**July 13 Meeting Reflections**

By Yahterie-Anne Sykes

On July 13th, Mr. Mims and I met with Dr. Diop, Dr. Vargas-Lew, and others at Sam Houston H.S. We met to discuss college ready students at Sam Houston and how we can help them get to Tier One Colleges. Dr. Diop already has a list of 30 students who are college ready. One of his goals for Sam Houston is to focus on helping these students. He wants to be “intentional” in supporting them in the college readiness process. This means that he will create opportunities, like college fairs, so that these 30 students and others at Sam Houston can learn more about Tier One universities. He also plans to work with each student on an individual basis and tailor the experience to their unique needs. This approach will ensure that each student’s need are met,so they do not fall through the cracks.

Personally, I think Dr. Diop’s approach is exactly what is needed at Sam Houston. In my experience, the focus was always on students that were falling behind. Students that were excelling were not given the recognition they deserved. It is very important to let these students know that their efforts are not going unnoticed while guiding them to colleges where they will be challenged and can continue to blossom. In the past, Sam Houston’s goal was to send students to nearby community colleges. Unfortunately, this is not a good strategy for all students, especially those in the top ten. This approach just lumps excelling students with everyone else, without considering to their interests, dreams, and strengths. A “cookie cutter”, one size fits all approach to college ends up hurting high achieving students and hindering their growth.