

District Improvement Team (DIT) Meeting  
March 1, 2007

In attendance: Dora Aschenbeck, Marisa Charles, David Converse, Ellen Davis, Suzanne Doler, Virginia Elizondo, Linda Entrekin, Wendi Harris, Xavier Herrera, Cathey Jones, Duncan Klussmann, Holly McGinnis, Jennifer Parker, Casey Rowe, Donna Schulz, Patricia Weber, Lorena Zertuche, Sharon Boutwell, Julie Hodson, graduate student. District Staff: Lea Ann Lockard, Director, Spring Branch School of Choice, and Jennifer Cobb, Coordinator, Research and Accountability.

Marissa Charles, DIT chair, opened the meeting. Dr. Klussmann, Superintendent of Schools, took questions from DIT members.

Questions

One question focused on possible changes in the SBISD Bilingual Education Program. Dr. Klussmann responded that a Task Force group has been studying district data and successful programs elsewhere. District data (see attached Power Point presentation) showed significant numbers of SBISD students not transitioning into English while in elementary school. This has impacted their success in middle school. Hidalgo ISD and research from the University of Texas –Brownsville suggest a one-way dual language program is more successful than other approaches.

The current district model focuses on percentage of instructional time in Spanish/ percentage of instructional time in English. One-way dual language will focus on a specific subject to be taught in English -- for example, math. Any new model would start at a designated grade level. At the same time, the district will modify its current program as it is natural do so. In addition, this will include addressing student needs for those who enter SBISD after the new model is implemented.

The result of this Task Force study was presented at the February School Board meeting. Other district personnel will become involved as the work of the Task Force continues.

Dialogue included comments about two-way dual language programs like Cedar Brook Elementary and the one scheduled to begin at Sherwood Elementary. These programs are most successful where student enrollment is approximately 50% English language learners and 50% Spanish language learners.

Of all the Chapter 41 Schools (Robin-Hood), SBISD has the highest number of Limited English Proficient (LEP) students, 29 % LEP.

Bond Committee

Virginia Elizondo and Bruce Koons represent the District Improvement Team on this committee. Suzanne Dohler is also on the committee.

Virginia and Suzanne commented upon the work of the committee thus far. Suzanne reported the committee is examining data provided from the year - long study conducted by the District Facilities Committee.

The need for a Bond election arises from the Operations side of the district, such as facilities. A Bond election permits us to incur long-term debt in order to address these needs.

The last District bond was in 1999 for \$250,000,000. The Bond Committee's work will be used to inform the Spring Branch Community of the purpose and need for a Bond Election.

The work of the Facilities Committee, together with the work of the Bond Committee, enables the District to establish a systemic approach to care for facilities -- something the district has not had in a number of years. This systemic approach will guide the District in long-term planning, such as how to address aging facilities, when to increase the number of classrooms, and how District actions can positively impact the SBISD community.

#### Survey

Jennifer Cobb, Coordinator of Research and Evaluation, divided the DIT members into Focus Groups to examine the revised district survey. This yearly survey measures various district components. This year the district will conduct a phone survey in English and Spanish of randomly selected participants – students, staff, parents, and community members. The district can compare results across these respective survey participants. Staff members will learn how to conduct the surveys, and there will also be an on-line survey.

DIT members reviewed the questions to see if they measure what is intended: *Do the questions read well? Are they easily understood? Are they appropriate?* Data collected from these questions will be used to determine progress on the district's Five-Year Education Plan.

Dr. Duncan Klussmann shared that the district follows up on the survey results, in particular when a concern/problem may be revealed. Duncan also shared that staff will be getting a survey to determine what actions the district might stop doing because these actions do not add value to the district. Duncan further commented that he reviews the district survey results with each principal when he conducts the principal's evaluation.

#### Waiver

Lea Ann Lockard, Director of School of Choice, presented a district-wide waiver related to the Pregnancy Related Services On-Campus CEHI program. 270 students are served by this program. Included among the features of this program are parent education classes, the assistance of social workers, and day care for infants so parents can attend classes. In addition, Chapelwood Methodist Church provides community support for this program. DIT members approved the waiver as presented.

The DIT examined another draft of the 5-Year Educational Plan. This document is based on the eight School Board goals and contains Performance Objectives and Action Plans to achieve those objectives. For the most part, the Performance Objectives should be measurable. Any changes will be based on actual data. Approximately 30% of the objectives will be action-oriented, such as “develop,” and “implement,” and be measured as “completed,” or “not completed.”

Having a plan will enable SBISD to make sound financial decisions based on identified needs. That is, the District will spend its limited resources within the context of this long-range plan. The District Improvement Plan (DIP) is the annual submission of the Action Plan for that year. As with the previous 18-month cycle, these newly-developed Action Plans will be for 18 months.

A section has been added to the plan to focus on the performance of those in Academic classes. A question was raised about developing Magnet programs in elementary schools as a means to attract people to SBISD and to recover district students currently in private schools. Klusmann shared that the district is exploring the academies approach for all campuses.

The Strategic Plan will aid the district in changing over time to meet such objectives. It creates accountability throughout the District in the various divisions and departments in of Central Office. At the campus level these actions are included in the Campus Improvement Plan.

While there has been a decrease in district staff based on cutbacks, the Plan will enable the district to target specific areas through measurements/data. Previously the district may have taken action by hiring someone rather than reflecting upon the data.

Next Meeting: Thursday, April 5, 2007.