

Session: Third Future Schools Presentation

Task Force Chair Josue Tamarez Torres welcomed members back to the main session. He introduced Third Future Schools CEO and former Dallas ISD Superintendent, Mike Miles. Commissioner Mike Morath joined the session to facilitate a Q&A with Mr. Miles.

Introduction and Overview

Mr. Miles shared the importance of addressing staffing concerns. He shared that their model has 6 schools, with 3 schools in Texas (Odessa, Midland, and Austin). Mr. Miles began his presentation sharing the day in the life of a teacher at Third Future Schools. Mr. Miles shared a sample teacher schedule. Commissioner Morath clarified that teachers only have one prep that is delivered 4 times, and that teachers are not doing the prep as much as they are doing the internalization of the lesson because the planning is done by curriculum specialists. Commissioner Morath talked about teachers that may have 4 preps and discussed how it is an engineering problem. He stated that Third Future Schools has reengineered their day to remove tasks from the teacher, so the teacher is better able to focus on instruction. Mr. Miles shared that in the smaller schools the teachers may have two preps instead of one. Commissioner Morath asked about grading and how that can happen during the day. Mr. Miles shared that that teachers grade the Demonstration of Learning each day in class, and that the learning coach, a role separate from the teacher role, does all other grading.

Mr. Miles discussed three positions within his staffing model: teachers, learning coaches, and apprentice teachers. He shared that many of the responsibilities that teachers typically have such as grading, making copies, and parent phone calls have been removed from the teacher's role through the addition of the learning coach and other support positions. He discussed that they have apprentice teachers, and that their primary role is to learn the model and provide additional support to students in the classroom.

Mr. Miles discussed the seven staffing strategies used by his school:

1.) Differentiate Compensation

Mr. Miles talked about Ector College Prep with 1,425 kids and showed the compensation plan. He showed how many teachers they have, and the salary range for the teachers. He talked about how they utilize a 1 Classroom 2 Location strategy to maximize the reach of the most effective teachers and how those teachers receive additional compensation. He shared how teachers in certain content areas earn additional compensation. Mr. Miles discussed that their pay scale is differentiated. He shared that on average his teachers make \$73,911.

2.) Eliminate non-instructional tasks

Mr. Miles used a hospital analogy, talking about how teachers need to be like surgeons. He discussed how surgeons do not take blood pressure, prep materials, or prep the room for surgery, allowing them to fully focus on surgery. He compared teachers to surgeons, saying that teachers need to focus on instructional delivery.

Mr. Miles stressed the importance of relieving teachers from extra responsibilities. He shared that in their model discipline is handled by administrators, lesson plans are provided by curriculum developers, copies are made by support personnel, and papers are graded by support personnel. Mr. Miles shared that they are working towards eliminating all non-instructional duties for teachers.

3.) Engage community consultants

Mr. Miles shared that as elective teachers retire and resign, they replace those elective teachers with community consultants. He shared that this allows kids to experience more enriching activities and results in a cost saving to the district. Their students get an elective class daily and twice a week they get a 90-minute Dyad class, classes such as karate, piano, photography, intended to broaden student experience.

4.) Expand the reach of the most effective teachers

Mr. Miles talked about how his schools have leveraged technology to expand the reach of the most effective teachers. He talked about how at Third Future Schools they utilize “one-classroom-two-locations” (1C2L) teachers, who teach two classrooms at one time (one group physically with the teacher and at the same time another group via Zoom). Mr. Miles shared that these teachers are compensated extra, and that they receive assistance from a Teacher Apprentice who will be with the class learning synchronously via Zoom.

5.) Hire Apprentice Teachers

Mr. Miles talked about how he anticipates we will continue to see mid-year vacancies. He shared that at Third Future Schools apprentice teachers are hired to support teachers, learn the model, and become effective teachers. He shared that when they do have vacancies, they have apprentice teachers on deck to move into teaching positions. Mr. Miles shared that because they had apprentice teachers to move into positions, they started the school year with no vacancies.

6.) Create the Learning Coach position

Mr. Miles shared that the learning coach is not a paraprofessional, and that most of them have bachelor's degrees. He shared that the learning coach position has taken roles and responsibilities away from the teacher such as making copies and grading assignments, and they also provide individual or small group support to students.

7.) Create the TFS (Third Future Schools) Teaching Corps

Mr. Miles shared a customized solution they utilized in West Texas, due to the shortage and particular challenges with recruiting teachers in west Texas, which have existed for years. He shared that they have differentiated recruitment strategies by creating a Third Future Schools teacher corps where they are offering a \$75,000 minimum salary and a \$10,000 bonus for teachers to relocate to Odessa or Midland. This strategy incentivizes a pipeline of teacher candidates to relocate to West Texas, which may not be needed in other regions.

Q&A:

The presentation closed with questions facilitated by the Commissioner.

Task Force members asked if Third Future Schools were private. Commissioner Morath clarified that Third Future Schools runs three public school campuses within traditional public-school districts in Texas (Ector County ISD, Midland ISD, and Austin ISD), and that these campuses are responsible for following all the same laws as all other Texas public schools, including teaching the TEKS, taking STAAR, and that they receive an A-F rating. All performance, finance, and other data for these campuses is available on txschools.gov. Commissioner Morath talked about how schools have operational flexibility under Texas law. He shared that the Third Future Schools model is unique in the way the day is structured for staff and students, the compensation model, and the approach to staffing. Commissioner Morath talked about how a different approach has been designed within the same constraints everyone has. Mr. Miles shared you have to do systems design. He talked about complications in larger districts and talked about how they were able to design programs with existing funding such as TEI (the largest pay for performance program in the country) and the ACE program (paying teachers more to go to the highest need schools) when he was superintendent in Dallas ISD.

Commissioner Morath asked about variations among the schools and what adjustments were made for smaller schools. Mr. Miles shared that the number of Learning Coaches and Apprentices vary based on size. Commissioner Morath talked about 504, ARD, and LPAC meetings, along with the House Bill 4545 tutoring requirements, noting that the model has embedded House Bill 4545 requirements into the schedule. Mr. Miles talked about how their students get support through daily differentiated lessons, and how students get a specialized teacher for 45 minutes. Mr. Miles shared that the 504, ARD, and LPAC meetings have to happen, but they have the Learning Coaches and Apprentice teachers to step in to cover the classes to allow teachers to attend those meetings. Commissioner Morath asked if the school uses substitutes. Mr. Miles shared that due to their staffing model they do not need substitutes, and Commissioner Morath reiterated that because the model has highly trained adults ready to step in, they do not need substitutes. Mr. Miles emphasized that the model allows for quality instruction to always happen.

Mr. Miles addressed additional questions from Task Force members. A Task Force member asked about benefits. Mr. Miles shared that their employees only pay \$50 a month for health, dental, and vision. Another Task Force member asked about athletics. Mr. Miles shared they had sports and reiterated the diverse range of elective courses offered to their students. Another Task Force member asked about technology. Mr. Miles shared about technology offered in the schools and the upfront cost.

Commissioner Morath closed out the session by reiterating that Third Future Schools has a fundamentally unique design. He shared that many schools across Texas have unique models. He stressed a key takeaway from the presentation that each school has an engineered environment, and that this is just one example of a

model that has been engineered very differently, and this model may not work in all contexts. He shared that the policy landscape in the state of Texas allows for a lot of variation in the design decisions of schools. The process of planning and designing takes time. He shared that Mr. Miles went through a thoughtful design process, and then iterates on the design process each year.

Commissioner Morath expressed gratitude to Mr. Miles for the presentation. The Task Force members were sent to Working Groups to debrief and begin drafting initial recommendations.