



Principal Ad Hoc Meeting Minutes November 7, 2012 7:30-9:00 a.m.

Welcome - Dr. Grier

Dr. Grier congratulated and thanked everyone for all their help and support to pass the HISD Bond. Special thanks were given to Ronnie Veselka for chairing the effort and to Aggie Alvez, Chief Communication Officer and her team for their strong communication undertaking. Dr. Grier stated that the focus was now to build and improve the school facilities. HISD is ready with the RFP's to start the process.

Dr. Grier opened the floor for principal concerns.

- What is being done to retain teachers whose work visas are about to expire? Schools are facing the possibility of losing all they have invested in these teachers.
 - Dr. Grier stated that Dr. Watson and his team are working on this effort. He reaffirmed that the district did not want to lose highly trained teachers.
- Is the paper version of the Teacher Appraisal Instrument allowed? There are still technology issues.
 - Dr. Grier stated that if a school is still having problems uploading their information; then appraisers may use the paper PDF version.
 - More in-depth discussion below.
- What is the status of the principal appraisals?
 - Principals will be evaluated by the Chief School Officers with input from the School Support Officers. Performance Objectives will be developed collaboratively.
- Schools are still having difficulty in data availability.
 - The data warehouse will soon be available to provide data to principals to support their work.
- The district pays for the one police officer in the high schools and the school pays for a second officer. Why is it that the second officer is constantly pulled?
 - Dr. Grier stated that this issue would be discussed with Chief Dotson.
- Schools are experiencing problems with bus routes, arrival, and departures.
 - Dr. Grier asked Nathan Graf, General Manager of Transportation to address.
 - Mr. Graf asked that issues or concerns be emailed to him so that he can address them directly.
- What can be done about parent issues/concerns with private bus companies? Can HISD offer the bus service to those parents who are willing to pay?
 - Mr. Graf stated that his department will research.
- When will the STAAR passing rates be available?
 - Dr. Grier stated that they were told November but have yet to receive any word. He stated that it would probably be January. Once the information is available; it will be shared immediately with the schools.

M-to-M Student Transfer Policy - Elneita Hutchins-Taylor

The Office of Civil Rights (OCR) has asked and HISD has agreed to review its Majority to Minority (M-to-M) student transfer policy. Ms. Hutchins-Taylor presented the policy and solicited feedback from the committee members. She explained that currently, there are 67,091 students in HISD on various types of transfers. Only 107 of the transfers are Majority to Minority (M to M) and of those transfers, only 11 were granted in the past year. The committee discussed that there are numerous avenues within HISD Magnet and school choice transfer policies to facilitate diversity and reduce ethnic and racial isolation. Ms. Hutchins-Taylor asked members to forward any additional information.



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Introduction of Early Hiring Process – Rodney Watson

Patra Brannon and Ulonda Crawford Eurey provided a brief summary of the new hiring process that will be implemented. The revised selection and staffing process is designed to get strong candidates in front of principals so they can be hired faster. It is expected that the process time will be cut from 12 weeks down to 7 days. This new process will be presented in detail at the Principals' meeting and in breakout sessions.

Items submitted-Lupita Hinojosa

- On line TADS system – Teacher Appraisal and Development System- Human Resources
 - A communication was sent to all principals during the week of October 29- November 2 stating that use of the Feedback and Development (F&D) online tool resulted in glitches that could not be fixed. Consequently all appraisers were informed that if they continued to experience problems with the use of the F&D tool that they should stop using it and revert to using the editable PDF forms that were used last year. The forms were placed on the Human Resources website. Those appraisers who were not experiencing any problems with the use of the F&D tool were informed that they may continue to use it.
 - Principals were also informed that there were issues with the Student Performance (SP) online tool. Principals were told that we expected all of the glitches with the SP tool would be resolved by November 2. Unfortunately, the problems with the SP tool have not yet been resolved. Through the School Support Office and the campus ETI representatives, we communicated that appraisers and teachers who were experiencing problems using the SP tool should stop using the tool until they received a communication that the online tool had been fixed. Appraisers and teachers can complete the tasks needed to continue implementation of the SP component of the teacher appraisal system and save their work in hard copy formats until the tool is repaired. Those who are not experiencing any difficulties may continue to use the SP tool.

We will continue to keep all system users informed of any changes.

- Principal Online Tools- Information and Technology Department
 1. Student Performance Tool: As of Thursday, 11/15, issues regarding the selection and submission of partial goals for students, assigning assessments, ghosting, and saving of student progress goals, have been addressed and are now fully functioning in the tool. We have also deployed a few scripts that have fixed many of the data discrepancies that have been reported. Many thanks to the Teachers and Appraisers at Travis Elementary who have helped us verify that these items are now properly working!!! Next steps include a release in the first week of December that includes the deployment of the results worksheets.
 2. Appraisal and Development (A&D) Tool: The team has been heavily focused on resolving the Student Performance Tool issues as those issues were causing a spillover of issues into the A&D tool. Now that all of those issues have been resolved, we are returning our focus over to the functional issues such as the IPDP/PPA design and editability, proper rendering of a printed document, an auto save feature and reporting capabilities. We are targeting a partial to full roll out of the said updates before the winter holiday break. We are also working with the ETI and Accountability teams to ensure that other improvements are made to the tool to improve the customer experience and usability.



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- Why are Magnet transfers limited after the start of school?
 - HISD is proud of its portfolio of schools. Neighborhood, Specialty, and Magnet schools offer students educational choices developed to serve students with specialized interests, talents, and needs. Giving parents choices must also be balanced by supporting the school's enrollment; therefore, policy is in place for students which determines the transfer period. At a date determined annually (no later than the Friday before school starts), all Magnet students are locked into their final Magnet transfer for **one** year. Magnet programs should not pull students who are currently enrolled in other schools as those schools' enrollment will be negatively impacted. There must exist a professional and ethical courtesy amongst principals. HISD values parent choice and if a Magnet transfer is requested after the start of the school year, it must be brought before the Student Transfer Appeals Committee. The committee will review all information presented and only approve under extenuating circumstances. The policies and procedures in place are designed not only to address the needs of the students, but also to support all schools (magnet and neighborhood) as they each recruit students to support their enrollment goals.

- Why must Out of District student transfers request have to go through central office?
 - All out of district transfers must go through the Student Transfer Department as each address must be manually entered into the system since these addresses are not part of the district's attendance boundary. The process usually takes about 24-48 hours.

- Assignments of Special Education programs- What is being done about the inequity of special education units from campus to campus? Some campuses have several and others have very few. This imposes accountability implications as well as the concern of overloaded classes. In addition, parents are inconvenienced based on their students being bused so far away from their homes.
 - Each year the Special Education team in collaboration with the Elementary School office reviews the location and placement of programs throughout the district. The number and types of programs are reviewed along with the distribution of needed programs throughout the city. Programs are moved as new facilities are opened or space becomes available at surrounding campuses. The priority remains moving programs from campuses with 3 or more self-contained units to campuses with less than two self-contained classes. These moves can only be made when the appropriate space is available at neighborhood facilities.

- What is the official role of TDS or what is their official job description? What is their relationship with the principal? Are they only to report to the SIO?
 - Teacher Development Specialists are instructional coaches with content expertise that provide job-embedded support to teachers which include: observation, goal setting, modeling, practice, and feedback aligned to HISD Instructional Practice Rubric and HISD Curriculum. Additionally, TDS facilitate grade level curriculum, instruction, and assessment planning sessions with teachers. TDS also facilitate district-wide face-to-face training aligned to district priorities. TDS are assigned to support teachers across campuses with an emphasis on new, developing, and struggling teachers.



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- TDS are hired, supervised, and evaluated by the Professional Support & Development Department led by Lance Menster, Assistant Superintendent. Dianne Alvarez is the Senior Manager for Elementary Teacher Development and Gwen Tompkins is the Senior Manager for Secondary Teacher Development. TDS also work in content teams at the elementary and secondary level with a content area TDS Team Lead as their manager.
- TDS are to partner with principals and SSOs to ensure their coaching efforts and focus are aligned to development priorities for individual teachers and across the campus. TDS are expected to provide principals with an ongoing summary of their coaching activities via email and/or paper form by completing a “TDS Campus Visitation Log”. It is highly recommended that principals schedule ongoing check-ins with their TDS to ensure alignment and also that TDS are working with teachers, grade levels, and/or content areas in and in support of what is most needed.
- What is the status on Aramark using the Call Out system for lunch balance deficiencies?
 - The district’s IT group and School Messenger are still working to finalize a data file that would be used in these automated calls to households. Once the file format is finalized, this data file will be sent to School Messenger for the weekly call to households. The call will include the student’s first name and outstanding balance. Both IT and School Messenger estimate that this will be ready by Thanksgiving break.
- STAAR letters-
 - The Accountability Office has used the STAAR data file to create letters for the students who tested in grades 4 and 7 last year. These are the bulk of the students who are requesting the information for magnet applications. Each campus has been provided a file (on SharePoint www.houstonisd.org/results) which contains the letters in PDF format for each student who tested on the campus. Campuses can then print one, two, or as many letters as necessary. The files have the school number, name, and grade level of the tested students. Parents of students who do NOT have letters included in the file should be provided a copy of the data using Chancery and the letter templates on the October 29 Academic Services item.
- Ed Plan- Is there any way to include schools in Phase 3 earlier than the set date?
 - The district is launching Phase 2 later this month. Until we get the more than 120 schools in Phase 2 up and running and work through issues and support, we will not be able to commit to moving up Phase 3 timeline.
- Please provide an update on the laptops and iPads initiative. How was a “school in need” determined?
 - 148 laptop carts are being deployed in the schools that were identified by the School Support Office and the Academic Division. An item is being prepared to for the December Board of Education meeting to request funds for the procurement of additional laptop carts to support the implementation of the i-Station Reading and the 6th and 9th grade reading initiative. If the item is approved by the Board, a laptop cart of 30 devices would be deployed to schools not receiving a laptop cart under the first deployment.



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- One district benchmark is not enough – I continually hear that teachers are supposed to create their own common assessments – we do that – but I have many new teachers who do not have the skill set or time to really create good assessments.
 - The Academic Division will discuss this matter further and determine if a second benchmark assessment is feasible and appropriate.
- Can we get an update on how schools were determined to be in which tier?
 - Currently, the Board of Education is revising the Board Monitoring System based on specific criteria. The tier system as it stands will not be used.
 -
- Principals are seeing inconsistencies between Area's and SIO's.
 - On November 8, 2012, the Board retitled and redefined the roles and responsibilities of the SIO. With this in place, schools should see more consistency. Please e-mail Mark Smith directly if there are any concerns.
- Can we get some of the same training and support that the Apollo elementary schools are receiving?
 - Currently, the Apollo program only includes the previously identified schools. Chief School Officers and School Support Officers continue to support all schools and disseminate information.
- There is concern that a lot more information from central administration is coming into the school through the teacher because of the lag time in Academic Service Memos. Many times the Principal is the last to know.
 - The Academic Services Items which are released on Mondays are the official vehicle for communication to the schools. Central office departments adhere to this communication protocol and only e-mail teachers directly if they are responding to specific questions and/or the principals have already been notified. Additionally, the central office departments are making every effort to be proactive and plan accordingly to provide enough lead time on all information disseminated.
- No service pins- This seems insulting to those who have dedicated years to HISD.
 - Information will be sent to principals on how to order the appropriate service pins.