

CASTLEBERRY ISD
DEIC Minutes
October 22, 2018

1. Introductions:

The meeting started at 5:30 pm. Dr. Ritchlin introduced our new community member, Barbara Fox, and two members who were not present last week: Stacy Zachary, and Shelia Connor, who is taking Leigh Kruse-Paine's place from IMMS.

2. "Something I want to know more about"

A. Title I Questions – DeAnne Page

DeAnne Page reported on the different ways Title funds can be used in response to several members who stated they would like to know more about Title funds. See attached table.

B. Pregnancy Waiver Questions – Wanda Byther

Mr. Casarez introduced Wanda Byther, the CISD Pregnancy Coordinator from Reach High School. Mrs. Byther was invited to talk more about the pregnant teen program in the district. She expressed her love of working and talking about the pregnancy program. In her years at Reach, the program diminished to where there was only one teen parenting coordinator so she had to re-staff and acquired a half-time science teacher and half-time home bound teacher to work with teen parents. Mrs. Byther noticed that there were many distractions at the home with the baby crying and other distractions and she decided to make arrangements for girls to come to campus two weeks after their doctor release to resume their studies; it was at that time she took over the program and became the coordinator. Mrs. Byther receives an email informing of any pregnant student and she will reach out to them and provide them with information about the resources and services available to help in their situation. The students come to Reach to an upstairs, secluded instruction area to work with teachers one-on-one to get back on track. Mrs. Byther stated again how much she loves the girls and working with them to help them be successful. She answered questions from the group.

C. Dropout Prevention – Ken Casarez

Mr. Casarez presented some additional information about dropout prevention. Some requirements for a successful dropout prevention program include: increased student attendance and conducting leaver investigations. Leavers are students who are enrolled one day and then leave without providing information or un-enrolling. The campus staff have to investigate and find out why they left the district and where they are enrolled.

Attendance is an integral part of dropout prevention and we have to monitor attendance very effectively. The Education Code, Chapter 25, applies to attendance. Chapter 25 defines all laws and regulations that apply to schools and students. It defines the time a student must be in school to be promoted or go to another grade level. Elementary and secondary have different rules; elementary is measured by days and secondary is measured by hours earned to get credit to complete or promote students. Seventh grade is the time when dropouts have to be reported to the state of Texas. All leavers unresolved after the end of October are considered dropouts. If we have an abundance of dropouts, we have to give account of that; the state wants to know, "why do you have so many?" Many students get discouraged when they realize they don't have enough credits to earn their degree and it is sometimes hard to motivate them to come to school especially if there is a lack of support at home. This can happen if they were tardy often or absent and didn't get the necessary hours for requirements to earn credit for a course. Another dropout prevention strategy we use is to identify high-risk families in order to help get our students to school. There are legal issues that have to be followed and truancy prevention measures begin after three unexcused absences. The campus staff

will work with parents to try and clear up absence issues. Sometimes all that is needed to clear up some absences is documentation from a doctor's office, etc., or it may be determined that a student has a medical condition and they may qualify for 504 status or receive other services. If a student continues to miss school after attempts have been made to remedy situations, truancy issues must be referred to the district attorney's office. Campus DMS's are the staff who try to locate students. At this time of year, the DMS's are looking for leavers. In some situations, it is just a matter of locating where they went the leaver is now located. Texas has a good tracking system for enrolling students, but as a child gets older, sometimes it becomes harder to locate them. Sometimes when we do locate leavers and try to encourage them to come back to school to finish, they feel so far behind, they don't want to come back. The counselor will try to recover them and encourage them or help them get into an alternative program. If they enroll in an alternative program, then we can count them as "no longer a dropout."

Some questions CISD has tried to address are: What if we have a kid in trouble? What do we do? What can we do? We do offer some solutions: students can come back to school and recover hours for some of their missing courses. We look at each individual course and offer for them to come in and do some credit recovery. Students can come in late in the evening or early in the day. We have more times available in late November after football season, as our coach helps these students and has more availability at that time. Students are often discouraged as they may be a freshman, but they are in the junior cohort. Our credit recovery program is an online platform we use called Edgenuity and is offered at CHS and Reach. We do have some guidelines and expectations of our students. They must agree and sign that they understand the opportunity being offered and pledge to take it seriously. We also offer credit recovery during summer school as well. Our counselors also look for students in danger of dropping out. CISD employs an At-Risk Coordinator, Sal Limas, who will do home visits to help show the students there is an adult that cares about their education and success and is willing to help them graduate. Reach High School is important because it is an alternative, non-traditional setting option for our at-risk students. There are smaller class sizes and more intimate settings for teachers to be able to develop stronger relationships with students. Question (Zachary): When do letters go home to parents regarding attendance? We send letters home in elementary school after three unexcused absences. Question (Bintrim): What are Saturday school hours? 8:00 to 11:00 or 12:00. Is that at all schools? No, just high school. Discussion followed about how absences accumulate not just from being absent, but also by being tardy, etc. Question (Bintrim): Is there a lot of participation in Saturday school? Yes, especially from seniors. Sometimes we have seniors who come back in the summer after they should have graduated, but were unable to walk at graduation because they didn't have enough credits.

D. Title I Parent Compact – Dr. June Ritchlin

Dr. Ritchlin discussed the elementary compact with the group. All parents see and sign these state-required forms at registration. It is included as an online form in our online registration process. One thing to note is that each area is aligned within each group to the student, parent, teacher and administrator and each of them sign the compact. The parent compact form is a Title I requirement.

3. Strategic Plan Score Card – Ken Casarez

Mr. Casarez discussed the score card for the Strategic Plan. CISD has coordinators in each content area who work with teachers to write curriculum that is aligned with the goals and policies of the district. The Strategic Plan is an ongoing work that is continually monitored and modified as needed. We look at data and compare it to the TEKS as they are updated. Mr. Casarez discussed the status and provided explanations for some of the items on the score card in detail. The score card helps us see how we need to revise Board policy. District leaders help in monitoring the data reported to the school board annually. This year data was delayed because of a change in the accountability system, but we present updates to the Board on a quarterly basis. The Board is good at asking questions; they want to know what is going

on in classrooms and how it is benefitting students. They ensure taxpayer money is being well spent, and spent on the kids. The score card provides a way for us to grade ourselves by comparing it to the data on assessments. The data then allows us to look and see where adjustments need to be made. Some of the data is from the state and some is from local assessments. The Board will look at our plan and recommendations, and approve it or decide where changes need to be made. More discussion followed and some questions were asked and answered.

4. Curriculum/Accountability - STAAR Results – Ken Casarez

Mr. Casarez talked about the new state accountability system. Prior to the new system, campuses either met standards or didn't met standards. Now, districts and campuses will get a letter grade, A through F. We will talk about how it looks and how our campuses did. There are now three domains; years ago there were five indexes, the state then changed to four domains, then three domains, and there are still many things to be worked out. The first domain is student achievement: Are kids taking assessments? Are they college and career ready? Are they taking AP classes? What are graduation rates? How many students are taking dual enrollment courses? How many students go into the military? How many industry certifications can our students earn? One thing that hurts CISD is that we do not have an automotive program, but we do offer welding. At the elementary and middle school level, data is 100% test results. Domain two looks at "Progress." How are students doing compared to last year? This group looks at relative performance and academic growth. Domain three is titled, "Closing the Gap." The federal government has all these different groups they consider in this area. Some examples of groups they look at are: all students, then ethnic groups, those in Special Education, male, female, etc. Some of our groups are Hispanic students, low economic students, and EL learners. When we look at academic measures for students there are three categories: approaches, meets and masters.

How did CISD do? We got a C. When we look at our students in the following categories: low socio-economic, behind grade levels, language, all three domains earned a C. Other schools that are more affluent performed higher due to higher socio-economic levels. Most of our campuses met standards except for Reach High School. Since Reach is an alternative school that works with at-risk students and due to the small enrollment size and at-risk population, they did not "Meet Standards," but instead earned "Improvement Required." Reach has been given a timeline by the state to make improvements.

Some CISD campuses did earn some notable distinctions: CHS and IMMS qualified in the top 25 percent comparatively in "Academic Growth."

Dr. Ritchlin then explained there are some celebrations and areas to address across the district. Significant growth and letter grade changes at Castleberry Elementary. She pointed out the relative progress compared to other similar schools. Dr. Ritchlin then showed a scatter plot that shows how CISD performed in Domain 1 compared to other school districts. She explained how the state does not expect economically disadvantaged districts to be held to same standard as schools with low numbers of economically disadvantaged students.

5. Staff Development – Dr. June Ritchlin

Dr. Ritchlin requested feedback from teachers regarding our most recent CISD Professional Learning Day. Some comments received were that our teachers enjoy the opportunity to plan in the afternoon for the next grading period. They also enjoy that strategies are shared with them at that time. This allows teachers time to regroup and reflect on interventions they may have in place for students. They also appreciate the time to look at data. SLOs is a new state requirement for T-TESS and having time to work on SLOs and their teacher digital portfolios is helpful. Some said they would like to see targeted learning dependent on campus needs as well as some campus-specific training on working with students living in poverty. Teachers also like having vertical alignment to talk about what other the grade-level teachers need for students to know when they come to the next grade. Teachers also felt that having the whole teaching staff together builds camaraderie, as they usually only come together as a campus for faculty meetings.

Comment: Ms. Zachary commented that she would like to see more horizontal alignment as well because at secondary that doesn't happen often, and it would be helpful to know how their students are doing in other content areas.

6. School Calendar 2019-2020 – Casarez/Ritchlin

A worksheet was provided to each table group and members were asked to look at the CISD calendar and list strengths and concerns with the calendar and to begin thinking about setting goals and guidelines and start/end dates. Sample calendars from nearby districts were provided and the members were asked to look at all the calendars and list the strengths and concerns. Groups worked on the calendar worksheet for 20 minutes. The calendar will be an ongoing work in progress in several DEIC meetings. The worksheets were collected and will be looked at again in future meetings.

7. Staffing Patterns

Positions added: Bilingual Reading Interventionist, New Pre-K Classes, Assistant Principal at Irma Marsh Middle School, Counselor at Castleberry High School, Elementary Science Coordinator, Secondary English/Language Arts Instructional Coach

Mr. Casarez reported on staffing patterns at CISD. He reviewed what positions had been added this school year. He explained how changing from half-day to full-day pre-kindergarten required a need for new classes and paraprofessionals. Due to behavior issues, a new Assistant Position was added at the middle school. Also, a new counselor position was created to provide half-day career counseling at CHS. The counselor is also in charge of all freshman at the high school. Each spring we look at staffing needs and we may need to make adjustments if we have to add certification pathways, etc. for Advanced Placement courses in 6th, 7th, and 8th grades at the middle school.

Evaluations were passed out and completed by the group. The meeting concluded at 7:35 pm.

Meeting Attendees:

- Sara Bintrim
- Wanda Byther
- Cristina Campisi
- Ken Casarez
- David Cashion
- Angela Cathey
- Carley Davis
- Denise Fisher
- Barbara Fox
- Ruby Jackson
- Carrie Jakus
- Shelia Connor
- Perla Perez
- June Ritchlin
- Lisa Scott
- Bill Svehlak
- Stacy Zachary