

**Multilingual Education Advisory Committee**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
October 22, 2019

**Attendance**

MEAC Members  
Nu Chanpheng (Parent)  
Shelli Hix (Parent & Co-Chair)  
Thuy Nguyen (Teacher)  
Peter Partheymuller (Parent)  
Lindsey Ip (Parent)  
Brenda Townsend (Teacher)  
Alicia Adame (Community Rep)  
Maria Sebastian (Teacher)  
Tracy Flores (Community Rep)  
Priscilla S. Emamian (AP & Co-Chair)  
Leonor Vargas (AISD Staff)  
Esther Williams (Parent)  
Theresa Le (Teacher)  
Danielle Sanders (AP)  
Mariel Early (Teacher)  
Maria Arabbo (Business Rep)  
Krystal Gomez (Parent)  
Kim Nguyen (Teacher)

Multilingual Education Staff  
Dr. David Kauffman (MEAC Coordinator)  
Evelin Ramos  
Ana Rojas  
Pat Dabbert  
Pedro Gonzales  
Raquel Colon  
Dr. Maria Alanis

**I. Call Meeting to Order / Review Purpose & Norms**

Meeting called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Co-Chair. Purpose of the MEAC meetings was briefly reviewed.

**II. Public Comments**

1. A Lively MS parent who is a member of the Dyslexia Committee voiced concerns about resources for the Dyslexia program. She was inquiring if the Multilingual Education had resources to help schools with funding for this program. She stated that Lively MS needs more resources such as books in Spanish. There is no Dyslexia/Reading Specialist at Lively. She would like a MEAC member to join the Dyslexia Committee.

2. A Ridgetop ES parent does not support the merging of Ridgetop ES and Reilly ES.
3. A Lively MS parent is concerned that the new Southwest school may have a French Dual Language Program. With the large number of Hispanic students, why is the district creating a French program? She was also concerned about the location being too far south, it should be more accessible. Accessibility = equity. Regarding high schools: She stated that having only 4 high schools with a Dual Language program is not enough, and more DL programs will need to be added at other high schools. She also stated that the district needs to provide better resources and funding for Dual Language programs.

### **III. MEAC Member Comments**

4. A concern was raised about the PK-12 Dual Language Alignment Design Team Recommendations not including Vietnamese, which is also a dual language program in AISD.
5. Regarding the current School Changes proposal: there are questions about some of the numbers and the rationale for closing some of the schools, in particular Palm ES and Ridgetop ES. Ridgetop is one of the original pilot schools and has positively influenced other DL programs by modeling serious, focused and committed implementation of two-way Dual Language. Important district -wide benefits have come from that one little school. There is still a need in our district for strong DL models.
6. A member stated that they visited two middle schools. When she asked what programs they offered at one of them, Dual Language was not mentioned. When she asked about the languages offered, Spanish was not mentioned. When asked about their Dual Language Program the staff person informed her about a bilingual class and called it a Dual Language class. This staff member did not know the difference. Staff person stated that the class is mostly taught in English and a little bit of Spanish. She was talking about a bilingual class not a dual language class. When asked why it was mostly taught in English the staff person said because in this country English is the primary language. The MEAC member believes that administrators are not always sensitive to the needs of the students and is concerned about the lack of implementation of the Dual Language program on campuses. She felt staff and administrators need more professional development training on Dual Language program offered at their own school.
7. Concern was expressed that the number of students in the Dual Language program at a particular middle school is dropping each year. The program is amazing and teachers are phenomenal; however, the speaker was concerned that campus staff is not promoting the program correctly, and that students are given incorrect information and are then deciding to transfer out to another school unnecessarily, resulting in a drop of enrollment that will jeopardize the viability of the DL at Small MS. The DL students that are not able to easily transfer out will then be left with no DL program or a weaker one. The principal does not seem to understand the Dual Language Program well and its benefits and does not seem to promote the program. Recommendation was that administrators receive professional development training about the Dual Language program and their role in informing their school community about it, and promoting it accurately.
8. The group was informed that the Multilingual Education Team members are developing a pilot process to ensure implementation. Cluster specialists working with administrators on the campuses are checking on the implementation of Dual Language on the campuses by conducting

“walk-throughs.” MET staff is also checking to see if schedules, language content and lesson plans are being followed.

9. A main concern was training for Middle School principals.
10. The 40-page document on school changes was a surprise to campus administrators. Administrators are being asked questions and they want to be informed.

#### **IV. District Committee Reports**

- DAC –No Report
- BFAC - A MEAC member attended the first meeting last week which was a joint meeting of several committees (Boundaries, Bond, Budget, and others that fall under the Chief Business & Operations Officer). The meeting was mostly an orientation where their purpose was discussed. The committees are in need of members.
- SEAC-Has not met.
- Dyslexia –No report.

#### **V. Approve Minutes**

There were three corrections to the September 26, 2019 minutes. Attendance list was corrected. Also on Public Comments there was a clarification about the first speaker’s comments.

There was a motion by Nu Chanpheng and seconded by Esther Williams to approve the minutes for the September 26, 2019 meeting as amended. The motion passed unanimously.

#### **VI. AISD Multilingual Education Team Updates**

Dr. Kauffman, MEAC Coordinator, thanked everyone for their attendance, welcomed new members and acknowledged AISD Board Member, Arati Singh. Last month’s update in Spanish will be ready soon.

##### **TABE Conference**

Staff attended the Texas Association for Bilingual Education annual conference in Corpus Christi. Some of the highlights were:

- Several AISD staff made presentations at the conference.
- Attendees learned what other districts and universities are doing to support Dual Language and heard presentations on new research

María Jesus Sebastián was recognized by TABE as the group's 2019 Bilingual Teacher of the Year. She is one of the original Dual Language teachers and has been teaching at AISD for 13 years. This is Maria’s first year as a MEAC member.

## **Personnel**

Dr. Kauffman informed the group that a new lead coordinator for Refugee Family Support Services has been selected and the person will begin on Nov. 4, 2019. She will be introduced at the next meeting.

## **School Changes**

Comments made about School Changes which is on today's agenda.

The goal of the School Changes initiative is to recognize the budget and facility realities and work to provide a modernized and safe learning environment for as many of our students as quickly as we can.

The School Changes materials are a set of ideas to start the discussion. Ultimately the AISD Board will decide which ideas to pursue.

District appreciates input from the community. The community's feedback is going to matter.

Most plans are not flushed out because these are preliminary ideas.

Decisions have not been made. Once they are made the final plans will be developed.

Several of these ideas impact multilingual education. He has confidence that the ones that address Multilingual Education, staff will be heavily involved in those plans.

## **Other updates**

Dyslexia concern brought up by one of the speakers about a MEAC member being part of the Dyslexia Committee will be addressed.

Staff will revisit how 504 policies, Special Ed and dyslexia fit into the Dual Language and Bilingual Programs.

AISD has more than one language as part of the Dual Language program (Vietnamese, Spanish, and Mandarin).

Professional development for administrators is part of the plan.

Last year there were no spring meetings with principals about how the program has evolved. This year this will be done. The plan is to provide staff with a template and guidelines as to who in a school needs to know about the Dual Language program.

An orientation for teachers at secondary campuses about the Dual Language Program is needed for an entire school. All teachers need to know about the Dual Language Program. It needs to be institutionalized.

The main focus is core implementation of the programs through school leadership, professional development, parent engagement and aligning systems. However, an additional idea is to support the cultural component of dual language through a concert series. We would invite musicians to perform at schools three times per year – two in Spanish, one in another language. The performances would rotate among all dual language campuses. In addition to school

performances, one family/community performance could be organized at the Performing Arts Center.

## **QUESTIONS**

Is this implementation plan new?

A. It is not new. The program is being redesigned. Professional Development is a major part of the plan. The alignment piece is big because a large number of students and schools are being served. Assessments are underway.

How many years will it take for full implementation?

A. Dr. Kauffman responded that three years ago he would have said 2 years. Now he would say another 3 years. A challenge has been the rapid expansion of the Dual Language program.

One approach would be to implement in fewer schools and focus on doing it well, then gradually expanding it, but we are not in that place anymore. Going back to 10 schools and gradually expanding the program would be ideal, but not realistic given the commitment and investments already made. If we can get full implementation in three years, that would be a success.

What can committee members do to help with implementation?

A. Members can help with advocacy and parent engagement. Staff can provide the tools for parents. It is staff's responsibility to know which schools have not implemented the program. It is not the responsibility of the parents to inform the district which schools do not have the program implemented. It is also the district's responsibility to have a model that schools implement and that parents are aware of.

Can MET pay for travel to conferences? Can MET identify teachers and send them to training?

A. Main goal is for teachers to receive training on bi-literacy. Teachers need to have a foundation and receive training; however, many go back to their campuses and the principal may not have created a system at the campus to implement the Dual Language program. The most important thing is building a system and building commitment, but some funds will be provided for teachers and principals to attend conferences.

## **VII. Review Implementation Plans**

Dr. Kauffman stated that most of the questions pertained to the Implementation Plans, which will be addressed later in the meeting.

He did want to address the question about Vietnamese not being included in the PK-12 Dual Language Alignment Design Team recommendations. The document includes the recommendations for the Spanish dual language program because the focus was on the alignment of the program from pre-kindergarten through high school; however, all recommendations will be considered for Vietnamese and Mandarin also.

## **VIII. Unfinished Business**

None

## **IX. IX. New Business**

### **AISD Strategic Plan 2020-2025**

Dr. Kauffman attended a district meeting regarding developing the new Strategic Plan and a process for Community Engagement. He said that he asked how we will engage our advisory groups such as MEAC. The response was we will have a Community Engagement process but it has not been developed yet. So we will be on the lookout for this to start. MEAC has provided input on this. When public comment opens, MEAC can respond.

Ms. Hix stated that last spring MEAC created a letter addressed to Dr. Cruz regarding suggested changes to the strategic plan. It essentially addressed bi-literacy as a core goal. . New MEAC members will get a copy. In the last few years the district has become more consistent when it talks about policy or programs and linking them to the Strategic Plan. The budget is tied to the priorities in the Strategic Plan. It is critical that our group provide input. On the website the status on this plan is not clear. She does not think there is a pending deadline right now. MEAC members should read the plan and become familiar with it. The current one is on the website but it will expire soon. The 2015-2020 plan was a weaker document in terms of bi-literacy and bilingual education than its predecessor, the 2010-2015 Strategic Plan.. Everything is based on this plan such as the budget and how administrators set their priorities.

Ms. Early commented that the training that was mentioned for teachers also needs to be given to counselors too.

Ms. Chanpheng commented that a student at Bowie took AP for Spanish and is now taking Spanish III because the counselor did not understand that he did not need to take this. The parents do not understand what the student should take. It is the responsibility of the school staff to know what the student should be taking.

### **Revisions to Board Policy/EHBE**

Dr. Kauffman's remarks:

- Board policy is available online and is structured for each policy category: Legal, Local and Regulations.
- Board policy EHBE addresses Multilingual Education.
- Legal Policy is defined for us. It is the State Education Code and addresses what Bilingual Education looks like in the State of Texas and cannot be changed. It can only be changed at the state level.
- Local Policy is where districts can modify policy in keeping with Legal Policies. Legal Policy states there are four bilingual programs -- One-way Dual Language, Two-Way Dual Language, Late Exit Transitional and Early Exit Transitional). But the local policy was adopted at a time when AISD's only bilingual program was Dual Language.
- Legal, Local and Regulations constitute the AISD policy on Dual Language. Regulations are easier to change and address how the policy is implemented.

So there is Legal, then Local then the Regulations?

A. Yes. Legal states the laws. EHBE is available online under Board Policies. Other districts have their EHBE policies online also. They can be looked up and compared to AISD's policies.

Explain the options.

A. The state defines the six approved bilingual/ESL program options.

Two are ESL—content based and pull-out—and four are bilingual—Two-way Dual Language, One-way Dual Language, Late Exit Transitional Bilingual and Early Exit Transitional Bilingual). When the policy was last revised it was due to changes in Chapter 89. Before then policy changed when the district expanded the Dual Language program to all campuses. A lot of the policy addresses the participation of native English speakers in Two-way Dual Language.

Which of the handouts is the current policy?

A. The copy that does not have any edits is the current policy. The copy with notes has recommendations that MET members have drafted.

-Staff has been gathering input and work is still in progress.

-A special MEAC meeting can be scheduled before the next regularly scheduled meeting to discuss this topic and provide input. Members can also send their comments to Dr. Kauffman. There is a tight timeline to provide input.

Does the Board have to approve all the changes? I ask this because I found some mistakes in the Legal Policy on how it is interpreting the Education Codes so if there are legitimate mistakes, does that need approval of the Board?

A. Texas Association of School Boards provides the legal framework for districts. So that is a bigger process. Maybe send TASB a letter but that input should also be part of our review. It may be something that can be correct in Local Policy.

How often are these policies updated?

A. Updated as needed.

Can we create a sub-committee to review the policy?

A. A motion is required to form a sub-committee.

Nu Chanpheng made a motion to create a sub-committee to review the Dual Language part of the Local Policy in EHBE. Krystal Gomez seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

The sub-committee could do a virtual meeting and use Google docs with help from staff. Several members volunteered to be part of this sub-committee (Flores, Ip, Solis, Gomez, Hix and Chanpheng). Non-MEAC attendees were also asked if they wanted to be part of this committee. MEAC members and attendees were asked to share their recommendations with the sub-committee.

## **School Changes**

Are comments from the various meetings about School Changes online?

A. Question was referred to the Community Engagement staff.

- Arati Singh, AISD Board member, stated there are more community meetings scheduled so please check the website. Staff is collating all the input. There is a Nov. 4<sup>th</sup> AISD Board work session and they will be discussing community comments on School Changes. Meeting will be televised.

- Celso Baez with the Department of Communications and Community Engagement informed the group that comments are on the website. Staff are synthesizing and organizing the feedback by theme and category. It will be shared in a format that makes sense. There is a 40 page feedback report currently on the website produced after July. The web address is [www.austinisd.org/schoolchanges](http://www.austinisd.org/schoolchanges) and there is a tab on the left that states Feedback that will take you to a hyperlink to this report.

Review Action Items and Future Agenda Items

Future Agenda Items are:

- Dual Language policy updates and that can go under Unfinished Business (MEAC recommendations are due in Dec.).
- Dyslexia Program in Middle Schools, in regard to Lively MS concerns and the need for resources.
- Possibility of adding an Arabic Dual Language Program in North and South Austin.

Q. Currently we have Wall-to-Wall schools like Ridgetop. If we merge Ridgetop and Reilly we may not have any Wall-to-Walls schools because it will be a combo of Mandarin and Spanish.

So it will be two strands and not a single Wall-to-Wall program. Isn't it important to have a couple of Wall-to-Wall schools?

Reilly is considered a Wall-to-Wall campus. Wall-to-Wall could also mean the entire school is implementing DL, even if there are two simultaneous strands, i.e. Mandarin and Spanish)

## **X. Adjourn**

Danielle Sanders made a motion to adjourn and Peter Partheymuller seconded the motion. Motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 7:37 pm.

The next MEAC meeting will be at 6:00pm on December 3, 2019 at AISD Headquarters.