

Superintendent's Communications Council
Campus Questions
October 4, 2016

ELEMENTARY

ACFT

1. The cafeteria is one of the biggest problem areas in a school, especially in elementary schools where there a lot of young children. **Why aren't cafeteria monitors a regular part of school personnel who provide support like the custodial staff, cafeteria workers, etc.?** Requiring individual schools to provide this out of their funds doesn't often work because the money is inadequate to attract people on a permanent basis.
 - A. Elementary campuses are provided specific funds each year in their budgets to cover the cost of the cafeteria monitors. Budget constraints prevent the District from adding full-time positions for monitoring the cafeteria.

2. **Is there anything our District can do to make our elementary school playgrounds more appealing and user friendly such as: more equipment, canopies to protect our students from the sun, trees for shade, landscaping for appeal?**
 - A. Playground equipment is very expensive. With our older buildings and limited funds, playground replacement normally does not get high on the list of projects. We hope to include playground replacement as a consideration for the next bond program. Additional landscaping has been limited due to the lack of irrigation and additional work placed on our grounds crew.

Birdville

3. **Will elementary team leads ever receive a stipend?** Throughout the entire school year we do additional work as a representative for our teams, through campus and district meetings, campus committee members, planning for substitutes for meeting dates, etc. We spend countless hours off the clock trying to take care of the many tasks and responsibilities that come with this position. It is my understanding that middle and high school department heads are paid a stipend for much of the same kind of work that we have as elementary team leads. Why the discrepancy?
 - A. Each year in the spring semester, elementary campuses are given academic stipend funds to use at their discretion for their campus. In the past this has been used for Battle of the Books coaches, the Spelling Bee facilitator, and the after-school choir director. We will revisit with the campus principals.

Foster Village

4. **Can EAs get paid more money to offset medical?**
 - A. The District increased the medical contribution rates from \$240 to \$260 per month for the 2014–15 school year. We were unable to make any adjustments for the 2015–16 fiscal year due to budget constraints. We will continue to review the District's contribution each year in light of any medical insurance premium increases and the changes to the requirements of the Affordable Care Act.

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ELEMENTARY (Continued)

Foster Village (#4 continued)

The District reviews all salaries during the budget review process including the educational aides. While we don’t identify the cost to solely offset medical premiums, we try to pay as competitively as possible within budget guidelines.

5. Is it possible to make logging into the computers and different programs the same? It is too difficult for elementary to manage more than one log in and password.

A. Yes, our goal is to implement a solution that allows students and staff to have one username and password. We have to do this in a way that keeps the students as secure as possible to fend off hacking attacks. We want to take it one step further and set up a “single sign-on” menu. After logging into the menu system once, students and staff will automatically be logged into the various applications that they want to access. All you have to do is choose the icon of the program and it launches. Here is a screen shot showing an example of how this could work:



We do feel your pain with having to remember multiple usernames and passwords. This is currently in development. We don’t have a timeframe for deployment, as it involves working with each vendor to configure their software with our student/staff data and account login processes. Setting up the menu portal is the last step in the process.

Green Valley

6. What marketing strategies is BISD developing in order to attract and retain families to BISD? How will BISD continue to differentiate its educational services from local competitors so that BISD becomes the school district of choice?

A. BISD continues to look for ways to promote the great things happening in BISD through print and electronic communications. However, this is going to take each of us sharing within our circle of influence (e.g., face-to-face, social media, email, etc.) The power of our story and what differentiates BISD from our competitors must be told by us all.

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ELEMENTARY (Continued)

Hardeman

7. “Attached is the elementary voting ballot for the staff members who are interested in serving on the 2016–2017 and 2017–2018 TEE Committees as a Non-Teaching Elementary Representative. Please vote your ballot and submit to EJ Montgomery by email or interoffice mail. And forward this email with the attached ballot to the other non-teaching professional staff on your campus (assistant principals, counselors, librarians, diagnosticians, etc.)” **Since librarians do teach and plan lessons and post in Eduphoria, and are evaluated by T-TESS, why are we considered non-teaching professional staff?**

A. You are correct, we do consider librarians as members of the teaching staff. The BQA (LOCAL) policy that governs the District site-based committee (TEE) indicates three different ways staff members can serve on the committee:

- District-level professional staff – one who has responsibilities at more than one campus, including, but not limited to, central office staff (three serve per year)
- Classroom teacher representative – one from each campus (33 serve each year)
- Non-teaching professional representatives (six serve each year)

Librarians were classified as a part of the non-teaching professional staff which gave them the opportunity to serve on the TEE Committee.

We will review and consider revising the BQA (LOCAL) policy upon Board approval to read nonclassroom-based professional staff instead of non-teaching professional.

Mullendore

8. **Is there not some other way to maintain Internet security rather than having K-1 students log in and log out on the computer?** We will lose math and reading practice time due to the length of time it takes young ones to log in. It will be a very long time before we will be able to implement engaging, guided reading lessons due to assisting students with computer logins during Reader’s Workshop. Star Math and Reading assessments will not be completed in one sitting. We appreciate the concern for maintaining student personal information; however, when the students log in under the campus Lab 105 ID, there is NO personal information at risk. Now that they have a log in ID, students have personal lunch codes that can be at risk. While we want to promote digital citizenship, we are concerned that a solution designed for older students is being applied to very young students. We hope that there can be some sort of compromise.

A. Greater security is provided by having individualized logins and password protection. The more generic the “authentication” process is, the lower the security is.

We understand the need for balance between security and learning. Greater security is a directive from the Board of Trustees and the Superintendent that we cannot ignore. It is our responsibility to raise security and still provide the best learning environment possible.

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ELEMENTARY (Continued)

Mullendore (#8 continued)

We have substantial evidence of abuse of the campus-wide shared logins, such as campus lab accounts, by students in BISD. This potentially leads to abuse by people outside of the District. Given that incidents of data breaches and ransomware are much worse now than they have been in the past, we must affect this change to assure, to the greatest extent possible, that computers are not hacked. It is our hope that we can move to new authentication methods in the future to minimize login time and do it in a secure way.

We know that it is challenging and takes longer to teach K and 1st grade students to learn how to log in. Many of our schools have created “login tips and tricks,” simple methods that make it easier for the younger students to quickly learn how to log in independently. We see labs in these schools start their lessons much faster. If you need assistance or access to some ideas, our digital learning specialists will be glad to help you.

Porter

9. How much money did BISD spend to put in motion detectors in halls and classrooms. They were put in the help us save money on electricity. Now, how much money is BISD spending on someone telling us to turn off our lights? Why is BISD doing this? It looks like a lot of money is being spent on saving money.

A. The motion detectors (occupancy sensors) are required by municipalities in the International Energy Conservation Code and have been installed as light replacements have occurred throughout the facilities. These devices do help save energy, but they also provide safety for staff members who enter various areas of the buildings in the evenings. The new energy management program includes no out-of-pocket costs for the District. The energy management company receives a portion of the energy savings generated through the program. Most of their work includes monitoring the facilities in the evenings for energy usage when unoccupied. The reminders to turn off lights are just part of their program to help District staff be more energy conscious.

Smithfield

10. Why do we have to place a heat ticket/work order when the toilets are overflowing?

A. We consider such things as overflowing toilets an emergency. The daytime process for emergencies is to call extension #5858. The call is received by our receptionist, who dispatches plumbing staff immediately to the campus. (After-hours emergencies are handled through the on-call supervisor at 817-688-7930.)

We ask for the ticket or work order to document the repair and complete our paperwork. Having the requestor process the ticket provides a means for us to have troubleshooting and after-incident communication with the requestor. Also, work order tickets help us track trending problems, which helps in the budgeting process.

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ELEMENTARY (Continued)

Smithfield (*continued*)

11. For 6 weeks assessment, since the curriculum is the same district wide, why is there not a set 6 weeks assessment?

- A. Many elementary and secondary campuses have been producing and administering six-weeks assessments for several years. Recently, a group of elementary principals expressed an interest in centralizing the development of six-weeks assessments in order to reduce the workload associated with the creation of these tests and to provide comparative data between campuses. In response, the Teaching and Learning and Assessment Departments have taken into consideration the possibility of producing six-weeks tests aligned to the curriculum.

The District currently produces CBAs as interim assessments to provide feedback on student mastery of the curriculum and on the alignment between the written curriculum and instructional delivery. The CBAs are produced by the content coordinators, extensively vetted by teachers, and administered to students in grades 2–11 in five content areas (reading, writing, math, science and social studies) two to three times per year. Development and production of high-quality aligned tests is a very labor-intensive process. This year 164 tests in English and Spanish will be produced and administered.

While it would be potentially useful to produce a set of six-weeks assessments for the core content areas in elementary and secondary, the District currently does not have the additional capacity to produce that number of high-quality tests for campus use. It is also unknown whether all campuses have systems in place to make full use of data generated by such tests, and a District requirement to administer six-weeks assessments may serve to unnecessarily reduce already precious instructional time. Therefore, the decision was made to hold off on District-developed six-weeks assessments until a more viable solution could be found.

Snow Heights

12. With the district's focus on continuous improvement, is there a vision to move toward a standards-based report card (at least for elementary)?

- A. We will convene a Task Force to look at this in keeping with some of the ideas that have come out of our District of Innovation Plan around mastery learning. This Task Force will be comprised of staff in curriculum and instruction and principals. This also has policy implications so any changes will be recommendations that will be brought to the Cabinet.

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ELEMENTARY (Continued)

Snow Heights (continued)

13. If the district is not leaning toward a standards based report card, is there any consideration for reducing the required number of grades in each subject each six weeks?

With the District's focus on continuous improvement and teaching with rigor and relevance, it seems that recording two grades each week is counterproductive to formative assessment that allows students to struggle with new content and progress toward mastery throughout a unit of study. Reducing the number of grades would allow for progression of learning and would ensure that the grades are a true reflection of both rigor and student progress.

- A. All formative assessments do not need to be graded. Also, grading for mastery can be on a curve with the overall goal being improvement. While we would strive for all of our students to make A or B grades, the fact is, that is not always the case. Grades should be a reflection of mastery, and formative assessments are reflective of working toward that mastery. Twelve grades per six weeks should show a representative sample of the student's mastery of the learning. Fewer grades will increase the percentage each assignment impacts the overall grade. Elementary principals will review this, as well, with the Teaching and Learning department.

Spicer

14. When selecting testing windows for the beginning-of-the-year, middle-of-the-year, and end-of-the-year STAAR testing, could the following please be given consideration?

- Student Holidays/Half Days of Students that cause the testing window to be less than 10 days.
- Possibly delaying the beginning of the year testing window by a week to allow the students to go to the computer lab once before they have to test. This would allow students to learn and/or practice new logins/passwords before they have to use them in a testing situation where there is limited time to complete the test.

- A. We will share this topic for discussion with the Assessment Committee.

Watauga

15. Will the District consider adding security cameras for our staff parking lot? We have had some instances of vandalism in the past.

- A. In the 2014 Bond package, we scheduled additional cameras at each campus. Depending on the size of the campus and the campus configuration, we are adding 6–8 exterior cameras at each school. We will give consideration to the schools where we have had vandalism issues. We will be following the technology rotation schedule for this work. Technology has replaced the old, outdated analog cameras with new digital units. They are in design stages for the expansion of more cameras and will be releasing a schedule in October outlining when the installation will happen at each campus. This is a flexible schedule and cases where higher security is needed can be prioritized on the schedule.

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MIDDLE SCHOOL

Haltom Middle

16. Choir, Band, and Theatre teachers all get stipends. What is the rationale for art teachers not getting one?

- A. While the time and effort that our art teachers devote to their programs and students has been well documented, as of this date, the District has not been able to fund this request. We will continue to review and try to identify ways to fund stipends for art teachers during the upcoming budget review process.

HIGH SCHOOL

Haltom High

17. Can BISD offer the VIP employee athletics pass to teachers so that those of us who are married with children can bring our immediate families with us to support our student athletes?

- A. We will look at how this might be adjusted where it is not abused. In the past, some have brought large numbers of people and said they were all immediate family.

Shannon

18. Requiring quotes from approved vendors is time consuming and creates a number of headaches when trying to order classroom materials in a timely fashion. There are many vendors who expect for your order to be placed with the discounted catalog price and do not send quotes back for an order. For example, I found a great price on a class set of paperbacks from Scholastic's Teacher Store. The request for a quote was not returned. The books were never ordered, and I did not get the books I had planned to use in my classroom. **Is there a faster way to process budgeted purchases that come from approved vendors?**

- A. At this time, purchasing is requesting that quotes be attached to the requisition. Best practice for all purchases requires a quotation requested beforehand. This helps to avoid timely cost corrections and freight errors. However, there should never be an instance when a lack of a quote provided by the vendor becomes a barrier to purchasing the items needed. If your first attempt to get a quote fails, please contact Purchasing and we will happily assist and obtain the quote on your behalf. If we are still unable to get a quote, we can make an exception and send the purchase order to the vendor without a quote and handle any change orders that might occur. Again, the goal is to get the materials that are needed for instruction of our students.