

Superintendent's Communications Council
Campus Questions
January 19, 2023

ELEMENTARY

Birdville

- 1. Just wondering if there might be anything in the budget for a Spring bonus for teachers?** Probably the big no, but the salaries are not in keeping with inflation.

A. At this time, there are no plans for a Spring bonus.

Green Valley & Porter (questions combined)

- 2. Why are we having to work on January 2nd which is a federal holiday?** New Year's Day is Sunday so observed on Monday. **Why couldn't the PD/Prep be on Tuesday, 1/3?**

A. All these scenarios are discussed in our calendar committee meetings. These dates are usually coordinated with our Professional Learning department.

Green Valley only

- 3. Has there been any thought given to starting school in August on a Monday rather than Friday for teachers?** Returning on Friday makes day care difficult for some.

A. All these scenarios are discussed in our calendar committee meetings. This year's calendar reflects a mid-week start for teachers. We continue to evaluate this thought as we go forward.

- 4. Is there a plan to remove the extra minutes off of each day and return to a pre-COVID schedule?** Some districts attend up to a half hour less than we do per day.

A. We will be keeping the additional days in order to help support our students academically, as well as build up minutes in the event of a bad weather day.

Porter

- 5. During the times of the year where there are high numbers of sick kids and the nurse's office being overwhelmed with students, has there ever been any thought to provide assistance to nurses to assist with the high volume of students and reports that have to be made for each student?**

A. We have resource nurses that float to cover nurse's absences as well as spikes in nurse office visits. We try to use sub nurses if available as well.

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ELEMENTARY (continued)

Snow Heights

6. What is the district's process as well as future plan for overflow students?

Our campus has received several students from various elementaries across the district this year. While we are happy to provide a classroom for them, there has been a strain caused to the campus due to the needs of the students. Some overflow students have been identified as Special Ed which increases the caseload of the Resource teacher. At our campus staffing in February 2022 we were allotted one Resource teacher and one Resource Educational Assistant. This would have been sufficient with the projection of students for the following school year (2022-2023). In May 2022, the number of Resource students projected was 18 and that number has now grown to 34 (and growing) with several of the students being overflow. Scheduling the services needed for all SpEd students, meeting all IEP requirements (many inclusion minutes), and preparing/attending ARDs has come quite cumbersome for just one teacher and EA. In addition to the staffing issue, many overflow students utilize district transportation. In our experience, students that miss the bus in the morning rarely come to school that day which causes a decrease in the campus attendance rate. In the afternoon, students are on campus until after 4:00 PM waiting on the bus to pick them up to return home. As a campus, we have to find personnel to supervise these students as they wait for the bus. **Will we continue to overflow students or increase staffing at the campus level to alleviate the concerns stated above?**

A. The process of overflow is a balance. At this time, we will continue to overflow as needed.

Spicer

7. Teachers are being encouraged to plan project-based assignments (Twelve Days of Innovation, Social Studies, etc.) At the same time, the curriculum is laid out for us with every day scheduled in the scope and sequence. It has been suggested that these projects can be assigned as homework, but this will not work for our student population and their families in the primary grades. Many of our students have siblings who are their caregivers after school, and parents are working multiple jobs. Will the scope and sequence be adjusted next year to allot time for project-based assignments?

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ELEMENTARY (continued)

Spicer (#7 continued)

- A. Project Based Learning is not a requirement but is offered as a choice for specific daily lessons for science and social studies.** In each case the project is aligned to the TEKS and is accounted for in the scope and sequence and unit pacing guides. The optional biome projects in science are available in grades 1–4. Social Studies projects are available K–5 in multiple units. Of note in Social Studies, if the optional project investigates the culture of students, input from families would be needed. The projects do not have a required homework element.

In terms of the 12 Days of Innovation, the presenters have shared positive learning experiences they have experienced facilitating with students. The 12 Days of Innovation focuses on efforts to improve and innovate all learning experiences for students continuously, based on formal and informal research. Twelve Days of Innovation does not try to mandate Project-Based Learning, but it advocates for the inclusion of PBL teaching method elements that align with our district's instructional vision, including:

1. Higher-order thinking tasks
2. Authentic context
3. Active learning
4. Student-focused learning
5. Personalized/blended learning
6. Student voice and choice
7. Student use of rubrics
8. and more

- 8. As the district provides CBAs for different grade levels across subjects, has the district considered providing unit assessments per grade level, including Kinder and 1st grade for each quarter that are created by curriculum writers to help with consistency and cohesiveness for Reading, Math, Science and Social Studies at the Elementary level?**

- A.** Yes, we have considered it. However, because of the curriculum work necessary to change from 6-weeks to 9-weeks and preparing clarification documents for STAAR 2.0, developing unit assessments per grade level has been postponed. In addition, the content coordinators are in the process of developing proficiency or progression scales which will help with developing unit assessments.

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ELEMENTARY (continued)

Watauga ES/West Birdville/Richland High (Questions summarized/combined)

9. With staff being expected to use their personal cell phones for things such as district-required apps (for emergency drills, procedures, Teams, or when the internet is down), will the District provide a voucher, stipend or reimbursement to cover the cost of using personal cell phones?

A. The following Q & As for similar questions are from the December 14, 2021 SCC meeting:

ACFT

14. Since the district is requiring teachers and staff to use their personal cell phone devices for the safety app and for multifactor identification **do you plan to offer some kind of stipend for the cost of paying for that cellular device or provide cellular devices? If not, is there another option for those who do not feel comfortable using their personal devices for work purposes?**

A. Baskerville (Safety App – Navigate 360): Cabinet is currently discussing. Thank you for giving us this feedback and opportunity to deliberate for a common solution.

Lambson (MFA): Multifactor authentication does not require a cellular data plan. One of the options of multifactor security is to receive a voice call or text message on a personal device. The Microsoft Authenticator app is a convenient option for those who choose to install it on personal devices. It allows for much faster authentication approvals, but it is not required.

The Microsoft Authenticator app does work over Wi-Fi so if the user is on our Wi-Fi network, a user would have no problems using that app if they prefer not to receive a text message.

Here is a link to the instruction for the app:

<https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/account-billing/download-and-install-the-microsoft-authenticator-app-351498fc-850a-45da-b7b6-27e523b8702a>

Since there are MFA options that do not require a data plan the district is not providing cell phone stipends to everyone for MFA.

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ELEMENTARY (continued)

Watauga ES/West Birdville/Richland High (#9 continued)

Also, from the same meeting:

Richland

26. Is the district aware of the degree in which they are asking teachers to use their personal cell phone for school use? We have been told we must download Navigate 360 in case of an emergency. We are highly encouraged to use "Remind" as a communication tool which is an app. Lastly, we have been asked to use our personal cell phone as a secondary "off-network" device that must be used for multi-factor authentication. **The school district does not pay for our personal phone therefore what is the alternative to using our personal cell phone?** Technology has yet to get my school phone to work because I do not have a cell phone that is used for school purposes. Yes, I understand it's just simply a text or phone call but assuming teachers have a working cell phone that they feel comfortable using to receive a verification code is a huge assumption. In fact, I was told to PURCHASE a "cheap pre-paid phone". I am confused why I have to BUY something to make SCHOOL technology work. Moving forward, I believe the district should be more aware of when they are asking teachers to use their personal devices and not assume teachers will do it. As well, they should always offer an alternative option.

A. Cabinet is currently discussing. Thank you for giving us this feedback and the opportunity to deliberate for a common solution.

MIDDLE SCHOOL

North Richland Middle

10. Currently our middle school department chairs receive a \$500 annual stipend for the leadership role they support their department in. Surrounding districts (such as Keller, Northwest, Saginaw) provide a stipend over \$1000 for middle school department chairs. This year the district revised the mentor program so that there are two mentees to every mentor, at the end of the school year they receive a \$750 stipend. The position of department chair requires supporting around eleven people, campus goals, and district objectives; but the compensation is less. **To continue to hold quality leaders in these roles how can we as a district compensate them for their time to support their department?**

A. Compensation and stipends are currently being discussed as part of the 2023–24 budget planning. All items will be evaluated, prioritized and recommended to the Board.

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MIDDLE SCHOOL (continued)

Watauga

11. Does BISD have any plans to participate in the TEA Teacher Designation Program in the future? Especially with the teacher shortage, I think this could be a great way to encourage and retain teachers in the district.

A. BISD participates in the Teacher Incentive Allotment through recognition of educators certified through the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards. Starting in October of 2021, BISD has supported teachers in achieving this certification through the *Supporting Teacher Excellence* cohort. This cohort was formed in collaboration with the following neighboring districts: Eagle Mountain Saginaw ISD, Northwest ISD, Hurst-Euless-Bedford ISD, Mansfield ISD, and Carroll ISD. The decision to follow the pathway of National Board Certification rather than creating a Local Designation System was also made in collaboration with our neighboring districts so all would remain in alignment. Operating our districts during the COVID-19 pandemic played a large role in this decision at the time – specifically the workload and strain to the system required to develop a Local Designation System. Supporting teachers in obtaining their National Board Certification allows any teacher who is interested to pursue this pathway quickly and does not limit teacher participation to only STAAR-tested grades/subjects. In the future, it is likely the conversations about developing a Local Designation System will continue. Due to the significant impact this decision would have on BISD staff, many stakeholder groups would be involved in the decision-making and planning process.

HIGH SCHOOL

Shannon

12. Now that all high schools are on the 9-week grading period schedule, will Birdville ISD consider adjusting the calendar to move Fall Break to the end of the 9-week period?

Example: In October of 22, Fall Break was 10/7-10/10 and the grading period ended 10/14.

With the 9-week grading period in mind, would a consideration be made to have the calendar adjusted so that with the first nine weeks ending 10/13 and Fall Break begin 10/14–17?

A. This was discussed in the Calendar Committee meeting. The proposed calendar is what we settled on.