

MINUTES OF HISD BOARD OF EDUCATION SPECIAL EDUCATION AD HOC COMMITTEE MEETING

Thursday, October 26, 2017

Committee Members Present:

Anne Sung, Committee Chair
Holly Maria Flynn Vilaseca
Jackie Cross-Ecford
Hannah Mose-Harvey

Shana Halvorsen
Erin Hasbrouck
James Troutman
Jamie Wilkes

Administrative Resources Present:

Dr. Joan Anderson, Assistant Superintendent (HISD)
Dr. Kat Pfannestial (American Institutes for Research)
Lisa McBride, Board Counsel, Thompson & Horton LLP

AGENDA

OPEN SESSION

1. **Call to Order.** The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:10 p.m.
2. **Minutes.** The minutes of the last meeting were presented by Lisa McBride.
3. **Special Education Department Update.** Dr. Anderson explained that the Department is currently preparing the District's special education snap shot data for submission to the Texas Education Agency. Hurricane Harvey has impacted the District's student enrollment, including the enrollment of students with disabilities. The Department is currently reaching out to homes and shelters to determine where students are, and to make sure that students have transportation to school from shelters and other temporary lodging. The Department's parent liaisons have been extremely helpful in this process.

Additionally, the Department has been very involved in the District's "Achieve 180" program. The District has included the department in the development of customized professional development for the Achieve 180 campuses.

Dr. Anderson answered questions from the Committee concerning the "Documenting the Request for Evaluation and Referral for Evaluation" flowchart, which was first introduced to the Committee at its September meeting. The flowchart depicts HISD's current special education request for evaluation and referral process. The Committee asked several questions concerning the interaction between response to intervention timelines and special education referral timelines. Dr. Anderson explained circumstances in which the two processes work side-by-side and circumstances in which the response to intervention process is a precursor to the referral

process. However, she stressed that response to intervention does not delay the referral process. Teachers and administrators have been trained on the interplay between the two processes.

Principal Harvey shared that the IAT specialists working on campuses this year are responsive and hands-on. They provide real-time in classroom support and strategies for teachers.

Other Committee members shared that while senior managers and administrators appear to be utilizing the student data from the universal screener well, special and general education teachers still appear for ARDs without data to support the progress reported for their students or their students' present levels of performance.

The Committee asked where parents as well as committee members could obtain additional information concerning the universal screener so they can better participate in discussions.

Dr. Anderson, and campus-based members of the Committee, explained that parents can access information on the universal screener on the parent portal and in the individualized letter given to each parent explaining the specific data for their child(ren). Dr. Anderson also committed to obtaining an overview of the universal screener for the Committee.

The Committee discussed the role of the IAT designee on each campus. The campus-based members of the Committee explained the increased expectations for teachers to record the interventions attempted with students and their success rates.

Dr. Anderson announced that her Department is finalizing a comprehensive program improvement plan, including root cause analysis.

Lastly, the Committee questioned how the special education department was promoting the new parent liaisons. Dr. Anderson explained that the liaisons have their own web page, and they respond to on-line mailbox comments. She is also considering having each campus place a link to the liaisons' webpage on its website. The Committee asked Dr. Anderson to consider other ways of promoting the liaisons, including placement information trifold for each campus.

4. **American Institute for Research ("AIR") Update.** Dr. Kat Pfannestial shared the response rates from the parent and staff survey, both of which were low. The Committee discussed factors contributing to the low response rate and ways to improve the response rate.

Dr. Pfannestial outlined the next stages of AIR's work, including the site visits. The Committee challenged the decision not to include parents or general education teachers in any of AIR's site visit interviews. Dr. Pfannestial will take these concerns back to her team.

Dr. Pfannestial shared that the final report deadline has been pushed back until March of 2018 as a result of Hurricane Harvey.

5. **Outcomes for HISD Students with Disabilities.** The Chair explained that the Board has been working a board monitoring system to measure student outcomes, but she wants the Committee's assistance in developing a more robust monitoring system for students with disabilities. The Chair also discussed the Board's plans to have an annual workshop on special education. The Chair would like the Committee to make recommendations to the Board concerning the questions it should ask of the Administration in connection with the annual workshops.
6. **Guiding Principles Regarding Inclusive Education Practices.** The Committee again discussed the Guiding Principles Regarding Inclusive Education Practices for the San Francisco Unified School District, and further adapted those principles for HISD. The Chair announced that the Committee's recommended language will be brought to the Board for consideration at its November 2017 meeting.

NO CLOSED SESSION ITEMS

The next Committee Meeting will be held on November 15, 2017.

7. **Adjournment.** The meeting adjourned at 6:38 p.m.