

Minutes

Principals' Advisory Committee Meeting

The Principals' Advisory Committee (Ad-Hoc) met on Friday, March 1st at the Hattie Mae White Educational Support Center in room 1E02. The following members attended: Beth Bonnett, Tiffany Chenier, Gabe Coleman, Dan Deleon, Sandy Gaw, Gretchen Kasper-Hoffman, Tynette Guinn, Steven Gutierrez, Tynette Guinn, Kettisha Jones, James McSwain, Susan Monaghan, Ramon Moss, Andria Schur, Traci Stewart-Jones, John Threet, Andrew Wainwright, Clayton D. Crook, and Michael McDonough. Also in attendance: Alicia Thomas, Mark Smith, Melinda Garrett, Chip Zullinger, Michele Pola, Leo Bobadilla, Brian Giles, Dallas Dance, Aggie Alvez, Ann Best, Ann Sledge, Rose Haggerty, Melanie Crawford, Mukta Pandit, Sapal Partners, Tayyba Kanwal, Sapal Partners, Bill Horwath, and Ildalia T., secretary.

Alicia Thomas welcomed the ad-hoc members and started the meeting at 8:07AM. She said Rose Haggerty and Melanie Crawford were present to discuss a proposal on recess that the School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) will present to the board of trustees next week.

Recess for Elementary School Students

Melanie Crawford said the SHAC will present concerns and recommendations in regard to recess to the board on March 9th. She said according to the Texas Education Code §28.004 the district must consider recommendations from the SHAC before implementing any changes to the district's health education curriculum. She said parents expressed concern that their children do not get sufficient time for recess – “they are not allowed time for a break” — not enough “down-time”. Crawford said research proves that unstructured activity increases achievement. She said the Texas Administrative Code mandates that a district require that elementary students participate in 30 minutes of unstructured activity daily, 135 minutes weekly. She said elementary school students must participate in “free recess” to interact with their peers and participate in activities of their choice; furthermore, she asked principals to inform teachers of this expectation to ensure recess is included in the School Improvement Plan (SIP) for the next school year.

Rose Haggerty added that the district has always supported choice of 30 minutes daily or 135 minutes of unstructured activity because it is aware of tight scheduling at the campuses, and for that reason, input is important to ensure campuses are provided adequate support needed to include recess daily into the curriculum.

Principal Feedback

- A principal said recess is an effective tool for discipline and to take away recess as a form of punishment concerned him.
- Another principal said it is important to ensure the safety of our children as such teachers monitor activities and will allow only a certain number of children at a time on one activity, he asked, is that considered structured?
- Another principal asked for clarity – 30 minutes of unstructured activity in addition to 30 minutes of structured activity mandated by the state – 1 hour outside the classroom?

- A principal suggested that the guidelines are sent to principals to clarify what is expected and what needs to be done in regard to recess.

Teacher Appraisal System IT Tool

Ann Best shared an overview around the appraisal and development system specifically, the technical piece. She said the district purchased the right to upgrade (our) PeopleSoft System to the 9.1 Version; however, she said, the upgrade can take 18 to 24 months to be fully implemented and put into practice. Best said in view of that Mukta Pandit, Principal, Safal Partners, is working with the district to design the Bridge Solution (BS). Best directed attention to Pandit who explained the expectations of the Bridge Solution, the group engaged to advise on improving and reducing the time involved to complete and report appraisals, and the timeline before all of this is put into action.

Mukta Pandit said the goal of the Bridge Solution is to create a user-friendly web-based tool that is easily to navigate, maintain and create appraisal documents and forms in one location, and the ability to track and monitor progress, access forms, receive email notifications, and the capability to complete a report, as well as a condense version for web-usage from an iPad. Mukta said the core user group will provide feedback on wireframes before beginning the development to attain a clear vision of the final product before production, and she referred to a timeline schedule. She turned to the ad-hoc members for input that she planned to incorporate in the design phase of the Bridge Solution. She provided her email mukta@sapalpartners.com.

Principal Feedback

- A principal commented that it is a problem if there isn't an adequate amount of capacity on the server that is robust enough to handle high capacity – in his opinion the appearance is not as important as the speed to deliver and to respond.

Tayyba Anwal, Sapal Partners, said the system will be on a separate database and delayed response should not be a problem. Alicia Thomas responded on behalf of Arny Viramontes that the server capacity should not be an issue especially after completion of virtualization which will take up to 18 months.

Someone from the HISD IT Team said all avenues and several scenarios are taken into consideration to ensure functionality: prevent timeout while entering data, or avoid delayed time when saving data or respond.

- A principal questioned, how will the user access the appraisal system?

A representative from the HISD IT Team said the teacher appraisal system will be accessible from SSLV central access to applications. She said users will be provided computers because of confidential employee information and in view of that a user must be on the HISD web.

- A principal said his concern was not the technological piece it is the commitment in terms of the number of observations, conferences, collection of ideas, meetings (with excellent) teachers “who have taught 15 years”; also, he said, it is not necessary to observe every teacher.

Bill Horwath proposed to return to ad-hoc with improved changes to the Appraisal System for the next school year using feedback collected from focus groups, surveys and other meetings

including: progress conferences, pick and choose the teachers, number of observations, et al. He said there are short-term changes that are planned for implementation in a month (or so) such as evidence collection process and overall paperwork.

- Another principal commented that it would be impossible to complete the appraisal system plus training requirement by May 17th because 52 days of high school testing starts next week. He said all of his staff will be devoted to testing. He asked if it could be postponed to August (Staff Development) or after May 17th.

Ann Best said she will discuss their feedback on how to adjust appraisal training deadline around testing with her staff, and promised to follow-up next week with information from the board as well.

Bill Horwath recommended an ad-hoc sub-committee session to discuss expectations if the system was changed. A principal recommended consideration of crunch times between Elementary (ES), Middle (MS), and High schools (HS); he said crunch times vary between ES, MS, and HS. Another principal suggested to wait until June. Horwath said he will contact some members and coordinate a session.

Funding Weights for Next Year

Melinda Garrett told the group the Resource Allocation Handbook will be presented to the board on March 9th. She said there are several changes they are considering on the PUA in addition to one element currently in view that the board is looking at and it is in the beginning discussion.

Garrett said there were two changes to PUA this year. She said there is a drop in bilingual and special education students and as a result the district is losing money; she said the district is losing 6.4 million dollars from the state and extracting 4.6 million dollars from PUA funds. The schools whose counts have decreased will be the ones affected. *Note: Garret planned to email the run that shows what the effect of bilingual and special education is by school so that the principals can get a clear view of the schools affected to Mark Smith, and Smith will send out the run to the ad-hoc.*

The second change consisted of a couple of factors in the formulas and one change is centered on challenges and education with the homeless and with the refugee population. She said they were asked to look at a small formula change that could address and drive money to those areas. She said they looked at deleting the mobility weight and add 5% to homeless and 5% to refugee – since the monies that were given for mobility weight is less than the monies that were given for the homeless and the refugee weights it would cost \$200K, and if this is incorporated on PUA there would be a difference of \$1.00 at all levels – no one would lose more than \$1.00.

Garrett said Title I reauthorization is under review and there are some introductory language and statutes changes that are being considered by congress and if passed the changes may be effective by 2014.

Garrett said the district has always been fortunate to balance Title I Comparability using FTE averages. She said that the district managed to balance comparability by finding an average FTE at our schools and as long as the school range was within 10% above or 10% below the average they are considered to be comparable.

A possible change being considered is a model based on actual cost and no variance on the lower end; so, as long as your school is above the average you are fine, but, you cannot be below the average. What's more, she said, if that comes to pass it will be a major change on how the school district is funded. It is not official – this is only the initial conversation segment.

Mark Smith added to correct the distribution of general fund dollars —he said they are suggesting to put all PUA money into one pot – not separate the funds and no supplemental ad-on for anyone, and redistribute on a weighted basis to campuses.

Principals' Questions or Comments

- How much per pupil funding is there for summer school?

Ms. Garrett said she was not sure of the funding per pupil, but, she said the summer school money is there and will be presented to the board next week. She said she would provide the funding per pupil information to the principal.

- Can schools who want to run their own program encumber funds for this school year budget?

Ms. Garrett said encumbering funds for this school year budget should not be a problem. However, she added that she will look into it further and get back to the principal.

- A principal said, the plant managers at his campus were told that they had to take a course and if they failed the course they would be demoted. The principal “shouted-out” the hard working maintenance crew at his campus. He said that his school does not have the appeal it had in the past and as a result student enrollment is dropping, and he gave an example. He suggested that principals get control of the maintenance budget for their schools.
- Another principal added that parents who chose to send their children to private schools may not be supportive to a future bond.
- A principal said that the plant managers at her school were told they would be immediately demoted if they did not sign the training form acknowledgement.

Leo Bobadilla said the intention for the training is to support the staff and to provide additional skills and/or enhance their skills, and it was not to threaten termination if the employee did not pass. He assured principals that the training was inappropriately communicated and the matter will be corrected.

- A principal said time change is a problem because the school will incur an added expense for extended time before and after school to monitor the students.

Bobadilla said they are collecting feedback from surveys and from the principals and will develop a proposal that will be presented to the board.

- Another principal said taking away service pins is not a good idea. He said in his opinion it is nice to recognize our employees.

Ann Sledge said the cost for service pins is 60K. All principals present agreed to divide the cost among all to pay for the service pins.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 10:45 AM.

Follow-Ups

What	Who	When
A principal suggested that the guidelines are sent to principals to clarify what is expected and what needs to be done in regard to recess.	Rose Haggerty Melanie Crawford	ASAP
Bill Horwath proposed to return to ad-hoc with improved changes to the Appraisal System for the next school.	Bill Horwath	March 22nd
Ann Best said she will discuss their feedback on how to adjust appraisal training deadline around testing with her staff, and promised to follow-up next week with information from the board as well.	Ann Best	ASAP
Bill Horwath recommended an ad-hoc sub-committee session to discuss expectations if the system was changed. He will contact some members and coordinate a session.	Bill Horwath	ASAP
Garret planned to email the run that shows what the effect of bilingual and special education is by school so that the principals can get a clear view of the schools affected, to Mark Smith and Smith will send out the run to the ad-hoc.	Mark Smith	ASAP
Ms. Garrett said she would provide the summer funding per pupil information to the principal.	Melinda Garrett	ASAP
Ms. Garrett said encumbering funds for this school year budget should not be a problem and added that she will look into it and get back to the principal.	Melinda Garrett	ASAP
Leo Bobadilla assured principals that the training was inappropriately communicated and the matter will be corrected.	Leo Bobadilla	ASAP
The principals all agreed to divide the cost among all to pay for the service pins.	Ann Sledge/Ad-Hoc Members	ASAP