

**SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING NOTES**

Date: October 2, 2019

Location: Austin ISD, Southfield Buidling

CALL TO ORDER:

Meeting called to order at 6:10 pm

COMMITTEE MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Lance Kinney, Maria Hernandez, Brian Mangum, Patricia Carley, Jolene Sanders, Enrique Trejo, Angelo San Segundo

STAFF MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Chad Ouellette, Dawnette McKinney, Sandra Salgado, Jennifer Limon

GUEST IN ATTENDANCE:

Sherry Grady- Parent, John Lees - Parent, Karen Conner- Parent

WELCOME AND PUBLIC COMMENTS:

- A Zilker Elementary parent talked about staffing at their campus.
They have formed a parent support group.
They are concerned about their only being one resource teacher at the school.
Some of the concerns include no help from the central office staff.
They questioned how our Special Education kids are included inclusively at their home school.
- A Zilker Elementary parent is surprised by the staffing shortages.
Zilker families are recruiting volunteers to help in classrooms.
Some of the parents are volunteering to help kids that have the most needs and include picking up kids and helping with classroom tasks.
Parents and staff are stressed and they consider staffing a crisis.
- A parent shared she is a parent who understands what it's like to advocate for her child.
- A Middle School parent is concerned about staffing shortages in her students' school.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ADDRESS:

- Dr. Hickman showed data regarding special education enrollment numbers. Enrollment numbers show that 12.7% of the Austin ISD population is special education.
- Special Education operates a budget a budget where the majority is set to staffing.
- There are over 50 positions posted. The delay in filling positions includes the applicants that are applying.
- The department is in a movement of equity.
- The district is bringing a new system, Accelify. It will allow principals to view data in real-time. The Accelify system will include a new IEP system. It will replace SEEDS and will help to correct issues and bugs. Data Progress will come that will allow parents to see where their student is at in their goals and progress with the IEP.
- Goalbook has been launched to help with PLAAFP and goal development, to include instructional support. The training was held in September and received 9.7 out of 10 in teacher response. A short video was shown on how the Goalbook platform works.

- Dr. Hickman discussed website concerns and how the new website will include accessibility.
- A Caseload analysis is being currently taken and reviewed. Campuses are no longer waiting until the end of the school year to review caseloads. We are processing all staffing and caseload requests as they come in with a student's first mindset.
- Our district staff are on-site at all schools and talking to all staff before making decisions.
- We are looking at how our special education programs (SBS, SCORES, Lifeskills, ECSE) are designed and how they are implemented on campuses. A part of the discussion is where students are being placed and how we can move them closer to their home school.
- Regarding discipline: We are working to provide training to all staff so that they have an understanding and knowledge of the different needs of our students and how to address them. We are reviewing data on why students are being removed and sent to alternative campuses.
- Texas Education Agency: We are in part one of cycle 1 of the TEA cyclical review. The district will be monitored every six years. Austin ISD is in the test group alongside other districts statewide. The second part is a self-assessment compiled of different committee members. 41 student folders will be selected and sent to TEA for review. Upon completion, TEA will give us a response or require a corrective action plan. It will be made public and will be given out similar to STAAR.

STAFFING:

- When the existing staffing rubric numbers were established it was based on a ratio and not the individual needs of each student. When looking at the need for staff we take into consideration each Individualized Education Program (IEP) and not a ratio. Staffing analysis includes scheduling, each student's IEP, and possibly staffing changes.
- Dr. Hickman showed the TEA student PEIMS accounting notebook and explained some of the codings.
- Master scheduling of campuses is completed by the Principal of each campus.
Elementary campuses in some cases allow the teachers to set their own schedules, which ultimately impacts staffing needs.
- Units were being staffed with 1 teacher and 1 paraprofessional. The district is moving to have 1 teacher and 2 paraprofessionals per unit.
- The Special Education Department is looking at hiring more positions to include; a Transition Team, PPCD/ECSE Administrative Supervisor, more Evaluations positions, and an Autism Administrative Supervisor.
- The Social Services position has been recommended for hire and is in the HR process.
- A question was asked regarding translations and the hiring of someone to do them. Dr. Hickman introduced the group to our district translator.
The group was reminded that translations can be done orally or written format.
The special education department will be hiring another translator. Our district translator has been hosting on-going training sessions for our staff to ensure that translations can be done at the campuses.

SETTING SY 19-20 MEETING DATES:

- Future meeting dates sent to the committee via doodle poll for approval.

NEW BUSINESS/ QUESTION & ANSWER/ OPEN CONVERSATION:

- The committee asked for Dr. Hickman to look into early pick-ups.
- Heather Merritt asked for the district to offer TBSI & SAMA training across the district.
- The committee asked for preventative measures for dyslexia and how we can help prevent the need for those interventions.
- What is the alternative to sending kids to the principal's office?
- Is it possible to get a parent portal with training sessions?
- Curriculum for credit recovery in regards to SPED is a district issue, however, credit recovery looks different for every kid.
- Heather Merritt suggested PD across the district for all teachers that directly teach strategies. She supported her request by mentioning that if an 8th of the population has an IEP, then 1 out of 8 professional development days should be with a Special Education focus. A Principal attending the meeting mentioned that sometimes that the time isn't always available on the District of Innovation Days.
- Dr. Hickman agreed and said that the department is asking for help regarding training. We need suggestions and feedback from our team, parents, and the community on expanding our training opportunities. The current budget has the majority of funds placed more in staffing, but what we do have has been allocated to training. The department is bringing in experts and providing an on-demand district-wide training portal. Behavior and Autism are part of this year's training plan.

CLOSING:

The meeting came to a close at 8:20 pm.