



Principal Ad Hoc Meeting Minutes
September 4, 2013
7:30-8:30 a.m.

Dr. Grier welcomed the new members of the Principal Advisory Committee and asked principals to comment on school needs and/or challenges they faced during the opening of schools.

1. **HR-** The processing of new hires during this summer took too long.
Dr. Rodney Watson, Chief HR Officer stated that his team is working to improve the process. Dr. Watson stated that a consultant will be hired to evaluate the HR procedures and systems. The superintendent encourages all principals to start hiring as early as January. (Further discussion on the subject is discussed below.)
2. **Student Teachers-** Dr. Grier stated that the administration will be looking at how student teachers are placed. HISD HR department should be the one to place these student teachers and not the universities. There are some schools with 5-10 student teachers on campus while others have none. Dr. Grier worries that some campuses may be placing student teachers with teachers that have regressive scores. Student teachers need to be placed with high performing teachers and placed evenly throughout the district.
3. **Scholarship application-** Dr. Allen, principal at HSPVA wanted to share with the principals about one of their students who was awarded a Broad scholarship. He informed the group that if a student has to drop or stop classes for a time due to hardship, they have the option of picking the scholarship back up. He stated that this is one of the few scholarships that he knows that the student do not lose (the award) upon their return.
4. **Building maintenance and technology installation costs** – Mr. Muzyka, principal at T.H. Rogers stated that building maintenance was better this summer. However, he had concerns on the high cost of installing smart boards, projectors, and other technology. Lenny Schad, Chief IT Officer stated that the district is talking with vendors to bring the cost down. His team is securing “bundle” services to leverage pricing- economies of scale will definitely help bring the cost down and thus produce economical pricing for the district.
5. **Technology** – Ms. Davis, principal at Shadowbriar stated that her campus was not wireless but is scheduled to receive work funded through the bond. She asked if Mr. Schad could make recommendations for her as to what to buy. Mr. Schad stated that his team could make recommendations and that he would also check the schedule to see where her campus was on the list and would ask his team to determine a temporary accommodation.
6. **NFISD-** The Superintendent stated that NFISD was a huge undertaking and gave special recognition to Ronnie Veselka, Julia Dimmitt, Leo Bobadilla, and many people who worked tirelessly to ready the newly acquired schools.



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7. **Plant Operators** – Ms. Stewart, principal at Westside High School ask if they can pay extra duty for their lock up person to cover when the PO is absent. Superintendent stated that he did not see a problem with schools paying for overtime if they had the funding available.

8. **Extra Custodians-** Mr. Threet, principal at West University asked if principals could hire extra custodians to assist in keeping their building clean. Dr. Grier stated that if the schools had the funds, they could certainly do so. Mark Miranda, Director of Business Operations, stated that all campuses have the ability to fund hourly custodians thru their funds and schools can utilize the custodial contract with McLemore Building Services for supplemental work.

9. **EdPlan** –A principal asked if Ed Plan was ready to go. Her campus is experiencing issues. Mr. Schad stated that scanners were all updated this summer. If there are issues, the campus Ed Plan coordinator should call their Ed Plan contact. He stated that Ed Plan is resolving issues in a timely matter. Mr. Schad will send an email with Ed Plan contacts to the campus Ed Plan coordinators.

10. **Ed Plan for Charter Schools-**What is the timeline for Charter schools to have the system installed? Mr. Schad will check and follow-up with those schools.

11. **Improvement Required Schools-** The Superintendent recently met with the principals of schools that did not meet standards. He asked the question: Would you want your child to attend your school? If not how can we help you? What do you need? What are you going to do? He was impressed with the principals and feels confident that strong plans are in place to ensure that each school meets the state's standards this year.

12. **First Day of School-** The Superintendent has been visiting school since day one. Some of the things that he saw were: schools were orderly, no kids in the hallway, and teachers at their doors greeting students. Things he did not see were: lesson objectives written on the board. He also saw students with their head on their desk and teachers sitting at their desk. Principals must have hard conversation about these things with teachers. They must also ensure that student engagement and rigor are high. He strongly believes that rigor needs to increase. Teachers must implement what they learned this summer at rigor workshop.

13. **Professional Development-** Ms. Monaghan, principal at Pin Oak MS, would like for Principals to be included in the development of trainings for the teachers for the beginning of school. Although the rigor training was good; four days was too long. She believes that the training could have been modified and shortened. Many principals agreed. Ms. Monaghan would like more time with staff at the campus at the beginning of the school year.



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ITEMS SUBMITTED

Curriculum- Julie Baker (Anne Boothe)

1. The BOY assessments are not rigorous enough. The concern was sent that we are telling everyone to be rigorous, that we just completed the Rigor Institute, yet the assessments coming from the curriculum department do not appear to mirror the same sentiment.

Response: The BOYs are intended to indicate student readiness for current year's instruction, not mastery of the current year's standards. As diagnostic assessments of student readiness, BOY's are not intended to be a pre-test of current-year standards. For elementary grades, math BOYs were taken from the grade-level diagnostics developed by *enVision Math*, the current mathematics adoption. They are intended to identify gaps in previously taught content and determine if students are prepared to move forward with the curriculum. There is a grade 5 science BOY based on standards that will be addressed in grade 5 science but should have been taught and mastered in grades 3 and 4. For elementary reading, Istation serves as the BOY. In addition, it was recommended that elementary students participate in a baseline writing assignment and be given a fluency probe. In secondary grades, the BOY's are multiple choice diagnostic assessments designed to assess key content and skill standards in math and language arts from previous grades that are instrumental for a strong start in the current years' course.

Finance/Procurement- Ken Huewitt:

1. Many schools are asking for additional white boards and bulletin boards. Is there some "list" we can get from Procurement that just gives us these items and some special pricing. Also there is supposed to be some type of "product" that covers over old chalkboards and makes them white boards. Can we get more information on this product?

Response:

High quality white boards (aka dry erase boards or marker boards) are included on HISD's furniture bid. The attached itemization details the vendors, specifications, and pricing from the bid. These vendors are HISD bid vendors and business may be transacted using a district PROCARD (up to \$1,000) or the SRM shopping cart/purchase order system.

Additional styles and sizes of white boards and bulletin boards are available from the office supply bid vendors (Office Depot, Office Max, Tejas, and Lee). These may be purchased using a district PROCARD or shopping cart. One of the most familiar brands is Quartet (a handy search term). The district now has a "punch-out" electronic catalog for Office Depot which brings SRM much closer to an Internet shopping experience such as Amazon.com. (More punch-out catalogs will be coming soon.)

There is a roll-on product that is used to cover a chalkboard and convert it to a white board. One of the products we are familiar with is made by Everase and is sold by HPL Systems, Inc. (available to HISD on a Buyboard contract). It comes in rolls 50 inches x 100 feet, but



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can be cut to desired length. It may be purchased using a district PROCARD or shopping cart.

Several of the paint companies, including Sherwin-Williams, Rustoleum, Surface Solutions, and Idea Paint, are distributing coating products that are advertised to turn a wall into a dry erase surface. The product literature tends to recommend professional installation for these coated surfaces. The products are available from stores such as Home Depot and Lowes and may be purchased using a district PROCARD.

If additional information is needed, please contact Bob Fazakerly at rfazaker@houstonisd.org.

Human Resources- Rodney Watson

1. Many of the applicants in the Teacher Pool do not have supervisors listed as references. When they are contacted for a reference check, the prior supervisor says that they are not eligible for rehire. Can we request that at least 2 of the references that applicants provide be prior supervisors? What is being done about applicants where their former references are stating that the applicant is not eligible for rehire?

Response: There is no legal requirement for candidates to list prior/current supervisors as references. In the 2013-2014 application, we are requiring two references to be submitted, and strongly suggesting that these references are former/current supervisors. This information is being highlighted on the Careers website for applicants to review, as well as in messaging to applicants via AppliTrack.

2. Is anyone auditing the applicants? Some of the references say "not eligible for rehire". What should we do if we find them? Will they be taken out of the pool?

Response: If a candidate is considered rehire eligible by our district (white, or no label in our system); we cannot remove the applicant from the candidate pool based solely on a reference (internal or external). The only basis for removing a candidate from the candidate pool is if a candidate has been indicated as ineligible for rehire, as marked via a red labeled in our system.

3. The "frontend" hiring process is greatly improved however, the "backend" process need to be looked at. Employees hired in May still did not have an email account or employee ID until the day before school started.

Response: We are currently taking an in-depth review of the overall staffing process from notification of the offer to entry into the system. Due to district procedures that impact the hiring of staff for the upcoming school year, data entry was not possible until the end of June. At that point, new hires were entered as they had cleared the HR process, and not based on the offer date. This is something we are working to improve with collaboration from other HISD departments.



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4. Fingerprinting and background checks are nightmares. We are losing good candidates because of this time consuming process. Is there any way this can be streamlined or expedited.

Response: For SY2013-14 we have reviewed and cleared over 8,000 teacher candidates. The average time to clear a candidate who has completed finger printing is 72 hours or less. It is the responsibility of the candidate to register and pay online for finger printing. We have identified that one delay to processing is caused by teacher candidates not prioritizing the completion of fingerprinting and allotting the required 72 hour turnaround time for clearance prior to hire.

If a teacher candidate has an offense that is eligible for appeal they are given the option to appeal to a committee. The appeals committee meets every Wednesday, therefore if a teacher candidate requests an appeal this can add another week delay to their approval or denial. To proactively support principals and teacher candidates we are exploring follow-up communications to all stakeholders, stating that fingerprinting must be completed by a specified date to ensure that the background check is cleared prior to the hire date. We are also exploring holding two appeal committee hearings per week during peak hiring periods.

5. What can be done to improve access and a timely response from HR representatives? Many have shared concerns about not being able to get HR representatives on the phone or not receiving responses to emails in a timely manner to addressing hiring issues or other HR concerns.

Response: The Human Capital Management Team (HR Business Partners and Assistants) work diligently to acknowledge emails and voice mails from hiring managers/principals and employees within 24 hours and provide a response within 48 hours. The volume of calls and emails this hiring season were much higher than expected which caused longer than ideal response times. The HR department is currently reviewing procedures to increase the quality of customer service provided across the district.

6. Many new hires have expressed concern about their pay checks not reflecting their years of service. How will HR address the concerns of the employees in a timely manner? It has been shared by HR that because of the volume of new hires that many hires were entered at the base pay in order to complete the hiring process. How can this be avoided in the future so that new hires are entering at their anticipated pay scale by the time their first check has been distributed? Also, if this process must continue, how will principals be made aware ahead of time so that they can communicate effectively with his or her employees?

Response: New hires were entered into the system at the base salary due to timing as well as not having their original service record(s) at time they were processed by HR. Once the original service record is received from the employee and reviewed by HR, the employee's salary will be updated and retro back to their hire date. Employees who have previously submitted their service record will see their salary updated by the 9/25 paycheck.



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7. Since ASPIRE eligibility for principals is based on 100% staffing by August 26th and HR was backlogged with processing candidates, how will we know what reports are being used to determine this eligibility requirement and will principals get an opportunity to verify their ASPIRE eligibility soon based on the new staffing requirement?

Response: Eligibility Requirement for the 13- 14 school year.

- The district will use multiple sources to confirm if a campus is 100% staffed by August 26th
- Positions not staffed by 8/26/2013 will be reviewed:
 - When did the vacancy occur?
 - When was a job offer made through Applitrack?
 - Is this a hard to staff position?
 - How many candidates were available in the pool?
 - Was the candidate selected but delayed through the hiring process?
- Principals will be given the opportunity to verify their eligibility.
- All decisions on staffing eligibility will be reviewed by the School Office and Human Resources.

School Support Services- Mark Smith

1. Barrage of Academic Services items the first week of school makes it difficult for small schools and/or new principals (22 items the first day of school).
2. Minor issue: When click the "Send Item" button on the Academic Services online memos, the Outlook message has a strange item in the Subject line. Here's an example from the Everyartist Live! notice: Everyartist Live! "â€" The deadline date is September 27, 2013

This only appears if there is a due date assigned to the item.

3. Turnaround time on reports on Academic Services web- for example: Two weeks (March 25-April 8) is a short amount of time for us to create our Waiver Requests especially since we have to meet with our SDMCs. Given the overlap with the first week of STAAR testing and a short week with the Spring Holiday, it was difficult for our SDMC to meet to discuss waivers.

Response: The administration continues to work with all departments to ensure that all items are appropriate and only released when necessary. The administration is working diligently to reduce any duplication of efforts and to ensure that each item which requires action on behalf of the schools have at least a 2-week lead time. The message resulting from clicking on the "send" key is currently under investigation.

Business Operations- Leo Bobadilla

1. Custodial staffing: Principals should be allowed to add more custodians out of their decentralized budgets if their school needs more staff.

Response: All campuses have the ability to fund hourly custodians thru the budget office, as several campuses do, and schools can utilize the custodial contract with McLemore Building Services for supplemental work.

For more information / help principals may call Brian Busby, Sr. Manager Operations in the office at 713-220-5018 or on his cell at 832-325-8062.