

**Minutes of Meeting of Board of Trustees
El Paso Independent School District
March 8, 2008
9:00 a.m.**

Present: Mr. David Dodge, President
Mr. Sergio Lewis, Vice-President
Ms. Patricia Hughes, Secretary
Ms. Lisa Colquitt-Muñoz, Trustee
Mr. Carlos Flores, Trustee
Ms. Carolyn Grantham, Trustee
Dr. Charles Roark, Trustee
Dr. Lorenzo Garcia, Superintendent

The meeting was called to order at 9:19 a.m. by Mr. David Dodge. Mr. Dodge also led the Pledge of Allegiance.

1. Board/Superintendent Retreat to Include Discussion of the Following Topics:

A. Education Committee Reports

Dr. Garcia thanked the Board, stakeholders and Cabinet Members for their attendance, good work and dedication to the students of the District. He shared how the Superintendent's goals tie into the Education and Budget presentations listed on the agenda as the goals involve improvement in student performance. Dr. Garcia also commented on the TAKS support provided to campuses during the first week of TAKS testing.

Dr. Garcia announced that the majority of the presentations for this meeting would be Board Committees such as the Educational Committee chaired by Sergio Lewis. There have been several committees reporting to the Education Committee and their reports were being reviewed.

Mr. Sergio Lewis, Chair for the Education Committee, thanked Dr. Garcia and those individuals involved in supporting the Education Committee. He commented that in the areas of student retention and alternative education, the District had accepted the challenge and has been addressing the needs of District students.

1. Fine Arts

Charles Angerstein presented the Fine Arts statewide statistics.

Susan Hernandez – Orchestra Director at Franklin High School, provided a presentation on academic performance, dropout rates and attendance rates of students enrolled in Fine Arts programs vs. those not enrolled in these programs. She impressed on the Board the correlation of students enrolled in Fine Arts having lower dropout rates and schools having exemplary status.

Don Belknap – Community member, Chapin parent, Booster Club President and Co-Chairman for the Committee, presented the Fine Arts Current Snapshot for the District. He shared the current Fine Arts programs available at high school, middle school and elementary schools, as well as the number of students served by teachers in these programs. Mr. Belknap also shared a comparison of program offerings and facilities as compared to other area districts. In addition, Mr. Belknap presented a Fine Arts Expansion Proposal to include the addition of 65 teacher positions, startup materials, technology equipment and high school band uniforms over four years. A funding timetable and cumulative cost per year proposal was presented for these recommendations.

Rosa Guerrero shared a brief testimony of her life and an inspirational message regarding Fine Arts programs. Ms. Guerrero also stressed the importance of parental involvement and the need for students to be enrolled in Fine Arts programs.

Mr. Dodge inquired as to the plan to introduce the new recommended programs along with the required State-mandated courses. Mr. Dodge expressed his concerns with the preparation of teachers and training needed to integrate these recommended programs into the instructional day.

Dr. Garcia provided clarification by informing the Board that the administration has been looking at scheduling at middle and high schools. In addition, that in the elementary schools, a State-mandated program has been implemented. Furthermore, that administration is looking into the length of the school day.

Ms. Carolyn Grantham expressed her support for the Fine Arts programs and the need to provide connections for students in transitioning to middle school.

Charles Roark suggested for the District to commit to these programs and find funding sources to support them.

2. Dual Language

Gina Gonzalez, Director for Department of English Language Acquisition, provided an overview of Dual Language programs in the District. Benefits of Dual Language to students include bilingualism, biliteracy, academic achievement in both languages and positive cross-cultural attitudes. Brain research was provided emphasizing acquisition of a second language by age 10. Key players to support the Dual Language were shared. Types of Dual Language Programs, Models, Settings, and Distribution Methods were discussed. Ms. Gonzalez also commented on a gradual phase-in, which would require a firm commitment by the District. The phase-in would begin in the early grades (Pre-K and K) with the addition of a grade level each subsequent year. Ms. Gonzalez also provided the criteria for success in a two-way language program. In addition, Ms. Gonzalez shared that the implementation of the pilot Dual Language programs does not imply the need for additional teachers.

Ms. Fara Green, Director of Advanced Academic Services, described the current two-way dual program at Polk Elementary School. In addition, she provided a historical background of the Connecting Worlds – Mundos Unidos Gifted and Talented Dual Language Magnet Program at Mesita Elementary School. Ms. Green presented a plan and estimated costs to maintain the Connected Worlds program at Mesita Elementary, Wiggs Middle and El Paso High Schools, as well as maintaining the Dual Language Program at Polk Elementary. The plan was divided into three Tiers. She also provided further detail on the research, presentations, funding, training and outreach needed in order to continue with these programs.

Jennie Lasley, Parent Representative, Community Co-chair and TAGT Parent of the Year, commented on the benefits to students of being bilingual and biliterate.

Mr. Dodge inquired as to those students who have enjoyed their dual language instruction and then move on to middle school. Ms. Green explained that Wiggs Middle School and El Paso High School are currently offering the Connecting Worlds program in an effort to provide continuity.

Implementation concerns were expressed by Trustees. Mr. Dodge expressed his desire that every student that graduates speaks two languages. Mr. Flores commented that dual language programs would have the benefit of empowering parents. Ms. Colquitt-Muñoz shared her concern to ensure that students maintain their native language. Mr. Lewis inquired as to metrics, indicators, and assessment programs for the current bilingual program.

Ms. Gonzalez discussed maintaining and enhancing the Foreign Language Enrichment programs through a three Tier program. Implementing a foreign language task force, providing professional development opportunities and piloting a foreign enrichment program would be some of the components for this recommendation.

3. Alternative Schools

The Purpose of the Alternative Schools Study, Methodology, Preliminary Results, GAP Analysis, Focus Sub-Committees and the Phase-In Process were presented by Dr. Edward Gabaldon, Robert Ortega, Chief Victor Araiza, Dr. Nidelia Montoya, Mark Mendoza and Arturo Jordan.

Art Jordan explained the data collection process utilized by Committee members to identify areas that support best practices in Alternative Education Programs, as well as identifying key potential causes and solutions to the dropout problem.

ISS Classroom (Preliminary GAP Analysis)

- Unavailability of computers and technology
- Use/upgrade of cameras in/out of the classroom (security issues discussed)
- Development of curriculum and work books
- Staffing and students
 - Student/Teacher ratio
 - Staffing ISS with substitute teachers
- Classrooms have not been made a priority

Major focus areas discussed were: staff development/training, facilities, technology, personnel, dropouts and outsourcing.

Dr. Nidelia Montoya presented the Committee recommendations to be implemented throughout a three-year period. Staff Development recommendations included:

- Year 1 – Provide 18 hours of course training specific to the DAEP and AEP teachers
- Year 2 - Additional 12 hours of training, receive EPISD DAEP/AEP endorsement of teachers and a \$1,000.00 incentive
- Year 3 - Accrual of DAEP/AEP endorsed teachers who would require 6 hours of training every year

The Committee’s personnel recommendations for middle and high schools included:

- 26 Attendance/Truancy Officers
- Bus Drivers
- Clerks
- At-Risk Coordinators
- Social Workers
- Counselors
- Core Teachers
- Elective Course Teachers

Dr. Montoya reported that facility recommendations include the need for 26 new portables and data wiring. Technology recommendations include 26 computer labs for middle and high schools at an estimated cost of \$500,000.00. She commented that some portables may need to be relocated. In addition, Dr. Montoya reported that the Committee recommendations include the purchase of video surveillance equipment to provide additional safety to campuses.

Chief Araiza provided information in reference to a pilot program currently being implemented at Andress High School, which includes the use of two web-based digital video cameras. The recommendation was to purchase 20 video security cameras per middle school and 30 per high school.

Mark Mendoza spoke in reference to the Alpha Initiative. He provided an overview of the technology component available to parents, which facilitates attendance monitoring by parents. Mr. Mendoza also commented on the Outreach Specialists provided by the Alpha Initiative. He commented that the Committee had identified the creation of a “School of Choice” model to address students demonstrating truancy characteristics and needing credit recovery services. Furthermore, this area would require the use of District assets, as well as a possible need for outsourcing of services.

The meeting recessed from 1:24 – 1:30 p.m.

4. College Readiness

Terri Jordan provided her presentation entitled College Readiness: “A Plan for Excellence for All Students” implementing relationships, relevance and rigor.

Entitlements and parental involvement activities were discussed to include:

- Compensatory funds
- Advanced academics
- College preparation and plans for the future

Ms. Jordan commented that advisory periods are being piloted at Chapin and Franklin High Schools. She also shared information on Freshman Academies, which are currently at Andress, El Paso and Franklin High Schools. Guidance and Counseling services have allowed the District to support its schools in academics, attendance and behavior. Information was provided on GO Centers, which are academic centers with a focus on College Readiness. The centers will be available for counselors to use for career cruising, FAFSA, scholarship/financial aid, College Readiness testing and university tours. Career cruising was also discussed with the Board and attendees.

Ms. Jordan provided an overview of the Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program, which is currently available at the District. She shared that together the principal, CILT and CTE would make decisions on course offerings. Student graduation plans will include a program of study, career opportunities, core curriculum and core electives.

Terri Jordan guided the Board through a presentation on Career Cruising. Facilities and equipment provided for elective courses were also discussed. Furthermore, she shared that Dr. Castro is working on evaluating the magnet schools and that an update to the Board will be forthcoming.

Early College High School student selection and the Princeton Review program were shared. Recommendations and funding options and one-time costs for GO Centers, Programs of Study, Magnet Schools, and Core Elective Audits were also discussed. Examples of alternative forms of funding are:

- Gear-up Grant – High School Completion Grant
- High School Allotment
- Texas High School Project Grant
- Smaller Learning Communities Grant

B. Budget Reports

1. 2007-08 Report

Financials for January were reviewed, along with the approved budget for revenues to include SHARS and State funding. Mr. Parker explained that there are potential savings in Instructional, Supplies and Other Expenses. Functions which are behind in expenditures were discussed. In addition, Mr. Parker provided a summary on the roll-forward of funding for Fiscal Year 2007 through purchase orders and roll-forward of unspent funds. Reconciliation of revenues was also discussed.

Item B6 was presented prior to continuing with the remaining of the agenda.

6. 2008-09 Budget Development

Mr. Parker shared historical information on ADA, which revealed a reduction in enrollments. He commented that student/teacher ratios will need to be reevaluated. A comparison of school sizes was also discussed.

2. Compensation Proposals

A salaries schedule comparison and options for 2008-09 were discussed.

3. Additional Expenditures/Reductions

Proposed reductions throughout the District were discussed, along with estimated reduction amounts.

Campus patrols – The number of officers can be reduced by utilizing security cameras. Reducing the number of on-site people (50%) and having those people highly trained on their jobs, which would fall under the District Police Department. Campus Patrol does not have law enforcement training. The benefits of video surveillance were discussed.

Mr. Parker shared issues with the Texas Legislature placing an emphasis on property tax reduction. As a result, the only ways to obtain more funding is by increasing ADA or a rollback election, which will require widespread community support.

4. Funding and Timeline for Plan for Excellence

Mr. Parker shared additional information on the Plan for Excellence and a timeline for a rollback election. Two proposed tentative schedules and timelines for a rollback election were presented.

5. Reuel Group Discussion

Russell Autrey and Bill Barnhouse from the Reuel Group provided additional information on rollback elections. Community engagement activities would include database development and community engagement programs. The importance of educating stakeholders on voting issues for the District was discussed.

Dr. Garcia explained District needs for next year with the opening of four new schools.

The Board discussed informing and educating the public on the District's need for rollback elections, monitoring the community through the Reuel Group and making the District's budget process very public in order for the community to understand the need.

Mr. Parker shared that approximately 100 districts in Texas go through rollbacks. Future growth and ADA are in the reviewing process and information will be brought forward for the next five years.

Meeting Adjourned

Mr. Dodge thanked Trustees and Committee members for their attendance and presentations. The meeting adjourned at 3:37 p.m.