



River Oaks Elementary SDMC Minutes

Wednesday, December 11, 2019

(To be approved at the next SDMC meeting)

The meeting was called to order at 3:19 p.m. Attendance was as follows:

| Name of SDMC Member | Position (Add Date Term expires) |
|---------------------|---|
| Jennifer Hertz | Kinder Classroom Teacher (2020) |
| Dominique Notton | 1 st Classroom Teacher (2021) |
| Kate Behelfer | 2 nd Classroom Teacher (2021) |
| Patty Like | 4 th Classroom Teacher (2021) |
| Debbie McLaughlin | 5 th Classroom Teacher (2021) |
| Diane Sheehan | Non-Instructional Staff (2021) |
| Nina Godiwalla | Parent (2020) Magnet |
| Catherine Matthews | Parent (2021) Magnet |
| Keri Fovargue | School-Based Staff (Head of School) |
| Margo White | Special Education School-Based Staff (2021) |
| Adriana Myers | School-Based Staff (2021) |
| Farah Nematpour | Business Member (2021) |

Dr. Fovargue introduced our newest business member, Farah Nematpour. Ms. Nematpour serves as the Assistant Director at Huntington Learning Center. Huntington continues to be a loyal sponsor and supporter of River Oaks Elementary through the PTO. Additionally, the center provides lunches for teachers annually as well as hosted our combined general PTO/SDMC meeting this fall.

A motion was made by Mrs. Hertz to approve the September 2019 minutes. Ms. Godiwalla seconded the motion, and the minutes were unanimously approved. A question was asked about a state takeover of HISD, and Dr. Fovargue stated there had been no announcement that any takeover would impact the daily operations of River Oaks Elementary School at this time. She stated it was business as usual, but she would let the committee know if any impact to ROE arose.

Next, she launched into a history of SDMC and budget decisions dating back to May minutes from 2018 and 2019. A brief history of funding changes for River Oaks Elementary referencing those SDMC Minutes were presented and summarized for the committee. She reminded the committee that over the past four years magnet funding at ROE had been phased out over time. Between the loss of the magnet funding, a decrease in the per unit allocation, and a reduction in enrollment by twenty-seven students this year, River Oaks Elementary had lost over \$400,000. During all these reductions, previous SDMC minutes explained how every effort was made to save teachers and existing staff positions.

Here is the excerpt from the SDMC May 9, 2018 minutes for reference:

First, Dr. Fovargue gave an update on the budget from the General PTO meeting in April. She thanked the committee for the collaborative work this year to assist her in making budget decisions along with

their support. She stated the April parent meeting was very well received, and she reviewed a few slides from the presentation. She then asked the board to vote on several budgetary items for the 2018-2019 school year. The following items were approved to fund positions for next year.

- 1. Reallocate music position from magnet to general revenue at 100% (\$56,700), since magnet funding is being eliminated.*
- 2. Reallocate art funding from magnet to general revenue at 52% (\$29,484), since magnet funding is being eliminated.*
- 3. Reallocate art funding from magnet to Gifted and Talented at 48% (\$27,216), since magnet funding is being eliminated.*
- 4. Close previous magnet coordinator position through December 2017 retirement as these duties were absorbed by the Assistant Principal this spring. (\$56,700 reallocated to General Revenue)*
- 5. Split fund Dyslexia Specialist from General Revenue to State Comp Ed at 18% (\$10,206), due to decrease in General Revenue through the Per Unit Allocation for all elementary schools in HISD. Specifically, ROE's reduction is \$138,491.*
- 6. Split fund Dyslexia Specialist from General Revenue to Bilingual at 7% (\$3,969.01), due to decrease in General Revenue through the Per Unit Allocation for all elementary schools in HISD. Specifically, ROE's reduction is \$138,491).*
- 7. Reallocate funding for Assistant Principal position from General Revenue to magnet at \$56,416.00. Fund position with remaining Gifted and Talented funds of \$9,184.00.*
- 8. Reallocate Dean of Instruction position to teacher specialist position to allow internal candidates (if applicable) an opportunity for the position without facing a possible Reduction in Force (RIF) due to Recapture in the future. A teacher specialist's salary is equivalent to a teacher. This position change also saves approximately \$10,000 in General Revenue.*

Here is the excerpt from the SDMC May 15, 2019 minutes for reference:

Lastly, a summary of the 2018-2019 budget was presented, and Dr. Fovargue stated the district decided not to cut the Per Unit Allocation (PUA) to elementary schools as previously anticipated. Although the PUA would not decrease for 2019-2020, Dr. Fovargue shared the district would continue to phase out magnet funding. Dr. Fovargue shared she had not eliminated any positions, since she had been the principal at ROE; although, approximately \$200,000 was eliminated from ROE's magnet funding last year. Without restructuring positions in 2019-2020, the general fund budget would create a deficit in the areas of supplies, extra duty pay, substitute pay, copier lease, etc. Dr. Fovargue stated the PTO and activity funds do not cover salaried positions. Therefore, Dr. Fovargue announced the following:

1. Ms. Scholin, ROE counselor, would move to a part-time counselor position for the 2019-2020 school year. 2. Ms. Bomersbach, IB Coordinator, will fulfill the kindergarten vacancy left by Ms. Carlisle's retirement in December 2018. 3. Ms. Lawrence, Assistant Principal, will transfer to Lamar High School as an Academic Dean for the 2019-2020 school year. Ms. Lawrence's position was split funded in 2017-2018 when Ms. Williams, former magnet coordinator, retired. See excerpt from 2018 SDMC minutes below.

Dr. Fovargue welcomed the committee to the third quarterly meeting for the year. The minutes from September and November 2017 were emailed in advance, and they were approved. Considering the recent budget discussions in HISD, Dr. Fovargue shared the HISD 2018 FTE versus PUA Budget Model and the implications for River Oaks Elementary. A decrease in Per Unit Allocation in the amount of \$138,491 as well as a decrease in magnet funding in the amount of \$202,370 is anticipated for ROE. Dr. Fovargue shared the following steps to address the gaps. Solutions include: asking the district to fund a magnet coordinator, increase enrollment, ask the PTO to fund the Everyday Mathematics curriculum and split fund salaried positions. She may have to utilize a Reduction in Force (RIF) policy, but she will do everything she can to save

classroom teachers. She led the committee through an exercise to match funding with positions. Through the exercise, the members understood the challenge the pending cuts presented.

Dr. Fovargue referred to the aforementioned excerpt and shared the magnet funding phase out was not a surprise, and with the current restructuring, the campus would still be able to save all teacher positions.

After the historical information was presented from 2017, 2018 and 2019, Dr. Fovargue presented an overview of the current funding state including staffing positions. Specific inquiries and comments included:

- 4th grade teachers and class size explanation
- Kinder, 4th and 5th grade under enrollment, magnet implications, and budgetary impact
- Class size waiver limitations and predictions for space availability
- Explanation of new transfer process including siblings/hardship and IB transfers
- Plan to meet enrollment capacity of 660 students in 2020-2021
- Music position

Dr. Fovargue stated the current deficit was unknown at the time of the meeting; however, the information should be made available to her on December 18, 2019. In order to address several budgetary challenges, Dr. Fovargue proposed the following items for the 2020 Spring semester:

- Although a plan is in place to increase enrollment and funding for the 2020-2021 school year, Dr. Fovargue recommended reallocating funding for the music position to 4th grade effective February 2020 and hire a 4th grade teacher prior to next year. (Mrs. Like made a motion, and Ms. Sheehan seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously).
- Support a proposal to the PTO to contract a music person to oversee the 3rd, 4th grade musical along with provide music support to students for the spring semester. (Mrs. Hertz made a motion, and Mrs. McLaughlin seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously).
- Reallocate State Compensatory Education funds up to .25% for Literacy Coach, and then reallocate .25% of current allocation back to the General Fund (Literacy Coach currently sees At-Risk students during the school day). Reallocate State Compensatory Education funds up to .25% for Teacher Specialist, and then reallocate .25% of current allocation back to the General Fund (Teacher Specialist currently sees At-Risk students during the school day and serves as our LPAC Administrator supporting LEP students). (Mrs. Sheehan made a motion, and Ms. White seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously).
- Reallocate funding for Magnet Coordinator to Spanish Teacher to support the International Baccalaureate Program (Ms. White made a motion, and Mrs. Like seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously).
- When enrollment is back at 660 during the 2020-2021 school year, use increased funding to support the IB Coordinator position greater than or equal to 50% of the school day.

Dr. Fovargue also noted the following:

- Ms. Hicks, retired ROE music teacher, has agreed to facilitate the kindergarten and fifth grade promotion ceremonies along with increase her music lessons with first grade. Now that a motion passed for us to reach out to PTO, Dr. Fovargue will draft a proposal asking the PTO to pay for this service.
- Mary Poppins is the musical for the 3rd and 4th graders, and a parent asked if the PTO could contract a person to come in and work part-time on the musical. Dr. Fovargue stated she would propose this to the PTO as well.

- IB requires Spanish and Technology in some capacity. Since IB is not funded by HISD, we are currently paying for these two positions. It seemed like HISD was paying for these positions in the past, because we were receiving over \$300,000 in magnet funding. Now that magnet funding went away, we still must have these teaching positions to maintain our IB Status.
- IB only requires one art. We do not have to have two arts, although we are accustomed to having both at ROE. Again, we are choosing to have IB which requires Spanish over music.
- HISD does not fund an IB coordinator, Spanish or Technology at River Oaks Elementary. Again, we paid for these positions out of magnet. We are a Vanguard/GT magnet. We are not an IB magnet. We use the IB Primary Years Program to serve all students including GT and neighborhood.
- Dyslexia is an unfunded mandate; therefore, HISD does not fund dyslexia positions on the campus. ROE currently has enough students for 1.5 teachers. Ms. Williamson and Ms. Macomber are trained above and beyond the district personal as our students require services in Levels 1,2 and 3. Most district support personnel are only trained at Level 1. By federal law, we must provide these services/therapy even though there is no money to pay for personal. Dyslexia services are currently costing ROE over \$100,000.
- Assistant principals are not mandatory on an elementary campus. A teacher specialist, Mrs. Macomber, can serve in this role. She serves in this capacity .5 of her duty schedule at ROE. She provides intervention sessions to students for students at risk, dyslexia and reading support the other half of her day.
- We lose approximately \$65,000 in revenue due to absences each year, and this is more than an average teacher salary.
- When the school choice department stopped accepting magnet transfers in July of last year, ROE had no other way to bring in students. The waitlist became nonexistent, and ROE was not allowed (per policy) to offer any other type of transfer. The district has now realized this presented a hardship/deficit (\$-89,495) for the campus, and IB and Hardship transfers will be allowed for the 2020-2021 school year based on space availability. In the Spring of 2020, magnet transfers end as early as March 2020. ROE will accept more kinder students than in previous years to anticipate students withdrawing from ROE and accepting private school waitlisted spots after March 2020.
- Accepting IB and Hardship transfers (sibling transfers designed to keep families together rather than them separating and withdrawing from the district to attend private schools) along with accepting more kindergarten spots than in the past should provide ROE an opportunity to maximize enrollment for the 2020-2021 school year and avoid a deficit.

Questions/Matters to be Addressed

After the lengthy budget discussion, Ms. McLaughlin expressed a concern regarding technology in the classrooms. Dr. Fovargue stated she would look at the warranties and replacement cycles for all grade level computers and communicate decisions accordingly.

Mrs. Matthews mentioned that parents had expressed concern over a safety/discipline issue. Dr. Fovargue explained the protocol for discipline for elementary school students, and she stated that several factors are taken into consideration when a student violates the student code of conduct. Such factors include but may not be limited to a student's age, disability, behavior intervention plan (if applicable through Section 504 or Special Education services), etc. In the event a safety issue is presented when a child misbehaves, we involve HISD's Psychological Services as well as the Elementary Schools Office and HISD'S Legal team. Dr. Fovargue shared that there are many facets to these types of issues, and students are protected under FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act). She recognized that sometimes there is information that she is not allowed to share with parents and the school community when it comes to how student discipline is specifically handled. She recognized that this may be

frustrating for some parents seeking confidential information. Mrs. Matthews further stated that some parents felt left out because we no longer have an open lunch for parents. Dr. Fovargue stated that she understood the changes were new this year, and all decisions were based on safety and taking all 636 students into consideration. She reminded the committee that parents are still allowed to check their students out during lunch and picnic on the front lawn.

Ms. Sheehan made a motion to adjourn the meeting, and Ms. White seconded the motion. All approved; the meeting was adjourned at 4:41 PM.