

**Superintendent's Communications Council**  
**Campus Questions**  
**December 4, 2017**

**ELEMENTARY**

**ACFT**

**1. This year, we have had a lot of trainings during the beginning of the school year.**

Next year, can we do some of these before the school year starts? Can these be done during the Art/Extended PLC days?

A. Teaching and Learning will have training during the summer, as well as on the District PL days. Unfortunately, with only 1.5 District PL days the week before school starts, not all content training fits within that time frame. We will continue to look at ways in which to present PL opportunities including using our academic coaches during art PLCs.

**2. We have a lot of politicians who do not support public schools. Can BISD start a get out the vote or encourage teachers to vote?**

A. Birdville is having a #BISDVotes campaign leading up to the March primaries. As a District, we are not able to support specific candidates. However, we are able to share non-partisan resources with all staff as they become available.

**Binion**

**3. With the district focus on literacy, will there be any guided reading training offered during the school year?**

A. Teaching and Learning pulled teachers several years ago during the school year for guided reading. However, at the request of campuses and teachers not wanting to be off campus, we have discontinued the practice and only pull teachers off campus for special occasions. We will look at offering some trainings after-school or on Saturdays if there is interest in these options.

**Birdville**

**4. Can we start the year off in August getting paid early like we do in December and November?**

A. We generate payroll early in November and December due to office closures during the holidays. Required payroll cutoffs for leave days, in addition to part-time employees and other additional earned compensation, require payroll staff to work a number of overtime hours in November and December to ensure the payroll checks are ready in time for the holidays. The beginning of the year also includes additional work for the personnel department processing new employees. Because District compensation is paid equally over 12 months, early paychecks during August could create a situation where the district compensates employees over the amount earned, creating an illegal gift of public funds. During November and December, employees have worked enough days to ensure that that does not occur.

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***ELEMENTARY (Continued)***

**Birdville (continued)**

- 5. Is it possible to be given a special card loaded with a set amount of money to pay for educational costs like other school districts do?** The beginning expenses for any school year can be tough especially after a long summer!
- A. We do not have a funding source for additional educational expenses. I suggest you work with your campus principal to ensure you have the instructional supplies needed at the beginning of the year.

**Cheney**

- 6. During student holidays when the custodians are still working, do they “deep clean” the classrooms? If so, what do they do?**
- A. During the holiday breaks, custodians mainly deep clean toilet rooms and common areas. Some head custodians are able to dust classrooms, but there is not enough time to do deep cleaning. Special projects requested by the campus, such as cleaning floors or wall pads from quiet rooms, or waxing an office floor, are often completed during these short holidays. Classroom deep cleaning occurs during the summer break.

**Green Valley**

- 7. How does the Workshop Model align with the TTESS and CIR rubrics?**
- A. T-TESS and CIR are both tools focused on helping teachers create student-centered classrooms where rigorous and relevant learning takes place. These principles are also the foundation of Birdville ISD’s Learning Platform, which was largely modeled after the work of Steven Zemelman, Harvey “Smokey” Daniels, and Arthur Hyde in *Best Practice: Bringing Standards to Life in America’s Classrooms* (2012). According to *Best Practice*, the Workshop Model is “probably the single most important teaching structure to be developed in literacy education” because it “recognizes that kids need less telling and more showing how, more modeling from teachers, and more time doing literacy or science or history, and less time hearing what these endeavors look like” (p. 46). The structure of the Workshop Model provides a “powerful vehicle for student-centered learning” because it simultaneously allows teachers to work one-on-one or with small groups of students to focus on their data-driven learning needs, as well as providing student-led work time where the possibilities for rigor and relevance are endless (p. 47). In this model, the teacher gains tremendous insight into each student’s specific strengths, weaknesses, and needs that drive the development of mini-lessons and student tasks for independent work time. In preparation for the June 2018 Administrative Leadership Conference, where we will focus on leading literacy, we are preparing an alignment guide that extends the alignment guide already created for T-TESS and CIR to include the Workshop Model.

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***ELEMENTARY (Continued)***

**Green Valley (continued)**

**8. Could the district explain how a teacher using the Workshop Model might expect to be considered “Distinguished” on TTESS or in “Quad D” using CIR?**

A. The distinguished T-TESS educator provides “appropriate time for student work” and “student reflection” while simultaneously using “informal assessments to monitor progress of all students.” Additionally, the distinguished educator establishes a classroom culture and routines that “rely on student leadership and responsibility.” T-TESS is specifically designed to help teachers move toward fully student-centered classrooms, which represent the distinguished indicators. The Workshop Model provides the structure that is most “appropriate for diverse learners” because it allows teachers to work with students to uncover their specific needs, deliver focused mini-lessons in response, and also provides a venue for students to lead their learning, collaborate, and do the real work of literacy during their student work time and reflections. In CIR, in order to create the optimal environment for thoughtful work to take place, student-centered routines and procedures, such as the Workshop Model, must be established as part of the classroom culture. Knowledge of students gained through Guided Reading and other work with individuals and small groups as part of the Workshop Model, allows the teacher to design meaningful activities that will build connections between other disciplines, students’ prior understanding and experiences, and real-world applications. Students are empowered to achieve learning expectations through feedback that guides their learning and that supports them in the struggles inherent to rigorous content. The learning environment in the Workshop Model is clearly established, but flexible to the differing needs of the students and learning tasks. Also, student growth and data from assessments informs instructional decisions and the design of future activities and learning tasks. T-TESS and CIR provide us with a structure to grow teachers and shift practice to student-centered instruction that is both rigorous and relevant. The Workshop Model provides teachers and the students in their classrooms with a structure where rigorous and relevant student-centered learning can happen every day.

**9. Is there an exemplar or model lesson demonstrating how such a lesson might be designed?**

A. The development of exemplar student tasks and lessons is built into the curriculum development cycles for our content coordinators and will be completed according to the cycle for each course. Unit Overviews contain links to some lessons/tasks already and more will be developed through the curriculum writing process.

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***ELEMENTARY (Continued)***

**Green Valley (#9 continued)**

Here is one example:

<b>Word Work</b>	<b>Decoding words</b> 1. Read Chrysanthemum by Kevin Henkes 2. Stop at a word that students might have difficulty decoding 3. Write the word on chart paper. Model for students how to decode a word: Chunking 4. Repeat with 2-3 additional words from book.
<b>Leading Standard</b>	[Figure 19 A] : establish purposes for reading selected texts based upon content to enhance comprehension.
<b>Partner/Process Standard</b>	[14A] identify the main idea in a text and distinguish it from the topic.
<b>Partner/Process Standard</b>	[13]Reading / Comprehension of Informational Text / Culture and History. Students analyze, make inferences and draw conclusions about the author’s purpose in cultural, historical, and contemporary contexts and provide evidence from the text to support their understanding
<b>Evidence of Learning</b>	Reflections
<b>Mini-Lesson</b>	<b>Establish a purpose for reading</b> 1. Have students brainstorm the different reasons why we might read a book: entertainment, for information, learn how to do something, etc. 2. Show students a variety of texts and decide together what the purpose could be for reading the book. 3. Remind students that during work time when they are reading to jot the purpose for reading the text they chose. We will discuss this during reflection time.
<b>Student Work Time</b>	<b>Buddy Beside Me As I Read</b> 1. With assigned partner, read prompt about a real-world problem and review the four texts on table that align to the scenario 2. Select first text to read 3. Discuss and Record: Purpose of reading the selected text 4. Student A reads first paragraph, Student B summarizes it and asks a questions, switch until text is complete 5. Select another text and repeat steps 3-4 4. Discuss: What did you learn from your reading that might help solve your real-world problem?
<b>Teacher Work Time with Students</b>	<b>Guided Reading</b> Groups Group A – See Guided reading lesson plans for specifics Group C - See Guided reading lesson plans for specifics Group D - See Guided reading lesson plans for specifics
<b>Share/Debrief/Reflect</b>	What worked well with your learning today? What would have made your learning better?  Have 2-3 students share their problem, selected texts and post-it notes regarding the purpose for reading. Review the focus lesson
<b>Differentiation</b>	Allow green and purple groups to create their own prompt for a real-world problem to extend their thinking and challenge them more  Texts levelled and matched to assigned pairs at their independent reading levels

*[Item Description: Sample of Exemplar Student Tasks and Lessons]*

**Mullendore**

**10.** In the Student Handbook, Clarification of Remediation / Reassessment Procedures section, it states:

“Students’ grades shall reflect mastery of district objectives, which have been related to Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills. Students who receive a failing grade on a test or other assessment which has a major impact on the grade shall have an opportunity to receive remediation and be reassessed for mastery. The reassessment should cover the same basic content at the same level of difficulty as the original assessment.”

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***ELEMENTARY (Continued)***

**Mullendore (#10 continued)**

**What is the maximum grade allowed on the reassessment for mastery? If a student receives a 35 on the first test, and an 85 on the reassessment, should the 85 take the place of the 35? If so, does this give an accurate picture of the student’s progress in class?**

**What if the assessment is given the last couple of days of the six weeks and the parent requests a retest after grades are due?**

A. We will discuss this with elementary principals on Tuesday, Dec. 5 and have a recommendation.

**Porter**

**11. What are the plans for future district calendars for BISD? Years ago we started school much earlier in August with more breaks throughout the year. As a District of Innovation, do we have plans to move our start date forward?**

A. The proposed 2018–19 calendar has the District beginning a week earlier than the current law allows. Each year, the start date is discussed as the calendar is being developed.

**Smithfield**

**12. With renewed focus on Guided Reading and the shift to more current resources, our Leveled Library is being utilized more than ever. Many classroom leveled sets are dated material that no longer match the needed level of rigor. Campuses are working to match the demand for additional leveled sets. Does the district have plans to purchase additional books for campuses this year or next?**

A. We are working to add to the Guided Reading libraries with both District and campus funds. This will continue to be a focus for both.

**13. The “At a Glance” document is a very useful addition to the wonderful ELAR curriculum documents. Will this document be provided for future six weeks and will a similar document be created for writing?**

A. I am glad you like the new documents and find them useful. Teresa Lawson and the academic coaches have worked diligently to develop documents that will help teachers with the planning process. The “At a Glance” documents are just being rolled out to campuses at this time for the third six weeks. We are gathering information from teachers about their usefulness. If we see/hear that teachers like and use the documents, then we will continue to develop them. The plan would be to develop them for reading this year, and begin the development of writing next year.

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**ELEMENTARY (Continued)**

**Snow Heights**

14. We understand that there are so many important trainings that need to be attended to grow as educators, but the amount of off-contract time teachers spend at these can seem daunting (especially with no incentive of extra pay). **Is the district looking at utilizing our district PL time in a more focused manner? Is there a direction toward more online, self-paced study?** Many teachers would be open to online training that they can do on their own to help them meet district expectations and these trainings could take place during a planning period.

A. This year is a big year for professional learning as we are revising our Professional Learning Handbook and implementing a new program that will allow for more personalized professional learning for our teachers. As part of this process, the Professional Learning Council is working to outline the plan for district and campus professional learning days next year. We have 13 online professional learning courses developed so far and will continue to grow that number as our capacity will increase dramatically with the implementation of Performance Matters. We are taking time right now to outline next year's specific goals and beginning to develop the professional learning plan – for both face-to-face and online – to ensure that teachers have ample opportunities to learn and have clear direction to help select the learning that is most relevant to their roles.

**Walker Creek**

15. Other districts, such as HEB ISD, provide common assessments for their teachers for their units of instruction. This would be particularly helpful for reading and revising/editing since those tests are challenging to write. **If the district is not able to do that at this time, would you consider purchasing a test-generator program such as Measuring Up Live at least for STAAR-tested grade levels?**

A. We have discussed common assessments as an elementary group. We will brainstorm alternatives at our next meeting on Dec. 5. I will bring your request forward for discussion with the Teaching and Learning Department as well as the Assessment Department.

**Watauga**

16. **Would it be possible to organize parent-teacher conferences in a different way next year?** In the district and state that I came from, parent teacher conferences took place on two specific days in the fall and then in the spring. On a Wednesday in October (and February), teachers would have a 12-hour work day. Students would be in class just like any other day, but teachers would have conferences scheduled from 4:00–8:00 PM. Students would not have school on Thursday, but teachers would work another 12-hour day, having available conference times between 8:00 AM and 8:00 PM. There would be no school on Friday and teachers would have the day off because they worked those 8 additional hours on Wednesday and Thursday.

# Superintendent's Communications Council

## Campus Questions

December 4, 2017

### *ELEMENTARY (Continued)*

#### **Watauga (#16 continued)**

This worked exceptionally well for several reasons. Parents knew, in advance, that these were the days that were set aside for conferences. There were opportunities to schedule an appointment that should work for everyone—early morning, mid-day and evening. The turnout for conferences was always high. Also, having the days set aside this way allows teachers to spend more time with their families. The way we have it set up now, teachers need to stay later in the evening to accommodate the different work schedules of families. This can lead to teacher burnout and exhaustion. In my previous district, we worked long and hard hours on Wednesday and Thursday, but knew that a day of respite was coming on Friday. We also had a face-to-face meeting with almost every one of our families to discuss the progress of their precious children. This was invaluable.

A. This is something we have considered and are not able to do at this time. Teachers are required to work a certain amount of days, not necessarily hours. We can discuss other alternatives such as securing subs for a time period to help allow parents to come during the school day.

17. The online enrollment form is not particularly user friendly. It is especially difficult for our parents with limited literacy and/or English skills. **How can we improve the online enrollment form to make it more user friendly?**

A. The Office of Student Services works with an outside vendor to provide the application process to our parents. Over the last year, we have received many compliments about the changes and the process being better than our prior application. We are beginning meetings now for the 2018–19 school year. During our discussion, we will bring forward your concern, so that all of our parents who would like to apply feel comfortable with the application. We are always looking for ways to improve the open enrollment process.

### *MIDDLE SCHOOL*

#### **North Ridge**

18. It seems that mental health issues are on the rise at our campus. What is Birdville doing to educate our students and staff on identifying individuals who may be suffering from anxiety or depression? I reached out to Ellen Harris, who works with the Jordan Elizabeth Harris Foundation—a group whose mission “is to eradicate suicide in Tarrant County by driving depression research, creating awareness through suicide prevention education, erasing the stigma, and providing hope to those who are struggling in silence”—and she mentioned Hope Squads, groups on campuses “comprised of students who are trained to watch for at-risk students, provide friendship, identify warning signs, and seek help from adults” as a possible way to empower individuals on our campuses to help those in need. **Can Birdville consider bringing Hope Squads, or a similar group, to campuses as a way to educate both students and staff on mental health issues? And if a campus were needed to pilot the program, could North Ridge Middle have the honor?**



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**MIDDLE SCHOOL (Continued)**

**North Ridge (#18 continued)**

A. We are looking into what is involved with this program, including short-term and long-term financial responsibilities on behalf of the District. If a pilot is needed, North Ridge Middle will be considered.

19. This year, the district has set in motion a journey to improve literacy practices that will hopefully endeavor our students to become literate lifelong readers. Teachers have been provided opportunities to engage in professional development geared towards the use of Guided Reading as an instructional model at all levels. While this work is currently in progress, many of our secondary Reading and English Language Arts classes are inundated with upwards of 34 students. In recent years, mathematics classes were limited to 20–22 students in on-level sections to improve math scores and provide more effective small group instruction. **Will there be a push to lower the class size in these English and Reading classes so that we can better provide opportunities for the Guided Reading practices?**

A. Teacher allotments are assigned to campuses following the District's staffing guidelines. The discretion is given to the campuses on how the allotments will be used. We will begin staffing for the 2018–19 school year in January and will work with principals to grant relief when and where possible.

**HIGH SCHOOL**

**Haltom**

20. **What is the maintenance schedule for Birdville Stadium?** During my last visit there, I noticed several broken beer bottles in the stands. While the entrance looks nice, the rest of the stadium does not represent BISD very well. I also understand that the locker rooms are in need of a major overhaul.

A. We have stepped up the patrol of the Stadium complex to daily during the work week. Prior to the first part of November, we were on approximately an every-other-day schedule for trash. At this time, we have two people assigned to police the stadium every morning picking up trash and looking for any maintenance issues. The District continues a community-friendly practice concerning the public's use of the running track, which unfortunately becomes an attractive location for vagrants and the homeless. The increased presence of our staff should solve the trash concerns. I also understand that the locker rooms are in need of a major overhaul. As part of the current Facilities Condition Assessment, the District is considering needs and the priorities across the district. This facility will be included in that study.



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***HIGH SCHOOL (Continued)***

**Haltom (continued)**

**21. Is there a plan in place or an upcoming bond initiative with monies set aside for the Haltom HS auditorium?** We appreciate the work that has been done in regards to some of the broken seats being fixed, and the tile flooring replaced. However, it has been studied by many districts and outside companies that have determined the speaker placement and sound is designed incorrectly. There are floor lights out on stairs causing safety issues, electrical issues throughout, sound issues throughout, at least 80 (2 rows) of chairs missing due to broken seats beyond the ones that were repaired, a bare concrete floor rather than painted under the seats and it is overall outdated and looks nothing like the rest of the school. The fine arts programs at Haltom are some of the most successful and definitely largest student groups on campus and in the district. More community and stakeholders come to the Haltom HS auditorium than to any other part of our building. The current status of this space does not represent the quality of student performances and there are definite inequalities across the district regarding these facilities. I hope this can be addressed and we can provide our students with the performance facility they deserve.

A. The District has just completed a Facility Condition Assessment through PBK Architects. The assessment results will be presented to the Board of Trustees in December. Major renovations such as the auditorium will require funding from a future bond election. The District has utilized maintenance funds to replace the walkway flooring and repair the auditorium seats inside the space. These items were completed during the summer of 2017. The bare concrete flooring under the seating areas will likely remain as designed. Changes could lead to significant, detrimental acoustical alterations.