

**MINUTES OF MEETING: LOCAL INNOVATION COMMITTEE
EL PASO INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
March 3, 2016
11:30 A.M.**

PRESENT: Dr. Royce Avery, Area II Superintendent;
Jaime Barceleau LMSW, Social Worker;
Dr. Tamekia Brown, Executive Director, Academics;
Ingrid Brown, Parent;
Norma De La Rosa, Teacher and President, El Paso Teacher Association/TSTA/NEA;
Dr. David DeMatthews, UTEP;
Michael Devine, Retired Teacher;
Ivonne Durant, Deputy Superintendent, Academics and School Leadership;
Lynn Gill, Principal, Address H.S.;
Scott Gray, Asst. Principal, Irvin H.S.;
Nancy Hanson, Principal, Shuster E.S.;
Dr. Elena Izquierdo, UTEP;
Ross Moore, President, El Paso AFT;
Melanie Mullings, Parent and member of DEIC;
Amy O'Rourke, Parent;
Debbie Trexler, Youth Education Support Services Director, Ft. Bliss Liaison, and member of DEIC.; and
Dr. Michael Warmack, Principal, Bowie H.S.

ABSENT: Karen Blaine, Executive Director Advanced Academics & Innovation;
Laila Ferris, Principal, Mesita E.S.;
Dana Hamilton, Parent; and
Elizabeth O'Hara Williams, Diocese of El Paso.

1. Brief Overview of Prior Meeting and Distribute Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 11:35 a.m. Ms. Sarmecanic welcomed the committee members and distributed the draft minutes from the February 23, 2016 meeting. The members had no additions or changes to the minutes.

2. Review and Discuss Survey Results

Materials were distributed to the committee members regarding the survey responses, to include a copy of the final survey language, a spreadsheet showing the average response level within each category of participant and a copy of the comments received. Ms. Sarmecanic introduced Mr. Stephen Stiles, who had compiled the survey results.

Mr. Stiles explained that over 18,500 students were e-mailed to their District assigned e-mail address, over 9,000 District employees were e-mailed, and over 68,000 persons were contacted through the School Messenger, an automated phone messaging system. Over 97,300 contacts were made, and the survey was posted on the District's social media sites. There was a total of 1115 responses. The lack of participants may be a result of timing (being over a weekend), that the students were contacted via district e-mail, which they may not check, that parents receiving

the phone call would have to find it on the website (no direct link), etc. Of the responses, 11 were to the Spanish version of the survey, and 325 participants did not identify under which category they fell. The participant group that was most supportive was the principals, and the least supportive were the responding High School students.

The committee was given time to review the written comments that were received. The committee re-convened at 12:00 p.m. to discuss the survey responses:

a. Discussion regarding the number of responses

The committee discussed whether, due to the low number of responses, a second survey would be beneficial after the Local Intervention Plan ("Plan") is posted. The committee discussed the importance of seeking input from the community to be sure that the best interest of everyone is considered. But, due to that it is a very busy time of the year, there may not be a better response. The committee decided that a second survey would not be planned, but that once the Plan is posted, stakeholders would be encouraged to provide feedback, and to submit questions, comments and ideas via the webpage.

b. Discussion of responses to the questions

The committee discussed that question number 1 may not have been fully understood by the participants due to a possible blending of two issues, and due to the multiple rules and laws regarding attendance.

The responses to question number 7 regarding adjusting the length of the school day were very close to neutral, meaning that there were many responses that were non-supportive. This portion is not a part of the current plan, however may be something that the District would want to do in the future. It was mentioned that perhaps the language would be more clear to the participant if it said that the length of the "instructional" day would be adjusted rather than the "school" day.

All of the survey questions resulted in an average response of above neutral.

3. Review of Draft Local Innovation Plan

a. I. Introduction, II. Term and III. A Comprehensive Educational Program

The committee discussed the introductory and overview portions of the Plan. The committee recommends having a brief, bullet point version of the draft Plan as well as a Frequently Asked Questions section available on the website in order to ensure that the public is able to review and understand it.

Ms. Sarmecanic reviewed the draft Plan with the committee, which first lists the committee members, provides an introduction that mentions the legislation and the District and committee's actions, and the term being 5 years as allowed by the statute.

The Committee discussed section III (C) Core Belief Statements as it relates to the new District Strategic Plan, EPISD 2020, and recommended updating this section to align with EPISD 2020. The Plan should incorporate the strategic priorities, including the three focus areas: Providing Engaging & Challenging Learning; Building Strong Supports; and

Modernizing Learning Environments, and the initiatives included in EPISD 2020 regarding those focus areas.

The committee recommended making some revision to Section III (C) Innovations to align more with EPISD 2020. Dr. Izquierdo will provide some amended language for this section regarding dual language.

b. IV. Requirements of the Education Code that inhibit the goals of the plan from which the district should be exempt

The committee discussed each of the five sections of the Education Code that it recommends the District seek exemption from in order to achieve the goals of the Plan.

A. Minimum Attendance for Class Credit or Final Grade

The committee raised questions about the 75% mentioned in the draft, and Ms. Collins explained that the law requires that if a student falls below 90% attendance, but is above 75%, she must comply with a principal's plan in order to regain credit. If a student falls below 75%, the only way to regain credit is to receive approval from an Attendance Review Committee, which must be a majority of classroom teachers, and which also often requires the student to comply with alternative learning activities. Ms. Collins mentioned that an exemption from this rule would not affect the rules regarding average daily attendance, UIL or compulsory attendance. The procedures required to comply with the 90%/75% law are inhibitive in that it takes a significant amount of teacher and principal time, and focuses on seat time rather than content mastery. Ms. Sarmecanic will incorporate that language from the Raise Your Hand Texas article, and remove the reference to the percentages. The committee also recommended adding language stating that this exemption will not change a teacher's right to determine the final grade under Texas Education Code Section 28.0214.

- Deleted: concept
- Deleted: "
- Deleted: y
- Deleted: h
- Deleted: ,
- Deleted: "
- Deleted: regarding

B. First Day of Instruction

The committee discussed the statements regarding maximizing class time prior to standardized testing and earlier professional development. It was recommended to remove those statements, leaving only the three items that the Local Innovation Committee had previously discussed. These three benefits to the calendar shift are: to enable the District to balance the semesters more; to enable students to end the school year earlier and enroll in college courses that start in early June; and to allow students in the transition grades time to adjust. The committee also recommended adding language from EPISD 2020 regarding social and emotional growth into this section, and all of the sections regarding the exemptions.

Deleted: Districtwide Educational Improvement Council ("DEIC")

C. Teacher Certification for Dual Credit and Career and Technical Education Instructors

The committee recommended that the language of this section include language similar to the related survey questions, providing examples of the types of career and technical instructors the District might hire (fine arts or specialized businesses), and that this would be used when high quality certified

teachers are not available. The committee also discussed that the instructors hired under this exemption may need training in order to effectively teach high school students from their area of expertise. The overall statement regarding the plan (entitled Innovations) should also mention dual credit.

D. Required Curriculum

The committee recommended removal of this section because the District cannot be exempted from this section of the Texas Education Code.

E. Designation of Campus Behavior Coordinator

The committee recommended incorporating language regarding social and emotional learning in order to align with EPISD 2020.

F. Educator and Administrator Appraisals

Ms. Sarmecanic mentioned that the purpose of this is in anticipation of the adoption of the Commissioner's rules, which are only proposed at this time. The rules appear to require that up to 20% of teacher appraisals be based upon standardized test scores. The committee did not have any additions or amendments to this section.

4. Discussion of the presentation of the Local Innovation Plan to Board of Trustees at the March 15, 2016 Board of Trustees Meeting

The Committee discussed that it will ask the Board of Trustees, on March 15, 2016, to give notice to the Commissioner of Education of its intention to vote on the plan in April. Dr. Elena Izquierdo and Ms. Lynn Gill volunteered to present the proposed Plan to the board. In addition, the Plan will be presented to the DEIC, which must hold a public meeting and approve the plan by a majority before the plan can be adopted by the Board.

5. Discuss Next Meeting scheduled for March 24, 2016

The committee decided that no additional meetings are required at this time. The Plan, once in final draft form, will be available in the General Counsel's office for the committee members to sign.

6. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 2:00 pm.