

Superintendent's Communications Council
Campus Questions
October 6, 2022

ELEMENTARY
Birdville & ACFT

1. **I would like to know when the district is going to increase teacher's salary that would be compensatory with the cost of living?**
 - A. The Board of Trustees has approved teacher raises of 3.3 and 3.0 percent for the 2021–22 and the 2022–23 fiscal year, respectively. Each year, the District reviews teacher salaries from area districts to ensure the District's teacher salary scales are competitive. The District generates revenue based on student attendance only. Student attendance and overall student enrollment have declined significantly since the beginning of COVID-19, impacting available revenue. In addition, no increases in revenue have been provided by the Legislature since 2019. To ensure adequate funding for teacher raises for 2022–23, The Board of Trustees adopted a \$6 million deficit for the 2022–23 fiscal year. Since the Legislature will be meeting in the spring of 2023, the District is hopeful additional revenue will be provided to districts for salary increases and funding needed for the rising inflation.

Cheney Hills

2. **EA positions are hard to fill and there are many openings. Is the district looking to add compensation to the EAs pay in order to help fill vacant EA positions?**
 - A. The District contracts with the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) each year to conduct a salary review. As funds are available, the District recommends market adjustments to groups identified by TASB. EA pay will be one of the areas reviewed this year during budget discussions.
3. **Admins are being pulled between meetings and students. How are programs and school size taken into consideration when deciding how many APs to have on the admin team?**
 - A. When the District staffs administrative staff for campuses, student enrollment and special programs are considered. We do realize that the number of student support meetings are increasing. We will continue to monitor these allocations and add support where necessary. Principals can request temporary assistance and we will support when and however we can. This concern will be addressed in our upcoming staffing meetings for the 2023–24 school year.

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ELEMENTARY (continued)

Green Valley

4. BAS Testing takes so many hours, especially in departmentalized grade levels. For example, this year we have 63 students in our grade level and one RLA teacher. If she tests 1 student per class during their silent reading time and that student only takes 30 minutes to test, she would need 31.5 school days to test. This is shorter than the window we are given. This is assuming each student will only take 30 minutes to test. Most students take at least 45 minutes to test. **Could campuses have help with testing from upper administration?** I believe this would help our teachers and also help our administration to see just how tedious this testing is. **Can we get help with BAS testing from the administration or keep the testing window open longer?** I test EVERY DAY during our SMART TIME and can't get it finished in the window.

A. Each year, the RLA Coordinator provides a BAS Plan that sets the stage for implementing the BAS Assessment. Funds are provided by Dr. Clark to help with departmentalized grades on each elementary campus. The principal has a choice between a BAS Cadre member that helps with the administration and scoring of the assessment or funds for substitutes for those grade level teachers to aid in the assessment. The funds are based on the most current membership report. In addition, the plan indicates that each campus should create a BAS Cadre team on their campus to ensure that teachers can complete the assessment within the window. The procedures are laid out in the BAS Plan. Principals and APs receive that plan at the first of the year. The BAS Plan for 2022–23 is linked here for more details.

[2022-23 BAS Plan](#)

Holiday Heights

5. **With more and more students needing specialized instruction, what are the plans to help support the students and teachers serving these specific students?**
- A. The Special Education Department will continue to support students and teachers in all programs with instructional coaches, behavior facilitators and coordinator visits to classrooms. The department utilizes department leads/chairpersons to disseminate information to all special education staff on each campus and has created a SpedHub to provide additional resources in an easy-to-navigate format. Additionally, professional learning opportunities are offered which address special education information in general, as well as targeted PD for specific programs.

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Holiday Heights (continued)

- 6. Will more staff be added to serve resource and inclusion students? Will there be more specialized programs added as student needs increase (such as PASS, AABLE, SEEC, etc.)?**

A. The Special Education department tracks enrollment in all special education programs. Teachers enter enrollment information into a class roster and updated information is reviewed regularly to assess staffing needs. Additionally, coordinators and instructional coaches visit the programs they oversee and constantly monitor the enrollment. We also do data analysis to determine if the self-contained class is the LRE for a student and review data to determine amount of support needed by each individual child. The department has added several self-contained classrooms this year and will continue to monitor the need throughout the year.

The District will staff as required by TEA and Federal programs stipulate. The Special Education department frequently communicates with HR to add staff where needed. Unfortunately, like many public and private entities, we are experiencing some difficulty hiring staff in this post-pandemic economy.

Mullendore

- 7. Can people on the substitute list please be deleted from the list when they are no longer subbing? Also, if subs continually cancel jobs they have agreed to take, can they be deleted from the substitute list as well?**

A. The substitute list is generated through MUNIS and we do not make them inactive unless the substitute resigns. We can deactivate a substitute in Frontline, but again only if the substitute lets us know.

1. Here are the times when we will deactivate substitutes in Frontline without resignation.
 - a) In August, November, and March we deactivate non-working substitutes. We limit this action to avoid removing substitutes who plan to work, but have not started yet.
 - b) By August we will deactivate all substitutes who have not completed the required paperwork for continued employment.
 - c) When campuses inform the substitute office that a substitute has indicated that they are no longer substituting, we will deactivate that substitute in Frontline.

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ELEMENTARY (continued)

Mullendore (continued)

8. **Why are there so many restrictions on using the P-card for Social Committee funds?** Like having to have a W-9 if they are not an approved vendor.
- A. The IRS requires a W-9 for all vendors so the District can file 1099 forms at year end.

Porter

9. **Are elementary teachers required to meet with parents for BOY conferences, per district policy? If so, why was this not scheduled into our district calendar?** In the past, we've sometimes been given an early dismissal day that was dedicated to elementary conferences in the afternoon. If you have 20 students and meet for 20 minutes with each parent, that takes almost 7 hours. Even with the early dismissal day being used for conferences, teachers still need to stay past contract hours to complete all of them. **Can this please be considered for future calendars?**
- A. The Calendar Committee built in more half days in the 2022–23 school calendar than in years past for this very reason. The use of these days is a campus and Teaching and Learning collaboration. Before the 2019–20 school year, we did not have any half days for BOY conferences. We will evaluate the use of the days and their placement in our upcoming 2023–24 instructional calendar meetings this fall.

Smithfield

10. **How does the new grading policy apply to writing? For example, for the new corrections policy, how do we give corrections for a writing composition?** We spent 3-4 weeks on the writing process, and I graded the final copy. I wanted to take this as a test grade. Using the Norma Jackson rubric, many students did not score an 85. **What can I give as a retake for them to make it up to an 85?**
- A. Using the writing composition that has been graded, conference with the student on how to grow in the ideas and conventions of the writing. Highlight the 12-stage rubric in the areas that need growth. Then allow the student to revise and edit the composition and resubmit the writing for the extra points.

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Snow Heights

11. There is a serious shortage of Special Education Educational Assistants (EAs). Some classrooms are operating without the proper ratios, and it is difficult to meet IEP goals and educational requirements. Even with the District's pay increase for the 2022-2023 school year, neighboring districts are paying more an hour for EAs and we are losing good ones to them. **How will the shortages be addressed and what is the district doing to entice candidates to apply for the open positions?**

A. BISD realizes that some area districts have made adjustments to Special Education employee pay. We began reviewing this situation a few weeks ago and will plan to meet on how to remain competitive with our pay.

Stowe

12. As the district works to create a solution to the teacher shortage, is there consideration to the workload put onto the first-year teachers so they are encouraged to stay in the profession? For example, a new to the profession teacher in Kindergarten through 3rd grade must complete Reading Academies, 30-hour GT training, learn the district curriculum, complete district assessment expectations, and, often, complete certification requirements at the same time. **What can we do as a staff/district to help communicate with the State the impact these laws are making on our teachers?**

A. Professional learning is essential to mastering the craft of teaching. Districts establish professional learning plans based on a variety of guidelines such as legislative mandates (required trainings), district initiatives, and research-based practices which benefit students and teachers alike. The Texas Reading Academy is mandated by a law which includes a timeline for implementation tied to teacher assignment. District leaders across the state have provided extensive feedback to TEA and state legislators regarding reading academies. TEA has provided some revision to those who are required to complete training and the timeline. There are indications that the legislature will take up this requirement in the next session. The initial 30-hour Gifted and Talented training is required by the state, applying to all kindergarten teachers and any teacher who teaches core content to any identified GT students in grades 1–12. The GT coordinator provides guidance to principals on identified students each spring to help with the assignment of cluster teachers for GT students. Only those new teachers who meet this requirement are required to complete the GT training in the first year. Other trainings such as those aligned to the SBEC clearinghouse are also required by law. Professional learning on the District curriculum, assessment implementation, and classroom management are necessary for teachers to conduct the core work of instruction.

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ELEMENTARY (continued)

Stowe (#12 continued)

The New Teacher Academy is designed to help support new hires with learning to help them succeed in the classroom, but it remains voluntary. Fortunately, all of these trainings count toward the fulfillment of CPE requirements for certification renewal in the first five years of teaching.

There is no debate that these requirements can be a heavy lift for new teachers. Anyone interested in providing feedback on professional learning state requirements may contact members of the [Texas House Committee on Public Education](#) or [Senate Committee on Education](#).

MIDDLE SCHOOL

North Richland

13. With school security a growing concern for parents and teachers, would the district consider purchasing the [Night Lockdown Door Barricade](#) for all schools? It is a quick and easy step to ensure classroom doors cannot be opened. As of now, if an intruder were to shoot out the glass window on a classroom door, they could potentially reach inside and open the door, even if it is locked. This device prevents the door opening, even if the door itself is not locked for some reason. Understandingly, funding would be a concern, but if it prevents one fatality - it would be worth every penny.

A. It is definitely worth a conversation. We will discuss it with our Safety team.

14. I want to ask if the district can revisit the issue of allowing teachers to use Donor's Choose? It's specifically geared for teachers at Title 1 schools like ours to be able to add resources and supplies to their classrooms to offset the amount we pay out of pocket. We don't get a \$200 resource allowance like many schools do, so we ask for resources and either have to wait half the year to get them or get told there's no money for it. **Why can't we let people who want to donate to us help us out?** The only impact on the school is positive.

A. We will take another look at this program and report back.

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MIDDLE SCHOOL continued)

Smithfield

15. *This is a statement only – no question.*

I would suggest the consideration of the large number of hours of required training that must be accomplished during unpaid personal time. I would suggest that one day of the beginning of the year professional development days be set aside for, among others, Safe Schools Training, Slip and Fall Training, CRT State Bill Training, Dyslexia Training, Required Special Education Training for general education teachers for specified cases, and other required training. These trainings could be completed with any required administration supervision by teachers being assigned to complete these tasks while working on their own campuses. "Check off completion" measures could be devised.

A. Thank you for your feedback. The District recognizes that many of these required trainings must take place outside of contract time. This is the primary reason we offer flex days within the calendar.

Oct. 20, 2022 Clarification from Professional Learning:

A. The intent of the response wasn't to indicate that Safe Schools was flex eligible, just an acknowledgement that we offered flex time for some hours which are required out of contract.

Here is what the Flex Guidelines say:

The flex days honor the time teachers and other exempt staff spend developing themselves as professionals and participating in events outside of contract time or regularly assigned duties.

Flex accrual is accounted for and credited for in-district Professional Learning happening off-contract time. It is reflected in each employee's Professional Portfolio in eduphoria! Strive. Flex accrual typically can begin accruing 30 minutes after a campus dismisses – but this does vary as some after school sessions offer PL for mixed grade level teachers. A decided upon amount of Flex Time is determined when the course is created and that is what the employee in attendance is eligible for. Flex accrual can be credited for out-of-district Professional Learning happening off-contract time with pre-approval from the person's immediate supervisor.

Each August: Staff will use the **Flex Day Request for Approval** form in eduphoria! Formspeak to submit up to **14 hours of professional learning** to be considered for approval by their principals or department directors each year (forms will be updated with any new principals by August as well).

So, as of right now, required *trainings* do not count as Professional Learning. Professional Learning, as defined by policy, is professional learning and

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MIDDLE SCHOOL continued)

Smithfield (#15 continued)

development that grow the educator and deepen their level of knowledge and competency around the seven objectives listed in policy – **DMA Local**. That learning counts towards Flex. The compliance trainings, as of what is in policy right now, do not count towards Flex.

Watauga

16. Is the strategy for the acquisition and retention of substitute teachers being reevaluated? Prior to 2020, substitute availability was not perfect, but now it is abysmal. Teachers are being asked multiple times a week to cover unfilled positions during their planning periods, and the compensation provided isn't the incentive that it is intended to be. I've seen the career fairs for substitutes the last few years, but it doesn't seem like advertisement alone is working as a solution. **Is there any opportunity for an internal committee with teachers included to strategize solutions to this issue?**

A. The Human Resource Substitute team is in the immediate process of reevaluating strategies and seeking more aggressive ways of recruiting new substitutes during the ongoing labor shortage.

Although the overall fill-rate for BISD is down in comparison to years prior to 2020, the teacher fill-rate has steadily risen to numbers close to pre-pandemic data.

We welcome any opportunity to collaborate with teachers, parents, or administrators for suggestions. Campus-level recruitment and retention efforts have proven very successful. For this reason, we will make ourselves available to any campus to discuss recruitment and retention strategies. Some other possible collaborative opportunities might include ...

- a. AP ILT collaboration. (Tips for campus recruitment and retention of substitutes; 10 mins.)
- b. Faculty or department meetings. (Tips for teacher/staff recruitment and retention of substitutes; 10 mins.)

BISD provides a highly competitive compensation package for substitutes. We are continuously researching compensation in our area to determine the need for adjustment.

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MIDDLE SCHOOL (continued)

Watauga (continued)

17. Can the purchasing procedures for technology be re-evaluated? Currently anything we would like to order that plugs into a computer must go through an extra step of technology approval. This includes fairly trivial things like headphones, keypads, clickers, or even toner for copiers. The current procedure delays purchases and creates extra work for several people. **Would it be possible to change this policy to something like - anything over \$50 that plugs into a computer?**

A. We currently offer pre-approved hardware items in our Purchasing Catalog that include headphones, keyboards, presentation clickers, and printer toner. Items in the Service Catalog have automations built in that address the large number of variables that can occur. This includes funding sources, special program approvals, and making sure the technology is compatible with current district Technology systems. This process also allows Technology to obtain quotes on items and verify we are getting the best pricing.

HIGH SCHOOL

Birdville HS & Smithfield MS

18. The district has moved our land line phones to TEAMS utilizing the internet. Is it a safety issue when the internet/Wifi goes down (we have an outage) as we cannot call from our phones? If this is accurate—is this not a HUGE safety issue for teachers and students in the classroom?

A. Yes, it is definitely a safety issue when calling is unavailable. We are in the process of implementing a "Survivable Branch Appliance" from Microsoft that will allow for uninterrupted calling in case of an internet interruption, basically a secondary redundant connection to the internet. We are also taking steps to increase the resilience and redundancy of the new firewall which will help to prevent similar outages in the future entirely. The firewall plays a particularly important role in keeping the District safe from cyberattacks. It helps to mitigate intrusions that could bring down all District services for days or weeks. This has happened in several neighboring school districts: phones, internet, Skyward, and even the ability to perform payroll in those districts.

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HIGH SCHOOL (continued)

Birdville HS & Smithfield MS (continued)

19. After doing the training on HB 3 and avoiding awkward conversations and inappropriate conversations—why do we have PLAY IT SAFE in our classes? How do we know it won't trigger something with students or make someone feel awkward? I understand students can have their parents opt out of it—but wouldn't be easier if we avoided it all together?

A. According to SB 9, instruction regarding child abuse, family violence, dating violence, and sex trafficking that is included in the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) must be offered to district students. The Play it Safe program provides lessons on these topics at the appropriate grade level to meet the required TEKS. We understand some of the topics and lessons may trigger emotions or traumatic memories for our students; therefore, our counseling team is available to provide support during the Play It Safe presentations. While this may also be a trigger for the students, this program does open up communication and helps the counselors identify students that may need additional support and other resources that we may not have otherwise known about.

20. The district likes to phish us to see if we click on inappropriate emails. However, one training we were sent looked like it was phishing. I know I personally turned it in to SPAM CATCHER. Wouldn't it be easier if ALL of our training was centrally located in Canvas, Safe Schools, or Eduphoria instead of the 'gotcha' method the district is trying to employ with sending out emails that may or may not be from BISD?

A. This is a great idea and something we can work towards for teachers and staff. BISD has already started consolidating information for campus leadership teams on a Leadership Dashboard and we can do something similar for teachers and staff. Regarding our Technology department phishing campaigns, the reality is simple. Phishing is more prevalent than ever before. The threat landscape continues to become increasingly complex with cybercriminals customizing their methods and tactics and continuously evolving to be harder to detect. KnowBe4, the vendor technology contracts with for security awareness training, focuses on current and hot topics every month. These phishing campaigns are not designed to be a gotcha. They are an awareness campaign and help to constantly keep us more informed and alert of the methods utilized by cybercriminals.