

Superintendent's Communications Council
Campus Questions
April 10, 2018

ELEMENTARY

ACFT

1. The teachers in GCISD got a bonus this year for all of the energy savings in the district. **Is BISD thinking of doing a bonus for teachers at some point with the money that has been saved through our efforts?**
 - A. Our savings support salaries, raises, and classroom resources.
2. We have CBAs that many teachers have questions about the validity of some of the questions on the test. We have started working on creating 6 weeks tests with STAAR-like questions. **Can we move away from doing two CBAs and instead do a CFA every six-weeks instead?**
 - A. We address the validity of items included in our CBAs through a vetting process in which teachers may review entire tests and provide feedback for consideration by the content area coordinators, who are responsible for the development and production of the CBAs. Teachers are always invited to participate in this process in order to assist in maintaining the quality of these assessments and alignment with the written curriculum and the state learning standards. In addition, when teachers have questions or concerns about specific items on the CBA assessments, the proper procedure is to communicate concerns to the campus test coordinator, who will then forward them to the appropriate central office personnel for consideration.

Over the past several years, the question has been posed as to the feasibility of creating district-produced six-week tests for all subject areas and grade levels. Considering the time commitment needed to create, vet, proof, correct, produce, and deliver the CBAs, our current system does not have the capacity nor the budget to create such a large number of high-quality assessments. In addition, it is believed that our students are generally over-tested, especially within the confines of STAAR-formatted items. If assessment results are to be used in a formative manner, it is important that the content, context, and cognitive level of assessment items and tasks align with the delivered curriculum. Such close alignment is not possible through test production efforts at the district level, thus development of appropriate assessments for formative evaluation of student performance should fall under the purview of the PLC or grade-level team, and be aligned temporally with units of instruction.

Binion

3. **Is there talk about a new program for dyslexia?** The program that we have is a bit outdated and there is a more recent and research based program that has great results. The name of the program is MTA (Multisensory Teaching Approach). This is a program that some of our reading interventionists are getting certified on.

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ELEMENTARY (continued)

Binion (#3 continued)

- A. The Systematic Instruction in Phonological Awareness, Phonics, and Sight Words (SIPPS) program that BISD uses is an effective program for students with dyslexia. As more research and knowledge has been gained in the field of dyslexia and as we strive to continue to educate our students with dyslexia, it is imperative that we continue to make advances in our dyslexia program. The current plan will allow for newly identified students at the elementary level to begin receiving instruction in the MTA (Multisensory Teaching Approach) program starting in the 2018-19 school year. The MTA curriculum meets all state requirements as an exemplary choice for the remediation of dyslexia. Additionally, MTA is an appropriate Response-to-Intervention to use for struggling readers who are not progressing as expected. This would be phased in as some students that are in the upper elementary grades will complete the SIPPS program, in lieu of beginning a new program.

Francisco

4. **Is there a way for Birdville ISD to fund mandatory elementary fine arts experiences?** For example, fourth grade has to pay for busses to go to the opera.
- A. The District currently pays for the transportation to these events. The students are only required to pay for the tickets. Campuses also have activity funds to assist any students that may be unable to pay for their admission.
5. **In the event that there is no other choice than to split classes (several absent teachers at the district level), can we consider increasing the “split classroom pay”?**
- A. The District is not currently considering an increase to the “split classroom pay.” However, budget requests may be submitted through your campus principal. All requests will be considered in light of other District needs.

Green Valley

6. Elementary teachers (many of whom are in self-contained classrooms and plan for all subject areas) lack equitable designated time for PLC planning. Secondary level teachers have a planning time, a PLC time plus a lunch period built into their daily schedule. Additional PLC time has been provided to classroom teachers at the elementary level 10 times per year through the use of District Art teachers. **Are there any plans to address the inequitable time set aside weekly for elementary classroom teachers to plan together and meet as a PLC?**

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ELEMENTARY (continued)

Green Valley (#6 continued)

- A. We are looking at options to increase this planning time for elementary. We realize that there is a need to increase planning time. Solutions or suggestions are always appreciated.

Hardeman

7. Is there a way for early dismissals to be documented in Skyward, that would not affect our funding? It can be difficult at times to get an accurate snapshot of attendance for a student, if they are regularly having early dismissals. We believe there is a way to document this in Skyward, we just need to be sure that it wouldn't have an impact on our funding.

- A. Early dismissals at elementary can be documented using the following attendance codes even with the attendance only being recorded one time per day. Skyward uses a two-code process for attendance and the Attendance Type code determines funding. A and U count against funding and P or non-entry counts as present for funding. The Attendance Reason code is utilized to distinguish the different types of absences. For elementary and for the funding period at the middle and high schools, the following coding should be used for early dismissals.

A–AE would be an early dismissal before the Official Attendance time and would count against funding.

AE	EXC ABS-EARLY D	EXC ABS - EARLY DISMISSAL	N	
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P–PE would be an early dismissal after the Official Attendance time and would not count against funding.

PE	PRS-EARLY DIS	PRESENT - EARLY DISMISSAL	N	
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There is also a comment field that can be utilized to document the time the student left.

If there are additional questions, please contact our PEIMS department for further clarification.

8. What is the plan for the new 16 acres within the boundaries of BISD?

- A. The District entered a contract to purchase 16 acres of land as a potential future campus site. This site has been provided to the 2018 Bond Planning Committee as an option for a possible upcoming bond election. More details will be provided as the Committee completes its work in the next several weeks.

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ELEMENTARY (continued)

Porter

9. Much has been made in the primary election season by our Lt. Gov. about teacher pay raises. He's promising an average of \$10k per teacher. While I realize that we in Birdville make above state base and he is grandstanding to the masses and the uninformed educators, **how would a mandated unfunded pay raise like that impact our district?**

A. A \$10,000 mandated classroom teacher pay increase would cost the District around \$17 million. If the state requires these pay increases without providing funding, the District would have to institute massive budget cuts. These cuts would negatively impact every program in the District and include major staffing reductions and increased class sizes.

10. Our Lt. Gov. has also stated that we spend too much money on other things. **What percentage of district budget is spent on classroom teachers (only certified classroom teachers?)**

A. Classroom teacher salaries encompass 48 percent of the General Fund budget. That percentage increases to 62 percent when you add all other classroom expenditures. The addition of libraries, staff development, campus leadership, counseling, special education student evaluation, nursing, student transportation, student extracurricular, and campus security pushes that number to 83 percent. Adding technology, utilities, custodial, and facility maintenance/repairs moves the percentage to 95.4 percent. Instructional leadership and general administration comprise only 4.6 percent of the General Fund budget.

Smithfield

11. With the changes to GATE this year, we have seen both positive and negative effects. We have worked through and overcome some challenges while others continue to be hurdles. Some of the remaining challenges are:

- Testing (particularly CBA's and writing assessments)
- Students missing subjects that they are not strong in
- Added stress to students (feeling they are "missing out")
- Scheduling for both school-wide and classroom events (it is difficult to ensure that GATE students don't ever miss something)
- Not teaching new curriculum or giving a test on GATE day (this is especially true in math where there is something new every day and the length of units vary)
- Increase of missing/late work (this is not due to students being responsible for work from the day they were off campus)

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Smithfield (#11 continued)

As we look forward to next year and continuing to tackle these hurdles, will there be any changes to the way GATE services are provided next year?

- A. Change often brings benefits and challenges. GATE programming at the intermediate level has resulted in tremendous benefits such as increased opportunities to meet and collaborate with cognitive peers, increased exposure to challenging curriculum designed for gifted learners, and instruction and time to produce products reflecting depth and complexity. No changes are planned for the service model for next year. There are district guidelines in place to address the administration of CBA assessments. Strategies such as pre-assessment, curriculum compacting, and flipped/blended classrooms are recommended to address instructional needs of the GATE students. A teacher or campus in need of assistance in developing strategies to address special event planning and curriculum issues is encouraged to contact the Advanced Academics/GT office.

Snow Heights

12. In many of the responses we have received in regards to personnel/program needs are "there is no funding source for that." We recognize that voting is important and changes need to be made to school finance ... but at what point do we start to look for tangible ways to meet our needs? If the money never comes, it seems like the district is willing to continue forward without the personnel or programs, such as full time librarians, art teachers, etc. that would bring students to our schools. **How can we creatively solve our financial problems and supply programs that can compete with the charter schools?**

- A. The state Legislature has not increased the student basic funding allotment since the 2015–16 fiscal year. The operating costs of the District continue to increase as a result of inflation and through staff compensation increases. The District budgeting process involves an ongoing evaluation process to search for ways to cut costs and generate revenue. Each year, Administration reviews the various service agreements utilized in our campuses and departments to ensure only the most critical agreements are renewed. As funds are available, the District performs facility infrastructure upgrades which help reduce operating costs. In addition, the District seeks out grant opportunities through our state and federal governments along with our BISD Foundation to help supplement programs. The financial challenges of Birdville ISD are experienced by many districts throughout our state. Additional unfunded mandates continue to erode our limited resources. We will continue to communicate our concerns to our legislators in the hopes that unfunded mandates can be eliminated and

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ELEMENTARY (continued)

Snow Heights (#12 continued)

additional funding will be provided to meet the growing demands of our changing student population. We will also continue to “tell our story” to our community to ensure that parents understand the great opportunities available for their children at Birdville ISD.

13. With the district's focus on literacy, what resources has the district considered making available to students over the summer in order to combat academic regression?

- A. Teaching and Learning is currently working with Learning A–Z to develop a summer reading program like we implemented last summer. Through Learning A–Z students will have access to RazKids all summer.

Spicer

14. During a lockdown, the PE teachers are not near their phones and cannot hear the lockdown announcements coming through the phone system. **What can be done to alert the PE teachers that there is a lockdown on campus? Presently a flashing light is used in the gyms to alert them of fire drills. Can this somehow be incorporated for lockdowns?**

- A. A final solution is being requested in the 2018 bond that will put speakers in gyms. If the request is not included by the Bond Committee or passed by voters, we will create an alternative solution to address these needs.

Walker Creek

15. Can we improve the grading policy to be more specific in order to ensure consistency across the district? Why do we have major grades set as 40% and daily grades as 60% when students are only supposed to be able to retest on major grades? The daily grades have more of a major impact on students' final grades. It is also unclear to us as to what should happen when we do retest. **Does the student get the opportunity to get a 100 when they previously failed, or can they only get a maximum of a 70 since none of the other students who passed get a chance to make their grade up to a 100?**

- A. We certainly can have a cadre of principal's work on rewording the policy to make it more clear. You are correct in thinking that students should not be able to make a perfect score on a retest. We will have this corrected for next year.

Also, we will review the number of grades in science and social studies. With more material being integrated, we can look to reduce the number of grades for this content area to six per six weeks. Principals will gather input from teachers.

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ELEMENTARY (continued)

Walker Creek (continued)

16. Administrators, counselors, and teachers are required to be current on GT hours annually in order for them to serve gifted students. **May we have special education training annually to ensure staff is trained to serve special education students in general education?**
- A. The Special Education Department is currently researching programs that would provide online training for staff, including EAs, in meeting the needs of students with disabilities in the general education setting. In addition, in conjunction with Teaching and Learning, we are planning a session on this topic for the district PL day in August. We will look for ways to make this type of training available on an annual basis.

MIDDLE SCHOOLS

Haltom

17. This year, the STAAR test was pushed back and gave us 11 more days of instruction. The scope and sequence was not manipulated to reflect this change. Instead, 2 weeks of STAAR Boot camp were added to the scope and sequence, making STAAR Boot camp 5 weeks long. We chose not to go by the number of days allotted for each unit by the scope and sequence, and instead distributed those 11 extra days to other units to increase the mastery for those units. Because of this decision, we had not yet taught some of the standards that were tested on our district CBA's, creating skewed data and poor scores. **Next year, will the scope and sequence, as well as the CBA's, be adjusted to reflect any extra time we are given prior to the STAAR test?**
- A. The state of Texas made a change to the testing calendar and notified districts in August 2017. Since this was after the content coordinators and curriculum writing teams had worked together on the scope and sequence, there was not time to pull curriculum teams before school began to make any adjustments.
- Curriculum writing teams will be pulled this spring and summer (depending on the content) to look at the calendars (state testing and district) to make any necessary adjustments to the scope and sequence.

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HIGH SCHOOLS

Haltom

18. Is it possible to stop telling students their precise class rank before the final numbers are tallied for graduation? Could we switch to telling them more general information, such as "you are in the top 10%" or "you are in the top 25%"? That would still help them with their college and scholarship applications without placing undue stress on our students. We have students that break down in tears because they dropped from #11 to #12 and such.

A. At the end of the semester each student is provided their rank and GPA. These numbers are required for college applications, scholarship applications and often financial aid. In the example given, it would be equally important for the student who moved from #12 to #11 to know they made progress. In this case, it is helpful at the end of the semester to know whether the student might be able to secure the goal they may have set for themselves through additional effort or making needed changes.

The primary reason, however, is that the information is required on applications and different applications request specific data.

19. What is the protocol for administrators on overnight field trips? More specifically, what percentage of the time should they be with the field trip group? What is their official capacity as an administrator on an overnight field trip?

A. The administrator is required, for both out-of-state or in-state field trips on which an overnight stay is necessary, to ensure that students are accounted for on a regular basis from the time students check in at the hotel until departure from the hotel to the field trip venue each day of the trip. In addition, the presence of an administrator is required in the case of an emergency or a violation of the student code of conduct that would require their intervention. On the last day of an in-state field trip, the administrator, at a time mutually agreed upon with the lead teacher chaperone, may return back to the campus since at this time it would be treated as any other in-state day field trip that does not require an administrator stay overnight.