

Superintendent's Communications Council
Campus Questions
December 3, 2019

ELEMENTARY

Binion

1. **Has the substitute situation improved since the district switched over to using the new company?** It appears we're still having a large number of unfilled jobs.
 - A. The District has seen an improvement in the fill rate with ESS over the past six weeks. While we do experience unfilled sub positions, these are consistent with the fill rate of this same time period last year. One of the reasons for partnering with ESS was to increase our fill rate, so they know they still have some ground to cover. We will continue to monitor their progress and provide feedback as appropriate.

Foster Village

2. **EAs are the lowest on the pay scale, why can't we be paid based on seniority when it comes to the new House Bill money?** We have EAs on our campus, that have 0 to 1 years of service getting the same raise as EAs that have 12 to 20 years of service. I am of the opinion that giving the same raise is not fair to people that have put in multiple years of service, opposed to 0 years.
 - A. Most Texas districts follow the minimum, midpoint, maximum salary structure recommended by the Texas Association of School Boards. This structure includes a pay grade with a range of minimum, midpoint, and maximum. When an employee begins work in a particular position, they are placed in the range based on their years of experience. The pay ranges are adjusted each year based on any raises approved and market conditions. All raises are based on the midpoint of the pay range. By using the midpoint, less experienced employees move up through the pay range with experience, and employees with more experience do not exceed the maximum of the pay range. If employees were to exceed the pay range, it could create a difficulty providing them raises in future years since they would then be paid above the market rate.

Superintendent's Communications Council
Campus Questions
December 3, 2019

ELEMENTARY (continued)

Francisco

3. **What changes can we expect from the new Social Studies TEKS as far as materials, resources, and training?**
- A. The curriculum content coordinator and teams of curriculum writers are evaluating the curriculum and are making adjustments to align to the newly revised TEKS. Teachers will attend a session on the updated curriculum in the summer of 2020 or during the August professional learning period. The streamlining of the TEKS was not accompanied by a proclamation for new state-adopted resources. Therefore, the curriculum coordinator is working to update the following resources in the curriculum:
- Alignment documents between the current adopted materials and the newly streamlined TEKS
 - Alignment to the ELAR F & P Classroom™ Interactive Read-Aloud (“IRA”) suggestions. When a direct correlation can be made between the IRA and the social studies TEKS, a new social studies lesson will be available in the curriculum to support interdisciplinary learning.
 - Connections to ELAR and Science to promote interdisciplinary learning

Green Valley

4. There are a number of required online courses including Safe Schools, Dyslexia Training and GT update hours. All require a large amount of time in the evening and on weekends in order to complete. Most are finding themselves completing online courses late at night so as to not take any more time away from their family. **Could these courses and additional required training hours be considered for Flex Time?**
- A. We will collaborate with the Teaching and Learning Department to review the mandatory trainings and evaluate if all or some of the trainings fit the definition of Professional Development. If so, we will present this to Cabinet for approval.

**Superintendent's Communications Council
Campus Questions
December 3, 2019**

ELEMENTARY (continued)

Hardeman

- 5. Is there a policy about how long a teacher can be on LOL?** Some teachers seem to have held their positions forever.
- A.** The length of tenure for a teacher on LOL is a decision that is made by the principal. We have encouraged principals to be strategic about placing teachers on LOL with the understanding that what we do as a District builds from one year to the next. Thus, every time there is a change, the new member has some catching up to do. We recommend that any teacher has a minimum tenure of three years, particularly at the elementary level. At the secondary level, teacher tenure is generally longer because LOL membership is somewhat based on individuals who are also Department chairs. What we want are individuals who have influence with their peers and who are willing to work collaboratively with the principal to build the capacity of the campus and individual PLC teams to implement District initiatives. In the end, however, it is a principal's decision.

Mullendore

- 6. Might there be a way that writing assessments are not scheduled on the same days as LOL so that Subs are not monitoring writing assessments?**
- A.** We will share this information with the Assessment Council with the goal to have teachers on campus for assessments.
- 7. When will subs be given computer access?**
- A.** The District now has an automated system that allows any substitute with an account in Aesop to have an account in our systems so they can log into our network. However, their access to our network depends on the scheduled begin and end dates that are in Aesop, and the following access rules:
- **Scheduled daily subs:** Network access only for that day between the hours of 7 a.m. and 5 p.m.
 - **Long-term subs:** Network access is 24/7, starting on the 'begin' date through 5 p.m. on the 'end' date in Aesop.
 - **Same-day/short notice subs:** The school office must submit a Helpdesk ticket for any sub that wasn't scheduled in advance who needs network access.

Please note that subs do have an @birdvilleschools.net email address. However, this is only for logging into the network and software they may have access to, and for sending/receiving school-related communications. The email box will only be accessible to them on the dates they are scheduled to sub.

Superintendent's Communications Council
Campus Questions
December 3, 2019

ELEMENTARY (continued)

Smithfield

8. There seems to be some confusion about whether or not substitutes should be able to login to the computer with their own username and password. Technology has made us aware that the substitute can call and get a login setup when they are subbing, but this often leaves them in a bind trying to get it setup and also starting the day with our students. Teachers often feel if we do not give the substitute login information or have a teammate login to the computer, they will not be able to access the lesson plans or other materials needed to teach. **Is there a way to streamline the process with a generic substitute login or include getting a username and password into their substitute training?**

A. Please refer to the answer provided for Question #7 above.

Snow Heights

9. In the past few years, our campus has experienced an increase in the number of students we serve with Autism, ADHD, Mental Health issues, etc. Many of these students are served in Special Education (AABLE/Resource) or through 504 (General Ed. setting) and are functioning fine academically. Where we see a concern is in their behavior. The programs that serve these students do not seem to be meeting the needs of these students. In addition, classroom teachers are following Behavior Plans that are time consuming and take away from Tier One instruction. Many of the teachers do not feel equipped with the knowledge needed to teach specific behavior skills. **Has the district considered adding a program that would serve students that have specific behavioral needs but are functioning fine academically?**

A. Our Guidance and Counseling and Student Services departments are working jointly on this very issue as we speak. We are redefining our roles and responsibilities for serving Tier Two and Tier Three students as their needs are constantly changing. In the past, the individual schools have chosen which Rtl plan to implement for their campus (CHAMPS, Capturing Kids' Hearts, Conscious Discipline, etc.). We are evaluating this practice, its effectiveness and whether any changes need to be made. Information about Tier Two and Tier Three strategies is forthcoming.

10. Our campus has already received the personal and student Chromebooks that were part of the 2018 Bond. While we are thrilled to have this new technology in our hands, we have some concerns as we look to the future. **Could you please help us understand what the following will look like:**

**Superintendent's Communications Council
Campus Questions
December 3, 2019**

ELEMENTARY (continued)

Snow Heights (#10 continued)

- A. We've been told that we will lose our desktops after one year. What will replace the desktop in regards to our projectors, document cameras, and Smartboards?**
- A.** The Chromebook has the ability to use projectors, document cameras, and modern Smart LED touch panels. Desktops will be assigned and connected to any legacy Smartboards until the Smartboard is replaced.
- B. Our iPads are used on a daily basis and are extremely helpful with students that use Learning Ally. In addition, they are more beneficial to our younger students that do not have the proper keyboarding schools. Will we be able to keep these devices?**
- A.** The new student Chromebooks are designed to work in both a Clamshell (laptop style) mode and a tablet mode by folding the screen all the way back. Using the device in tablet mode, students will have the same physical functionality as an iPad. This also includes the use of most software including Learning Ally. iPad mini 3s and below are a network security risk as they are no longer supported by Apple, these will be removed from the campus. iPad mini 4s and higher will remain until Apple stops providing updates and support.
- C. Many of our classrooms are not equipped with enough electrical plugs to support the number of Chromebooks. Will the district be able to add that so we can power and charge the devices?**
- A.** All classrooms should have received a LocknCharge charging cabinet to store and charge up to 15 of the new Chromebooks. If there is a room that did not receive it, please submit a ticket.
- D. Can campus printers (computer lab, office printers, color printers) be linked to the Chromebooks?**
- A.** They can print now, but there is no management over who is printing what. If enabled, students from other campuses would be able to find and print items to your printers, which would not be good. We are finalizing a districtwide Chromebook Enterprise Printing solution and are evaluating solutions from multiple vendors to ensure users will be able to print from the Chromebooks.

**Superintendent's Communications Council
Campus Questions
December 3, 2019**

ELEMENTARY (continued)

Snow Heights (#10 continued)

- E. Will our network be able to support all of this new technology?** Quite often our WiFi is down or is not strong in certain rooms/locations in the building.
 - A.** WiFi uptime and coverage should be very good throughout the entire district. If there is an area lacking in coverage or if the wireless is ever down, please submit a ticket.
- F.** Our office staff is worried about losing some of the devices they use on a daily basis: dual monitors, individual scanners, and printers. In addition, **will the Chromebook be able to support the Raptor system?**
 - A.** Chromebooks support dual monitors, scanners, and printers. Raptor is updating its system to work with Chromebooks. A desktop will remain in the front office for Raptor until their Chromebook solution is ready.

Spicer

- 11.** We are very appreciative of all of the Fountas and Pinnell resources that have been purchased for elementary classrooms. At one time, we had Istation for the K–2 grades. We believe that having Istation in the primary grades would be a great addition to the Fountas and Pinnell resources. **Could you consider getting Istation again for the K–2 grades?**
 - A.** Like Fountas and Pinnell, the Istation curriculum is designed to deliver skill practice in literacy components such as phonemic awareness, phonics, listening, and comprehension. All of these components are addressed in the BISD curriculum which utilizes the Fountas and Pinnell resources. The Fountas and Pinnell resource is robust and comprehensive. It is important to note that Teaching and Learning endeavors to be good stewards of our financial resources. While it would be nice to offer skill practice with the online delivery method of Istation, it is a duplication of effort and the high cost of the resource makes it cost prohibitive at this time.

Walker Creek

- 12. Why are teachers required to complete mandatory Compliance videos (Safe Schools) but not provided contractual time for completion or provided compensatory time towards flex time requirements?** Other neighboring districts specifically designate time during the week prior to students returning so that teachers can complete this mandatory requirement or provide credit towards flex days since it is an employer-required mandate that must be completed outside of standard contractual time.
 - A.** We are considering this as an option and are in the process of discussing this with HR and Teaching and Learning.

Superintendent's Communications Council
Campus Questions
December 3, 2019

ELEMENTARY (continued)

Watauga

13. We love how the district supports our classrooms in so many ways. We appreciate the resources and supplies furnished for us. We also appreciate how we have some autonomy in the classroom to create the learning environments that our kids need. It's almost like we create a home away from home for them. This out-of-the-box thinking often comes with wishes and desires for certain supplies or organizational tools that are not a part of a traditional supply list or something that the campus could traditionally purchase for us. What's great is that there are services like DonorsChoose out there with donors who are eager to help support the classroom. **Will the district reconsider allowing teachers to submit projects on DonorsChoose—so that we can have some of those items supplied for our classroom and save our campus and district some money along the way?**

A. The District is currently exploring options for providing additional classroom resources for teachers. We hope to have some options in place later this school year. We prefer to provide the resources teachers need through other sources than crowdfunding-type options. Board policy requires employees to receive approval prior to soliciting these types of donations. It is important that all resources provided support the instructional programs of the District. Management of those approvals and inventorying all of the donations would be very difficult.

The DonorsChoose program for teachers allows teachers to request items on the DonorsChoose website. Through donations, DonorsChoose purchases those items and then ships them to the school. The District does not have any say in the quality of the goods.

West Birdville

14. What suggestions does the district have for promoting our district/schools via Facebook and other social media now that the iPads and teacher Project Innovate iPads have been removed? Personal cell phones and electronic devices require data charges for use. The new student Chromebooks do have the camera option, however, not every campus has those. Our parents love to “see” their students working via Facebook, ClassDojo, Twitter, and even email.

A. Fortunately, these social media apps do not require data plans when promoting during the school day as long as your personal cell phone is logged into the BISD network WiFi. If a teacher prefers not to use their personal devices, the new teacher Chromebook can be flipped into a tablet or any of the student devices can be used as well. All social media sites can be accessed from the teacher Chromebook, including ClassDojo, which has a Chrome app.

Superintendent's Communications Council
Campus Questions
December 3, 2019

MIDDLE SCHOOLS

Richland

15. Will the district ever add a testing coordinator to each middle school campus to take over all the testing responsibilities (District level, TELPAS, STAAR, PSAT, and AP)? They could even act as the campus 504 and LPAC coordinator. This position would allow the assistant principals and counselors more time to work directly with the students.

- A. No doubt, there is a need for campuses to have more support for testing, especially given the fact that the state requires so much statewide testing. However, adding testing coordinators to all middle school campuses adds significant costs. We also know that many elementary campuses with large numbers of EL students require more testing support as well. Contrary to what has been communicated by the state, we do not have a funding source to support much of what is being mandated, much less something that we feel is a need. Testing coordinator positions would need to be considered in conjunction with other staffing needs that are brought forward by campuses and departments. Then, it is a matter of determining which positions rank as top priority based on available funds.

HIGH SCHOOLS

Birdville

16. According to the latest TAPR report, Richland High School has 7 more full-time teachers and an additional principal compared to Birdville High School. However, the most recent BISS membership report shows that BHS & RHS are essentially the same enrollment size. Even the projections prior to the start of the school year only expected RHS to be approximately 30 more students larger than BHS. Our class sizes are extremely large & this makes it difficult in a variety of ways including maintaining a high level of student performance, mainstreaming special education students effectively into regular education classes, and having enough equipment (especially in science classes) to effectively satisfy the state requirement of 40% lab time. It also extremely compromises lab safety issues & often puts us in violation of the minimum square footage per student in a lab setting as mandated by the TEA. Given our limited staff we had to limit the types of classes we offered & take away a STAAR remediation class. Furthermore, with this many students in the classroom, teachers constantly have to do more work from a discipline side, a planning side, & even grading. We are effectively being asked to work extra compared to other comparable campuses in our district. **Can you please explain this discrepancy of staffing and touch on what the district's current plan is to alleviate this problem so that all students can have the same access to education equally across our district?**

**Superintendent's Communications Council
Campus Questions
December 3, 2019**

HIGH SCHOOLS (continued)

Birdville (#16 continued)

- A. Regular Ed staffing is consistent across the three high school campuses in our district from a ratio aspect. How and where staff is allocated on the campus is a campus decision. Special Education staffing is provided separate and apart from regular staffing and will skew ratios depending on required services for each student. Also, teachers who are part of CTE staffing that were once assigned to the BCTAL were moved back to the campuses. All of these factors affect the staffing ratios, which is why staffing meetings are scheduled every year with campus staff to discuss the impact to each campus. Staffing is originally discussed in early spring after course selections have been evaluated, and is revised during the summer, and after school begins. Fluctuations in enrollment from the start of school going forward is sometimes hard to manage and can affect class size ratios.

Haltom

- 17. Could the district consider a Google platform or other updated online system for field trip requests?** Once submitted the requests seemingly disappear and teachers cannot go back to confirm/cancel or verify details. If transportation is not necessary for the field trip, then it really does seem to vanish from the system. The teacher submitting does not receive any sort of denial or confirmation regarding approval, but then is asked to provide an approved field trip request to submit to our secretaries to complete financial requirements of the field trip. Not only do we not have access to this, but oftentimes our administrators cannot locate the request in the system either. This process seems to be quite dated and there has to be a better way that all parties are kept abreast of the approval process and can have access to the records.

- A. We are working to find a replacement. We hope to have a decision very soon.

- 18. Who at the district level is responsible for field trip requests?** When questions or issues have occurred, no one can seem to determine who to contact at the district level for help.

- A. The director of the specific program would be the contact person (i.e., CTE: Allison Vinson; Fine Arts: Danny Detrick; AVID: Julie Hyman; and General Field Trips: Clarence Simmons).

Superintendent's Communications Council
Campus Questions
December 3, 2019

HIGH SCHOOLS (continued)

Richland

19. The district has been focused on improving student literacy and performance year to year. I am wondering when/if the board will review the mandatory grading policy for high school students. **If the policy was revised from 3 tests per six weeks to 2 tests per six weeks, then students would have an additional 12 days (per class per year) to engage in rigorous/relevant work.** I believe that students would greatly benefit from an additional 336 periods of instruction during their high school career.
- A. The number of minimum required grades reflects the need for students to be able to continue to show mastery of the content that will allow them to recover from showing lack of progress on one test or major project that could affect their eligibility to participate in cocurricular and extracurricular activities.
20. It seems there is still sub shortages in our building despite outsourcing the subs. Teachers only have one conference period and are asked continually to cover classes. Fort Worth offers higher pay to retired Fort Worth teachers, so there is qualified personnel in the classroom that could actually teach. **Would BISD consider paying only retired BISD teachers a higher pay?**
- A. We have been addressing the substitute shortages with ESS. They have responded by providing short-term and long-term solutions to address our needs. Currently we are paying a fee to TRS to use retired subs, which is covered by the District and not passed on to retired subs. We will continue to evaluate our sub needs with ESS and provide feedback to them on a weekly basis including the suggestion above.