

Advisory Committee on Education Gathers for Third Meeting of the Year

Dr. Rodney E. Watson opened the third ACE meeting of the 2018-19 school year on Wednesday, Nov. 7 at the Gordon M. Anderson Leadership Center, by welcoming the committee members and thanking everyone for attending and participating.

The committee gathered to discuss instructional strategies and the latest Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) Growth Star 360 and Checkpoint #1 assessment data, as well as discuss the work underway on the proposed 2019-20 Instructional Calendar.

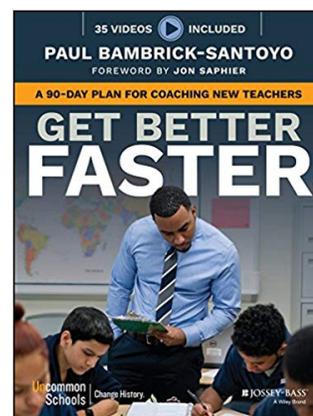
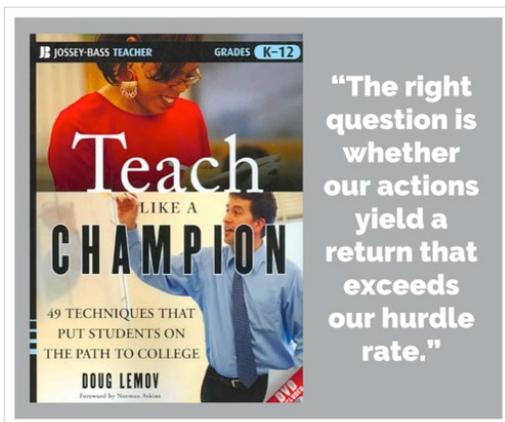
SpringWay Systems, Structures and Routines

Dr. Watson kicked off the meeting by asking Chief of Staff Dr. Julie Hill to lead an activity for the group, beginning with a quick review of the district's four strategic priorities for the year – Special Education, Gifted & Talented, PVA Integration and Professional Development.

Dr. Hill then moved on to a presentation of a video featuring a Wunsche CTE teacher modeling a Teach Like a Champion lesson on floral design. She asked everyone in the room to identify and write down all of the Teach Like a Champion (TLAC) and Get Better Faster techniques observed in the video.

The activity prompted discussion of TLAC strategies and techniques, including threshold, strong start, strong voice, establishing a routine, stretch it, check for understanding, timed agenda and every minute matters, board to paper, independent practice and narrating the positive.

As the group discussed the techniques, one committee member noted she had never heard of the board to paper strategy. Dr. Watson said that one of the benefits of TLAC is giving a common language to many of the strategies teachers already practice in the classroom, whether they are aware of them or not. He said it's helpful to know the names so that everyone is on the same page when talking about and sharing instructional best practices. He urged committee members to practice identifying TLAC strategies as part of their ongoing work to learn and internalize those instructional techniques.



2018 Official Performance-Based Monitoring Analysis System (PBMAS) Overview

Dr. Hill then led a presentation on the district's official 2018 PBMAS Staging. The committee has spent previous meetings discussing the importance of this data system that reports annually on the performance of

school districts in selected program areas, including bilingual education/English as a Second Language (ESL), career and technical education (CTE), certain federal Title programs and special education.

She noted there was good news on the district's performance in bilingual education/ESL, which maintained their performance at Stage 2 in 2017-18. She then noted that CTE also improved from a Stage 4 in 2016-17 to a Stage 3 last year.

In another positive trend, performance in special education moved from a Stage 4 in 2016-17 to a Stage 3 last year.

Dr. Watson emphasized why the PBMAS Staging is so important.

"Every month we meet with the TEA and we're required to discuss what the district is doing to improve student performance in those areas," he said.

In concluding the presentation, Dr. Hill stressed that the district is within reach of moving from Stage 3 in special education to Stage 2, which would be a big win for all Spring ISD students.

Bilingual Education/
English as a Second
Language (BE/ESL)

Career and Technical
Education (CTE)

ESSA Title I

Special Education
(SPED)

2018-19 Beginning-of-Year Results for Measures of Academic Progress (MAP), Star 360 and Checkpoint #1

The committee also received a brief overview of MAP data, Star 360 and Checkpoint 31 presented by Dr. Miguel Perez. Each member was given a specific report for their campus so they could see how their students were tracking so far this school year and could share the data with colleagues back at their campuses.

The goal of this checkpoint is to provide some insight into where progress is being made and where more work needs to be done, Dr. Perez told the group. Another way to evaluate progress is by looking at how different subgroups of students are performing, such as Gifted & Talented, Special Education and English Language Learners.

He noted that the most valuable aspect of MAP data is understanding how many students are below grade level so that everyone on a campus can focus on getting those students to grade level. For example, the data shows a big drop in the percentage of students districtwide reading on grade level from Grade 1 (75 percent) to Grade 2 (28 percent). The goal is trying to figure out why there is that drop and then look at strategies to close those numbers.

He encouraged the committee members to share the data with their campuses and work with their campus leaders so that everyone understands the numbers as they relate to student achievement.

Dr. Watson added that it was important to make the connection between the data and real-life consequences. Specifically, he noted that one proposal that will be considered by the State Legislature when it opens its next session in January is to tie funding to third-grade reading scores. He said Spring ISD could lose funds unless it does more to make sure all of its third-graders are reading on level. In addition, he said Spring ISD is facing competition from charter schools and is hearing from parents who are demanding more for their students.



Proficiency



Growth

“As a district, we’re trying to stay competitive,” he said. “The better our students perform, the more students will move into the district and the more money we will have for our classrooms. We’ve all got to continue working together.”

2019-20 Instructional Calendar Discussion and Development

20|19
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District of Innovation
INSTRUCTIONAL
CALENDAR



One of the key roles of the ACE is provide guidance as the district develops the instructional calendar for the next school year. As part of that process, all ACE members received a short questionnaire on the current calendar to gather feedback on start dates, staff professional development dates, and school breaks and holidays.

“We care about what you think,” said Dr. Hill as she opened the discussion on how the committee felt about the five Staff Professional Development days at the beginning of the year.

Many members stated they felt that with all the training, they didn’t have time to prepare for students. “It felt like our time as teachers was not being valued because we have to spend our off-contract time to set up our classrooms,” one teacher said.

But some committee members teaching at the high school level said they liked having all the training during that first week because it was concise and they didn’t need the time to set up their classrooms.

Dr. Watson noted that one of the challenges facing the district is getting teachers to attend training when it’s not paid. In response, an ACE member said one option might be to give teachers who prefer getting their training done over the summer the opportunity to do it, with the caveat that built-in training days at the start of the year be returned to them for planning and preparation time.

The conversation over training exposed some areas for improvement over how those opportunities are communicated to teachers. Committee members say they often get notified of potential training sessions with little or no notice, or even after a training date has passed.

Dr. Hill promised to work on how that information is shared with teachers so that they are notified in a timely fashion. She also said the district is currently looking at the possibility of planning a summer conference for teachers that would include a lot of the important trainings that all teachers need to be successful.

Dr. Watson noted that a goal is to get the 2019-20 Instructional Calendar approved earlier this year. Draft calendar options will be presented to the ACE at its next meeting in December.

2018-19 Retention Supplement

Dr. Watson concluded the meeting by reminding ACE members that eligible employees will be paid a one-time retention supplement in the Nov. 23 payroll. He asked that members help communicate that the supplement is just that – a one-time payment for those eligible employees whose start date was before June 30, 2018 and are employed through the Nov. 23 payroll.

The payment was approved by the Board of Trustees in June as part of the 2018-19 budget, in lieu of raises for full- and half-time employees. An email to all eligible employees will be sent out next week.

The superintendent thanked all the teachers for their hard work in the district and reminded them that the Thanksgiving break would be coming soon.

Next Meeting

The next ACE meeting will be held on Wednesday, Dec. 5 from 4:30 to 6 p.m.