October 2021 SDMC Attendees/Agenda/Meeting Minutes

Attendees
Brita Lindsey, School Leader
Ben Chaplin, 3-8 Principal
Candice Ayala, 9-12 Pricipal
Amanda Viola, Lead Principal
All TCAH Staff

Agenda
Brita: Today's agenda includes three major pieces: our accountability rating, TCAH school improvement planning, and most importantly next steps.

Meeting Minutes
Greetings

Hello, I am Dr. Brita Lindsey, Texas Connections Academy School Leader supporting grades 3-12, former TCA high school principal. Amanda Viola, Lead Principal focusing on Instructional Leadership, Candice Ayala, new high school principal, and Ben Chaplin, Grades 3-8 Principal.

Brita: Howdy, TCAH Family! I am grateful for the support of Pearson Virtual Schools. What are you grateful for today? Put your answer in chat. Now let's have a moment of silence in honor of the loved ones who are no longer with us and the loved ones left behind.

Opening Comments

Brita: Before we talk about school improvement planning, remember, who we are: TCAH is Story 4, we are the Houston Chronicle Best of the Best E-Learning Program in Houston, Public School in Houston, and Teacher in Houston (Layni Cade). We have highly successful 3-8 groups and 9-12 groups, to be an A+ school; we need consistent highly successful groups 3-12, we are a 3-12 school, not just for state testing, social events, and graduation; we are a 3-12 instructional program. Be open to revisiting common themes while trying to see them from a different perspective. You cannot over-communicate efficacy in any system: sharing a common purpose, building safety, showing trust through cooperation will get us to the A+ accountability rating. We are Story 4!

Who are we and who do we serve?

Brita: Who are we and who do we serve? TCAH is a 100% TEA virtual school serving ~10,000 students statewide in grades 3-12 on the regular accountability system. It is important to note: we serve all students groups as a Title I school, have a high mobility rate and; both teams and students work from home statewide.

TCAH 3-12 Enrollment

Brita: Our enrollment cap increased to tentatively 10,500, we will strategically pull students from the waitlist in grades 3-10 while we move the other students through the different enrollment stages. It is important to note: Due to the number of off-cohort

students enrolling (about 30-40%), we are not enrolling new students in grades 11 and 12 for the school year. We will not have enough time to graduate 11th and 12th-grade students (from different cohorts) in 4 years if they are severely off-cohort; they will impact multiple grad rates and accountability years.

TCAH Accountability Rating?
Brita: What is our accountability rating and where can you find the details? TCAH has an overall rating of a C up from a D and F since the 2015-2016 school year. I encourage you to visit the website looking at the details, the areas of weakness are the work!

TCAH School Improvement (SI) Planning?
Amanda: What are our plans to improve? For TCAH, school improvement planning involves the district School Improvement Plan and the state Targeted Improvement Plan. Both are documented and maintained in Plan4Learning. The plans will be lead by school leadership plan team partnering with different stakeholders to ensure the appropriate support and resources are available to implement the plans. At the end of our meeting, you will have an opportunity to cast your vote of confidence. This is not a one and done, throughout the school year, you will be updated and have multiple opportunities to give feedback.

School Improvement Plan: TCAH and Board Goals?
Amanda: For TCAH, we will have school improvement action plans, delineating the goal and strategies for the Board and Campus Goals, led by School Improvement Leaders and their committees. The School Improvement Plan work will not conflict but enhance the Targeted Improvement Plan.

Why do we need a State Targeted Improvement Plan?
Brita: Why do we need a Targeted Improvement Plan? We are Comprehensive Reidentified due to missing the 4-year Federal graduation rate target of 67%. The Graduation Rate formula includes the number of Graduates, Dropouts, GED students, and Continuers. Our Class of 2019 Federal graduation rate is 58.4%, Class of 2020 is 66.5%, and Class of 2021 projection is ~69.3%. Our goal is to exceed the Federal 4-year graduation rate target of 67% and achieve the state 5-year graduation rate of 90%. When looking at why our graduation rate is lower than the targets we have a high number of dropouts, students getting GEDs, and continuers compared to students graduating in 4-years. Our campus needs assessments shows between 30-40% of our high school students are off-cohort by 0.5 to more than 6 credits. When looking at cohorts, approximately 30% of our students are seriously considering GEDs and ~10% are continuers who come to us behind one or more academic years. Also, no CCMR targets we met, our goal is to meet the district percentage of 63%. We need social and academic systems that support virtual student growth and success.

What are we doing: dropout rate?
Candice: Our dropout rate dropped from 7.7 to 5%. It is continuing to decrease because we are taking a 2-prong attack on our dropout rate: prevention and recovery. For prevention: While building and sustaining early relationships with families, key staff provide and execute support plans for struggling students that include both social and academic supports. For recovery: key staff provide dropout recovery support using our leaver

management system, our leaver scorecard that shows the students, their codes, and recovery history (interactions with course teachers, homeroom teachers, master teachers, assistant principals, and administrative assistants). We look for students in TSDS, Social Media, and neighborhoods (pre-covid). We text, call, send emails and letters. Pre-COVID, Teams would physically travel to different areas of the state looking for dropouts.

What are we doing: dropout rate?
Candice: Every student counts! The leaver scorecard generated in Power BI shows the work to be done by the different teams: Pending Verification are the students who have a code but no supporting documentation, the administrative assistants are working on VOEs and getting other supporting documentation, the Univerified section are the students who are being worked by the GSMs (made up of teachers, administrators, and counselors). The goal is to have 100% verified by the end of the school start window, 9/24. We were at ~80%, we will continue to work 2021 keeping in mind the campus Fall PEIMS submission deadline of 11/9, while working the 2022 leavers. Know, all of the students have been worked multiple times, before the enrollment process begins we ask for schooling options.

What are we doing: graduation rate?
Candice: With the goals of exceeding the Federal 4-Year Grad Rate standard of @ least 67% and reaching the State 5-Year Grad Rate standard of 90%, we have systems to monitor and support students by cohort, looking at each student multiple times a year during round table discussions that include social, academic and college and career readiness support efficacy. The teams use a master sheet loaded with information regarding how students are doing. Teams continuously ask if individual students are struggling, why are they struggling and how can we support them. Are the supports working? Is there an administrative or counseling trend we need to address? If the supports are not working, what can we do next? Do they have a CCR qualifier? Are they SPED, 504, or EL? Most importantly, when was the last time anyone spoke to the student or parent?

What are we doing: college and career readiness?
Candice: CCR is a struggle for us, we only afford 3 ways a student can quality for a CCR indicator: TSI, Dual Credit, and Advanced Placement. Additional college and career readiness supports includes Khan Academy integration into curriculum and instruction via department chairs, the use of Reading Plus and College Bridge to support scoring college ready on the SAT/ACT/TSIA. Because the 100% virtual environment lends itself to becoming passive, I added the expectation that students are eligible for at least one CCR indicator at the end of their senior year to the school's entrance agreement.

School Improvement Identity
Ben: As a result of Lever #3 Essential Action 3.1 key practices, we now have compelling and aligned core culture values, mission, vision and goal. Do not forget to update your signatures and school logos to reflect the new brand, mission, vision, goal and core culture values.

Lever #4 Essential Action 4.1:
Ben: Based on where we are in the continuous improvement process we need to focus on Lever #4 EA 4.1 ensuring the effective daily use of high-quality instructional materials in our virtual paradigm. Looking at Domain 1 and our education management system, we are going to focus on assessment alignment, mastery-based grading, and effectively supporting

various student groups. Our desired outcome is to increase our Meets and Masters ELA scores by at least 3 percentage points plus the number of 3rd grade math students scoring Meets from 30% to 58% and Algebra 1 students from 25% to 35%.

Essential Action 4.1 Actions Taken
Ben: For EA 4.1: The passivity of our virtual teachers will be addressed by expecting the routine use of exit tickets to inform re-teaching, checking for understanding, and personalizing instruction. The Lead Principal will support the routine use of virtual synchronous and asynchronous instructional feedback tools designed to increase student learning outcomes.

Essential Action 5.1:
Candice: We need to focus on Essential Action 5.1, effective virtual classroom routines and instructional strategies, key practices of differentiating instructional paths specifically for students with disabilities and English learners, effective mastery-based grading practices that facilitate proactive interventions, spiraled TEKS throughout the curriculum and structured supports for specific groups. It is clear looking at our Domain 3 Closing the Gaps data, meeting the needs of student groups is a priority.

Essential Action 5.1 Actions Taken
Candice: Pearson Online Classroom (Connexus) facilitates passive interactions with virtual curriculum and instruction in Grades 3-12. We are going to overcome those challenges as a leadership team by equipping teachers, inspecting what we expect, giving timely feedback regarding instructional efficacy among different student groups; using a more formalized approach to curriculum-based assessments (CBAs) designed to check for understanding, mastery of TEKS at the Meets and Masters levels; and an intentional support plan for our virtual Emergent Bilingual.

Essential Action 5.3:
Candice: To close our achievement gaps while supporting growth as noted in Domain 3, campus instructional leaders need to be intentional about the use of data to inform instruction, supervision and school systems.

Essential Action 5.3 Actions Taken
Candice: Shifting the virtual mindset of the leadership team from passive instructional leadership to active instructional leadership is a major challenge in a 100% virtual environment; therefore, we must be intentional in our instructional efficacy work. We have the tools, we need to use them as a leadership team to inform our decisions regarding professional development, supervision, and the allocation of resources.

School Improvement Next Steps
Amanda: Each area of the Effective Schools Framework will be addressed. Our next steps include you casting your vote of confidence as an exit ticket (we need to hear from everyone); HISD and TEA approvals; organizing and facilitating professional development for all; the creation and facilitation of actions plans rooted in the TIP and SIP; increasing school operations (non-instructional) support through administration; and the instructional efficacy journey.

Closing Statements

The work continues....

Brita: Building and sustaining a sense of community, keeping and graduating all students in 4-years post-secondary ready with at least (1) endorsement is at the core of what we do at TCAH. We strive to empower, educate, and elevate everyone in our learning community through parent engagement opportunities, instructional field experiences, instructional efficacy, and relevant culturally responsive professional development. What questions or feedback do you have for us?