

SDMC November 27, 2018 Meeting

Minutes:

SDMC meeting began at 3:37 pm

The following members were present: Perry, Naidoo, Bryant, M. Hayes, Seaton, Boneau, Khan, Nguyen, Shargey, Jackson, Adam,
Additional attendees: Hoyer, Rodriguez, Williams

Ms. Perry opened meeting, welcomed committee members, and reviewed meeting guidelines. Mrs. Adams began with describing some of the concerns of the staff: low performance and failures of current students, current performance of students in all Pre AP 9th grade courses and request offering only “magnet courses” during the first semester of 9th, and changes in entrance requirements by returning to entrance exams and previous matrix.

Mrs. Naidoo indicated the concern that parents and students did not choose DeBakey HS or left DeBakey HS because of the lack of Pre AP courses.

Ms. Perry indicated there are no longer “magnet courses” but “regular courses”, the performance on the math, reading, and writing exams did not determine acceptance but was calculated as a % of the matrix score, there was not a science entrance exam. The matrix score included, academic performance, TAKS/STAAR & Stanford performance, entrance test performance in math, reading, & writing, and conduct.

The comments during the meeting were focused on the rising number of students failing multiple courses. Several members made suggestions for trying to solve the failure problems. One suggestion that was discussed in length was having all incoming Freshmen take on level math and science courses for the first semester and then moving up to pre-ap the second semester if requested. The pros and cons of this suggestion were discussed at length. Other comments concerned the possibility of DeBakey returning to the testing process before the lottery, the Board of Education’s opinion of magnet schools, and teacher’s frustration with trying to teach the curriculum to students who are not prepared at their middle school.

Below is a summary of the suggestions made regarding our student population.

To best serve our student population, a plan of action comprised of two steps is suggested:

1. Immediately identify incoming at-risk students by administering a math assessment exam during Freshman textbook pick-up days in August.

**This test will only be a snapshot of the freshman’s skill level and a reflection of his/her test-taking ability.

2. Start all freshman students in on-level Math, English and Science courses in the fall semester. Those students who excel academically will be placed in accelerated PAP courses for the spring semester. All other students will remain in on-level courses.

** Rational: The first semester will allow time for the Freshmen to acclimate to the DeBakey environment. This time will also allow teachers to evaluate the students on their prior

knowledge, academic ability, as well as “intangible” traits such as positive attitude towards learning, willingness to work hard, determination to succeed, curiosity, reaction to setbacks, initiative, etc.

** Comments were made against starting ALL freshman in on-level courses because this may disenfranchise students in the top middle schools such as TH Rogers and Lanier resulting in them not applying to DeBakey. It was suggested that incoming freshmen students could take an entrance placement exam to test into a PAP level class. Although parents are able sign a waiver to place their child that is not academically qualified into a PAP class, this should be a small subset of students. This will result in 1-2 PAP level classes with the majority as on-level classes for freshmen.

In response to this comment, it was suggested that two different committees should be formed:

1. Recruitment committee – unified team consisting of DeBakey administration, teachers, parents, and community members including Baylor College of Medicine that will examine applicable data and then develop an action plan to present to HISD for recruitment.
2. Retention committee – DeBakey administration, teachers, and selected students that will examine applicable data and then develop an action plan to best serve the student population.

The meeting ended at 4:45 pm. The SDMC will reconvene in two weeks to continue discussion, to vote on recommendations, and to address additional concerns previously submitted.

Meeting notes/minutes are summaries contributed from A. Perry, D. Adam, and B. Williams.