

Superintendent's Communications Council
Campus Questions
October 6, 2014

ELEMENTARY

Academy at C. F. Thomas

1. **Is it a state requirement that we are required to do the safety training every year? It's very burdensome at the beginning of the year with all of the other demands on our time, and the information is already known by most teachers. Some districts allow their teachers to use the time required as comp time. Is that a possibility for BISD?**
 - A. Most of the annual training is required by state law. Those not required by state law are highly recommended by our attorneys. In order to help staff through this process, we removed one video and shortened another. We don't know of any other district that offers comp time for required state training.

2. **Many of our teachers use their own time in the summer to attend a number of days of professional development. We are allowed to comp out of two days in the fall. If we have more than two days, can we comp out of days in the spring semester such as weather make-up days on Saturdays?**
 - A. Professional employees do not earn comp time, they earn flex time by attending professional training outside their contracted time. Comp time is earned by at-will employees. We have to identify in the calendar the flex days. Weather days do not constitute flex days. Professional Learning is a priority in the district and it is important for staff to receive the planned training in order to impact student learning.

Binion/North Ridge

3. **Could the Safe School training list be released to teachers before July 1st?** Since most teachers do this training on their own time it would be nice to know what is expected earlier. The most recent training requirements came via email on 9-11-14. Elementary teachers have 19 days to complete this requirement. Again we wonder if we could have more notice in the future.
 - A. We will make them available July 1 beginning in 2015.

4. **Why is it that such basic supplies, such as ink cartridges for laser printers, are not part of a district budget?** Many teachers purchase their own printers and ink because the equipment and supplies provided by the district are not properly maintained.
 - A. In the past, the cost of printer supplies was included as part of a central district budget. Once that budget was depleted, there were no additional funds for these supplies. Subsequently, funds for these and other supplies have been included in the individual campus budgets. It is up to the individual campus to determine how these funds are spent throughout the school year.

Birdville

5. If the bond passes, when can we expect to be in a new facility?

A. It will be up to the Board to determine which projects take priority. Design and construction of a new school generally takes between 12 and 14 months, so the best case scenario would be fall 2016.

6. Where will the new school be located (existing property or adjacent to our current school)?

A. The final determination has not been made at this time. Still, whenever possible, the District prefers to build on the adjacent playground area while school continues in the current facility.

Major Cheney

7. Does the district have plans to add covered walkways to portables?

A. Though covered walkways are an ongoing concern in BISD the bond committee could not find funds to address this issue through the proposed bond. If the bond referendum passes, it will free up local funds (non-bond funds) that might be available to address this matter.

W. T. Francisco

8. Birdville ISD has always been able to proudly describe our first-year teacher mentor program as one with daily campus level support from a teacher that understands not only the programs, curriculum and processes utilized by the district, but also has a deep understanding of campus culture and procedures as well. The model being used this year campus culture and procedures as well. The model being used this year is very different. What are the future plans for the first-year teacher mentor program?

A. Data collected the past two years indicated that there was a high level of variance in the services being provided by first-year teacher mentors across the district. Less than one-third of the mentors completed the expected tasks, and several FYTs reported that they were not even aware that they had a mentor assigned to them. As a result of the randomness of the support being provided, a decision was made to research and revise our model to provide more equitable support to new teachers in the district. That work will be done this year by the Professional Learning Committee. In the interim, the critical learning needed by FYTs to interact with online resources and to implement district instructional initiatives will be provided by instructional coaches, academic coaches, and academic deans. Campus administrators should continue the practice of ensuring that new staff members have a designated “buddy” to help those folks become familiar with campus-specific protocols and culture.

Hardeman

9. **What is the plan to provide technology in the PreK classrooms?** We only have a teacher computer in our classrooms. We have access to the computer lab on a weekly basis and there are iPads we can check out from the library temporarily, since they are to be shared with the entire school. According to the PreK Guidelines, there are five technology application guidelines we are required to cover throughout the year:

- X.A.1. Child opens and navigates through software programs designed to enhance development of appropriate concepts.
- X.A.2. Child uses and names a variety of computer input devices, such as mouse, keyboard, voice/sound recorder, touch screen, CD-ROM.
- X.A.3. Child operates voice/sound recorders and touch screens.
- X.A.4. Child uses software applications to create and express own ideas.
- X.A.5. Child recognizes that information is available through the use of technology.

These are also on our report card. Having daily access to technology is vital to our students mastering these skills; once a week is not sufficient.

- A. We agree. However, there is no funding currently available to provide this technology. We cannot afford the technology, but we cannot ignore the standards, either. This creates a dilemma.

The only source of funds to provide this without depleting funds for other existing needs would be the passing of a bond or a substantial increase of funding from the state. The current bond proposal has funds for classroom technology.

Mullendore

10. **What will be the timeline for receiving additional science and math textbooks for new students, so teachers are not required to copy the materials in black and white for new students?**

- A. The Purchasing Department is currently working with campus textbook and content coordinators to determine the exact shortages so that additional books can be ordered. They are also checking inventories to move books from one campus to another where overages/shortages exist. We expect this process to be completed within a week, and any needed orders will be placed. Currently, the book publishers have been fulfilling orders within 5-7 school days. Once received, the books must be scanned in at the warehouse before being delivered to campuses. Until additional books are received, almost 100% of both student and teacher resources are available online. Hopefully, all students will have access to required resources very soon.

11. **Has the required selection criteria for acceptance into the LEAP program been altered from its inception?**

- A. We have tweaked the criteria every year, but the basic concepts of application, letter of interest and resumé have remained the same. This year we moved from Gallup to AdminFit for our survey because Human Resources moved to a different platform. Overall, there have been very few changes to the entrance criteria.

ELEMENTARY (Continued)

Spicer

12. **Can you give us an update on what is being done to centralize the logins used by teachers and students in our district?** By centralize, I mean having fewer, different logins to remember.

A. We are six months into a two-year initiative to automate the creation of system accounts, reduce the number of logins, and make a single password change create the same password change in as many systems as possible. We have contracted with a company who specializes in this.

We are currently in the first two phases, which is writing the code that automates the process and puts the programming “hooks” into the different software packages, and cleaning up our user accounts. Because of this, network logins which are based upon an employee’s name will soon be converted the employee’s ID number.

13. **Can you share what is being done to address having to change web browsers for different programs we use to work most efficiently?**

A. We tried to use one browser, Microsoft Internet Explorer, to simplify computer maintenance. Unfortunately, many online software packages do not run well or at all on Internet Explorer. To allow the use of online software that campuses and Curriculum are requesting, we have opened up the use of other browsers, specifically Firefox, Chrome, and Safari. We recommend Chrome as the first alternative, since Safari, an Apple product, has even more compatibility issues, and Firefox will add “trash” programs to computers if not installed differently from the default.

We wish we could work with only one browser, but doing so prevents schools from using online software they have requested.

MIDDLE

North Richland

14. **We’ve heard a little bit of information about a new Behavior RTI program. When can the teachers expect to receive more information and/or training on this program?**

A. The district has added a Behavior RtI component to our RtI structure for the 2014-2015 school year. The District RtI Handbook contains basic information about Behavior RtI on pages 4 and 6. The K-12 Behavior RtI Procedures are outlined on page 46. Each grade level or department should have access to a District RtI Handbook.

Every campus sent a team to be trained on the basics of Behavior RtI on June 11th and 12th. Since the counselors are an integral part of the Behavior RtI procedures, counselors received training on August 7th. The district provided two sessions on RtI Updates on August 19th and 20th. Basic information about Behavior RtI was included in those trainings. We will be offering the RtI Updates training again on October 10th for any RtI Coordinator who missed the August training.

Since this is the first year to implement a Behavior RtI process, we anticipate making revisions and adding more specific details during the spring and summer of 2015. If you have questions, please contact Cindy Dubuis or Jennifer Miller.

North Richland (continued)

15. **Would it be possible for the Special Education department to create an in-service training for teachers and their educational assistant(s) to attend together?** A training that covers the rules, responsibilities and boundaries of a teacher/EA team would be extremely meaningful, especially at the beginning of the school year.

A. A full day of training is scheduled for special education and classroom educational assistants on October 10 to address this particular issue, as well as effective communication and classroom management strategies. Responses from attendees at the training will help determine future training needs for these very important staff members. Consideration will be given to providing opportunity for educational assistants to attend training with their assigned teachers as mentioned in this question. Additional training specifically for EAs assigned to special education classes will be provided in the future – Feb. 2015 and Aug. 2015.

Watauga

16. I understand that the state requirements on the structure of our days during in-service prior to school, but one day to prepare our classrooms and lessons the week before school starts is not enough at all and teachers are stressed the their limits. Add to the number of safety videos, local campus requirement so the one day given to teachers is completely inadequate. **What will BISD admin do to help their teachers with the overwhelming amount of requirements required from the district so that we can have time to do what is most important which is to plan higher level rigorous lessons?**

A. The district calendar adheres to state guidelines regarding the number of student days and staff work days. Birdville has a waiver from the state for five professional learning days, and they may not be used for teacher planning and classroom preparation time. This concern will be taken to the Calendar Committee and the Professional Learning Committee for further consideration.

17. An email dated 08/10-09/10 stated that all teachers and librarian hired before May 1, 2009 would be grandfathered into the old pay scale with the big jump at 22 years. Several teachers on our campus wanted to know **how and when that became void. See attachment.**

A. The letter sent in 2012 that describes the change is attached.

18. **Is there a way to filter out the continuous email bombardment of schools wanting us to attend their grad programs?**

A. When we filter out undesired email, there is always the unintended consequence of filtering out the emails that are wanted. Email filtering is not an exact science. In these cases, we usually defer to openness, so everyone gets what they are expecting. That also means getting a lot of what you aren't expecting.



Birdville Independent School District

Darrell G. Brown, Ph.D. • Superintendent

6125 East Belknap • Haltom City, Texas 76117 • 817-547-5700 • Fax 817-547-5530 • www.birdvilleschools.net

May 25, 2012

Dear BISD employee:

Due to state funding cuts and the fact that BISD continues to be funded at a lower rate than most of our neighboring districts, it is critical that the district exercise good stewardship over the resources entrusted to us, while giving recognition to our staff for the fine work they do every day. Therefore, the Board has committed \$1.25 million for the 2012-13 school year to award a onetime \$450 supplement to every full-time returning employee.

After careful consideration, the district has determined they can no longer afford to fund the large step raises embedded in our current salary schedule for teachers, librarians, and nurses with 23 years of service for a bachelor's degree and 21 years of service for a master's degree. We have determined that maintaining the current salary structure would jeopardize jobs and overall compensation in future years.

Fortunately, for the 2012-13 school year, the Board has committed a \$2,085 salary increase for those moving up to the 23 years of service step for a bachelor's degree and a \$2,000 salary increase for those moving up to the 21 years of service step for a master's degree. This is in addition to the \$450 supplement all staff will receive during the 2012-13 school year.

The board of trustees and administration appreciate each of you and your dedicated service to the children of Birdville.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Darrell G. Brown".

Darrell G. Brown, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools

*All students succeed
in a future they create.*

~BISD Vision