



**BROWNSVILLE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
 District-wide Educational Improvement Council (DEIC)  
 2017-2018

**Official Meeting Minutes for October 4, 2017 approved 10/16/2017**

*Dr. Esperanza Zendejas*  
 Superintendent of Schools

**Facilitators: Bertha Peña, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction**  
**Roni Louise Rentfro, Ed. D., District Coordinator of School Improvement**

**I. Welcome by Carlos Guerra, Assistant Superintendent for Dr. Esperanza Zendejas, Superintendent of Schools**

- He thanked the members for their time and effort on the behalf of Dr. Zendejas who was at another event out of the district. He asked that they carefully consider the proposed plan.

**II. Meeting Called to Order**

Clement Markley, DEIC President, called the Special Called DEIC meeting to order at 5:03 PM.

**III. Roll Call:**

The following DEIC members were not in attendance and their campus did not have another individual attend to get the information for the campus:

LOCATION	FIRST NAME	LAST NAME
<i>El Jardin Elem.</i>	Norma	Hurtado
<i>Gonzalez Elem.</i>	Beatriz	Moreno
<i>Hudson Elem.</i>	Cynthia	Cantu
<i>Lincoln Park</i>	Patience	Nelson
<i>Manzano MS</i>	Gertrudes	Martinez
<i>Oliveira MS</i>	Demina	Nichols
<i>Porter ECHS</i>	Pending	Pending*
<i>Pullam Elem.</i>	Mary Alice	Bodden
<i>Putegnat Elem.</i>	Adriana	Mireles
<i>Sharp Elem.</i>	Rebecca	Wood

Substitutes were present for Besteiro Middle School, as well as Morningside, Palm Grove, and Yturria Elementary Schools. \*Porter ECHS will be electing a new non-teaching professional.

**IV. Presentations**

- A. George McShan, facilitator for the BISD District of Innovation Plan Committee, described some of his background from starting as a BISD Brownsville High School science teacher in 1969, serving as instructor and Dean at TSTC, past President of the Texas and the National Association of School Boards, and Board member from Harlingen CISD for 30 years.
1. The members were provided with a couple of handouts, one with the Innovation Planning Committee meeting agenda and minutes, sample draft calendars, a listing of other districts that have submitted DOI plans, and other DOI information. The second handout was a copy of the TEA webpage for DOI that shows the resources and links to districts' DOI plans.
  2. He provided the membership with an overview of the timeline, purpose and opportunities of being a District of Innovation:



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- TEA providing opportunity for districts to determine what Texas Education Code they want to be exempt from the eligible laws.
- BISD is only considering the option to start earlier than the last Monday in August
- Los Fresnos started on August 14<sup>th</sup>, other districts started August 21<sup>st</sup>, charter schools starting August 14<sup>th</sup>, Pt. Isabel did not change their calendar start yet. Districts can do a lot of different things but BISD's plan will only address the calendar.
- Mr. McShan used playing chess versus playing checkers as an example of the additional flexibility opportunities under the DOI plan.
- He described some of the opportunities including balanced semesters, matching schedules with higher education—both for students and teachers, giving parents more choice, more time to prepare for the state exams, better balance of days between semesters, and other areas noted in the DOI committee's minutes

Carlos Guerra, Assistant Superintendent, joined with Mr. George McShan in answering members' questions regarding the intent and purpose of the plan. Through-out the presentation, it was re-iterated that the DEIC was only approving the plan to allow the district to create a calendar that could start prior to the last Monday in August.

Some of the questions addressed included:

- How does it help align with college? College start dates have sometimes conflicted with BISD's calendar, especially with late graduation dates that interfere with registration for summer university courses.
- Could this plan allow BISD to hire un-certified teachers? It is not part of the current DOI plan. The district would have to go through the entire DOI process all over again if it wants to add this exemption.
- Are all representatives on the DEIC elected? Dr. Rentfro stated that, according to the submission information from the campus principals, all campus representatives were elected this year or last year.
- Will the calendar committee have any say in the calendar for this? At this time the DEIC is not voting on a specific calendar, the current plan for calendar development is expected to be as it has been in the past with campuses providing input into which calendar the district will follow.
- Some campus representatives wanted to take back information to their campuses about the information they were sharing with them today before voting, but Mr. McShan reminded them that they have been elected by their campus to represent the campus. If the vote is in favor, then the plan is posted for 30 days on the district website before the BISD Board of Trustees can vote on the DOI plan. The plan must be approved by a 2/3's majority vote of the Board of Trustees. If the board approves the DOI plan, then the district will determine what the actual calendar will be.
- Numerous members made statements for or against the proposed plan for a variety of reasons. Mr. McShan and Carlos Guerra continued to remind the representatives that the vote was only to possibly change the starting date of the BISD calendar beginning the next school year.



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A motion was made to conclude the presentation and conduct the vote by Anna Gabbert, Pace ECHS and seconded by Myra Cortez from Paredes Elementary. This motion was approved by a majority voice vote.

#### V. Action Items

- A. Mr. George McShan presented the ballot describing the plan for members to use to record their vote. He and others again stated that the DEIC was only voting for calendar flexibility.
- B. The members marked their ballots either "For" or "Against" the DOI plan to be able to start before the last Monday in August. The ballot included the following information:

**Proposed Exemption**

- Flexible Calendar
  - (TEC 25.0811)

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**Current Calendar:**  
Students start school the last Monday of August.

**Proposed Calendar:**  
To allow for a calendar that fits the local needs of our school district, and community, we would like to consider a flexible calendar option, which may include an early start date.

- Students may begin earlier than the fourth Monday of August. This earlier start date will allow the opportunity for a more balanced first and second semester number of days of instruction.
- Greater local control;
- Increased flexibility governing education programming;
- Empowerment to innovate and think differently;
- Provide classroom teachers the opportunity to deliver more equitable learning experiences for students in the fall and spring semesters.
- Align dual credit courses with post secondary institutions such as UT-RGV, and Texas Southmost College.
- Fall semester exams prior to Christmas vacations.
- More instructional days prior to mandatory state testing.

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#### VI. Announcements

- Mr. Markley announced the next meeting would be the next regularly scheduled meeting would be October 16, 2017 at 5:30 PM at the BISD Boardroom.
- The results of the voting were announced after the ballots were counted by Clement Markley, President; Dr. Rentfro, DEIC Facilitator; and Carlos Guerra, Area Assistant Superintendent: **38 votes "For" and 12 "Against" the DOI plan.** The motion carried.

#### VII. Adjournment

Mr. Markley, DEIC President, called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Anna Gabbert from Pace ECHS made the motion and Luz Marshall from Martin Elementary seconded the motion to adjourn. The motion was approved unanimously.