars. Dr. Fovargue provided the district and Texas Education Agency’s websites for references.

HISD had recently sent communication regarding applying for a District of Innovation. Dr. Fovargue shared those resources as well and explained the four focus areas of the district. These areas are as follows: start of school, career and technical education (CATE) hires (secondary level), 90% Attendance Rule as it relates to seat time and Minutes of Instruction (75,600-minute rule).

Dr. Fovargue shared the end of year and summer schedules including the closeout of the year including student pick up and drop off. She also shared the following: “Instructing while closed” remains in place during the summer 2020, virtual Summer School begins June 8, 2020, summer PTO and school events postponed until further notice and the start of the school year remains unknown. She encouraged families to stay connected over the summer through [HISD@H.O.M.E](mailto:HISD@H.O.M.E). and ROE resources.

Lastly, parents and community members submitted the following inquiries prior to the meeting, and Dr. Fovargue answered the questions in the following format.

**PTO Spring Meeting Agenda FAQs**

**Academics**

*Anticipating that we may need to continue some form of distance learning for some part of next school year, will ROE be assessing the current model of instruction and making any changes to it over the summer?* Yes. River Oaks Elementary will adapt to a published district model with a consistent set of expectations across the district. This has not been published yet; however, you can follow the [HISD@H.O.M.E](mailto:HISD@H.O.M.E). website for examples, communications, publications, etc. to have an idea of what will be expected. Teachers will receive training this summer to prepare for a consistent approach to remote learning and digital platforms.

*Please address the inconsistent virtual lessons taught across grades, specifically around the 2nd grade teachers. One 30 minute catch-up per week is hardly sufficient.* At this time, grade levels have received a minimal set of expectations with little training as to how to proceed with the remote learning. Second grade does seem to provide a challenge of students exhibiting some independence as the upper grade levels; however, not quite ready yet. Without being able to provide teachers adequate training, pay for home internet and data plans, personal cellular service, etc., I am unable to make substantial demands on teachers. Many teams and teachers have “volunteered” to go above and beyond on their own. While there are many parents who want more facetime with teachers, there are plenty of parents who want less or communicate even 30 minutes is too much. Moving forward, the district has a plan to provide consistent training for teachers along with a set of expectations for all remote learning districtwide in the future.

*Are preparations being made now for distance learning to possibly occur again?*

Yes. The district will have a plan in place for remote learning in the future that will be consistent across the district. This will be published on the district website when complete. You can follow updates at houstonisd.org

**Business Operations**

*When can families collect student belongings (things that may have been left in lockers like winter jackets and water bottles)?*A schedule has been drafted and will be announced soon. Social distancing guidelines will be communicated, and families will not be allowed to exit their vehicles. Lunch kits and water bottles may have been discarded due to being unsanitary. Food items in lockers have been discarded. All other items will be bagged by the teachers beginning May 21st. A pick-up process will commence May 26th - May 29th.

*How much autonomy do you as a principal have regarding reopening?* Currently, principals do not have autonomy regarding school budgets, access to campuses, scheduling, etc. All information from the Governor’s office is communicated to the Commissioner at the Texas Education Agency. Superintendents or designees meet with the state officials weekly. The Superintendent meets with principals as to how to proceed weekly. You can follow the Texas Education Agency updates at <https://tea.texas.gov/texas-schools/health-safety-discipline/covid/coronavirus-covid-19-support-and-guidance>

*What will busing look like?*Transportation for the 2020-2021 school year has not been communicated to principals at this time. As soon as information is provided, we will communicate to families through the ROE Newsletter. In the Summer, you can look for a Summer Mailer to be communicated electronically in late July or early August.

*When does the school year end and will this be consistent across teachers and grades? It is hard when one sibling is “done” and the other is still getting lessons.*

The last day of school for students is June 1st and the last day for teachers is June 2nd. Teachers will have limited time to prepare items for pick-up beginning May 21st and 22nd. Pick Up will occur May 26th – 29th; however, teachers must still engage weekly with students the last week of school. Many of our parents have communicated they are starting to return to work, so we are tapering off activities the last week of school. All teachers are expected to communicate with students on the last day of school via Microsoft Teams/Zoom except for 5th grade teachers.

*When will we know what the plan for fall is? Will there be ASP?* The plan for the opening of school will be communicated from the Superintendent’s office.

*How likely is it that school will reopen in person in the fall?* The plan for the opening of school will be communicated from the Superintendent’s office.

*What if we are not comfortable with the situation or have health issues?*This has not been communicated yet.

*Will ROE follow HISD timelines and guidelines (regarding online vs in person learning, start and end times to the school days and school year, social distancing, etc.) exactly or is there room for discretion by school?* There is no room for discretion by the principal. River Oaks Elementary will follow all guidelines set forth by the Superintendent per the Governor’s orders.

*Teacher Request/Information about your Child Forms- how are these being handled this year?* A google form link will be submitted via the school newsletter on May 26, 2020. We will only accept requests via the google form.

*More information about the District of Innovation; what would that look like? What would change?* For more information regarding the DOI, click <https://tea.texas.gov/texas-schools/district-initiatives/districts-of-innovation> and <https://www.houstonisd.org/site/handlers/filedownload.ashx?moduleinstanceid=294076&dataid=282809&FileName=050520_doi.pdf>

**School Finance**

*How will parents be refunded the money they paid for the ASP after school program, including the Enrichment classes that are provided by outside vendors. Due to quarantine, the kids were only able to attend approximately one-half of the classes that were paid for.* Parents can contact the ASP Director, Sylvia Ponce de Leon at [ciasp@sbcglobal.net](mailto:ciasp@sbcglobal.net) to request a refund. For parents who utilized School Pay, refunds may be processed using the School Pay platform. Parents requesting checks will have to wait until further notice, due to non-exempt employees not being allowed to work during a school closure. All parents who are due a refund will be refunded as soon as possible.

*When we first entered quarantine, I had asked the ASP coordinator whether any of the after-school classes would be moved to an online platform, so that our kids could continue these extracurricular activities. At that time, I was notified by the ASP coordinator that although no online programming would be made available, parents would be refunded, but have not received any further details or communication.*The online platform was not viable currently since a policy prohibits non-exempt employees from working during school closures. The policy was never intended for a global pandemic, and a revision to the policy is being presented to the school board soon. If the policy is changed, principals will be able to utilize the support of non-exempt employees, and online after school classes may be an option.

*Will we have a music teacher?* At thistime, the campus budget cannot sustain a music teacher for the 2020-2021 school year. See next question.

*What is the status of the budget issues/constraints discussed at your last open forum?* At this time, principals do not have access to school budgets; and, budgets/monies are centrally located. Principals may not purchase any items or authorize deliveries. The HISD School Board is expected to vote on a compensation package for the district at the June board meeting. The SDMC voted earlier this year to hire an IB Coordinator over a music teacher for the 2020-2021 school year. Dr. Fovargue did make a request for a music teacher to Dr. Lathan in February prior to Covid-19 and the current recession. With the current economic state, it is unlikely there will be extra funding to sustain a music teacher. It is anticipated all districts and campuses will have to tighten budgets extending into the 2023 school year and possibly beyond, and monies left over from school budgets this fiscal year may be utilized to support a central district wide summer school.