



**District Improvement Team (DIT) Meeting**  
**Thursday, February 4, 2021**  
**5:00 – 7:00 p.m.**  
**MINUTES**

**Meeting start time:** 5:03 pm

**Meeting end time:** 6:32 pm

**Member Attendance (21)**

Jennifer Blaine, Carla Braxton, Minda Caesar, Kristin Craft, Anne Dailey, Ivonne Davis, Michael Ferrier, Shaundra Jacobs, Vanya Karia, Richard Kelvin, Matt Kiger, Julie Knapp, Noemi Lopez, Larry Maple, Michelle Marcil, Michelle Nall, Abena Ntoso, John Pisklak, Van Tran, Kate Waldorf, Katie Wiseman

*Percent of DIT members in attendance: 50%*

**Non-Member Attendance (7)**

Amy Accardo, Rebecca Brown, Linda Buchman, Lawanda Coffee, Joyce Evans, Keith Haffey, Gary Henry

**Welcome and Approval of Minutes**

DIT Co-Chair Anne Dailey welcomed attendees and introduced new member Abena Ntoso from Northbrook High School. Ms. Dailey then called for a motion to approve the January minutes as posted. Member Michael Ferrier moved to approve and member Larry Maple seconded. No members opposed.

**Equity Plan Update**

Ms. Lawanda Coffee, Director for External Funds and Compliance, provided a brief update on the district's Equity plan required by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The Texas Education Agency (TEA) requires districts to submit plans addressing potential inequities for students taught at higher rates by inexperienced, ineffective, or out-of-field teachers. Spring Branch submitted our most recent plan in spring 2020, and the first check-in with Region 4 was last week. Region 4 provided a copy of our plan to TEA as an exemplar of what other districts could be doing to close gaps.

Mr. Gary Henry, Director of Talent and Support Services, discussed specific strategies used by Human Resources to recruit experienced teachers, including use of the Brazen platform to conduct virtual career fairs. Savings on out-of-state recruiting trips also allowed for more spending on strategic advertising (including TV and radio) to increase Spring Branch's name recognition. The district will continue to monitor teacher recruitment numbers and rely on feedback from teacher and principal surveys to increase candidate interest.

**Reading Diagnostics Update**

Dr. Kristin Craft, Associate Superintendent for Academics, reviewed the state's requirements around reading diagnostics. House Bill 3 (HB3) requires specific assessments to be administered at grades Kindergarten, 1, 2 and 7. For Kinder, there are two choices for beginning-of-year diagnostics, but there is more flexibility for the other grades. Spring Branch has used the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) as our primary reading assessment for the past 4 years, but MAP is not included in the TEA-approved reading diagnostic list.

The district formed an internal committee, led by Humanities Director Joyce Evans, to study reading assessment options and provide recommendations. Ms. Evans explained the committee's evaluation process and noted that districts can adopt an alternate reading diagnostic tool as long as it fits these criteria:

- 1) based on published scientific research in reading
- 2) valid and reliable
- 3) age and grade appropriate
- 4) identifies specific difficulties in word analysis, fluency and comprehension, and
- 4) assists the teacher in making individualized instructional decisions based on the results.

The committee completed rubrics for both the state's recommended assessments and the MAP. This process took one month, and final committee recommendations were:

Kindergarten: Tx-KEA for beginning-of-year, MAP Growth English/Spanish for middle and end-of-year

1<sup>st</sup>: MAP Growth English/Spanish for beginning, middle and end-of-year

2<sup>nd</sup>: MAP Growth English/Spanish for beginning, middle and end-of-year

7<sup>th</sup>: MAP Growth for beginning, middle and end-of-year

Dr. Rebecca Brown, Executive Director for Instructional Services, described the MAP Growth assessment in more detail. Because it is computerized and adaptive to student responses, it helps determine what the student knows and what they are ready to learn. This allows for more personalized learning plans, aligning with the Spring Branch priority of Every Child.

In summary, the committee affirmed that MAP meets TEA's reading diagnostic requirements. The district is now seeking approval from DIT to use MAP as an alternative reading diagnostic tool for grades 1, 2 and 7. DIT members responded to the following poll:

**Questions:**

- Do you feel comfortable making a recommendation based on the information you have received this evening?
- Do you approve the district recommendation that MAP be used as the additional reading assessment in grades 1, 2 and 7?

**Results:**

Nineteen (19) members responded affirmatively to both questions. No members opposed.

**District Update**

Dr. Jennifer Blaine provided an update on school finance. If the state chooses not to fully fund districts impacted by pandemic-driven lower enrollment, our financial impact will be a loss of \$2.5M. There will also be a gap of \$15M for recapture payments, since enrollment is down but property values remained stable. The legislature wants to ensure districts are doing due diligence to find missing students.

The state also needs to locate money to fund HB3, as there is currently a deficit based on revenue estimates. If Texas uses federal stimulus money to supplant ongoing expenses, this could create a situation leading to cuts later when the stimulus runs out. The district's legislative liaisons will track developments closely.

**Texas Academic Performance Report (TAPR)**

Dr. Keith Haffey, Executive Director of Assessment and Compliance, presented the 2019-20 TAPR report, which was also presented to the Board of Trustees on January 25. Dr. Haffey stated that due to the cancellation of the STAAR test last spring, the two years of STAAR data in the report are the same two years of data that were in last year's 2018-2019 TAPR report.

**Visioning for the Future Committee and 2021 DIT Elections**

Ms. Linda Buchman, Associate Superintendent for Communications and Community Engagement, noted that Trustees will review the Visioning Committee's draft Core Characteristics of a T-2-4 Ready Graduate at the next Board workshop. Pending any changes, the Board will consider approving these at the February 22 meeting.

DIT elections for the 2021-2023 term are also in process. Certified staff candidate applications are posted on the DIT website, and the parent lottery closes March 5. Ms. Buchman thanked DIT members for their ongoing commitment.

### **Closing**

Ms. Daily adjourned the meeting at 6:32pm.