



Principal Ad Hoc Meeting Minutes
October 3, 2012
7:30-9:00 a.m.

Welcome - Dr. Grier 7:30 a.m.

Dr. Grier greeted everyone and asked the following questions: “What is happening in your school that is different or better” and, “Are our HISD schools lacking rigor?”

Joseph Williams, principal of Kelso Elementary School, was asked to share his thoughts about his school’s Literacy Program. Kelso is working with the Success Charter Network that is based in Harlem and Bronx, New York and operated by Eva Maskowitz. This program focuses on three reading components: Read Aloud, Guided Reading and Independent Reading. It teaches, in a very unique way, using structured protocols for each item.

Susan Shenker, principal of Walnut Bend Elementary, shared her experience with the Markowitz program and how it’s THINK Literacy component, is a process for increasing rigor in reading.

Karla Loria, elementary chief school officer, who just returned from a visit to a New York school, stated the following:

- Greatest take away: Adults change what happens to students.
- Huge housing projects in the Bronx and Harlem surrounded the very same schools in which rigorous student-led book discussions were held, with minimum teacher participation, from grades Kindergarten and up.
- The students have a high level of thinking and structure. The schools have high teacher preparation.

What needs to happen? In the coming weeks, Dr. Grier will be meeting with the chiefs and School Improvement Officers (SIOs) to find out which schools are not making it. What needs to be done? How many students are not making it?

SIO Roles and Responsibilities-Mark Smith

Mr. Smith provided handouts of the draft proposed changes in the role and responsibilities of the current SIO. The SIO’s new role will be to coach and mentor principals to implement the district’s vision of providing a safe school, and a consistent and rigorous education. The chief school officers will evaluate principals.

The Board of Education will review this proposal and once the plan is approved, training will be provided for the current SIO’s.

Items submitted-Lupita Hinojosa

- Teacher Appraisal System issues-Bill Horwath and Quentin Suffren were present to speak to the concerns.

Principals expressed many technical issues they have incurred with the new system:

- The system times out and they lose all that they have worked on.



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- The system does not allow for one to go back and make changes to the appraisal. Can a warning message be set up on the system to warn principals before they are timed out?

Mr. Suffren stated they are working to improve the system. He advised that principals email www.effectiveteachers.org. The website contains a FAQ document that may assist with questions and concerns being raised. Principals can also directly email or call Quinten Suffren at QSUFFREN@houstonisd.org or at 713-556-7801.

- The help desk is not effective. Principals are experiencing long hold time. Help desk technicians are not able to help. Pam Farinas, Principal from Gregory Lincoln is having printing issues; reports are not printing correctly. She is using three part NCR forms until the kinks are worked out. Charles Foust stated that the Technology Department and Teacher Appraisal System are not working together.

Arnold Viramontes, chief technology officer, stated that his department is working to update technology systems. Mr. Viramontes stated that principals can email him directly at aviramon@houstonisd.org or call him on his cell phone. (832-824-2522) when there are technology issues. Mr. Viramontes stated that his team has been addressing all concerns and will continue to work around the clock to resolve the issues at hand.

Dr. Hinojosa stated that she would email the remaining concerns to the appropriate people and have them respond. Below is a summary of those concerns and responses.

Appraisal Toolbox

- In the principal appraisal toolbox, one can see the PPA's given to teachers from other schools.

This issue has been fixed as of 9/25. We have confirmed with several principals that the error is no longer happening.

- The process takes HOURS but the system continues to time out and all the notes are lost.

There is a known timeout issue on some pages. Information Technology (IT) is actively working to address the issue and it should be resolved by October 10 at the latest.

Various other improvements and bug fixes are currently being worked on for the Appraisal applications. These include:

1. The ability to edit the IPDP and PPA
2. The ability to cancel or delete a form



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3. The ability to run reports.
4. The ability to correctly print a form so all comments appear in the print.

Food Services

- A recommendation was made that the Food Services system be connected to the HISD School Messenger to send out automatic messages informing parents of outstanding food service balances.

Ray Danilowicz, executive general manager, HISD Food Services responded that Food Services has been working with Peter Heinze at Briar Meadow Charter to utilize School Messenger as a potential means to communicate unpaid student food service balances. This initiative could be used to replace or supplement the current notices that are being printed up and sent home with students or being mailed to parents to communicate unpaid student balances. Essentially, a weekly reminder call would go to all households that have student balances using the Student Messenger system.

The HISD IT team is trying to work out the technical issues involved in making this idea a reality and have started building the file format to pull this information together and feed it into Student Messenger. If all goes well with testing, this alternative means of contacting parents regarding student balances should be in place within the next several weeks. Food Services will update principals as progress is made on this project.

Central Office Directory

- Principals would like to be provided a list of persons and who does what in HISD—information on the portal is not current.
Aggie Alvez, chief communications officer, and her team are currently updating the central office information so that it is easier for principals to contact the right staff member and department to address a specific issue or inquiry. An updated directory is being prepared that can serve as a quick reference guide. The directory is being designed in a way so that even if principals do not know the exact name of a particular department, they can enter a key word in the services field and find the right staff member.

HAVC

- Calls made by schools to report HAVC concerns are being taken by an employee who lacks customer service or professional behavior.

Leo Bobadilla, chief operating officer, addressed the issue with the employee and the team. The HVAC team will visit schools to be sure that any outstanding HVAC issues are addressed. Mr. Bobadilla stated that schools can contact him at lbobadil@houstonisd.org or Robert Sands, Construction-Facilities Services Officer at rsands@houstonisd.org directly if this incident should occur again.



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I-station Universal Screener

- Computer labs are busy all day and it is not realistic to use 30 minutes to screen an entire class in the critical areas of reading development.
Julie Baker, chief academic officer, stated that she and her team are aware of the critical need for computers for the first administration of I-Station in October. She is requesting that schools rotate classes into computer labs for this first administration. Dr. Baker also added that the district is purchasing additional laptop carts that will be distributed to schools based on need. These laptop carts will be distributed in late October/early November.
- Schools were not given enough i-Pods for the teachers; do schools need to budget to purchase for every teacher?
Julie Baker stated that Academics and the School Offices will work together to identify the need for iPods at the elementary schools. Dr. Baker stated that some iPods have been ordered and will be distributed to schools based on need; however, the district will consider purchasing additional iPods based on available funds.

Nurses

- We have a serious shortage of nurses in this district.
Rodney Watson, Chief Human Resource Officer stated that the district is working to address this issue immediately. At the meeting, Dr. Grier added that the district may have to look at a new compensation plan to attract and retain nurses.

Access to HMW Educational Support Center

- Lack of Principal access to 2nd and 3rd floor offices.
Hank Hauffe responded that principals with a HMW ID Badge do have access to all the general offices on the 2nd and 3rd floors of the HMW Educational Support Center. Mr. Hauffe added that if access has expired, or if principals still need a HMW ID Badge, just stop by the ID Badge Desk in HR the next time they are in the building. Given that your information is current in Peoplesoft, then he will renew your access or make you a badge on-the-spot. Mr. Hauffe's contact information is hhauffei@houstonisd.org or 713.556.6156 should you have any questions, or to see if he can stay after hours for you.