

## ELEMENTARY

### Cheney Hills

1. There is a concern that TEAMS phone system uses our employee ID number as our phone extension. I understand this is a district internal number. The concern is that we were asked to watch and pass a video concerning cybersecurity. In this video it talks about keeping numbers and passwords confidential. My concern and I believe others is that our employee ID number is linked to so many things that are personal and confidential in the district. We used this number as part of our log-in to programs we use throughout the district. The number is linked to our benefits/payroll and many other forms of personal information.

#### **How can we be sure our information is secure and will not be breached by using this as a way to identify us on a phone/message system?**

- A. No one can get into anything of yours with that number. A password is required and the number one way to ensure information is secure is protect your passwords and not share them with others. We require passwords that are at least 16 characters long and encourage them to be difficult to guess.

Another way to ensure our information is secure is Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) which is rolling out now across the district. In addition to someone knowing your Username (Employee ID) and your password with MFA, they also have to have another piece of evidence – one of your credentials – when logging into your account. According to the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), credentials fall into any of three categories:

1. Something you know (like a password or PIN#)
2. Something you have (like a cell phone)
3. Something you are (like your fingerprint)

Your credentials must come from two different categories to enhance security, so entering two different passwords would not be considered multi-factor.

In Birdville, like most school districts and educational institutions, we focus on your username/password as one authentication factor, and an authenticator app/text message code on your cell phone as a second factor.

MFA helps protect by adding a layer of security, making it harder for bad guys to log in as you, even if they know your employee ID number and your password. MFA is now required by the District's cybersecurity insurance providers.

Most people are already familiar with MFA and have it set up with their banks, online shopping websites, and social media accounts.

If you get an MFA request on your cell phone that you did not do something to initiate, contact Technology ASAP and change your password(s).

## Superintendent's Communications Council

Campus Q & A

October 12, 2021

### ELEMENTARY (*continued*)

#### Porter

2. Since we have a two-week window for STAAR testing, would the district please consider spacing out the testing days for elementary students? Testing 3 days in a row can cause anxiety as well as make students weary by the last day, so they are not able to do their best. Please also consider that students are not testing on paper anymore, so this means up to 4 hours of screen time for 3 days in a row. Teachers and students are both held accountable for STAAR scores, so we would appreciate the district doing everything in its power to create the best testing environment possible.
  - A. We have discussed this in the past with key stakeholders. The response has always been the same, which is to keep the window as is (first week of testing). The three days of testing only impacts 5th graders, as writing for 4th grade has been removed. The first week of the window was for paper only and we only recently decided to move completely online starting in 2021–22. If we extend the window, this creates a timeline of two weeks where we must test all children for the applicable assessments. For example, if a student was absent in week one, we would administer all applicable grade-level assessments the following week. This means the campuses are in “testing mode” for two weeks vs. one. There is potential for results to be delayed if we use both weeks of the window, which could impact HB 4545 requirements in the spring. We are happy to investigate this further with neighboring districts and district/campus staff.

#### Smithfield

3. **Is there a possibility or potential timeline on BISD offering pre-K for staff members?**

- A. We are discussing the possibility of tuition-based pre-Kindergarten for the 2022–2023 school year.

#### Snow Heights

4. Keller ISD pays special education teachers a \$2,500 stipend and other districts offer SPED stipends as well. **Has BISD considered this, or will they in order to remain competitive?**

- A. Birdville ISD implemented stipends for our self-contained SEEC and TEAMS teachers this year. BISD, along with recommendations from the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB), will continue to review stipends in order to be competitive in the market.

## Superintendent's Communications Council

Campus Q & A

October 12, 2021

ELEMENTARY *(continued)*

### ACFT

5. **Why isn't the COVID-19 leave policy provided to any employee who gets COVID-19? Why is it for only those who have been immunized?**
  - A. Many districts in the area offered incentives to get employees to get the vaccine. Some offered cash, additional COVID relief days for employees only (not children or spouses), or additional days AFTER employee has exhausted their own leave days. In an effort to try and protect those students that currently don't have an option for protection against COVID-19, the Cabinet and Board of Trustees supported this initiative to incentivize getting vaccinated.
  
6. **With the change in the bilingual model, K-3rd grade math is taught in Spanish. Is there a plan to add a bilingual math interventionist to the campuses who have bilingual programs?**
  - A. There is a need for bilingual interventionists, particularly at the bilingual campuses. When there is a vacancy at a bilingual campus, the goal is to hire someone who is bilingual.

## MIDDLE SCHOOLS

### Smithfield Middle

7. **Is it possible to return to the pre-COVID school day dismissal time of 3:50 p.m.?** This enables teachers to possibly get to a doctor, dentist or other appointment if necessary.
  - A. This will be evaluated and discussed in our upcoming Cabinet and Calendar Committee meetings.

## HIGH SCHOOLS

### Haltom High

8. **When will the District be re-building the High Schools?**
  - A. The District is currently completing the last few projects of the 2018 Bond passed by the voters in November 2018. Only the Board of Trustees can call a bond election. While the District continues to review facility conditions and provide updates to the Board of Trustees, there are no current plans to call a bond election.

## Superintendent's Communications Council

Campus Q & A

October 12, 2021

### HIGH SCHOOLS (*continued*)

#### Haltom High

9. Does the district have a plan forming for how to address the substitute shortage and need to fill long-term substitute positions for classrooms without an assigned professional to them?

- A. The District currently has 400+ substitutes employed. At this time, approximately one-fourth of them are comfortable working due to concerns with COVID. We have become more competitive with the substitute pay and continue to recruit with social media, universities, job fairs and advertisements within our campuses. We also offer compensation incentives to encourage more substitutes to work, as well as providing them information regarding the safety precautions the district has in place to address COVID. Our substitute office communicates daily with our subs regarding unfilled and long-term assignments, as well as monthly Zoom meetings and weekly newsletters.

#### Richland High

10. The workload of staff members (teachers, admin, nurses ...) has increased exponentially. What actions are occurring to review practices that could be diminished given the increased expectations?

- A. Everyone would agree that the workload of educators in general is tremendous. Specifically, COVID has added more duties even though the dual-platform is no longer allowed. However, HB 4545 has stretched the system beyond its capacity to be in legal compliance. For instance, providing tutoring in a group ratio of 1 to 3 is not possible. Requiring meetings, developing individual plans, and providing 30+ hours of tutoring for students who failed one or more STAAR/EOC exams has added exponentially to everyone's plate. So, to answer this question is difficult because of the lack of specificity. We will continue to review all the expectations. My first response would be to keep the legislators out of Austin because every law that is passed comes with a litany of compliance requirements that are imposed on an already overloaded system. That would be a step in the right direction. I do know that we have hired some clerical staff to help campuses with all of the 504 requirements, since counselors can no longer perform certain duties related to 504.

11. Other Districts offer their employees COVID days in addition to their allotted local days. The employees are allowed to use those COVID days for mental health breaks not just for COVID exposure or illness due to COVID. Would BISD ever consider offering additional days?

- A. Currently, the COVID-19 relief days are for those who test positive for COVID-19, or those whose children are isolating or are in quarantine due to COVID-19.

## Superintendent's Communications Council

Campus Q & A

October 12, 2021

### HIGH SCHOOLS (*continued*)

#### Richland High

**12. Would the district consider looking into bathroom sensors that notify administration of vaping?** These sensors could increase safety measures greatly on campuses. They notify administration of vaping, fighting, or need for help as well as destruction of property. They do not record or have a camera ... they are sensors that detect loud noises (fighting and destruction of property) and the words HELP as well as detect tobacco smoke.

**A.** We are currently gathering data regarding reported incidents and the costs related to adding this type of equipment to the campuses. Once this data is gathered, the topic will be part of an upcoming Cabinet meeting.

**13.** The second six weeks has 20 and 1/2 instructional days for my seniors: a five-week grading period with days missed on 10/8, 10/11, 10/13 (PSAT day), (Play it safe) and 1/2 day on 10/29. Trying to get 8 daily grades and 3 test grades in creates a lot of stress on teachers and students alike, especially the last week of the grading period. **Is there any way to decrease requirements in short grading periods to relieve stress on everyone?**

**A.** I agree that there is nothing magical about eight daily assignments and three test grades, especially when the six weeks is not a full six weeks. While I really don't have the responsibility of developing the grading handbook, I do know what the research and best-practices are about assessments. Formative assessments are very powerful tools that can be used to cement learning and increase student motivation. The minute we assign a grade, the assignment becomes summative and the grade is recorded either as a success or a failure. I do believe we need to revisit our practice and work for a more balanced approach.

#### Shannon High

**14. Can the District provide COVID testing for employees?** It takes time away from work/school to find a testing site that has openings, or doesn't have long lines. There are people (who think they have COVID) coming to work because they can't find a testing site that is convenient or works with their school schedule. So, in the meantime, while they are at school waiting, they are potentially exposing others to COVID.

**A.** Birdville ISD offers testing at the BCTAL by appointment on workdays from 6:15 a.m. to 7:15 a.m. The information for appointments can be obtained from the campus nurse or principal. An employee who is exhibiting COVID symptoms is expected to remain at home and seek guidance from their healthcare provider.

**HIGH SCHOOLS (continued)**

**Shannon High**

**15.** At the beginning of the year we had a PLC meeting with our principal where we discussed ways to improve campus safety in regards to COVID. Part of that involved moving meetings with a larger number of attendees to Zoom in order to limit unnecessary, prolonged exposure. With districtwide professional development on the calendar we are opening ourselves up to an increased exposure risk. Now this could already be addressed and I am just not in the loop—but **are we, as a district, following through on the promise to limit exposure risks and promote safety by conducting meetings of larger numbers virtually?**

**Will districtwide professional development be conducted in a virtual setting to limit the cross-exposure of campus faculties?** It seems teachers would be at an increased risk of exposure when interacting with faculty members from other campuses. It was my impression that the administrators had asked for our feedback and the response was "hold meetings virtually to limit exposure and potential spread" — **is the district supporting that motion by conducting district-wide professional development in a virtual setting as stated in the attached District "Protocols List" pdf and "Protocols" image?**

**A.** Cabinet discussed whether or not to move PD to virtual or stay with the original plan. It was agreed that face-to-face is better for collaborating and learning. However, we do know that safety precautions need to be taken. Dr. Hyman and all the coordinators working with her have planned the district PD Day to meet recommended health and safety measures, as well as have meaningful and engaging learning. In addition, we have planned some fun activities that we believe will help show our appreciation to teachers for the amazing work they are doing.