

Minutes
Teacher Communication Committee
Denton Independent School District
April 4, 2016 Meeting

The May meeting of the Teacher Communication Committee (TCC) was called to order by TCC chairperson Terry Rahn at 4:16 p.m. in the Redbud Room at the PDC. The following teachers were in attendance: Pam Ammons, Calhoun; Christina Baker, Crownover; Sheila Becker, Wilson; Neil Biediger, Savannah; Tricia Boosa, Houston; Kevin Brown, Hodge; Ivey Carey, Myers; Christina Dearman, Strickland; Adriana Denison, Borman; Cyndi Deville, L.A. Nelson; Jennifer Engelbrecht, Ann Windle; Heather Fishbeck, W.S. Ryan; Gail Frisby, McMath; Angela Fuller, Newton Rayzor; Cindy Greer, McNair; David Huey, Davis; Deliah Johnson-Seastrunk, Navo; Analee Leverton, E.P. Rayzor; Magan Locey, RHS; Courtney Lopez, Evers; Ramon Martinez, Myers; Maranda Matheson, Sparks; Jade McClure, Navo; Melissa McDonald, Blanton; Vickie McQueen, Lee; Will Milne, ATC; James Moore, Strickland; Sandy Noles, Calhoun; Lisa O’Rear, Adkins; Terry Rahn, Providence; Scott Steiner, McMath; Sandy Taylor, Stephens; Kim Thaggard, DHS; Kristen Thornton, Hawk; Lori Trice, GHS; Larry Turner, GHS; Isabell Villarreal, Tomas Rivera; Allison Vincent, Cross Oaks; Georgina Webb, Ginnings; Christi Weems, Harpool; and Jennifer Wright, Gonzalez.

New Concerns (*in regards to District of Innovation only and answered by Chris Shade, Coordinator of District Improvement & Innovation*):

- 2. What power is afforded to Denton ISD by the District of Innovation that is something that our school board doesn’t already have available to it by TEA code? (Chris Shade, Tracy Johnson)**

A District of Innovation is a concept passed by the 84th Legislative Session in House Bill 1842, effectively immediately, that gives traditional independent school districts most of the flexibilities available to Texas’ open enrollment charter schools. To access these flexibilities, a school district must adopt an innovation plan, as set forth in Texas Education Code chapter 12A.

A local school district may want to pursue specific innovations in curriculum, instruction, governance, parent or community involvement, school calendar, budgeting, or other ideas. An innovation plan also allows a school district to gain exemption from many Texas Education Code requirements. Essentially, innovation plans will be about local control. Each district will pursue designation as a District of Innovation for different reasons, and no two plans may look the same. Community members should note that each innovation plan will be unique to the local school district. The experiences of other school districts may be informative, but may not directly relate to the purpose or progress of a plan in another location. For more information, visit <http://www.dentonisd.org/doi>.

- 3. What makes the District of Innovation worth the risk of the yet-to-be defined federal “payback” that is likely to come by taking on the DOI status? (Chris Shade, Tracy Johnson)**

Districts are not exempt from federal regulations.

- 4. Why do we need a District of Innovation status which invites such risk? At minimum, would it be possible to wait and not be one of the first districts to take this step? Wouldn't it be wise to wait and see how this works with other districts first? (Chris Shade, Tracy Johnson)**

The emphasis of the DOI Committee is student achievement. The purpose is to identify barriers, determine if the barriers are external or internal, and develop recommendations that support student achievement to the school board.

Because every district is unique, each district has the freedom to explore the issues that directly impact the district. There is some concern the legislature may resend this option in the upcoming legislation. The intent is to develop and post the plan prior to the end of the fall semester.

- 5. While the District of Innovation provides opportunities of ingenuity, what factors are being put into place to insure that salary, contracts, etc. won't be impacted? While our present school board and superintendent don't support such actions, what safe-holds, if any, will be put into place for such actions in the future? (Jamie Wilson)**

See official response on the TCC website.

- 6. What is the status on the District of Innovation and what areas would we seek state exemptions? Will teacher contracts be one of those exemptions and if it is, will those on continuing contract be grandfathered in or will there be a possibility that they will lose their continuing contracts? (Chris Shade, Tracy Johnson)**

The DOI Committee has held one preliminary meeting during TIA. The committee will begin meeting on Tuesday, September 13 and will meet throughout the fall semester and perhaps into the spring semester.

In the words of our keynote speaker and author of *The Innovator's Mindset: Empower Learning, Unleash Talent, and Lead a Culture of Creativity*, George Couros said, “Innovation starts not by providing answers, but by asking questions.” This is the approach of the DOI Committee.