



Instructional Consultation Meeting

Thursday January 31, 2019

2:30 p.m.

3SE36 (Large Superintendent's Conference Room)

AGENDA

Board Meeting Date: February 14, 2019

Attendees: Steve Antley, CHT; Charles Robinson, CHT; Andy Dewey, HFT; Zeph Capo, HFT; Sonia Gonzalez, HFT; James Faber; HFT; Noelia Longoria, Chief Academic Officer; Catosha Woods, Legal; Tonnis Hilliard; H/C; Geovanny Ponce, East Area; James McSwain, West Area; Geovanny Ponce, East Area; Nicole Moore, South Area; Yolonda Rodriguez, North Area; Jorge Arredondo, NW Area; Dawn DuBose-Randle, Leadership and Teacher Development; Annie Wolfe, Curriculum Development; Mike Dorsey, Curriculum Development; Marisol Castruita, Early Childhood; Lisa Reagins, Leadership and Teacher Development.

Items Requiring Consultation:

OTHER	REVIEW OF THE DECEMBER 20TH INSTRUCTIONAL CONSULTATION MEETING MINUTES	CHIEF ACADEMIC OFFICE: Noelia Longoria
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RESPONSE: No concerns with December 20th Minutes

D-1	ADOPTION OF RECOMMENDED INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS FOR SCHOOL YEAR 2019-2020.	CHIEF ACADEMIC OFFICE: Noelia Longoria Annie Wolfe
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RESPONSE: Dr. Wolfe reviewed the item as adoption materials for K-8, process of reviewing and piloting materials of publishers by the committee and recommendations made to the board. Zeph Capo asked whether there is a contingency plan for material replacement and process for replenishment of materials.

Dr. Wolfe explained that there were digital components as well as consumable components, but part of the adoption would allow for the district to replace those consumables yearly upon use. The department is cognizant of the refresh that needs to happen every year and has worked into the plan to fund. Mike Dorsey also elaborated that the district also loads all the teacher components into the hub courses the teachers are assigned to. Textbook coordinators on each campus are asked every year to submit the requisitions (consumable books) for their campus.

K-1	PROPOSED REVISIONS TO BOARD POLICY BQB(LOCAL), PLANNING AND DECISION-MAKING PROCESS: CAMPUS-LEVEL—SECOND READING	CHIEF ACADEMIC OFFICE: Noelia Longoria
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RESPONSE: No changes have been made since first reading. No concerns were brought up.

K-2	PROPOSED REVISIONS TO BOARD POLICY AE(LOCAL), EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY—FIRST READING	LEGAL: Elneita Hutchins-Taylor Catosha Woods
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RESPONSE: This is AE(Local) but these changes were made by Board, not by the administration so we don't have an explanation to the item. Zeph Capo brought up that there is still a concern when referencing employees as human capital. Ms. Woods explained that the revision was not an overhaul of the policy, but changes made to include TEA revisions.

HFT/CHT Items(s):

		RESPONSE
HFT/CHT 1	Employee Representation during investigations: HFT is seeking the development of a policy stating that when an investigation is opened on an employee the administration be required to inform the employee of the allegation(s) prompting the investigation and give employee time to consult with a representative or attorney prior to asking the employee to provide an oral or written statement.	HUMAN RESOURCES: Julia Dimmitt

WRITTEN RESPONSE:

RESPONSE: Zeph Capo simplified the concern by conveying that the way employees are handled still feel as if they are treated like criminals in an employee-employer relationship investigation and often do not know what the full complaint is being made against them but continue to get probed by employer for responses. He expressed that there needs to be a level of understanding that is given to teachers to recall before getting probed further by the employer. He further expressed that the way the district treats its employees and teachers is the reason for high turnover in the district as well as bad reputation of the district since employees who leave are also the ones who are voicing their dissatisfaction of public schools and the district itself. This prevents the district to overcome any bad reputation that would attract more students and teachers to come. Mr. Capo expressed that "the district is shooting itself in the foot".

Ms. Woods explained that it is no longer appropriate to discuss this item anymore in consultation as a lawsuit has been threatened to be filed. Elneita and Kris will be discussing this matter.

HFT/CHT 2

Hostile and negative climate at Fleming: We have received concerns from Fleming Middle School regarding campus safety, low faculty morale and the need for increased administrative support. Most of these are concerning safety issues such as many campus fights, teachers being assaulted, classroom disruption, and erroneous student complaints on campus teachers. The teachers feel that the administration is not giving them adequate support in dealing with these issues.

**SCHOOL OFFICE:
NORTH AREA:
Yolanda Rodriguez**

WRITTEN RESPONSE: Fleming MS experienced a change in leadership during the fall semester. The number of behavior incidents has actually decreased due to implementation and monitoring of systems to address behaviors since the arrival of the interim principal. A climate survey was conducted by the SSO approximately two weeks ago. Campus administration has reviewed the survey results and will share their response in a timely manner.

RESPONSE: Ms. Rodriguez reiterated the written response. Zeph Capo expressed appreciation for Ms. Rodriguez's quick response to the concerns. Mr. Capo expressed that the reason why this concern is still on the agenda today was that there have been similar concerns with the new interim having similar issues as previous principal. Mr. Capo had concerns that on the date he scheduled to meet with some school staff members to see if the concerns had subsided, which was on January 31st, a "coincidental" staff meeting was called on the same day, and therefore his meeting was canceled. Mr. Capo concluded that he would like to discuss the plan moving forward with the area superintendent.

HFT/CHT 3

Overcrowded classrooms at Sam Houston: We have received concerns regarding overcrowded classrooms at Sam Houston MSTC. At what point does an overcrowded classroom become a safety issue or a fire code violation? Are there different rules for science labs with limited seating at lab stations?

**SCHOOL OFFICE:
NORTHWEST AREA:
Jorge Arredondo**

WRITTEN RESPONSE: At the beginning of every semester there is leveling that has to be done in classes. That has taken place at this time and class sizes look good overall. The school has a couple of junior and senior level courses with numbers in the mid-30's, but those are the largest classes. No classroom is used over capacity so there is no fire code violation. In fact, most of the new science labs could easily hold up to 60 students – though none of the classes comes anywhere close to that number of students. There were a few instances during the first week where some of the science classrooms (all of which are taught in lab settings) had more students than chairs. That has been remedied for the short-term until the furniture ordered for the new school arrives. Classrooms were all originally given only a certain number of tables and chairs. As a long-term solution, additional tables and chairs were ordered.

RESPONSE: Dr. Arredondo explained the written response. It was then brought up that this concern may be related to old building and should not continue to be a concern in the new building.

HFT/CHT4

Pre-K testing – Circle Exam (Jim Faber): We have some concerns regarding the administration of the Circle Exam to Pre-K students. One of our members from Mistral Early Childhood Center will present those concerns.

Below you will find more specific concerns I received today from Mr. Faber. He will be explaining the issues in the meeting.

Three sub tests figure into the teacher evaluation — set counting, rapid letter naming and letter sounds. The pre-k guidelines say nothing about requiring students to rapidly name letters, just to name them. The test lasts 1 minute and requires students to name 40 letters in that time for the student to pass and the teacher to be considered successful. For a number of reasons, this is a terrible idea. First, ELLs need time for recall of L2 and the test doesn't give any. Second, the test has to be administered by a teacher who is also monitoring the rest of the class leading to distraction for both teacher and student — hardly the way to get a reliable result. (This is actually an issue for the entire test, but it is the worst for the timed tests.) Finally, as mentioned, rapid letter naming requires the

**CHIEF ACADEMIC OFFICE:
Noelia Longoria
Dawn Randle
Michel Rozas**

students to do something that is actually above the state objectives.

The set counting test requires that students be able to perfectly count sets to 10, which is within the guidelines. However, requiring a perfect score out of a 4-year-old for the teacher to be considered successful seems unfair. Until this year, we had not been allowed to use physical manipulative for this or any math test. Early childhood department has changed that stance, which is good because almost all guidelines allow for physical models for children to show mastery.

There are no outstanding concerns about the letter sounds test, other than it is unfair to ELLs. That is an overarching issue with the fairness of the test. There are no accommodations for non-Spanish ELLs. There is no cutout for newcomers who don't know English. No way to change to test to allow alternative responses. So, bilingual teachers administer the test only in the students' native language, while ESL teachers are often administering the test in a non-native language. The considerations for passing are exactly the same.

The same issue exists for students with special needs. There is no way to slow down the rapid portions of the test and no provision to allow alternative ways to showing knowledge, especially for students with limited verbal skills.

There are nearly 20 sub tests that need to be administered for each student and there are issues with a number of other tests, especially the rapid vocabulary which is poorly designed (full drawings don't fit on the screen and teacher needs to scroll to include them within the 2 second time frame for a response), poorly drawn and culturally biased. There are 6ish social emotional sub tests that the teacher needs to complete that never show up in any district data reports. Why are these tests being done if no one is using the results? And, short of sitting down and explaining each sub test to the parents, sending home a report offers them no real insight.

And, to restate a previous point, the test is usually administered with the teacher as the only adult in the room. Thus, the teacher needs to simultaneously administer a standardized test to a small child while also being responsible to monitor the other 20+ students in the room. No other evaluation that is part of a teacher evaluation is administered in such a chaotic environment

WRITTEN RESPONSE: The goals as outlined in the Student Performance Guidebook are as follows –

Prekindergarten Centralized Goals

For the youngest students in HISD, Student Progress assessments and expectations for student growth must be developmentally appropriate. For this reason, the CIRCLE (Center for Improving the Readiness of Children for Learning and Education) assessment, selected by a team of the district's Early Childhood educators are required for use as Student Performance measures by general education early childhood teachers.

Within these assessments, Prekindergarten teachers have three Student Attainment measures. The measures, EOY goals, and teacher performance levels for Prekindergarten are as follows:

Student Attainment Measure	End-of-Year Goal	Teacher Performance Level
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Reading: Rapid Letter Naming	Correctly names a TOTAL of 40 uppercase and lowercase letters.	Level 4 85% or more students met goal
Language Arts: ABC Sounds (untimed)	Correctly produces the sound of 40 uppercase and lowercase letters.	Level 3 60%- 84% of students met goal
Set Counting	Correctly counts 4 out of 5 items	Level 2 50%-59% of students met goal Level 1 49% or fewer students met goal

The performance levels the teacher earns for the three measures are **averaged** (and rounded if the average results in a decimal) for the teacher's final Student Performance rating. If a campus with Prekindergarten classes does not have access to the district-wide assessments, please contact the HISD Early Childhood Department at 713-556-6823.

Additional references to CIRCLE and Student Performance are as follows –

Where is Student Attainment applied? Who has Student Attainment as a measure?

Currently, Student Attainment applies only to the three required Prekindergarten measures: **Set Counting, Rapid Letter Naming, and ABC Sounds** are subtests on the CIRCLE assessment (EOY only). Only Pre-K students who are four years old by September 1 are included in the measure. Because it is generally these students' first year in school, there is likely no previous math or literacy achievement from which to measure growth. A beginning of year math or literacy diagnostic may or may not be given due to developmental appropriateness and focus on oral language.

TADS Student Performance Measures for Teachers of Prekindergarten 3-Year Olds

Prekindergarten teachers of 3-year-old students will administer the CIRCLE assessment. Teachers of a full class of 3-year-old students will not have student performance measures, their appraisal will consist of 70% instructional practice and 30% professional expectations.

PALS Teachers

PALS teachers will not administer the CIRCLE assessment and will not have student Attainment Measures for the 2018-2019 school year. PALS teachers will collaborate with their assigned appraiser to determine individual student progress measures.

RESPONSE:

Mr. Faber summarized his written concern into three issues:

1. Rapid Lettering: Why do we assess students at a higher standard than what is required by State Guidelines?
Response: Ms. Castruita explained that the director makes the decision on what is required, and that decision to assess fluency was made under the rationale that in order for children to be good readers, they need to have the fluency of the rapid naming letter. The concerns will be brought forth to the new director.

Mr. Faber further expressed that the district sets its own guidelines that requires rapid naming of 40 letters in 1 minute to evaluate teachers, even though there is a possible option of an untimed test that could be used. Using an untimed test would allow the district to accommodate students who require extra time on their IEP and LEP students with language barriers, yet as it is administered currently the test can't be modified for accommodations since the test is timed, and there is no way to slow that test down. It was explained that instructions that are given with the Circle exam state that the test is not intended for children that require special services and that they are exempt from the test.

Ms. Castruita reiterated that the concern would be brought back to the director of early childhood.

2. Subtests of Set-counting: Since students are required to 4 out of 5 items to be considered proficient, it would mean that students would have to score a 100% in order for the teacher to be considered proficient. Mr. Faber questioned whether there are any other evaluations that require students to score 100% for teachers to be considered proficient?
Response: Dr. Stevens clarified that 100% of students do not need to meet criteria to get a 4. Currently, 85% students need to meet criteria for teacher to get a 4, 60% of students meet criteria for teacher to get a 3 on appraisal rating. Therefore, 60% of students meeting criteria would be proficient.
Mr. Faber further expressed concerns that even with the rule of 60% of student needing to meet criteria in order for the teacher to be proficient, a teacher with a small number of students that would count towards the teacher's

evaluation, either due to exclusion based on EIP or language proficiency, is unfair. He states that the district also sets a higher standard of requiring students to count up to 15 than the state requires (which only requires counting to 10). Again, if you throw out the set that requires counting to 15, then the district is expecting 4-year-olds to be perfect on any given day of counting four subsets of 10. Students can't miss a single item.

3. Administration of Standardized Test: Mr. Faber reiterated his point that the test is usually administered with the teacher as the only adult in the room. Thus, the teacher needs to simultaneously administer a standardized test to a small child while also being responsible to monitor the other 20+ students in the room. No other evaluation that is part of a teacher evaluation is administered in such a chaotic environment.

Response: Ms. Castruita shared that there have been suggestions given to campuses from early childhood department on how to engage other students or bring in subs while the test is being administered and will bring back concern to department.

Zeph asked whether in the process of the district deciding the criteria, are practitioners brought into the discussion?

Ms. Longoria responded that the district will follow up on concerns and it was clarified that this is the sixth year of Circle Test and second year of Rapid Naming component

Dr. Randle also shared that every year the Teacher and Leadership Development department also consults with each department on the tests being used for evaluation and will bring up concerns at that point as well.

HFT/CHT 5

“No Touching” policy at Mistral: There was a meeting concerning “don’t touch children” at Mistral recently and the information given was that employee relations and not campus leadership would handle any complaints.

The staff was left with lots of questions. They help children with zippers and coats, help wipe noses, hold hands and are, as per campus policy, expected to greet the child through some type of touch.

Is there a district policy that staff can’t touch children, even if it is to assist them? If not, what guidelines does the district have regarding the touching of children especially the very young who need the type of assistance described above? What protection will the district give the employee who might be the subject of an uninformed or a false allegation in the course of doing their job?

**SCHOOL OFFICE:
WEST AREA
James McSwain**

WRITTEN RESPONSE: There appears to be miscommunication in the concern. The SSO assigned to Mistral will review expectations with the principal. Any staff member with a question may reach out directly to the SSO or the West Area Office. All principals have been instructed to meet with staff and discuss expectations for interactions with students. Guiding board policy in this discussion is FO(Local) and FO(Legal) regarding the strict prohibition of corporal punishment and board policy DC11 regarding employee investigations. These do not imply that staff may not “touch” a student. Staff members may not employ any type of corporal or physical punishment and they may not use excessive. They may not engage in any type of inappropriate touching or relationship. They may not restrain students except for very specific situations that are defined in board policy. Any and all accusations of corporal punishment, physical punishment, excessive force, inappropriate touching, or inappropriate relationship must be investigated (see Board Policy DC11). Principals must report to the Area Office, HISD Police, and Texas CPS.

The Area Office in consultation of the Human Resources Department will determine whether an investigation will be conducted by Area Office Personnel or HISD Employee Relations personnel. Depending upon the allegations, employees may be reassigned to another work location while the investigation takes place. Once concluded, the outcome of the investigation is reviewed by the Area Office and the HISD Legal Department. Determinations are made based upon the findings of fact and applicable law and policy. Reassignment and investigation are the best means to protect an employee who may have been falsely accused of a prohibited action.

RESPONSE:

Dr. McSwain responded that there appears to be a miscommunication in the concern, and there must be more to the concern. He explained the written response and elaborated that the concerns would be reviewed by the SSO on an individual basis with the principal. He further elaborated that that there is not degree that is given to whether an allegation is reported or not.

Zeph Capo explained that the issue is that all allegations made are all treated the same. When a student makes an allegation against a teacher, the teacher is removed from the classroom. That’s the concern teachers face. There have been hundreds of these allegations and it has been difficult to find a level of balance.

Ms. Woods asked to clarify whether the concern is about excessive force or inappropriate touching. Mr. Capo responded that it all ends up in the same spot and same procedures, where employee is pulled out of the classroom and sent away.

Ms. Woods asked whether there was some other way that HISD should handle these situations to address concerns (as the moment there is an allegation, the district is required to remove the teacher from the classroom)? If you know we have to take the teacher out, is there some other way we can handle that process?

Mr. Capo responded that at some point, being as upfront and clear with the teacher as possible, and giving them the opportunity to respond, instead of assuming that they are doing something wrong, would keep teacher calm and not overreact. This also ruins the teacher's reputation even though the allegations may be false.

Mr. Capo brought up the example of Fleming, where allegations were made towards two teachers by the same student who had a history of making multiple false allegations. He asked whether the district has considered removing the student who make several false allegations instead of removing all the teachers.

Ms. Woods responded that the district cannot prioritize the teacher over the child and must respond to each situation the same way, so that no other student is interacting with that individual.

Steve Antley brought up the whether the student code of conduct of making false allegation is reviewed with the student and parents are reviewed and whether consequences or disciplinary actions are given to the student if they made false allegations. Ms. Moore stated that the procedures is to follow what's in the code of conduct. The district must complete the investigation first, and if it is determined that a false allegation is made, then the principal can issue the level 3 consequence, and the level of severity of the level 3 consequence is up to the person handling the discipline. Steve asked that the district determine the level of severity for all false allegations.

HFT/CHT 6

Ortiz Lesson Plan: See the attached 16-page unit lesson plan.

**SCHOOL OFFICE:
EAST AREA:
Geovanny Ponce**

WRITTEN RESPONSE: Department Chairs facilitate the development of the IB MYP Unit Planner (Page 1). IB MYP units usually take 20-30 hours (15 to 20 school days) to complete. Teachers in PLCs develop weekly lessons plans (5 days) and each day includes a lesson cycle (Do Now, INM, GP, IP, E-Ticket). "Plans are to be created collaboratively during PLC meetings and uploaded on the common drive in the appropriate department's designated folder no later than 3:30 PM every Wednesday, including early release days." (Teacher Handbook page 15). To complete an IB MYP unit, teams then upload weekly plans by adding more rows (pages) to this IB Unit Planner Template. Again, it is one working document where teachers add lesson plans for 5 school days at a time. The following week, teachers will continue to add more rows (pages) to reflect new weekly lesson plans. This process continues every week until the unit is completed (usually 15 to 20 days of instruction).

RESPONSE:

Dr. McSwain explained written response and stated that IB does not require anything beyond what the district already requires (unit plans). Unit plans are developed before the unit with departments, and possibly alone if there is only one person teaching that subject, but it is no more than what the district requires.

Zeph Capo said that part of the issue is that we get different interpretation from each of the IB schools. If there is one IB standard, then all schools should be following the same rules. Multiple IB schools are having their own interpretation of what's required and wanting to do it their own way and isn't really in line with the IB grading policy. It's a continuing grading issue with Tanglewood and other IB schools.

Dr. McSwain explained that IB has a grading rubric, and there is a system a campus uses to convert the rubric into a numeric number to make it easier for teachers to utilize which is encouraged.

Mr. Capo expressed that unit plans should be living documents that should not be reinvented each year.

Dr. McSwain responded that they are meant to be living documents, and the scope and sequence and unit plans the district provides easily fits within the framework of IB.

The area superintendent will be working collaboratively with Ortiz IB program, which is a newer IB, to recommend best practices and resources of other established IBs. IB allows you to network with every IB school around the world.

HFT/CHT 7

Excessive Paperwork/hostile work environment at Sterling: See the attached PLC agenda from Sterling HS. Please note the excessive paperwork requirements in the "non-negotiables" and the threats made to teachers for non-compliance.

**SCHOOL OFFICE:
SOUTH AREA:
Nicole Moore**

WRITTEN RESPONSE:

1. SSO will meet with the Principal and teachers on the SDMC to review the non-negotiables. We will focus on changes from the fall to the spring to reach a consensus for instructional non-negotiables to meet the excessive paperwork requirements.
2. Principal will follow protocol to address non-compliant behavior without threats.

RESPONSE:

Zeph Capo prefaced that the complaints have been expressed all semester, but he has not brought it up until now. Ms. Moore asked why complaints were coming at this time, since the expectations started prior to this year and the new principal is now enforcing the expectation this year, which has resulted in an increase in scores so far at a school is on the bubble for IR.

Ms. Moore stated that she will speak with principal to lighten the tone. She also asked for examples of where excessive paperwork is being required.

Sonia said that the concerns must be brought up when members bring it to them, and there needs to be a happy medium.

Zeph Capo expressed that there seems to be a lot of the repetition on the teacher of what is being asked to be placed in multiple locations (ie. Lesson plans, boards, walls, etc.) and it may be possible that it is something that the students should be doing. It was discussed that the school's non-negotiables are part of best-practices and pedagogy for the teacher.

Ms. Moore also shared that TDS and specialist are also alongside teachers at Sterling to assist in lesson planning. Ms. Longoria asked for Ms. Moore and Mr. Capo to have offline conversation to come up with a resolution to address the concerns.

Meeting

Next Meeting: Thursday, February 28, 2018, 2:30 p.m. in 3SE36 (Supt's Large Conference Room)