



Superintendent's Public Engagement Committee  
Meeting Minutes

**October 13, 2010 • 8:15 a.m.–10:00 a.m.**  
**Hattie Mae White Educational Support Center**

Terry B. Grier, Ed.D. Superintendent of Schools

*The purpose of the Superintendent's Public Engagement Committee (PEC) is to support public-engagement outreach for the district's efforts in providing high-quality education, communicate critically important information, and gain valuable input from key community members.*

**IN ATTENDANCE**

Burt Ballanfant  
Beth Brown  
Martin Cominsky  
Dale Davidson  
Laura Grobowsky

Mary Scott Hagle  
David Jaroszewski  
Earl Jimmison  
Judy Long  
Rev. Max Miller Jr.

Mary Nesbitt  
Leslie Smith  
Maggie Utter Soloman  
Lillian Villarreal

**INTRODUCTION**

Members of the Superintendent's Public Engagement Committee (PEC) to the Hattie Mae White Educational Support Center were welcomed to the meeting. After welcoming everyone, introductions were offered to help acquaint new and continuing committee members.

**DISCUSSION**

After reiterating the superintendent's commitment to obtain committee members' input on issues that concern their communities, the agenda, supplemental materials and upcoming calendar events including World Café and Board Workshops were reviewed. Discussion focused on the Apollo schools, strategic direction and magnet review efforts.

Below, grouped by topic, is a summary of the issues raised and responses provided.

- Apollo Schools: Dr. Grier was pleased with the preliminary progress of the Apollo schools noting an increase in attendance and decline in office referrals. He communicated that the district is striving to maintain the pace by providing Saturday training in differentiated instruction for teachers in the schools with less dramatic results. Discussion turned to the plan to add 11 schools next year focusing on the lowest performing elementary schools to be selected at random. The middle and high school Apollo program is funded through a combination of sources including Title I, the Texas Title I Priority Schools (TTIPS) grant, general funds for reconstitution of staff and private grant. The district is receiving national attention from external funders and other district leaders with site visits planned in the coming weeks for fundraising and highlighting best practices in turnaround schools
- Strategic Direction: Dr. Pola announced the Implementation Plans were available on the website containing the district's specific activities. Many efforts are underway including issuance of Request for Proposals (RFP)

and partnerships with thought-leaders such as The New Teacher Project to revise and align teacher appraisal review process and the principal appraisal system. Members shared concerns with appraisal input opportunities. Dr. Pola encouraged participation in the Shared Decision Making Committee (SDMC) meetings. Additionally, Dr. Pola committed to provide the link to the effective teachers website once available. Members suggested an increase effort by the district to make employees feel valued. Current practices include small and large meetings, Cabinet Member outreach, Superintendent sessions with Hattie Mae White employees and district committees. More information on the strategic direction is available [online](#).

- **Magnet Review:** Members voiced concerns and observations regarding the misconceptions of the magnet review progress. Dr. Grier committed that the review would provide recommendations but the HISD Board would be responsible for making any decisions. Once the recommendations are received, they will be shared with PEC members. Dr. Pola echoed that the review is in progress and that no decisions have been made. Currently HISD has five schools receiving Federal magnet funding and are required to conform to Federal selection process criteria which involves a lottery system. More work will be needed to align district policy with recommendation decisions once received. Additional outreach forums have been scheduled for the first week of February.

Other topics of discussion included the recent movie Waiting for Superman and class ranking calculation implications for transferring students.

## **CONCLUSION**

Dr. Pola closed the meeting by committing to provide logistical information on upcoming events. Action Items include:

- Board Workshops topics: 10/28 Finance & Procurement, Effective Teacher; 11/4 Summer School, Rightsizing (workshops are discussion based and not action items)
- Data for Apollo20 (see attachment)
- Effective Teacher website information (see press release)
- STAR Math incentive information :

### **Private Contribution Funds HISD Study of Financial Incentives' Effect on Fifth-Grade Students and Parents**

A \$1,259,000 contribution from a Texas-based foundation will fund a math incentive program for fifth-graders and their parents in 25 HISD elementary schools. Harvard University's EdLabs and Apollo 20 Project advisor Dr. Roland Fryer will research the incentives' impact on students' academic gains. The "Math Stars" program will begin the week of September

**The next meeting of the Superintendent's Public Engagement Committee is tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, January 19, 2010.**

**Chief of Staff Michele Pola serves as the liaison to the committee.  
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