

Superintendent's Communications Council
Campus Questions
April 18, 2016

ELEMENTARY

ACFT

1. **What can our district do to ensure that we help develop the emotional, social, and physical side of our students as well as the intellectual one?** It seems as if we are required to dedicate every minute to academics often to the detriment of the other three parts of the whole child. When we discussed why our school day is longer than all the other surrounding districts (Keller, HEB, Fort Worth, Dallas: 8:00-3:00, BISD: 8:10-3:25), the answer was we need every minute for instructional time. I'm not sure that's the best for our young students who often fall asleep before the end of their very long day and who have nothing left to focus with later in the afternoon. We have also discussed the value of more recess time and again the answer was we need the time for instruction. Yet, what better place is there to develop the social, emotional, and physical side of children than free interaction on the playground?
 - A. We are in the process of reviewing instructional minutes. The school day hours can also be reviewed. One of the best practices to keep students engaged while also developing their social, emotional and physical side of students is to provide multiple daily opportunities to work in pairs, teams or triads.

Binion

2. **Is there a school food program where students of a lower socioeconomic status can take food home on Fridays like the Backpack Program in Keller ISD?**
 - A. The federal food programs offered within the District do not include a backpack program. These are typically provided by non-profit organizations working in conjunction with individual schools.

Currently, there are several campuses that are participating in this program through area churches. If your campus would like to pursue this as an option for your campus, please work with your principal to seek support in how to provide take home food options. Principals, please work with Dr. Ownby to seek out available resources.

3. **Is it possible for an elementary ELAR pacing guide to be provided as a blueprint for teaching ELAR (like the ones in the other core areas)?**
 - A. ELAR is such a very different content area than the others, which means it does not lend itself to a traditional pacing guide. However, there are several suggestions included in the curriculum documents for ways in which teachers can address the issue of pacing. The information below provides several examples.

Here are the pacing features currently provided throughout the existing curriculum documents:

Superintendent's Communications Council

Campus Questions

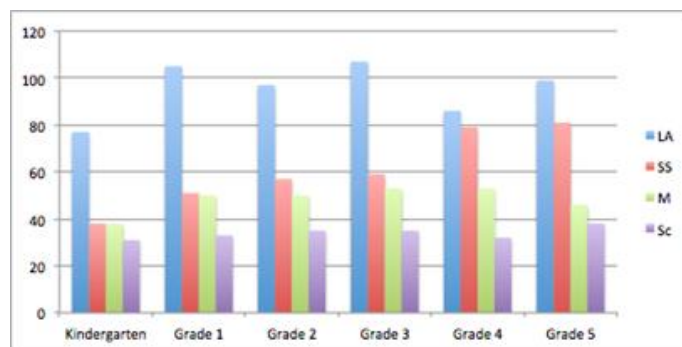
April 18, 2016

ELEMENTARY (Continued)

Binion (#3 continued)

- **Unit Overview: Standards.** LA TEKS are bundled by six-weeks and grouped according to major categories of instruction (i.e., processes, genres, phonics). These TEKS have been intentionally grouped together because they are prerequisite skills needed to achieve the leading standard or because they are naturally learned together. This allows teachers the flexibility they need to respond to the specific instructional needs of their students while still achieving the expectations for that six-weeks.

At most grade levels, the number of LA TEKS is more than double that of most other contents. Further complicating the issue of creating a traditional pacing guide is the fact that a large portion of these standards are process standards rather than content standards.



- **Unit Overview: District Expectations.** When a LA TEKS includes more content than students can reasonably be expected to master within a six-weeks period, a specific District expectation has been added with the TEKS. A star (★) is used to designate the District expectation for that period of instruction. The District expectation provides a clear pacing expectation. For example:

[3.23] Oral and Written Conventions/Handwriting, Capitalization, and Punctuation. Students write legibly and use appropriate capitalization and punctuation conventions in their compositions. Students are expected to:

[A] write legibly in cursive script with spacing between words in a sentence;

- ★ BISD students are expected to write 14 lowercase and uppercase cursive letters individually and joined in words with correct formation, proportion, and slant.

Superintendent’s Communications Council
Campus Questions
April 18, 2016

ELEMENTARY (Continued)

Binion (#3 continued)

- **Unit Overview: Guiding Questions.** A brief narrative outlines the instructional emphasis in the Guiding Questions section of the Unit Overview. LA is a content with far too many TEKS—double that of most other contents. In each six-weeks, this helps teachers focus their instruction on what matters most. This suggests ways to integrate learning from this six-weeks with learning from previous six-weeks. It suggests ways teachers can make connections to previous learning and to the enduring understanding for that grade level. This is a second-grade example.

Guiding Questions	Enduring Understanding: MEANING CAN BE REVEALED DIRECTLY AND INDIRECTLY IN A MESSAGE.
	Students spend the fourth 6 weeks studying the word choices writers make and how this intentional language conveys meaning directly and indirectly. As they read, they make inferences and draw conclusions about characters, setting, and ideas or events based on the precise words the writer uses. As they write, they select precise words that match the meaning and the feeling they want to convey. Include the following types of questions in your discussions. Expect students to support their responses with specific textual evidence and prompt for it when students do not routinely supply this information. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Does this make sense? Which specific word or phrase let you know...?• How do these ideas or information connect with what you already know? Support your response with textual evidence.• What conclusions can you draw about ___ from the writer’s choice of words? Support your response with textual evidence.• What do you notice about this text? What choices did the writer make? Why?

- **Unit Overview: Independent Practice.** The LA curriculum is designed to support the reading workshop and writing workshop structures. The Independent Reading and Independent Writing sections of the curriculum outline the products or evidence required to demonstrate mastery on the TEKS for that six-weeks. This is yet another tool teachers can use to pace their instruction. This is a reading example. The same type of support is provided for writing.

INDEPENDENT READING/GUIDED LITERACY GROUPS
Continue meeting with literacy groups to explicitly teach and practice skills and strategies. Start with the highest needs students. Meet with at least two groups a day, increasing to 2-3 groups per day as the class develops more independence. Meet with struggling readers every day, on-level readers 2-3 times a week and above-level readers 1-2 times a week.
By the end of this 6-week unit, students are expected to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• complete a minimum of:<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ 300 minutes of independent reading in self-selected texts▪ 300 minutes of independent and/or guided reading in assigned, grade level texts• read with comprehension and fluency at text level 10 or higher• retell or act out important events in stories in logical order• complete 1-3 weekly written reading responses

- **Scope and Sequence.** For teachers who prefer a more global look at their curriculum as they pace their daily instruction, the Scope and Sequence document outlines the specific level of achievement expected for each TEKS and the six-weeks in which mastery must be achieved. For example:

**Superintendent’s Communications Council
Campus Questions
April 18, 2016**

ELEMENTARY (Continued)

Binion (#3 continued)

Reading/ Comprehension of Text/Independent Reading. Students read independently for sustained periods of time and produce evidence of their reading. Students are expected to:							
2.12A	read independently for a sustained period of time and paraphrase what the reading was about, maintaining meaning	LS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS
	★ read with comprehension and fluency at ≥ text level 18	★					
	★ read narrative and informational texts with comprehension and fluency at ≥ text level 18		★				
District	★ read with comprehension and fluency at ≥ text level 20			★			
Expectation	★ read narrative and informational texts with comprehension and fluency at ≥ text level 20				★		
	★ read narrative and informational texts with comprehension and fluency at ≥ text level 24					★	
	★ read with comprehension and fluency at ≥ text level 28						★
Reading/Media Literacy. Students use comprehension skills to analyze how words, images, graphics, and sounds work together in various forms to impact meaning. Students continue to apply earlier standards with greater depth in increasingly more complex texts. Students are expected to:							
2.16A	recognize different purposes of media (e.g., informational, entertainment)						PS
2.16B	describe techniques used to create media messages (e.g., sound, graphics)					PS	
2.16C	identify various written conventions for using digital media (e.g., e-mail, website, video game)			PS			

LS = Leading Standard; PS = Partner Standard; ★ = BISD clarification of mastery level expectations during the 6-week period
November 14, 2015

Additional support to campuses in using the curriculum documents is also provided through our coaches and our ELA Elementary Coordinator. Please feel free to contact the Curriculum and Instruction Department for assistance.

Foster Village

4. According to House Bill 2610, prekindergarten will need to add 30 minutes to each AM and PM session to be in compliance. We have heard that the District is applying for a waiver for the 2016–2017 school year. **When will we know if the waiver was accepted? What are the plans for the 2017–2018 school year for prekindergarten hours?**
 - A. The District has a waiver for the 2016–17 school year and will be investigating ways to comply with HB 2610. For next year, the hours will not change. We will be working on how to best address HB 2610 in the future.

Hardeman

5. **Is it possible for the printers and copiers to be connected to the teacher badges or codes so that copies on the copier and printers can be accessed only with a code?** This will keep papers from being mixed up with other items or accidentally taken off the printer and also keep documents confidential.
 - A. If department codes have been set up on the copiers, the copy machines will require a code for making copies and running print jobs. This only applies to the Canon copiers. The copiers and printers are different systems. We will investigate what it will take to provide this type of functionality on the printers as well.
6. **Why are CBAs scheduled at the end of the six weeks in which the material is still being taught?**

Concerns:

 - Many math TEKS are only taught for one week. If the CBA is given in the 5th week of the six weeks, then some material will not have been covered.
 - Many campuses give end-of-the-six-weeks tests and so students are tested too much in one week.

Superintendent's Communications Council
Campus Questions
April 18, 2016

ELEMENTARY (Continued)

Hardeman (#6 continued)

- Also, this year, CBAs and TELPAS Writing samples were due at the same time.
 - CBAs during the end of six weeks and TELPAS limits instruction for students.
- A. The Assessment Council designs the CBA schedule each year based on input from committee members, campuses, and C&I staff. The issue of CBA testing during the last week of the six-week marking period was brought to the group's attention this year and is being taken into account in developing the schedule for 2016–17. Please note that it is a campus decision to administer six-weeks tests and they are not prescribed by the District.

The course scope and sequence is carefully considered by the content coordinators as they develop the CBAs to ensure that the content has been covered prior to the test administration. The TEKS addressed in each CBA are provided in the blueprint documents available in Forethought. It is suggested that teachers make use of the blueprints when planning for instruction to ensure that students have had ample time to learn standards prior to the CBA administration.

Mullendore

7. What after-school programs will be offered to our students when ASPIRE ends? Is there anything on a District level to support the schools that will be losing the ASPIRE program?

- A. The campuses that are not offered ASPIRE that want to continue after-school programs can submit proposals to indicate how they would meet this need. Currently, there are going to be six campuses that will have alternated, school-run after-school programs starting in the fall.

Snow Heights

8. Would the District ever consider a standards-based report card in 3-5?

- A. This will be shared with the principals and discussed with the Curriculum and Instruction department. We will continue to gather feedback on this. In order for this to be considered, research on best practices must be considered to see what the benefits would be for students as well as any possible unintended consequences.

9. Would the District consider moving to a 9-week reporting period?

- A. We will bring this forward to the principals and the Curriculum and Instruction department to discuss. Once reviewed, if a change is recommended, we will bring this forward to Cabinet. Currently, UIL requires us to decide on participation of No Pass/No Play based on six-weeks grades.

**Superintendent's Communications Council
Campus Questions
April 18, 2016**

ELEMENTARY (Continued)

O.H. Stowe

10. Our Report Cards have comments in English. I would like to request to have comments in Spanish for the bilingual classes. That way parents really understand their children's progress and more details about their behavior/work habits. Sometimes it's really hard to contact parents and at least we can send comments on their report card in their language. Is this possible?

- A. We will certainly look into an option to provide a Spanish translation to the comments teachers indicate on their report cards.

MIDDLE SCHOOL

Haltom

11. Will they strongly think about changing Spring Break back to the second week in March, so our students have two weeks to get back into the groove of school before they take the 8th Math, 8th Reading and 7th Writing STAAR tests? With the change, we only have 5 days to get them back in the groove and we will have high percentages of absences the first two days they return from Spring Break.

- A. This concern will be shared with the Calendar Committee that meets in the fall. BISD tries to choose breaks in line with the area school districts so that child care is not as impacted. We will weigh out the pros and cons of both decisions.

North Richland

12. Is HR working on a system to automate employee changes when they move into a new position? For example, when someone moves to a new position, the principal is responsible for contacting Technology, Dr. Uphoff and perhaps others to get phones changed, Skyward campus access changed, level of Skyward/Eduphoria access changed, etc. With all the other duties of the principals, having them responsible for triggering these changes seems much less efficient than having systems through HR to trigger them. The result is it can take quite a while for employees to have the appropriate data to complete their new job duties.

- A. Yes, Technology is working closely with the HR department to automate these processes as much as possible. The goal is to configure access and permissions based upon job information in Munis. This will also apply to door access and ID badges as well.

**Superintendent's Communications Council
Campus Questions
April 18, 2016**

MIDDLE SCHOOL

North Richland (continued)

13. Has the District ever considered using an interpreting/translation service such as CYRACOM? BISD has a limited number of interpreters and many families who speak languages other than English. A translation service like this would make it possible to access parents and families easily for ARD meetings, parent conferences, teacher phone calls, school programs, etc.

- A. We have three District Parent Liaisons who provide these services to campuses who need support with Spanish or Vietnamese. In some instances, we contract with Catholic Charities for these interpreting services. We will continue to explore all avenues for providing efficient and effective translating and interpreting services.

HIGH SCHOOL

Birdville

14. What is the District policy on the number of school related field trips that students can take in one year? We have several students involved in multiple sports, clubs, and organizations who are missing 10+ days per semester for these activities, plus missing classes to attend fashion shows and counselor meetings and a myriad of other things. **If there is not a district policy can we consider putting a cap on the number of school related field trips per student?**

- A. The District does have a policy regarding this issue.

FM (LOCAL)

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITY ABSENCES

The District shall make no distinction between absences for UIL activities and absences for other extracurricular activities approved by the Board. A student shall be allowed in a school year a maximum of ten extracurricular absences not related to post-district competition, a maximum of five absences for post-district competition prior to state, and a maximum of two absences for state competition.

USE OF DISTRICT FACILITIES

School-sponsored student groups may use District facilities with prior approval of the appropriate administrator. Other student groups may use District facilities in accordance with policy FNAB.

15. What is the District policy on mock exams for academic coursework? Does the district/curriculum department feel that it is important to have these mock exams to guide the preparation of these major standardized exams? If so, can you explain the rationale behind allowing some to do it during the school day but others being told no it has to be done on a weekend or after school. Would the district consider coming up with a modified schedule by class period to allow equity among all activities for an uninterrupted block of time in the spring semester for the purpose of mock exams/practices? (e.g., Monday 1st and 2nd periods only,

Superintendent's Communications Council

Campus Questions

April 18, 2016

Tuesday 3rd and 4th periods only, Wednesday 5th and 6th periods only, Thursday 7th period and grade level assemblies, Friday normal to analyze data.)

- A. Yes, the District does see eminent value in conducting AP Mock Exams in preparation for the spring exams. What is the purpose of the AP Mock Exam?

The AP Mock Exam:

- provides information to the teacher, student, and parent on progress toward performance targets;
- allows teachers and students to plan for reinforcement and interventions as needed *prior* to the beginning of the “testing season” (which includes state assessment and AP tests);
- provides insight into revisions for syllabus and curriculum revisions for the next instructional year; and
- provides productive practice with actual AP-released tests.

Administration of the Mock Exams does require a significant commitment of time. Due to the fact that most students are enrolled in two or more AP courses, guidelines for the administration of the AP Mock Exam were developed with the input of BISD teachers to ensure that students would not miss instruction in other academic classes. In 2015–16, the window for the Mock Exam was significantly lengthened and teachers were given the *choice* of when to administer the exam—in their class period across multiple days or at a time when test conditions could be reflective of the testing situation (after school or on a Saturday.) Previous requests to establish a “dead week” of testing like the one described in the question have been considered. However, the amount of instructional time missed increases significantly for all students in this scenario.

Richland

- 16. Could the next calendar committee consider adding the extra minutes on days in future, so school year ends before June starts?**

- A. It could be discussed, but it could have consequences on extracurricular activities.

- 17. New construction: Could lower maintenance floors such as stained concrete be used instead of labor intensive waxed floors?** It seems most public buildings, retail, etc. are moving away from waxed floors.

- A. We deliberated this selection decision prior to the design phase of the replacement campuses in the 2014 bond program. Until recently, pricing for stained and other exposed concrete flooring finishes has been well above the installation cost for our staple flooring system, vinyl composition tile. Concrete finishes are still quite a bit higher by about 90 cents per square foot. However, prices have begun to drop as a result of increased demand for concrete flooring finishes. Some of the issues we must consider are ensuring protection of the flooring during the building construction, public misperceptions over cosmetic cracks in the concrete, stain resistance, inability to change the color of the floor over the years and having a slightly noisier building due to the harder surface.

Superintendent's Communications Council
Campus Questions
April 18, 2016

HIGH SCHOOL

Richland (#17 continued)

We continue to discuss and debate the effectiveness and efficiencies of the maintenance and upkeep of flooring, since it is the largest surface we have to maintain inside the buildings. The issue of flooring selection will certainly be revisited again with the next opportunity to plan a replacement campus.

EXTRA QUESTIONS

18. Has the District thought about having a daycare at Shannon for teen mothers, so they can get their degree?

A. BISD has a supportive Assistance for School-Aged Parent Program with a facilitator of School-Aged Parents and a Social Worker who serve not only Shannon High School but all high school and middle school school-aged parents throughout the District. BISD partners with Child Care Management Services and Workforce Solutions for Tarrant County which, in most cases, are able to provide free child care or child care at a minimal charge through local child care providers based on the student's income.

19. Does the District have any plans in the future for a job mentoring program for special education students at the high school level? Some districts have EAs or teachers who actively go into the community and do job coaching to get students ready for the world of work. We have the PASE program for specific students which is great preparation but nothing is the same as actually being out in the real world.

A. We currently have a program called the Work Experience for our high school special education students in the OMEGA class. Theresa Bowman is the Work Experience teacher and she has set up jobs in the community for the students to rotate through during the school year.

Currently, two of the high schools have decided not to participate in this program, but plan on being part of it next school year. We have asked the campuses to identify two to four students that are ready to try out different jobs to see what interests them, as well as see what jobs they are capable of performing well. The PAS lab experience is the stepping stone to the Work Experience.

The PAS Lab is an excellent tool to teach job behaviors as well as job tasks to students. From the data gathered, we are able to determine student skill levels regarding specific job tasks. Students often have a difficult transition when moving to having a supervisor as opposed to a teacher. The PAS Lab helps teach students how to deal with a supervisor, clock in and out of work, and what to do when a job is completed. Another aspect of the PAS Lab allows students to determine if the specific task is something they enjoy doing and if they have a competitive rate of performance in completing the task. There are over 400 job tasks, so students have the opportunity to attempt many different job tasks at different levels of

Superintendent's Communications Council
Campus Questions
April 18, 2016

difficulty. This information helps determine what type of job the student would be good at and would enjoy.

The focus of the OMEGA program, in its first year of existence, is to assist in the development of functional living and work skills, as well as earning the required course credits for graduation. As the program grows, so will the opportunities for students to gain work experience in the community.