

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

March 22, 2018

Committee Members Present:

Jackie Anderson	Erin Hasbrouke
Courtney Bensch	Lashondra Jackson
Jackie Cross-Ecford	Joshua Rotenberg
Hannah Mose-Harvey	James Troutman
Shana Halvorsen	Jamie Wilkes

Administrative Resources Present: Dr. Joan Anderson, Assistant Superintendent for Special Education (HISD)
Dr. Tessie Bailey (American Institutes for Research)
Lisa McBride, Board Counsel, Thompson & Horton LLP

AGENDA

OPEN SESSION

1. **Call to Order.** Lisa McBride called the meeting to order at 4:35 p.m.
2. **Special Education Update.** Dr. Anderson previewed the Susan Bon presentation being held at the University of St. Thomas on March 22, 2018, entitled "The Ethics of Special Education Leadership: Doing What Is Right for the Student." Dr. Anderson reported that the department is in the middle of conference planning. Dr. Anderson is receiving proposals to speak. The Summer Conference will be at the old North Forrest High School on July 17-18, 2018.

Principals are responding to requests for names to be on Special Education Advisory Committee. The current deadline to provide names to Dr. Anderson is the end of March 2018. Dr. Anderson wants broad representation on the Advisory Committee.

The Special Education Department is working on professional learning series for principals. The Department has already provided training on designated supports. The District's New Teacher Academy will be held in August 2018, and will include special education topics. Dr. Anderson is also reviewing the schedule for the District's Pre-Service week to strengthen the planned instructional strategy training. The Department is finalizing progress monitoring training, and will roll it out to campuses soon.

Dr. Anderson recently set out an academic memo with two attachments: (1) an application to serve on Special Education Advisory Committee; and (2) the roles and responsibilities for the Special Education Advisory Committee.

The Committee asked Dr. Anderson about the availability of materials from previous District parent trainings. Dr. Anderson advised that she is trying to get PDFs and PowerPoints from the parent summit loaded to the Department website by end of the school year

- 3. Discussion of AIR Report.** The Committee generally discussed AIR's findings, recommendations, and methodology with Ms. Bailey in a question and answer format. Topics of discussion included:

Committee: Why was there a lack of parent input into the report?

T. Bailey: Parent input had already been received. The District had the results of a parent survey, and the Department of Education had already performed parent focus groups. Parent concerns were identified in these documents. AIR worked from these, rather than starting from scratch.

Committee: Why did AIR not interview the parents at the 27 campuses selected for inclusion in the report?

T. Bailey: The goal was to look at nature of parent concerns. AIR already knew what the concerns were. The AIR report confirms these perceptions and concerns.

Parent and staff participation at HISD is low, and historically has been low. AIR tried to adjust for this by being on campuses and at District trainings to solicit input directly from parents and staff. There were no responses from these groups when AIR was on campuses, and at trainings.

Committee: Why was there a lack of looking internally at special department functioning in the AIR report?

T. Bailey: AIR looked at HISD's organizational chart as well as HISD Board policies, and reviewed available feedback from staff. AIR found no red flags concerning how HISD is set up. TEA is in the process of revising regulations which have caused HISD problems. HISD's policy/regulation issues are TEA issues.

Committee: Why were transition services not mentioned in the report?

T. Bailey: AIR could not access enough data from HISD to make accurate findings concerning transition services. It is important to remember impact of

Harvey on transition data. Additionally, transition services were not part of the scope.

Committee: This group needs to prioritize what gets done.

Parents and staff say they are afraid of retribution and that is why they do not participate.

Will the Special Education Department be responding to the AIR report?

Anderson: Dr. Anderson is already working on this.

Committee: What are next steps? Any suggested timelines?

T. Bailey: AIR's recommendations can't be implemented in one year. This work will take three to five years. You need "buy-in". You need folks to believe the District will do this work.

**Anderson
And**

Committee: The Special Education Department will make plans, and the Committee will provide input.

T. Bailey: Remember to utilize HISD's Research and Accountability Department to help the District progress monitor implementation of the recommendations. Progress monitoring has 2 components:

- (1) Infrastructure – monitor whether changes were made and the impact; and
- (2) Implementation of plan –Did it occur and what was the impact?

Committee: The Committee raised a concern about staffing at certain campuses. The Special Education Department Chair at the campus is often also a resource teacher. The Committee expressed concern that both positions cannot be effectively discharged by one person.

T. Bailey: Turning back to progress monitoring, Bailey cautioned the Committee that placement numbers are one thing, but the Committee, and the District, need to look at student outcomes.

Committee: The Disconnect between data and outcomes suggests that we need to look at implementation.

T. Bailey: Don't get caught in trap of arbitrary numbers.
In a well-functioning system, you repeatedly check in with program evaluation. This suggests that HISD needs to assign a strategic team to focus on this monitoring work.

Committee: Is the Board going to allocate resources?

Anderson: Dr. Anderson wants to develop a strategic plan to address each of AIR's five recommendations, one year at a time over the next five years.

Dr. Anderson is excited that HISD could look very different in five years.

Committee: The District needs concerted, standardized special education training. Master teachers need to continue to train. General education teachers need same training.

We want HISD to be best special education service provider in country.
We want HISD to be known for its special education programs.

Cutting and pasting of IEPs across students is not appropriate

Teachers need to know procedural safeguards.

We need to make sure that all teachers receive face-to-face training on:

Goal setting

ARD process

IEP process

What's in the procedural safeguards?

One training is NOT sufficient. No more training on the web.

The District needs to develop skills-based training, including a mock ARD and IEP process where teachers receive real-time feedback.

The Committee made the following recommendations based on the discussion from the meeting:

- (1) As to Board Regulation BQB2, which identifies the membership of campus SDMCs, Shana, would like this regulation to require that the parent membership include at least one parent of a child with a disability. This would probably need to be a change to Board Policy, with the administration having to change their regulation to match. Currently state law requires SDMCs to include, **if practicable**, at least one representative with the primary responsibility for educating students with disabilities, but the District's policies do not require that staff membership or parent membership include parents or

teachers of students with disabilities. Members were in agreement with this recommendation.

- (2) Board Regulation EHBAB1 states that private service providers are not permitted to provide services to students on HISD school campuses during the school day. Shana would like this provision deleted. This is a regulation (the Administration's area of responsibility) so the Committee would either need to work with Administration to change this provision (if that is the desire of the Committee and the Board), or revise a Board Policy, which would necessitate a change to the Administrative Regulation. Members appeared in agreement with this recommendation.
- (3) Jackie suggested that because every campus must annually adopt a school improvement plan (SIP), and that plan must address strategies for improving outcomes for students with disabilities, the District should require SIPs to be approved by the special education department to build in more accountability into the SIP process. Additionally, she would like to see the District require a description of the specific professional development planned for the campus to assist teachers with the strategies identified in the SIP, and that the PD identified also be approved by the special education department. Members were in agreement with this recommendation.

4. Adjournment. The meeting was adjourned at 6:50 p.m.