

**Superintendent's Communications Council**  
**Campus Questions**  
**December 7, 2015**

**ELEMENTARY**

**ACFT**

1. **How does House Bill 2610 affect our school year?** Based on the information we have been given, it looks like we have about 3,000 more minutes in the 2015–2016 school year than the state requires. We asked last year why our elementary schools have 15 more min. in our school day than the surrounding school districts. Can this be considered in setting school times for next year to give much needed planning time to our elementary teachers?
  - A. The impact of House Bill 2610 is that we will not have to have students make up any bad weather days as long as we do not miss more than four days. We can bring the discussion forward to adjust start/end times for the elementary day. This decision does, however, impact all grade levels due to transportation and other factors.
2. **Is there any possibility that the math and reading specialists will get two iPads to work with students as classroom teachers did?**
  - A. The devices for the elementary specialists were purchased prior to the bond and were prescribed by Curriculum and Instruction (C & I) to meet specific needs. We will ask C & I to review the request and determine if it is appropriate. If they say yes, we will then pursue funding, as this request is not in the bond or the budget.

**Birdville**

3. **Can we make it a consistent practice to have feedback after all professional development [sessions]?** Not a sticky note if you have a question, but a feedback form that would give constructive information to help with professional development in the future. It would be a good idea to do toward the end, but not at the very end because teachers would rush to get it done. Maybe 30 to 45 minutes before the training is over with ample time to give genuine feedback that could be used and analyzed. Electronic surveys are good, but there would be times that these would need to be done at the professional development on paper.
  - A. This is a good suggestion that will definitely be considered. With limited time during professional development sessions, it is sometimes difficult to build in feedback time. However, we know that constructive feedback can be very effective in the development of a viable PD program. Be looking for this component in future sessions.
4. **Why do teachers have to pay more in the cafeteria but receive the same amount of food as the students?** When teachers do ask for more food than students receive, they are being charged extra (besides the \$1.25 extra they are already paying).
  - A. The student meal is federally subsidized and the charge for adult meals must, at a minimum, be greater than the amount of total reimbursement received for a student. We must also ensure that federal reimbursements, students' payments, and other non-designated nutrition program revenues do not subsidize meals served to non-program employees. Federal requirements allow the use of two methods, both yielding close to \$3.50 for BISD. The minimum for BISD this year is \$3.40. The adult price includes high school portion sizes at

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***ELEMENTARY (continued)***

***Birdville (continued)***

**all** levels. Any amount of food provided above high school portions would be considered as giving food away. As a federal program, we cannot provide food (meals) considered to be non-federally funded meals at no charge to adults.

**Cheney**

5. Parking at our school is insufficient. There are not enough spaces for the number of staff on campus, the problem is multiplied daily at drop-off/pick-up times. Many teachers are forced to park across the street from the school or down side streets where our vehicles are far out of sight. On many occasions teachers are blocked in when trying to leave campus for meetings at other locations at the end of the day. There are gates on both the north and south ends of our building that can be opened to allow for more parking (on grass). **Is it possible to have the gates opened to allow for more parking, or extend the parking lot onto a portion of the grass somehow?** Opening the gate would be an immediate and free solution.
  - A. We agree completely that the parking at Cheney is inadequate and problematic. We explored the problem with the City several years ago and what would be a simple parking lot addition was to be a monumental civil engineering project due to drainage concerns across the site that involved extensive underground piping and a detention pond. The problem is compounded by the fact that access to the school is on one side (front) only. With regard to leaving the gates open, we need to limit our parking to prepared, hard surfaces only. We don't want to expose the teachers and parents to potential injuries from uneven surfaces.

**Foster Village**

6. **What are we doing about the substitute shortage in BISD?\***  
*(This question was asked and answered at the December 2014 meeting.)*
  - A. This is actually a national problem. Some equate it with the convergence of retiring baby boomers and a good economy. The culture has somewhat changed; in the past it was a privilege to be a sub, now it's a privilege to have a sub. Planted in the middle of a mega-population center we are competing with surrounding ISDs for a limited pool of subs. With that being said, subs now have the opportunity to pick and choose assignments between Districts and campuses.

We are currently initiating changes to create an atmosphere of "belonging" to Birdville ISD. For instance:

- Regular (at least biweekly) mass communication emails
- Subs of the month (recognized in above communications) – \$15 gift cards
- Proposed pay incentives
- Proposed pay increases

However, it will also take districts looking at managing absence/leave control more strategically.

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**ELEMENTARY (continued)**

**Foster Village (continued)**

Some additional information from the 2015–16 school year:

BISD currently has 599 active subs; we hold sub orientations every Wednesday (except a few)

Monthly stats:

Month	Total Absences/ Vacancies	Fill NOT Needed	Fill Needed	Filled	UnFilled	Held	Fill Rate
Sept. 1–5	424	101	323	319	4	0	99%
Sept. 6–12	627	122	505	491	14	0	97%
Sept. 13–19	1074	202	872	807	65	0	93%
Sept. 20–26	1281	283	998	901	97	0	90%
Sept. 27–30	568	110	458	434	24	0	95%
<b>Totals-Sept.</b>	<b>3974</b>	<b>818</b>	<b>3156</b>	<b>2952</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>94%</b>

Month	Total Absences/ Vacancies	Fill NOT Needed	Fill Needed	Filled	UnFilled	Held	Fill Rate
Oct. 1–3	475	116	359	336	23	0	94%
Oct. 4–10	1219	409	810	736	74	0	91%
Oct. 11–17	1025	318	707	631	76	0	89%
Oct. 18–24	1054	272	782	706	76	0	90%
Oct. 25–31	1102	277	825	744	81	0	90%
<b>Totals-Oct.</b>	<b>4875</b>	<b>1392</b>	<b>3483</b>	<b>3153</b>	<b>330</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>91%</b>

Month	Total Absences/ Vacancies	Fill NOT Needed	Fill Needed	Filled	UnFilled	Held	Fill Rate
Nov. 1–7	1085	248	837	775	62	0	93%
Nov. 8–14	1155	269	886	797	89	0	90%
Nov. 15–21	491	57	434	416	18	0	96%
Nov. 22–28	3	3	0	0	0	0	0%
Nov. 29–30	29	5	24	23	1	0	96%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>2763</b>	<b>582</b>	<b>2181</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>92%</b>

**Francisco**

7. **In the future, does the district have any plans of staffing each campus with a full-time librarian?**

A. Personnel requests are reviewed by the Cabinet as part of the budget process. Requested expansion of positions requires new funding, and the Cabinet has not determined at this time that there is sufficient funding to do this when all other needs are taken into consideration.

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***ELEMENTARY (continued)***

**Green Valley**

8. **Are there any plans to offer each campus a full-time Math Interventionist?** Scholars have benefitted greatly by having a full-time Reading Interventionist on campus. We would love to know if additional support in Math is on the way!
  - A. Staffing decisions will be made later in the year, and additional units for positions such as interventionists are always a consideration. While we know that full-time math interventionists would benefit every campus, we also know that budget allocations from the state for next year do not look favorable. As always, decisions about additional staff or resources come down to available funding. Once that is determined, the hard decisions to establish priorities must be made. The request for additional support will be noted during budget discussions.
  
9. Elementary teachers are required to use Norma Jackson materials and were also required to attend ABYDOS training. The cost for the training and the substitutes required to cover classes while the elementary teachers were being trained seems unnecessary since we are expected to use Norma Jackson materials. Secondary schools are encouraged to use ABYDOS. They are really different methods. **Is this a best practice?**
  - A. Abydos is not a required training for elementary teachers. This year there were some available slots, so fifth-grade teachers were invited to attend. Some campus principals may have required their teachers to attend, however. While the Abydos and Norma Jackson writing trainings differ, each complements the other. Any elementary teachers who choose to attend Abydos training will learn how to utilize elements as they work with their students using Norma Jackson strategies.

**Porter**

10. **Why is the campus air conditioning in the warmer months or heat in the colder months turned off at 4 p.m. every weekday?** Teachers have less than 30 minutes of air conditioned/heated air time after coming inside from dismissal duties to clean up, get ready for the next day, lesson plan, grade papers, answers emails, etc. I feel that we are treated unprofessionally when expected to work as hard as we do, which usually comes after school hours, in an environment without air conditioning (or heating during the winter). Days of 100 degree weather, or even 85 degree weather, make it extremely uncomfortable inside as well. Teachers purchase fans with their own money just to maintain a workable classroom temperature. It is not right for teachers to be forced out of the building or choose to stay at school and sweat in order to get their work done. I strongly feel that this policy should change and allow air conditioning in teachers' classrooms until at least 5:00, if not later, at every campus.
  - A. At the Nov. 19 Board meeting, trustees approved contracting with a new energy management company. As we work with the new company, the District will be reviewing energy guidelines and establishing Board goals. We plan to address these types of concerns as we move forward.

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**ELEMENTARY (continued)**

**Porter (continued)**

11. With the elimination of open enrollment our campus has experienced a decrease in enrollment, and we feel that cutting classes/teachers seems inevitable next year. Our school was built to accommodate many more students than we have now, since many were moved with the opening of Walker Creek. **With the growth that we see near WCE, is there a possibility of offering open enrollment or changing the boundary lines so that our school stays intact?**
  - A. We are carefully monitoring the enrollment of these campuses. Open enrollment has not been eliminated. The status of campuses is fluid and continues to change based on enrollment.

**Smith**

12. The beginning of the school year is a difficult time for some kindergarten students. Many of them have never been to any type of formal education setting or daycare. The first week is especially difficult as they transition into time away from their families and become used to the school day. Students are extremely tired by the middle of the week. Some will cry because they miss their families or fall asleep during group activities. With this in mind would it be possible to consider a start date that occurs in the middle of the week so that they do not have to attend 5 days the first week? Another possibility is to model what other districts and countries do for first year students. They will start students gradually by having them attend half a day for the first week. **Are either of these an option Birdville would consider?**
  - A. The recommended calendar is moving forward this year, however, we can consider this option for the following school year. Please note that if we were to start school in the middle of the week, this would have an impact on the other days during the calendar year that we currently have off.
13. **Has any penalization been considered for substitutes that cancel or are late on a regular basis?** It has left our campus in a stressful position on numerous occasions. We know that other campuses are having this problem as well. *(This question was asked/answered in April 2015.)*
  - A. HR monitors how often subs cancel at the last minute. An inordinate amount of cancellations by a sub will result in an assessment of their employment status with the District.

**MIDDLE SCHOOL**

**Haltom**

14. **How does the district determine population projections for each campus each year?**
  - A. We use data from demographers and rolling numbers up from the prior year's classes.

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**MIDDLE SCHOOL (Continued)**

**North Ridge**

15. A member of our campus would like to thank Dr. Brown and the Cabinet for allowing voices to be heard through this committee. People's voices are being heard and ideas taken into consideration. Noticeable changes are occurring like the change in the hair color policy. So, a big Thank You!
16. **Have there been any satisfaction surveys on the use and usability of the district's mobile website?** In its present state, the mobile access is not user friendly. Will there be any updates to the mobile website?
- A. BISD launched their mobile app in July 2015 and the Communications Department continues to work to make improvements. The Department also conducted a survey of stakeholders in October. Though the survey did not specifically address the mobile app, the final question allowed for suggested areas of improvement.
17. **What's the feasibility of long distance access from the classrooms?** With area codes being less of an issue in today's society, it is challenging to call parents from the classroom after hours.
- A. The changeover in phone provisioning using SIP trunks is nearly complete. This new system changes our long distance billing. We will no longer be billed per call, and local+ calls will no longer be considered local. We will be given a block of long distance time per month. If we exceed that amount, our cost will go up substantially. It is impossible at this point to determine what the cost will be. It will be our recommendation to the Cabinet to open up long distance in the classroom, request that staff use it judiciously, and monitor the cost. If the cost proves to be too high, we will determine a new course of action, which could include blocking long distance again if that is the only way to assure we stay within budget.

**HIGH SCHOOL**

**Birdville**

18. Over the last two years, BHS has grown greatly in size, however the number of faculty in each department has stayed the same or declined. Currently, BHS has more students enrolled than RHS, yet RHS has almost 30 more faculty members, and an additional principal and counselor on staff. **In an effort to ensure equitability among all BISD students regarding the teacher-to-student ratio, will BHS be allowed to hire additional staff?**
- A. The counselor position was addressed at BHS this year. As for the teacher numbers, Richland High School has 129 teachers and Birdville High School has 118.9 teachers. Staffing is evaluated each year based on the number of the students and the needs of the campus. We will continue this practice as we look at the 2016–17 budget.

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**HIGH SCHOOL (Continued)**

**Haltom**

19. **Could we consider allowing teachers to count the CBA as a test grade, since we've changed CBAs to be less frequently given, longer, and more comprehensive of material?**

A. A major purpose of CBAs is to help align and evaluate the effectiveness of the written and taught curriculum. They are not designed to provide a comprehensive and summative evaluation of student performance. In addition, the CBAs cover content outside of the six-weeks marking period in which they are administered. It is inappropriate to assign a grade in one six weeks based on learning that may or may not have occurred in a different marking period or in a different teacher's class. For these reasons CBA scores are not appropriate to stand as major grades. While it is not recommended, campuses may elect to use scores on CBAs to substitute for an existing, lower grade in the gradebook.

20. **AP and Pre-AP Movers Policy at second six weeks. The new policy keeps a failing student in the class for an extra six weeks. This makes it difficult for the student to rebound, because they only have one more grading period remaining in the semester. Can we please move failing students at the first six weeks mark?**

A. The next task force meeting is Dec. 7 and a part of our work is to refine and discuss components of the AA/GT Handbook that will include moving to a review after the first six weeks. The reason that a period of two six weeks has been recommended to the campuses was to ensure that a total picture had developed for a student and parent before a final decision is made to withdraw the student from an advanced academic class. Also, when you factor in the other components that are needed in terms of tutoring and collaborative conferences, one six-week grading period may not be sufficient. Regardless of a time specified, if a campus, with the approval of the principal, feels that it is in the best interest of a student to withdraw from a course, then we will always defer to the decision of the campus based on the intimate knowledge of what is best for that student. The guidelines were put in place because we had too many instances of decisions being made without a collaborative conference being conducted and in most cases, the parents not being contacted by the teacher and ultimately the campus.