

**Superintendent's Communications Council**  
**Campus Questions**  
**December 3, 2018**

**ELEMENTARY**

**ACFT**

1. We are all excited that the bond passed. **Do you have a timetable for when schools will be getting more technology?** Do we know what technology, like iPads verses laptops?
  - A. We won't have access to any 2018 bond funds until spring 2019. Now that the bond has passed, the Technology Department is in the process of finalizing the project plans, and will be releasing more information early in the spring.

**Binion**

2. **Who is responsible for communicating to teachers when apps are added to the BISD portal?** Can it be organized by Core subjects? It is getting to be very overwhelming with the amount of apps in the portal. Some don't pertain to students.
  - A. The portal supports applications from multiple stakeholders throughout the district such as the Business Department, Teaching & Learning, Human Resources, Special Ed, etc. Each stakeholder is responsible for communicating to teachers and staff about their applications.

Students should only see apps that pertain directly to them. The same applies to staff. For example, if a student logs on, they will not see apps like AESOP, Munis Self-Service, Tyler Pulse, or Zendesk. Those apps should only show up when a staff member is logged in. Students should only be seeing apps that pertain directly to them. Technology is working with the vendor on a new version of the portal that will include an ability to better organize the applications, but we don't expect this to be ready for student/teacher use until next semester.

3. **Why does Birdville hire many administrative/academic coaching positions from other districts, rather than from within?** Birdville has a lot of highly talented and trained professionals, many who have spent countless hours in graduate courses, LEAP, extra trainings, etc., who are being overlooked/ignored for various positions, or are maybe given one interview, even though they have applied for various positions. Birdville strives so hard to keep our students from leaving our district for alternative districts/options, yet when hiring specialized positions, many times BISD looks outside of our district, even though we have many well-trained and highly qualified employees who are highly recommended by their supervisors for promotions, and have dedicated many years to the students in Birdville. It only seems fair that if we feel Birdville ISD is the best place for our zoned (and even open enrollment) students, that we should feel the amazing Birdville employees are the best fit for open positions.

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**ELEMENTARY (continued)**

**Binion (#3 continued)**

- A. When hiring for elementary academic coaches, a rubric is developed based on the job requirements listed in the job description provided in Applitrack. The Director of Teaching and Learning screens every application and resume and scores each applicant on the rubric. Not every applicant meets every job requirement. The 4-5 highest scoring applicants receive an interview. Currently, ten out of the 12 academic coaches were Birdville ISD teachers/interventionists.

Administrators are selected based on a variety of criteria. Resumes are reviewed based on a rubric. Applicants also participate in the Applitrack process. Candidates are selected to interview based on these two pieces of information. The interview team for APs has staff from the campus, Human Resources, and other administrative staff to help make the decision of best fit. For principals, fellow administrators and central office staff make recommendations of the top candidates to Dr. Brown. Currently, 18 out of the 23 APs were hired from within the district and 17 out of the 21 elementary principals were hired from within the district. At the secondary level, nine of the 12 secondary principals were Birdville ISD employees when hired, 22 out of the 30 assistant principals were hired from within and nine of the 11 academic coaches/deans were hired from within District.

**Birdville**

4. We got some great guided reading books for primary grades in English. **What is the district's plan in purchasing an equivalent program for the bilingual teachers?** With our F&P kits, we received 65 books with an additional six small books for each story. In Spanish, I received nine big books with six small versions of each book. That in no way covers what we need to cover the TEKS or compare to what we received in English. I know F&P does not offer Spanish guided reading but we cannot be expected to translate materials.
- A. The District reviewed several options in terms of finding a comparable system in Spanish to the F & P Classroom kits purchased in English. Given that this year we are adopting a new resource for Spanish Language Arts, the decision was made to purchase enough shared reading books with the additional sets of student books to be able to cover the 19 weeks of instruction in SLAR. Bilingual teachers in K–2 were provided 19 big book titles with the accompanying student books sets (six small books). Our curriculum team worked this summer to create lessons for the shared reading books which have been included in the curriculum. We have been continuing this work with our curriculum team since the school year began.

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**ELEMENTARY (continued)**

**Birdville (#4 continued)**

The Textbook Advisory Committee has selected resources to review that we hope will be comparable to the F & P Classroom System. The limitation we face is in the availability of resources in Spanish, i.e., there are four publishers on the adoption list from TEA for SLAR as compared to seven for ELAR. Additionally, bilingual campuses received, at minimum, 170 sets of guided reading books (a total of 1,020 books) for K–2 (larger campuses received multiple sets for each grade level). The Bilingual/ESL Program will continue to work with the Textbook Advisory Committee to review the materials on the adoption list as well as other resources for our Spanish Language Arts program. We are also hopeful that we will find additional guided reading materials for our bilingual teachers to include as part of the new adoption.

5. Canvas is better designed for the upper grades where one subject is taught. **Is there a primary-friendly lesson planner available for those who teach all subjects?**

- A. All lesson planning should be happening in the District's Lesson Plan Template in Google that was designed to integrate with the District's curriculum.

Canvas is a learning management system that is designed to facilitate the delivery of lesson content and curriculum. Canvas can work for lower grade levels, but we recommend Google Classroom at the Elementary level as it is better for younger students.

**Mullendore**

6. With the introduction of the PCard, confusion now exists related to the campus social committee. These are funds donated by teachers for the purpose of staff gifts and celebrations according to guidelines agreed upon by the staff. However, being required to use the PCard for this fund is creating difficulties due to PCard rules about using required vendors and purchase guidelines (such as being unable to purchase gift cards). **How can we more effectively administer our social fund and still do the things we need for it to do?**

- A. Approved vendors are not required when spending campus social committee funds. If the campus needs to add a vendor to use for social funds, they may request that vendor through the normal vendor setup process. Gift cards are not permitted due to IRS regulations. Gift cards are considered cash and must be reported as income for employees. The PCard implementation did not impact these procedures.

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**ELEMENTARY (continued)**

**Mullendore (continued)**

7. Can we please define district expectations for days that are labeled “**teacher planning**” and “**teacher work day**”?
- A. Teacher work day is at the discretion of the teacher for them to work in their classrooms. Teacher planning days are designated for planning with their PLCs. It is a form of professional learning because we do take these days out of our calendar with a waiver. Planning, using the Planning for Learning Protocol and the protocol for assessment are learning opportunities to share and collaborate, which is the purpose and intent of these days.

**Snow Heights**

8. With the new design of the GATE program, our 3–5 teachers do not have immediate access (on campus) to resources/professional development/collaboration with a G/T teacher. Our K–2 GATE teacher is on campus one day a week. This limited time makes it difficult for our K–2 teachers to receive helpful information related to providing support for our GATE students. We want to ensure that our GATE students are not only receiving our best Tier 1 instruction but extensions and enrichment of their learning also. **With our current program, is there a plan for supplying classroom teachers with continued G/T learning from a GATE professional?** The online classes the district provides are good, but many of our teachers have already watched most of the videos. Planning time with a GATE teacher and having accessible resources that meet the curriculum currently being taught would be helpful in ensuring that we are meeting the needs of all of our students.
- A. The G/T Interventionist's primary job is to provide instruction to gifted students in Level II services (pull-out classes). To provide cluster teachers support in the general setting, Advanced Academics has implemented the following strategic plan for providing support for Level I GATE services.

Professional learning to help support cluster teachers takes place in a variety of formats including:

- District training on pre-assessment and curriculum compacting available to all cluster teachers each summer or upon request during the school year.
- TAGT on Demand: Online learning system with over 240 available courses on meeting the needs of gifted learners.
- Renowned gifted education experts, such as Ian Byrd and Laurie Westphal, are invited to provide professional learning in face-to-face sessions over the summer.

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**ELEMENTARY (continued)**

**Snow Heights (#8 continued)**

- Members of the GATE department provide targeted professional learning opportunities during the summer or during the school year by contacting Stacye Onstott.
- The Advanced Academics department has provided a set of Differentiating Instruction with Menus for all core subject areas for grades K–5 as a tool in designing enrichment opportunities for gifted learners.
- Google Classrooms for cluster teachers which provide ideas for enrichment and extension in the general education setting are available through the Advanced Academics department.
- Cluster teachers may also invite GATE students in grades 1–5 to engage in student Google Classrooms which have been created by the GATE interventionists. These classrooms provide extensions from GATE Level II services.
- Cluster teachers in grades 3–5 may invite GATE students to work on weekly extensions available in their GATE binders from Level II services.

Advanced Academics would be happy to work with our elementary principals to address additional professional learning needs for G/T cluster teachers. Please contact Stacye Onstott or Julie Hyman with specific requests.

**Stowe**

- 9. Why are our new schools so poorly lighted for evening use?** Most teacher parking areas are dark and are not safe for staff to stay at school. We need to review our safety policy for staff that is committed to work late and after hours. Custodial staff is also endangered upon their dismissal late at night. A safety committee should review the outside of all buildings and determine what additional actions need to be taken to ensure the safety of all employees of Birdville ISD.
- A.** Nighttime lighting issues should be reviewed on a campus-by-campus basis. Our energy specialists have adjusted the lighting schedules to maximum security while also conserving energy. We will do a lighting assessment and determine if we need to revisit those decisions.

**Walker Creek**

- 10. What is the reasoning behind not having a math coach assigned to support Walker Creek teachers with math instruction?**
- A.** Every elementary campus receives support from an academic coach through general education funds. The additional support Title I campuses receive is

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**ELEMENTARY (continued)**

**Walker Creek (#10 continued)**

paid for through Title I funds; therefore, non-title campuses (Walker Creek, North Ridge, Green Valley, and Porter) did not receive supplemental support from academic math coaches. We would love to have additional coaches because we understand the value these individuals have in supporting our teachers. However, until we have an additional funding source, we are limited to the number of coaches we currently have. We will continue to look at this for the future.

**West Birdville**

- 11. How is the bilingual teacher's stipend set or calculated?** Is it a set amount from the State board, or is each school district choosing the amount? How come it has not changed in more than 12 years ... since the need for bilingual teachers has increased, as it is the work done in the classroom to meet the ELL needs?
- A.** Bilingual teacher stipends are determined by the District. All stipends are included and reviewed in the annual compensation analysis prepared by the Texas School Board Association. The District is certainly willing to consider an adjustment for the 2019–2020 school year if this year's compensation analysis recommends one and the District budget can support it.

**MIDDLE SCHOOL**

**North Oaks**

- 12. Can teacher classroom phones be allowed to call "long distance"?** Many, many parents have a cell phone as their primary contact, and very frequently the phone number has an area code that will not dial out from the teachers' classroom phones. At NOMS, we can make these calls from the AP's offices and from the teacher's lounge, but frequently it is necessary to reference a classroom resource or Skyward while speaking with a parent. Being able to call from the classroom would be very helpful.
- A.** Campus principals can work with Technology to either add a computer in the teacher's lounge or add long distance calling to additional phones at a campus such as department chair rooms, PLC rooms, or other specific phones that are spaced throughout the campus. The District is charged per minute for all long distance calls and "local+" calls. Some 817 numbers are considered long distance. Technology is creating a process to monitor cost and report overuse of long distance calls to campus administrators. If the cost of long distance proves to be too high, we will determine a new course of action which could include blocking long distance again if it is the only way to assure we stay within budget.

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**MIDDLE SCHOOL**

**Richland**

**13. The district began utilizing holiday shutdown checklists to save energy. Where is the saved money being applied?**

- A.** The District has been able to save around \$300,000 in utility costs due to the overall changes in our energy program. Those additional funds have been used to provide the funds we need for employee compensation increases and other budget requests throughout the District.

**Haltom**

**14. Why can't we start school earlier so that the semester ends at winter break?**  
This would also push AP and State testing closer to the end of the year and give us more days to prepare the students for the tests.

- A.** Each year the BISD Calendar Committee considers and reviews a multitude of calendar options including when school starts and ends. One of the effects of moving up the start date of school is when staff needs to report back on duty. While most teachers would not notice a significant change in their reporting date, some teachers and campus staff would have to report in mid-July to accommodate the earlier start date. Also, earlier start dates effect the summer maintenance schedule and the opening of new campuses.