

District of Innovation Meeting

February 8, 2017

Mr. Fields began the meeting by explaining what a District of Innovation (DOI) entails:

- Process of Combining Waivers (class size, teacher certifications, testing dates, etc.)
- 5 Year Plan (Locally Developed)- which currently TEA will not override.
- Public Hearing to be a DOI.
- Board Approval for moving in this Direction has been obtained.
- DOI gives the District flexibility.

He also explained that we are in a crunch time, due to upcoming Legislature Meetings in which they will review the effectiveness of the DOI and if it should continue.

Areas:

1. Flexibility in Calendar – this year if we adhere to plans laid out of Legislature, school would not start before August 28. We feel this might be too late, causing the school year to go beyond June 1 and a very short 1st Semester.
2. Ratio- Currently we are held to a 22:1 ratio in some Elementary Classes, this is not the case for Secondary. There are times the need for a waiver in this area arise from certain circumstances.
3. Maker Space – Began with a sub-division in the Metroplex, a community building served as a center for creativity (arts, crafts, metal, digital design). Basically, to generate or stimulate creativity. Albany ISD has been in communication with ACU (currently they require a 3-hour Class for all students). They are seeing increased interest in activities. Darren (formerly with Guthrie ISD) was innovative with Maker Space is working for ACU and has been helpful with explaining the concept to AISD. We would like to form a Partnership with ACU.

Our Idea – Students would come in master skills for CTE Courses, and be a benefit to both campuses by teachers being able to schedule a time to use the area for projects. The main questions we need to answer as a group are:

- A) How do we tie this in to the TEKS?
- B) How do we make this beneficial to students and teachers?

Tamara asked, “Where would Maker Space be and what is the projected cost to the District? Mr. Fields explained, “We have places to start, but ultimately we would like to

build a community area. Some places are more complex and some are very plain and simple. Cost can add up quickly with machines, equipment and other necessities.

Mr. Fields explained that CTE's and FTE's bring in weighted funding to Districts. Starting a Maker Space program has potential to increase State Funding to the District. He again stated, "We need to move forward with this because often the state will pull back funding when more funds are going out to Districts."

How does it work for community use? Example- a man needs to use machinery to make cabinet doors, he brings materials and uses the equipment that he needs.

Jacob Cleveland asked, "Does someone pay to use this equipment? And what keeps them from tearing the equipment up"? Mr. Fields explained that people would have a check off list before being able to use equipment. We must take baby steps, start with the students and then open it up to the community.

Examples of certifications we might like to eventually include are Plumber, Master Craftsman, Photography and more by using people in the Community that have those skills and certifications.

"Someone like Donnie Lucas, having extensive expertise in Photography could be certified to teach that course", stated Mr. Hill.

Roscoe is working on a Drone Certification. At this time the Certified Drone Pilot is employed half-time by the Wind Farm and half-time by Roscoe, with this agreement Roscoe can get their students and others certified.

Kevin Hill added, "We would likely put kids through a certain amount of curriculum and then at certain times bring a "Master" person in.

TSTC has a Mobile Unit that would help in area such as air conditioning. Jenny Scott added that would come with a tuition fee.

Justin Winters asked how often Maker Space would be used. Mr. Fields said it will be flexible, depending on what people are studying. It is a "Hands-On Lab" and most likely not on a set schedule.

Tamara Trail asked if one goal of Maker Space was to help students that are likely to "Drop-Out" with Life Skills, Mr. Hill said, "Yes".

Jennifer Everitt explained the method that White Face ISD (where her brother-in-law is employed) began their program – someone in town donated a house. They moved it to District Property and began with a Robotics Program for kids that normally didn't return after lunch, because they were home playing video games. After a short time they were attending contests and coming back to school to work on these programs.

Kevin said with this plan we can make it unique to our District, not a set plan for all schools.

Jonathan Scott asked, “Is Maker Space dependent on us being awarded the District of Innovation Status? Mr. Fields stated that it is not, Maker Space could be a standalone program. We have started the process to include it in our District of Innovation Plan. There was a Public Hearing, Approval by the Board to start the process, today’s meeting and the next step is to write our plan. The Plan then goes to the Website for 30 days. We want this process to start so we can move forward and hopefully be “Grandfathered In”, if the state changes their minds.

Mr. Fields summed up Maker Space by saying that he feels this program is needed for 10-15 students who need the challenge and are interested in skills and areas not currently offered by AISD.

4. Teacher Appraisal Request – Currently under the T-TESS System.

DOI offers 2 options:

- A) Stay with T TESS
- B) Create a new Local Policy which must be comparable to T-TESS Model and give the Flexibility for Veteran Teachers to be appraised every other year, rather than each year.

With extensive discussion of Maker Space, Mr. Fields went back to question of Flexibility in Scheduling. He gave a short history of the later start date (4th Monday of August), based on tourism needs in Texas. He said our concerns in Albany are not necessarily those of larger areas, but we are concerned about the Balance of number of days in a semester and being able to be out of school in order to cooperate with Fandangle dates.

He asked is the Calendar and Area we want to address. The committee said yes. Some questions or thoughts were:

- Mr. Hill said he thought we should work backwards from Christmas Break to make sure the day’s work for getting the correct number of minutes in the 1st Semester.
- Mr. Fields said we will strive to create more balance in the semesters.
- A question was asked do we want more days off throughout the semesters or go straight through and get longer breaks?
- Mr. Scott asked about Staff Development, are current days adequate or do we need more or less?
- Angela Askew mentioned having a work day returning from Christmas break, before students return was very beneficial.
- December 22 is on a Friday, do we want to do up to that date?
- Jennifer Everitt mentioned travel was difficult with only two weekends, rather than three.
- It was mentioned that it helped Elementary to start in the middle of the week.

- Balance was once again mentioned, with everyone encouraged to try to plan even number of weeks in each six weeks period.
- Jenny Scott asked if 7 period days were possible, rather than 8. Donnie Lucas and Kevin Hill mentioned that this made it almost impossible for Upper Level students to earn extra credit and maintain Higher Level classes.

Mr. Fields presented the District Improvement Plan and asked members to look over it. We want to add anything that we can to the plan to plug it into the District of Innovation. Please send your ideas and suggestions to him, as soon as possible.

In Summary, we want to move forward with the District of Innovation Plan and looking at Flexibility in the Calendar.

We will meet again next Wednesday, February 15 at 7:00 am.

District of Innovation

February 15, 2017

Mr. Fields passed out minutes from the last meeting and the District of Innovation Plan. He asked members to look over the plan and make any corrections that are needed.

Mr. Fields wanted to discuss a few highlights:

1. Page 5 (Teacher Certification)

- Local guidelines allow District to hire people with expertise that do not currently hold a certificate.
- CTE funding could be eligible with Local Criteria met.
- Anyone not holding valid Teacher Certification would be an “At Will Employee”.
- Do not foresee a problem, but this would allow someone to be terminated, if it wasn’t working out.
- Employees would still be approved by the AISD School Board.
- 1 year contract, rather than long term.
- Kevin Hill added that there are courses that are used for Core Courses (Business English, Financial Math) that must be taught by a certified teacher and would not be allowed under the “Local Policy” of the DOI.

Mr. Fields reported that Darren with ACU has opened up a time for the committee to come look at Maker Space and see the current set up at ACU on Monday, February 20 at 10:00. He encouraged all members to attend.

Kevin gave some general ideas for Partnerships:

- Work Initiative where students can have a job and receive credit.
- Internships or Mentor settings where students are not paid, but investigate careers.
- Having support for CTE Classes and funding (if it comes into question by Legislators), by business owners being aware of the need and benefit of CTE courses.
- Models will be set up by the interest shown in areas.
- Plato has CTE Courses available that could be facilitated by someone, but we need to be cautious of this, due to the certification necessary to receive funding requirements (teacher certified in that area being the facilitator).

Angela Askew asked if AISD planned to become able to offer classes for students to obtain certifications such as CNA. Mr. Hill said that would depend on partnerships with places such as TSTC or Cisco College. Jenny Scott added information from a program in Weatherford, stating

that it was expensive and there would need to be an ongoing commitment to justify the cost and time needed for such a program.

Mr. Fields asked everyone to pay attention to the calendar portion of the plan. Highlights include:

- Start Date early enough to add balance to the semesters.
- Flexibility of time off throughout the year.
- He asked is ½ week better than a full week for the first week back?
- We are looking at start dates of August 16 or August 20, depending on previous question.
- The earlier start day allows 86 days in the 1st Semester vs. 78 if we use state start date.
- The only waiver that would be submitted as a District of Innovation is the Early Release Day Waiver.
- Jennifer Everitt questioned the Minutes- Mr. Fields reported that the requirement is 75,600, our currently plan has our attendance around 78,000.
- Jennifer also mentioned the job shadowing or field trips could be done earlier in the year.
- Angela Askew mentioned that teacher workdays throughout the year or at the end of the 1st Six Weeks, allow for Parent Conferences to take place. This has been a request through the NSES CIC and Title I Meetings.

Mr. Fields wanted to make a quick point about the Class Sizes. Currently, there is a 22:1 ratio in lower Elementary. He stated, “We are not trying to get away from hiring a third teacher, I would like to have two really good teachers with 23 students each, rather than quickly hiring a teacher in October and changing students routine.” The District will always have the best interest of the students in mind when making these decisions.

Mr. Fields reminded everyone of the trip to ACU, if attending – meet at the Elementary at 9:00 Monday morning.

District of Innovation
Called Meeting
March 20, 2017

Members present:

Donnie Lucas	Jennifer Everitt	Ryder Peacock	Kristie Smith
Angela Askew	Kelli Kreidler	Jenny Scott	Leigh Lowe
Jonathan Scott	Kevin Hill	Shane Fields	

Mr. Fields called the meeting to order. He asked if everyone had looked over the plan from the last meeting and opened the floor for discussion or changes.

With no changes or questions asked, Donnie Lucas made a motion to move forward and approve the Albany ISD District of Innovation Plan, as written. Jenny Scott seconded the motion. Mr. Fields called for a show of hands of all in favor. Eleven people voted for the motion, none against.

The plan will be presented to the Albany ISD Board of Trustees at the March Board Meeting, scheduled for March 20.