

**AUSTIN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SEAC) MINUTES**

Date: February 19, 2020

Location: New HQ Building, 2nd Floor PD Room

ATTENDEES:

Chad Ouellette, Eric Oyler, Enrique Trejo, Jolene Sanders, Maria Hernandez, Brian Magnum

GUEST:

Helen Miller, Marisol Fray, Rebecca Yerly, Sandra Salgado, Alethia Ostfeld, Stephanie Hawley, Shane Whalley, Matt Inman, Kim Royal, Christina Smith, Jennifer Limon

WELCOME AND PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Helen talked about the school to prison pipeline and wanted to address that there needs to be a change. If you aren't ready for a change you need to leave the district. We have to get people that kids will open up too. You have to get people that know the culture and the struggle. If you don't know what it's like to live in their shoes you have to be sensitive to it. There were different offerings for us when we were students we were career ready when we left high school. Learning is supposed to be fun. When you're focusing on adults you aren't serving the kids. People need to stop focusing on adults. She reiterated that if you are not ready for a change you are in the wrong field. You sit in the meetings but if you aren't boots on the ground you won't understand. I hear you are changing the discipline requirements, I want to see what they are.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR/ ASSISTANT DIRECTOR ADDRESS:

- Mr. Ouellette shared that Dr. Hickman is looking across districts to see what other districts are offering. We are looking at other ways to improve our practices.

1882 PARTNERSHIPS:

- Laura talked about the 1882 Partnership and how it will focus on creative arts and technology. Its purpose is to help with the transition of our students outside of school. Easter Seals will pilot the program in the upcoming school year and will take the lead on the program. Peer mentors will be provided that also have neurodiverse disabilities. Evaluation and progress metrics will take place across the program. They will focus on home life, income, etc. They are looking to fill the gap that some of the programs Austin ISD currently has. This program will be like our other 18+ programs.
 - Question: Would students be bused? Possibly it would be dependent on funding and partnerships. With a lot of the 18+ programs, it falls on the parents.
 - Question: What are the hours of operation? The hours of operation will be the typical school day. Under 1882 we have some flexibility as to the schedule of services that are delivered.
 - Question: Is there a vocational component? Absolutely, free employment training services will be provided. Students will be offered

- Question: For the pilot year, types of students will this program be offered too? The application process will be considered. At this point, autism and neurodiversity disorders will be a priority. We are working to make families fully aware of the program and what is being offered.
- Question: In terms of ELL, would that be within the first pilot year? Yes, that piece is critical. We would definitely staff accordingly.
- Question: Do you have a curriculum in mind? Part of the planning process will be purchased from other programs that are successful.
- Mr. Ouellette shared that he was a principal of a transition program. He also shared his enthusiasm for the upcoming collaboration with the 1882 partnership.
- Question: Have you all considered during the pilot year having an advisory committee? They are looking for parents and self-advocates in the community. The peer mentoring model will grow. Self-Advocates are a critical piece. The program will be offering both voluntary and paid positions.
- Question: They will be helping with job placement and retention.
- Question: Would post-secondary education be possible? Absolutely, it's a job readiness and we are looking into partnering with UT and ACC. We are trying to make sure that these students have the same experiences that all other students have.

VELA Families:

- Maria Hernandez shared about her program and what they are doing with Austin ISD. The focus is on ensuring that parents have everything they need so that their students get what they need. Before launching the program they sat with parents for a year and a half interviewing them. They came up with four pillars: support, empower, connect, and inform. As a result, they developed what they offer to the community. Each family gets an in-depth plan of what's needed. They are working in schools around the district and really focusing on autism. Next year the program will launch a 12 and up program to help transition from Middle School to High School. Families come from everywhere and all languages. Families are offered peer-to-peer courses, class facilitators are trained parents of children with special needs, specialized childcare, parent toolkit, etc. They are looking at integrating into more facilities. They always take referrals through the website or flyers.

SPECIAL EDUCATION WEBSITE:

The committee broke into two groups to brainstorm ideas for the website. The following ideas were provided:

Group one:

- Identify a point of contact for parents (school and vertical team specific)
- General parent portal to include:

- online resources
- community resources and organizations
- earning opportunities/ workshops/ events
- Advocate groups
- Organizational Charts
- News and Initiatives page
- Staff resources/ upcoming training sessions

Group two:

- TEA guide- info to be distributed to parents
- Special Education Strategic Plan
- Special Education- GOALS
- Special Education- link to SEAC
- A place to provide feedback
- Acronyms
- 18+ programs- GoProject, Project Search, Transition to Learning
- Community Resources (VELA, AU Society, The ARC, CTD, ESCT, etc.)
- Statistics- snapshots of SPED numbers and percentage; school leaver survey
- Info on placements/ services/ units (define SCORES, SBS, Life Skills, Resource)
- SEAC
 - Update members
 - Minutes
 - Child Find- link to SPED website
 - Explain and define public comment at SEAC
 - Events
 - Recourses posted or report to be made public
 - Goals of the committee
- Special Education Site- link to information for those who are new to special education (Autism, Behavior, etc.)
- ESCE vs Full day Pre-K
- Link to Austin ISD legal priorities
- Link to SBOE and SBEC
- What is self-advocacy?
 - Self-determination
 - Person-centered thinking/planning
- What is UDL?
- Link to Navigate Life TX
- Link to Parent Support & Training
- Information on IDEA, 504, ADA, WIOA, FERPA, ESSA
- State Agencies and programs (ex. TWC, TEA, HHSC, etc.)
- Organizational Chart
- Special Education form to request cameras and information about the legislation

QUESTION AND ANSWER:

Staffing was questioned. Chad Ouellette shared that we are constantly hiring. The team sits in numerous interviews and is working to fill any vacant positions.

How do you add items to the agenda? A form was shared with the group to add topics they would like to have discussed. Many of the topics on the sheet have been shared and we continue to share and cover the topics that were suggested.

Clarification on purpose and do we have a co-chair? We do not have a co-chair at this time but will be opening this up to the committee.

CLOSING:

Meeting ended at 7:45pm