



**District Improvement Team (DIT) Meeting**  
**Thursday, January 7, 2021**  
**5:00 – 7:00 p.m.**  
**MINUTES**

**Meeting start time:** 5:01 pm

**Meeting end time:** 5:50 pm

**Member Attendance (35)**

Jennifer Blaine, Carla Braxton, Carter Breed, Minda Caesar, Lisse Colon Melendez, Kristin Craft, Anne Daily, Laura Dawson, Kayla Delgado, Molly Ferguson, Michael Ferrier, Bibbin Gill, Mia Hallmark, Mary Hand, Darya Hasanova, Shaundra Jacobs, Vanya Karia, Richard Kelvin, Matt Kiger, Julie Knapp, Kim Lemex, Noel Lezama, Noemi Lopez, Larry Maple, Michelle Marcil, Michelle Nall, Soha Nassef, John Pisklak, Christian Rice, William Schwartz, Jennifer Stuart, Van Tran, Julie Turrentine, Kate Waldorf, Katie Wiseman

*Percent of DIT members in attendance: 83.3%*

**Non-Member Attendance (5)**

Amy Accardo, Linda Buchman, Audrey Shakra, Lance Stallworth, Mike Thomas

**Welcome and Approval of Minutes**

Associate Superintendent Linda Buchman welcomed DIT members, and DIT Co-Chair John Pisklak introduced Minda Caesar and Carter Breed as new Trustee liaisons for the DIT (replacing Chris Gonzalez and Karen Peck). Mr. Pisklak asked members to review and approve the November 2020 minutes by typing their approval into the chat. Nineteen members subsequently approved.

**District Update**

Dr. Jennifer Blaine stated that about 72% of Spring Branch students have returned to in-person instruction. Although Houston Covid numbers are up, community medical partners have not identified schools as a place of significant spread.

Dr. Blaine also spoke about the ongoing work of the Visioning for the Future Committee. Community meetings are scheduled for January 19 and 21, and these will provide opportunity to educate the public about the committee's work and gather feedback as they seek to define a T-2-4 ready graduate.

The Communications team now has a Marketing Coordinator who is working with campus and district leaders to create a comprehensive marketing plan. The first step was a Pre-K enrollment push. Virtual tours for each high school will soon roll out, followed by campaigns for the middle schools and elementaries.

**District of Innovation Renewal and Vote**

Mr. Pisklak introduced General Counsel Audrey Shakra to review the timeline for the District of Innovation (DOI) renewal. DIT is now meeting to consider the results of the 30-day public comment period that ran from November 17-December 17, 2020. Following review, members will vote to recommend the renewal plan to Trustees if no changes are proposed.

Mike Thomas, Director of Research and Evaluation, reviewed the 18 public comments registered during the 30-day period. He categorized these as follows:

- Seven (7) agreed with renewal.
- Four (4) agreed but offered comments that do not pertain to the plan.
- Three (3) provided additional comments or suggestions about the plan.
- Two (2) offered comments or suggestions that do not pertain to the plan.
- Two (2) disagreed with renewal.

Mr. Pisklak then opened the floor for questions and comments. After a brief discussion, he asked if any members would motion to take the renewal plan to a formal vote. Mr. Richard Kelvin motioned and Mr. Michael Ferrier seconded. Members responded to the following poll question:

- Do you approve SBISD's plan to renew its District of Innovation status?

According to policy, a majority of DIT voting members – a minimum of 18 – is required to affirm the plan's renewal. Non-voting student members will vote separately, as their votes are symbolic and non-binding.

- **Twenty-six (26) eligible voting members (76.5%) responded affirmatively to plan renewal.**
- **One (1) eligible voting member responded negatively to plan renewal.**
- **Three (3) students (60%) responded affirmatively to plan renewal.**
- **Zero (0) students responded negatively to plan renewal.**

Next steps: Board of Trustees will consider the DIT's recommendation at their January 25 meeting. The Board must then approve the plan with a 2/3 majority (5 of 7 members). Once approved, the district informs the Texas Education Agency (TEA), and renewal is complete for five years.

### **Calendar Updates**

Ms. Buchman stated that academic calendar recommendations for 2021-22 and 2022-23 would also go before the Board for approval on January 25. Additionally, that meeting will include a required public hearing on the Texas Academic Performance Report (TAPR). The meeting will serve as a joint Board/DIT meeting and DIT members are invited to attend.

### **Closing**

Dr. Blaine closed by taking questions. One member asked about the impact of reduced enrollment on district finances. Dr. Blaine stated that TEA Commissioner Morath has decision-making authority over whether to hold districts harmless for lower attendance due to the pandemic. If Spring Branch is not held harmless for the second semester, the potential cost could be \$15.1 million.

Regarding Covid vaccinations, Dr. Blaine stated that SBISD nurses have received vaccinations, but Texas has not prioritized education workers. At this time, only staff who meet the eligibility requirements of age and/or underlying health condition can register for the vaccine.

Ms. Buchman reminded members that the district is now using the Let's Talk online tool, so people can use that avenue to ask questions and receive targeted responses as the situation around vaccination develops.

Mr. Pisklak adjourned the meeting at 5:50pm.