



**Principal Ad Hoc Meeting Minutes
November 6, 2013 | 7:30-8:30 a.m.
HMW Building, Room 1E01-02**

Dr. Houlihan welcomed the members of the Principal Advisory Committee and acknowledged this is a busy time due to Goal Setting conferences, fall review, and other items. He reminded the group that the Principal's Meeting has been restructured in a format where the afternoon sessions are optional.

Dr. Grier stated that we are almost half way of the school year. A lot has been done and a lot needs to be done. He asked what school leaders are doing at the campus level, what needs to be done differently to impact student's performance. He asked to reflect on what kind of training teachers need and to think about who in their teams are not meeting expectations. He stated that the District retained 86% of effective teachers and then asked what an effective teacher is. A principal responded that an effective teacher demonstrates two years or more of value added growth. Dr. Grier then challenged the group asking why we have teachers in schools that despite training and coaching, they are not demonstrating years of growth. A student needs to have effective teachers for four consecutive years to close the gap. We are going to ask the Board in to move early notification to start in November. We need to know if teachers are planning to retire. Recruitment needs to start earlier. Best teachers and worse teachers come from the same universities. The difference is that best teachers are recruited earlier. Dr. Grier asked to recognize and reward best teachers in efforts to retain them; to ask them to advice or mentor fellow teachers; to make them feel important; to build relationships with them. He reinforced that we can't afford teachers with negative scores and that evaluations need to reflect that. He encouraged principals to think about what a school leader can do to improve teacher impact on students.

Dr. Grier opened the floor for principals concerns:

1. A principal asked if there are any plans to have teacher from bottom grade levels have value added scores. Dr. Grier responded he didn't know but encourage principals to make the call regarding teacher effectiveness and to prep prep prep.
2. A principal stated that new teachers have no clear understanding of value added and was wondering if these teachers can visit fellow teachers with high value added scores. Dr. Grier added that principals need to own their data; display it and let teachers observe teachers with high value added. Teacher needs to differentiate, to prepare lesson plans where everybody gets something. Differentiation needs to be revised every 6-8 weeks. You need to talk to your teachers to get buy-in.



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3. A principal asked if there are any plans to add additional TDS. Dr. Grier stated that the District has no enough resources. However, schools have additional resources to either help their teachers or add tutors to help their students. All revenues have been pushed to the schools. He requested resources are used wisely.
4. A principal indicated that they can't see all appraiser documentation. It was explained by Dr. Watson that information was seen according to how each assigned appraisers. HR has made the change this year and now a principal can see all appraiser information. Last year is still not available because it is a different system. Dr. Grier requested that his team make appraisal information from last year available to principals by end of next week.
5. Dr. Grier stated that even though we are half way in the school year, some tier schools have not expended a third of the funds allocated for this year. He encouraged principals to spend it according to their positioning statement, to consult with their SSOs if they have doubts regarding how to spend their resources. He asked that if they are not going to use the funds, to let him know, since there are schools that need the extra funds and are ready to spend it.
6. It was requested that a master calendar is created by July which will include major initiatives so that principals can plan around and know who to contact. Mr. Gohl stated that we, Central Office, owe it to principals to figure it out. The question is how we do it. We are asked to keep you informed; then we hear that you are receiving too many emails; too many things going on. He asked that principals work with them as we find a solution.
7. A requested was made that Academic Service emails change the time emails are sent. They are coming at 5 o'clock which is the end of the day and doesn't leave time for principals to plan, delegate, execute. We need a better communication strategy.
8. A comment was made that new teachers are receiving great support from HISD; better than what they receive from Region 4.
9. Dr. Zullinger was recognized for his job in staying in touch with teachers. They feel that they are heard and valued.



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10. There is a concern regarding system behind substitute teachers. Teacher absences from classrooms are not covered properly even when they are planned. Some substitutes drop even if they were sought ahead of time. There needs to be system where substitutes can set their preferences and campuses can share their feedback. Dr. Grier mentioned the possibility of having a permanent substitute position at the campus. There were concerns about how it would work since the position needs to be available and the budget as well. Dr. Watson stated that some of the substitute teachers choose to go to certain campuses if the position becomes available (dropping a previous selection) due to how prepare the school is for a substitute: lessons plan, staff checking on them, etc. A principal stated that we can partner with Universities so that future teachers can gain experience and learn about our schools. Another principal suggested that campuses need to collect feedback from substitute teachers when they are in your campus.

ITEMS SUBMITTED

Academics - Daniel Gohl

- Could the district generate a letter that we can send home to parents letting them know how excessive absences will affect the students' report card.

Response: Academic Services will work with the School Support Services department to generate an appropriate form letter that may be sent to parents. We will work with the Schools Office on the appropriate distribution of these letters. Monitoring and interventions with students who are absent is critical to student success.

- The Fall DLA is not in a realistic STAAR format. The questions on the math assessment are way too bunched together when compared to STAAR and don't give kids adequate room to show their thinking.

Response: Based on this input the Curriculum Department will review the format of vendor procured and centrally generated DLAs and other district assessments to align with the STAAR format. Academic Services appreciates the campus' efforts to insure aligned formatting, appropriate rigor and a secure testing environment.

- Why does it take so long for Special Education Directors to reply to email messages? I have 2 wheelchair bound students and 1 runner in a Life Skills class of 9 students with only one



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aide and one teacher. I have sent many requests to Special Ed for additional help and no one has responded.

Response: It should not take long for directors or other staff to respond to any request. We apologize for the frustration that this delay has justifiably generated. Please copy Sowmya Kumar, Assistant Superintendent of Specials Education Services, and me (dgohl@houstonisd.org) should a similar delay occur again.

- The assessment calendar is too tight given the other responsibilities at our schools.

Response: Academic Services realizes that the logistics involved with administering assessments are challenging for all school staff. We appreciate school staff understanding and responding to the achievement levels of students. We will work to better coordinate the demands of staff without compromising their ability to insure that all students are proficient, college and career ready.

- TDS support: New Teachers need TDS support. Our schools do not have TDS support but we really need some to help with our new teachers.

Response: For school year 2013-2014, TDS are linked to prioritized campuses as determined by central administration. Campuses that are not linked to TDS still have access to all district-wide face-to-face and online training. The HISD Fall Teacher Training catalog is available at

<http://hisdacademics.org/2013/09/02/master-training-calendars-for-teachers-and-leaders-fall-2013/>

Non-prioritized campuses are to continue to leverage lead teachers, department chairs, teacher leaders, and new teacher mentors to build capacity and provide instructional support on the campus. It is important to note that all HISD Effective Teacher Fellowship (ETF) ACP teachers on prioritized and non-prioritized will have coaching support from an HISD EFT TDS.

In instances where support is needed and capacity is not available on the campus, principals may reach out to the PSD Elementary and Secondary Senior Managers of Teacher Development and New Teacher/Mentor for support. Name and contact information is below.

Elementary Teacher Development: Dianne Alvarez, dalvare2@houstonisd.org, 713-696-0600

Secondary Teacher Development: Gwen Tompkins: gtompkin@houstonisd.org, 713-696-0600

New Teacher/Mentor Support: Gail McGee: gmcgee@houstonisd.org, 713-6960600

For content-specific professional development questions in relationship to HISD training opportunities, school leaders and teachers are encouraged to reach out to PSD TDS Team Leads. They are:



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Elementary English Language Arts	MaleneGolding	mgolding@houstonisd.org
Elementary English Language Arts	Tammy Wall	twall@houstonisd.org
Elementary Mathematics	Nalsy Perez	nperez@houstonisd.org
Elementary Science	Donelle Williams	Dwilli16@houstonisd.org
Elementary STEM	Laila Wakim	lwakim@houstonisd.org
Elementary ESL/Bilingual	Milagros (Mili) Henriquez	mhenriqu@houstonisd.org
Secondary English Language Arts/ESL	Georgina Castilleja	Gcastil1@houstonisd.org
Secondary Mathematics	Kanika Vessel	kvessel@houstonisd.org
Secondary Social Studies	Cynthia (Cindy) Fairbanks	cfairban@houstonisd.org
Secondary Science	Karla Auzenne	kauzenne@houstonisd.org
Secondary Special Education	Kelli Charles	Kcharle1@houstonisd.org

Additional TDS Linkage information is available at <http://hisdacademics.org/2013/08/19/tds-linkage-and-campus-support-for-2013-2014/>.

Business Operations - Leo Bobadilla

- Maintenance: Principals are told that services we normally get are being delayed because the priority is to have the former North Forest schools caught up. Services like maintenance and Special Ed. Will this be the system for the entire school year?

Response: We are not delaying anything to other schools due to schools in the North Forest area. Work orders from ALL schools are prioritized based on the information that the schools provide when they call in the work order. If after submitting a work order someone has a concern with the response they should contact the person on the contact sheet that was distributed to all principals at the start of the school year or call Robert Sands directly if his direct reports are not being responsive so he can address this.

Communications - Tiffany Davila

- After school cancellation on Thursday, October 31 - I hate hearing about these things from parents. Suddenly our phones go nuts with phone calls and we all wonder what in the world is happening. I finally got an email from Academic Services 45 minutes after the first call came in from parents. Principals should be the first line of notifications. It makes it look like the right hand doesn't know what the left hand is doing. The District's credibility with parents and the community suffers.

Response: The order that communications were sent out last Thursday to cancel after school activities (i.e. first to parents then to principals) should not have occurred. Moving forward, an improved protocol has been established. Communications will coordinate with Academic Services to ensure the principals are notified before a callout happens. Academic Services will copy Media Relations on the memo to principals; once the email is received,



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parent callouts will begin. We are also looking at the possibility to establish text message alerts for principals.

- Emergency notification: Why are principals not notified of non-emergency phone messages sent out during the school day prior to the messages be sent? Case in point...October 31, 2013, after school activities were cancelled and schools were informed of the message by parents. The Press Office did not send any information directly to principals for over one hour. It makes it difficult for schools to respond parent phone calls or make preparations to cancel programs without some lead time.

Response: Please see answer to item above

- Parents who received calls from HISD notified at least four Principals of the cancellation of after-school activities due to weather on Thursday, 10/31/13. Academic Services notified schools at 12:11 p.m. yesterday via e-mail.

Response: Please see answer to first item

Human Resources - Rodney Watson

- Trust through Actions- we were told that we have to have summative conferences completed by Nov. 22 and we'd have the ratings by October 31. We are now being told "we are waiting for the IT department to complete the development of the summative rating score sheet that will reside in the F&D tool. It could be a bit longer from my understanding." We are not given the luxury of time on campuses. We need our support departments to support us, not have to work around them. Principals are on the frontline taking trying hard to buffer from angry teachers and parents.

Response: Summative Ratings **could not** be released without the summative rating details page (or score sheet). All of this information and functionality was released district-wide on Friday, November 1st. One was not released prior to the other. Everything pertaining to summative ratings and the appraisers' ability to view and submit the rating to their assigned teacher(s) was made available via the TADS – Feedback & Development Tool on November 1st. Other than making the summative ratings available one day after the established deadline of October 31st, the rest of the information presented in this issue is incorrect.

- The Academic Services Memo dated 10/14/13 required that IPDP for Non-Teacher Employees and conference with each employee was due on Friday 10/18/13 which gave Principals 4 days to complete.

Response: This is correct. The ASM released on 10/14/13 regarding the appraisal system for Non-Teachers did include a copy of the Non-Teacher Appraisal Manual. The non-teacher appraisal manual includes the appraisal calendar that does in fact specify that the IPDPs and Goal Setting conferences must be completed by **October 18th** for non-teachers on a **10-10.5 duty schedule**.



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The calendar also specifies the following:

Goal Setting Conferences Duty Schedule	Goal Setting Conference Completion Date
9 month	October 4, 2013
10-10.5 month	October 18, 2013
11-11.5 month	November 15, 2013
12 month	November 22, 2013

After HCA was informed of the short turnaround as a result of the these dates, HCA quickly moved to extend these deadlines. On **Friday, October 18th at 1:03PM** HCA posted an **Appraisal Systems Timeline Extension** memo on the Principals SharePoint. Deadlines for completing IPDPs and Goal Setting Conferences for all appraisal systems were **extended to November 22nd**.

The path is as follows:

Principals SharePoint → Select *Appraisal and Development* folder → Select *Non-Teacher Appraisal Forms and Resources* folder → Select *Appraisal Systems Timeline Extension Memo*

This memo was also submitted via the Academic Services weekly memos system on Friday, October 18th and was posted on Monday, October 21st.

Our apologies for the confusion and added stress this event may have caused.

- Fall check-in: Is there a schedule for fall check-in? What data are should we prepare/bring?

Response: Yes, there is a schedule for the Fall Staff Review meetings. This schedule was provided to the CSOs and Schools Directors in advance of the meetings. Principals were provided campus-specific data sheets on which they are to list the type of development plan each teacher is currently under – IPDP or PPA. These data sheets were made available via the Principals SharePoint on Friday, October 25th in advance of the meetings.

The path to the campus-specific data sheets is as follows:

Principals SharePoint → Select *Appraisal and Development* folder → Select appropriate CSO folder → Select appropriate campus folder → Select *Teacher Appraisal* folder → Select *2013-2014 Fall_Staff_Review_Report_(Campus Name)*

There is no other additional information that the Principal must bring unless otherwise directed by the CSO or SSO.

- The six-step process to complete the IPDP is confusing for the teachers and takes an inordinate amount of time. Please simplify the process or eliminate it.
 - 1) Teacher creates/submits to Appraiser.
 - 2) Appraiser acknowledges/submits to teacher.



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- 3) Conference
- 4) Teacher dates/submits to Appraiser.
- 5) Appraiser acknowledges/submits to teacher.
- 6) Teacher completes/submits back to Appraiser.

Response: HCA, in conjunction with IT, will begin the process of redesigning the TADS tools in preparation for the 2015-2016 school year. The newly redesigned tools will be piloted during the 2014-2015 school year. ALL aspects of the tools including all forms will be reviewed and redesigned as appropriate and as allowed by TEA regulations and Board policy.

Information Technology - Lenny Schad

- We are having lots of tech issues with EdPlan. Is this common? Biggest complaint is that teachers are not able to login from time to time.

Response: All teachers have a user name. Their user name is everything before the @ symbol in their email. If they are logging on for the first time, the default password is "2012txhouston". A best practice is that the user reset their password during the first login. How to do this can be located in the EdPlan district website. For security purposes, the system will log off a user after three incorrect login attempts. If their accounts are locked, the campus EdPlan Admin can reset and reactivate any campus account.

- Our IT department needs to create forms that work on all HISD computers. Schools do not set up their own computers. Technicians from HISD set them up and schools are not supposed to mess with the load; yet, in order to make forms work we are constantly being told it is our fault for not having the latest version of this or that installed. Why not create forms (whether for teacher or principal appraisals) that work regardless of the version being run. Schools do not have the finance to upgrade computers yearly. Our computers are a year old yet still were installed with XP and I.E. 7.

Response: After the recent activities and challenges with the appraisal applications, the applications teams will be testing applications on multiple platforms to ensure that the user experience is the same regardless of what computer operating system or internet browser you are accessing the application from.

- We need a system for communicating that is consistent. When a new update (of Adobe for example) is required to use a district form, why is this not communicated to all schools? There are simple ways to avoid the frustrations principals are having by just communicating with us in the first place.

Response: Please see answer to item above.



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- SharePoint: Can we get an email alert when something has been dropped into SharePoint?

Response: Alerts must be set up by the individual user:

1. In the SharePoint Documents folder you wish to set the alert on Click on ACTIONS, then ALERT ME
 2. Name your alert whatever you want...there's a default name that you can just leave
 3. Make sure your name appears in the box under "user"
 4. Under "only send me alerts when" please select your alert criteria (such as NEW ITEMS ARE ADDED)
 5. Under " send me an alert when," please select your alert criteria (such as SOMEONE CHANGES AN ITEM THAT APPEARS IN THE FOLLOWING VIEW: select MY ISSUES)
 6. The last section allows you to choose how often you receive alerts. It is recommended selecting the second option: "SEND A DAILY SUMMARY" then choosing the time of day you want to receive alerts. Of course, you have the option of receiving an alert immediately if that's what you prefer.
- Unreasonable timelines in light of constantly adding new initiatives and technology which makes it virtually impossible to complete tasks by the deadlines.

Response: Many of the new initiatives and technology improvements are business-driven, which means each project requestor and the IT project manager must work together to develop an appropriate Communications plan to facilitate implementation of the project and sufficient preparation time to allow completion of the tasks by the necessary deadlines. In addition, wherever possible IT will attempt to provide 2 weeks advance notification of pending implementation and school impacting changes / requests for assistance. To successfully improve school impacts, all departments not only IT, should apply the practice of providing 2 weeks advance notice of upcoming requirements.

School Support - Drew Houlihan

- Please see if a discussion can take place regarding master schedules in our schools. I have a major concern about the effectiveness of the A/B day schedule and the impact it has on the children we serve. The principal is planning to move to a 5X5 90 minute block next year. Students would be responsible for 4 subjects a semester and have each subject every day. The principal has worked in urban districts that have made the move to a 4x4 block and the student achievement results for high schools in these districts have been positive. The fifth block will be a 90 minute literacy period which would focus on culturally relevant materials designed to improve our students' reading and writing skills. The principal is interested in seeing if other campuses would be interested in collaborating and doing the same.



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Response: The High School Office will coordinate with Academics and other departments to have this collaborative discussion.

- Request to filter all requests for information and deadlines through the SSO to decrease the chaos.

Response: All requests for information and deadlines will be filtered through the Office of School Support and CSO's/SSO's.

Student Support - Mark Smith

- The lack of communication to principals, SSO's, CSO's and others prior to notifying the media regarding the Magnet closures.

Response: On Thursday, October 17, 2013, the Administration participated in the monthly Board Workshop. Board workshops are open meetings where board members are updated on current district programs or initiatives. Agendas are posted prior to each meeting and members of the media generally attend.

At the workshop, the Administration presented and discussed proposed Magnet Regulations; the 20 magnet programs that have persistently failed to meet the minimum enrollment requirements for students who reside outside the school's attendance zone (five of which also failed to meet state accountability standards); and 13 schools that met magnet standards, but failed to meet the state accountability standards.

The Administration strives to directly communicate with HISD staff members prior to releasing information to the media. It is unfortunate that, in this instance, communications were released prior to notifying school and central office administrators.

- Academic Services memos: The Academic Services emails serve a good purpose; however, the same lists of items are sent to principals from the ESO secretaries. We sometimes think the information is new. After a couple of minutes reading it, we realize that it is the information we already have. I believe the Academic Services email with due dates is great. If we can receive that email on the Wednesday before it is due will help support us in the many things we juggle.

Response: Reminders for Academic Services' items will be scheduled for distribution on the Wednesday before the action requested by due date.

- Technical issue with Academic Services email forwarding (Subject line) – we get extra characters. As an example from this week's memos: (highlighted words are extra words that automatically appear in the Subject line)

“2013-2014 TELPAS Rater and Verifier Forms – **Submit form** by November 8, 2013”



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Response: Last year, Principals Ad Hoc Committee members requested that action requested/deadline date information be emphasized by highlighting that information in red. Accordingly, the decision was made to add that red highlighted information to the title of the item.

The Academic Services' website application (Wordpress) does not provide an option to make words appear red on the title of a memo; therefore, a special code is added to the title field in order to accommodate this feature. This code is not seen unless the item is forwarded via the email (Send Item) button on the bottom of the page. Also, the application places extraneous characters after certain symbols (i.e., &, -, and '). Avoidance of these situations would require the elimination of the red highlight color and/or symbols from information placed in the title field.

We are currently in the process of researching alternate applications that will meet our needs more effectively.