

Superintendent's Communications Council
Campus Questions
March 10, 2022

ELEMENTARY

Binion

1. Was there a follow up with neighboring districts to find out about their testing dates for STAAR and if they are consecutive or not?

- A. The Planning, Assessment and Research Department utilized social media through our state organization, TSNAP, to inquire about testing dates. We also discussed this topic for 2021–22 and 2022–23 during our regional MATS-TSNAP meeting. Every district seems to be doing something different. In the meantime, we have sent a survey to campuses for 2022–23 providing options that could eliminate three consecutive days of testing.

Green Valley

2. I want to know what adjustments they have made to the assessment calendar next year, considering we are going to 9 week grading periods. This year's assessment calendar is less than ideal.

- A. The assessment calendar process involves multiple meetings with stakeholders from all campuses invited. We have held our first meeting to gather general feedback regarding the 2021–22 calendar (what worked and what didn't work). Now that the District calendar is approved by the Board of Trustees, we will move forward with building a 2022–23 calendar using information collected from stakeholders, feedback from the state assessment calendar survey and information collected during the upcoming assessment council meetings. From there, we develop a draft that is sent back to assessment council members for one more final review. Of course, one of the issues is what the state requires and the dates that are established by the TEA.

Mullendore

3. If a teacher plans to retire at the end of the school year in 2023 and is scheduled to do Reading Academy during the 2022–23 school year, is it still mandated that the teacher completes Reading Academy?

- A. Teachers who plan to retire at the end of the 2022–23 school year and notify the BISD HR department of their retirement in August of 2022 will not be required to enroll in or complete the Texas Reading Academy.

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ELEMENTARY (continued)

Mullendore (continued)

4. **What will happen if a good faith effort has been made on the teacher's part and AI students do not get all of their hours in? Will they complete their hours during summer school or is there another plan for them to complete them?**
- A. The District designed targeted academic support of at least 30 hours as required by House Bill 4545 to help the student master the skills needed to be successful on grade level. If a student was not able to receive all 30 hours, then academic support will be provided in summer school. Once a student passes the STAAR assessment in which they previously did not perform satisfactorily, accelerated instruction can stop.

Porter

5. **The RTI model emphasizes the need for intense intervention for Tier 3 students. However, we do not have a reading interventionist to meet this need on our campus. We are a non-title campus and lack the funds that other campuses have. However, we have many Tier 2 and Tier 3 students that need this additional support. When can we expect to have a reading interventionist to support our readers' instructional needs?**
- A. Schedules are set by the campus and, as in past years, interventionists will work with their campus to determine the best schedules to ensure fidelity to the program and minimum interruption of classroom Tier 1 instruction.

Every campus receives support from a reading interventionist through general funds. The District conducted a Rtl audit which resulted in adding five (5) more District-funded reading interventionists for 2020–2021 and an additional four and a half (4.5) bilingual interventionists in 2021–2022. These interventionists were assigned to campuses with the highest enrollment/at-risk/Tier 3/dyslexia numbers which helped to ameliorate the issue of capacity to adequately serve all students who need reading support. However, until we have an additional funding source, we are limited to the number of interventionists we currently provide. Staffing is re-evaluated each spring.

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ELEMENTARY (continued)

Birdville, Smithfield & Watauga elementaries/Watauga Middle/Birdville High

6. **BISD used to be one of the top highest salary districts in North Texas, however now we aren't even in the top 10. What does the district plan to do to hold onto teachers?** (UEA salary comparison has been provided if needed.)
- A. TASB performs a salary market review each year for the District. The TASB consultant recommends areas to address each year through that review. Raises and market adjustments are provided as funds are available. District funding is limited to student attendance. Birdville enrollment has been declining the last several years which has limited funding. The last increase to the state's basic allotment per student was in the 2019–20 fiscal year. Administrative staff and the Board of Trustees continue to explore efficiencies and other savings to ensure District salaries remain competitive.

Snow Heights

7. **Is the district planning on adding more diagnosticians to campuses?** With dyslexia testing now going through SpEd., the process seems to be much slower than previous years. Many teachers feel that students who need additional help are having to wait even longer to have their needs met and testing addressed.
- A. The District has had an increase in the number of students being referred for special education testing this year. At this time, we are able to utilize contracted diagnosticians to assist campus diagnosticians in meeting referral timelines. The department closely monitors the number of referrals and will work to ensure that referrals are being processed as expeditiously as possible.

Walker Creek

8. **Does the district have any plans to help out with the lack or subs in our district?** I know other districts (HEB) have put incentives in place that have taken some of our regulars away from BISD.
- A. The District currently has 400+ substitutes employed. We have been more competitive with the substitute pay and continue to recruit with social media, universities, job fairs and advertisement with 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 assignments and long-term assignments, as well as weekly newsletters.

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ELEMENTARY (continued)

Walker Creek (continued)

9. Will BISD look at adding to campuses with only one Reading Interventionist- a Dyslexia Instructionalist and a Reading Interventionist grades K–2 and a Reading Interventionist grades 3–5?

- A.** During staffing, we look at the needs of the campus. Requests for Reading Interventionists or Dyslexia Specialists are taken into consideration at that time and throughout the budget process.

Watauga

10. The state of Texas is requiring elementary teachers to complete the Texas Reading Academy which is all about the Science of Reading. What is the district's plan to incorporate what we are learning into the curriculum?

- A.** After the 2020–21 implementation of the Reading Academies, the ELAR and SLAR word work curriculum was redesigned to implement the strategies and best practice instruction as presented in the Science of Teaching Reading. Birdville ISD also purchased and implemented in the curriculum the Heggerty resources for phonemic awareness. Additionally, the District adopted the mClass early reading assessment to screen student performance on foundational reading skills. This program, in conjunction with the Amplify Reading resources, automatically groups students for small group instruction and provides the teacher with targeted lessons for intervention based on the science of teaching reading. In addition, the District's literacy plan, with the adoption of Fountas and Pinnell, embraces the science of teaching reading. We have and will continue to provide high quality professional learning in the area of literacy. Our instructional coaches support teachers by modeling and meeting with PLCs to use District curriculum, resources, and research best-practices that align and integrate Reading Academy content and emphasis.

MIDDLE SCHOOLS

Haltom

11. Is there a plan for attendance zone realignment any time in the near future?

- A.** No, there are currently no plans for an attendance realignment.

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MIDDLE SCHOOLS (continued)

Smithfield Middle

12. What plans does the district have to address the teaching shortage crisis effecting the nation for the 22–23 school? - Baskerville

- A. The District works with TASB (Texas Association of School Boards) annually to develop a compensation analysis so that we remain competitive with salaries for all of our positions. The district will attend 20 career fairs throughout Texas and outside of Texas to recruit for positions. The District will host their own teacher career fair this year. The District maintains a relationship with the students enrolled in the Education and Training CTE program at the BCTAL. We encourage them to return to work in BISD after graduation. The Teaching and Learning Department works closely with our existing teachers regarding mentoring and professional learning. They recently surveyed District teachers seeking input regarding their needs. We support and mentor our student teachers who intern in our District.

HIGH SCHOOLS

Shannon

13. If a teacher uses their school issued device for Navigate 360 (NOT their personal cell phone) and they are off campus with students but do not have Wi-Fi, how do we “account” for them?

- A. By “off campus,” if you mean on a field trip, the office should have a roster of students on the trip. If this is a true event, students will not be returned to their campus. The teacher can account for the students when they are taken to the reunification site where District Wi-Fi is available. If students are at recess and the teacher takes the students into the neighborhood for safety, the teacher will call 911 and when the teacher is transported to the reunification site the teacher can use the District Wi-Fi to account for students.

14. Why can't students wear hats or head coverings? What would it take for them to be allowed to wear head coverings to class?

- A. Excluding religious head coverings, hats create a less safe environment because it is harder to identify someone wearing a hat. Hats create a distraction during class and can hide a student who is not paying attention; hats promote the proliferation of lice due to people sharing their hats; removing your hat is a sign of respect.

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HIGH SCHOOLS (continued)

Birdville

15. Original Question: Teachers in a variety of subjects depend heavily on the ability to supplement learning with quality videos. In my classroom, for example, a Shakespearean play takes on new life and greater understanding when there's a visual representation of the work. I was not aware that the district had blocked all streaming services, so imagine my surprise this morning when I pulled up my personal Amazon Prime account to show the opening scene of *Macbeth*, as I have done for six years, only to find it blocked. **It's bad enough that I have to purchase this movie with my own funds, but now I cannot use it? Are we not trusted to utilize our resources in the classroom?** I suppose I could buy this movie again in DVD format, but there's no guarantee I will have a desktop with a functional player going forward, and the technology of a DVD is far less advanced and user-friendly than an online version. We should not be going backwards here. Please consider retracting the excessive ban on streaming services, or at least allow some sort of permission provision.

A. This is a good question, and the answer is Amazon Prime. Like the other streaming media providers, Amazon Prime permits only personal, non-commercial, private use of its content. There are no exceptions for classroom use, and such use would violate Amazon's licensing terms.

I recommend seeing if this content is available on Swank, which is not blocked and provides a means of securing the necessary copyright license or systems like Discovery Education, which we have access to in BISD.

16. Follow up question: The solution offered for how to replace the videos lost via streaming services may be a bit short-sighted in addressing the difficulties of classroom teachers. A purchased DVD has the same licensing designation (for "private use of our audience") as a purchased streaming video, so there's confusion as to why that rationale is offered as an objection. Additionally, not all teachers have DVD players since the district switched over to the new laptops. Using clunky DVDs seems to be a step backwards technologically, and many of us, primarily English teachers, use videos to enhance the understanding of literary scenes, dialogue, and setting. Videos also significantly assist struggling readers as well as our ELL students in a way that no other comprehension tool does. The suggested streaming alternative, SWANK, does not carry a sufficient number of videos from the novels and plays we read in our curriculum, so our options are significantly limited. **How can we get back our access to streaming services, or access to an adequate collection of useful videos?**

A. Technology will work with Teaching and Learning to identify resources that are supportive and align to the curriculum.