

Superintendent's Communications Council

Campus Questions

December 8, 2014

ELEMENTARY

ACFT

1. **Is there anything the district can do to help schools with chronic late pick-ups of students? Parents have been fussed at, offered solutions, and told how hard it is for their children to have to sit in the office and wait on them on a very frequent basis. Nothing seems to make any difference. It seems there should be some kind of severe consequence when this goes on week after week.**
 - A. Unfortunately, there is not a lot that can be done. The principal will need to continue to work with the parent to resolve this issue.

2. **Why did our district implement the two-week PDAS window? We have highly-trained and dedicated teachers who certainly believe that we should be held accountable. However, subjecting teachers to this kind of stress is not good for anyone. I think we all agree that the most important factor in student achievement is the classroom teacher. Overly stressed teachers, being human, are not at their best. Many people at my school were in their two-week window this week and also had walk-throughs from six administration building personnel. That's a lot of disruption and a lot of stress!!**
 - A. It is a common practice in districts across the state. Administration feels that utilizing a two-week observation window provides a more accurate reflection of the quality of instruction which occurs in each classroom on a regular basis.

Binion

3. **Why is the OHI completed so early in the school year? This doesn't give new teachers the opportunity to know their administrators very well.**
 - A. In working with the Organizational Health Diagnostic and Development Center, we know that about half of their clients choose to collect data during the fall or early winter, which is during the first semester. The other half collect during the second half of the year. So, it really doesn't matter initially. However, there are some basic guidelines for data collection:
 - The goal setting and improvement process needs to be in alignment with and integrated into the district's goal setting and planning process (data collection starts this process). We like to collect data in the fall so that principals have ample time to use the data to operationalize plans during the spring and summer in preparation for the subsequent year. We also know that spring is the most stressful time of year because of all the state testing. So, we felt a fall survey would avoid that stressful time.
 - Data collection is done at approximately the same time each year which avoids the debate about the potential differences between the working conditions in the fall versus the spring.
 - If districts see a need to change the data collection time, it is recommended that it be moved forward or backward by four to six weeks at most. The same process could be used the following year.

Binion (Continued)

Since we started collecting data in October we have stayed with that timeframe. It was decided at the Cabinet-level that October gave principals time to start school, to provide adequate time for staff to get acclimated to new positions or campuses, and then to provide data in ample time so that plans could be developed during the second semester that would address a campus priority identified through the OHI.

A broader question is how long does it take new faculty members to have enough information to respond to the OHI? By October, principals will have had an opportunity to:

- Directly influence new faculty members during the hiring process;
- Directly influence new faculty through orientation sessions with their new teachers;
- Directly influence new faculty through faculty and staff meetings during the first few weeks of school; and
- Indirectly influence new faculty through pairing new faculty members with a very positive mentor.
- Also, the PLC structure is a great way to influence new teachers and get them very familiar with the internal workings of the campus.

It has also been shown that new teachers “pick up on” the internal workings of their new school rather quickly.

4. When District personnel visit classrooms why aren't the teachers given feedback through PDAS or email? **Shouldn't District personnel introduce themselves when entering a classroom if not traveling with the building administrator?** This has not been happening and not every teacher knows who is who in the district.
 - A. The purpose of the district campus walks is to gather data related to the work of the C & I Team, not to evaluate the teachers in the classrooms we visit. PDAS walkthroughs are conducted by principals and must comply with requirements set forth by district policy. Central office walkthroughs are not teacher specific. We are looking for system data, not individual teacher data. Thus, we use the data to develop professional learning plans, revise current work projects and/or plan for future tasks needed to better support teachers. For this reason, feedback would be inappropriate and of little or no value to the teachers whose classes we visit. We do appreciate the opportunity to get into classrooms so that we can observe the implementation of district initiatives. Without these visits, it would be very difficult to determine the effectiveness of any programs or models we have put in place.

We try not to interrupt student learning when we go into classes, so we purposely do not stop instruction to introduce ourselves. The campus administrators know in advance that we will be visiting campuses, and most of them inform teachers. We always invite campus administrators to walk with us, but often their schedules do not allow them to do so. Our preference is that they accompany central office staff.

Major Cheney/Holiday Heights

5. Why are subs not picking up jobs? Is this a districtwide problem, or just our school?

We have had four instances already this year where we have had no sub for a job and had to split the class up amongst the other teachers in that grade level. It is an even larger problem when the grade level is departmentalized.

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. 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.

Foster Village

6. When administration visits the campus to gather data pertaining to the practice of posting of the standards, classroom and hallway displays are checked to see the progression of the campus adhering to the posting and referencing of those standards. **Is this information shared with the campus administration AND teachers? If so, in what manner is it shared with each teacher?**

A. See response to question #4 (above) from Binion. If a principal asks, we typically share examples of effective implementation that we observed. We are also taking photos and videos of effective implementation in order to build a library of best practices to use in future trainings. Some of those resources will be shared districtwide in the C & I newsletter, at ILT meetings, and with LOL members. We also encourage campuses to share examples of best practice with us so that these examples can be shared districtwide.

7. Is there a process or standard by which the effectiveness and value of the “coach” position is being used?

A. The instructional coaches are evaluated by the Elementary Instructional Officer using a document designed specifically for their roles and responsibilities. Input about their performance comes from a variety of resources including campus staff.

The coaches complete weekly logs detailing the types of tasks they are doing with each campus staff. The Director of C & I and the Elementary Instructional Officer meet with them monthly to review their work. Additionally, campus administrators have been asked to communicate with us regarding successful coaching work or concerns regarding the work of the coaches. Any concerns are addressed individually with the coach and revisions are made in their tasks when appropriate.

Foster Village (Continued)

We feel that this model offers great promise. Based on best practice research, coaching is an effective professional development model. It allows the coach to meet with teachers, discuss the practice, model if necessary, and facilitate a discussion with teachers that is reflective in nature, and offer support and encouragement during the implementation of new instructional strategies. Coaches are not people who evaluate the performance of teachers. They, instead, provide a support system. We would hope that this is viewed as a help.

W. T. Francisco

8. What is the criteria for providing literacy support staff to serve Tier 3 students in reading for both English-speaking and Spanish-speaking students? Is the number of Tier 3 students needing early intervention a consideration?

A. Last year the district added Reading Interventionist positions so that every campus would have a full-time Reading Interventionist to support Tier 3 reading students and students with dyslexia. One of these Reading Interventionists has a bilingual certification. The district also provides three Spanish-speaking educational assistants who work as tutors at assigned bilingual campuses. Twelve Title I elementary campuses use a portion of their allocation to support additional Reading Interventionists, including Bilingual Reading Interventionists. The administration reviews the Tier Summary Reports submitted to David Holland and the campus and district ISIP results to identify trends and make staffing recommendations.

Holiday Heights

9. So many of us stay after school and on the weekends to do planning, grading, and other paperwork that consists of sitting at the table. It is so frustrating to have the lights go off every few minutes. **Is there any room for consideration for allowing the lights to stay on, or at least set the sensors for a longer period of time?** We are working with the kids and teaching during school hours, which makes it necessary to do the other chores after they are gone. I have had them go off in the middle of parent conferences as well. Could this be visited by the cabinet and considered?

A. In response to your concerns, we are reviewing the settings at your campus to determine what we can do to adjust the system so that it better meets your needs and work patterns.

Mullendore

10. We deeply appreciate being given the half day to collaborate with our teammates. We were wondering, however, **if that allotted time could be given to us on a Professional Development day?** The time spent writing sub plans, preparing for a sub, obtaining a sub, and then making up instruction time lost while our kids were with a sub, far outweighed the gift of time we were given. We do not intend to be ungrateful, by any means; however, we would prefer that the time given to us to be the most beneficial possible. **Would it be possible to refrain from pulling teachers out of instruction in order to attend trainings, especially when the training is the same as those attended during professional development days?** The time spent in the classroom with our kids is, by far, the most valuable.

Mullendore (Continued)

- A. The next professional development day, January 19, is going to be a district day, but it will be entirely for planning at the elementary campus level. Using the appropriate PLC protocol for each campus, teachers will have the entire day to plan for learning for the remainder of the year. The C & I Team recognizes the need to give teachers time to reflect on their work relative to all the district initiatives, and we believe this day will be valuable.

Trainings that have already been scheduled for this year were approved by Cabinet. These trainings are required for most teachers and must be offered multiple times during the year in order to provide access for everyone. If a teacher has already attended *any* one of these trainings, he/she should not be required to attend one again. Some are multiple-day trainings which require more than one day out of class, but most are only one-day events. If you have already completed training, inform your principal so that he/she can make the best use of the slots available.

11. Has Birdville considered a health clinic for our employees like the one Keller has recently opened? What other plans does the District have to promote wellness for our staff?

- A. For the past two years, the district has budgeted more than \$200,000 annually to provide our employees with no-cost access to Teledoc/Ameridoc. This service is available to every employee of the district and every member of his or her household, regardless of whether they have district insurance or not. The service is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. This program is widely used, has the potential to save an individual employee hundreds of dollars per year, and results in earlier diagnosis and treatment than would be available otherwise.

At this time, we believe it is better to continue to make this program available to every employee rather than diverting those funds to a clinic that would benefit far fewer employees.

Richland

12. How is the decision made to departmentalize in grades 3 – 5? Is it a campus decision or district decision? Is it a blanket decision across the board for all three grades or is each grade level decided differently. Traditionally grades 4 and 5 are departmentalized, but there seems to be flexibility in 3rd grade, with some schools departmentalizing and some not.

- A. At this time, it is a campus decision. However, the district is considering standardizing operations.

13. With the bond passing, will it be possible to compensate Team Leaders with a stipend? How can we find the money to make this possible? It seems so common in many other districts, how do we make BISD similar in this area?

- A. This was proposed and cut from the 2014-15 budget. It will be strongly considered in the development of the 2015-16 budget.

MIDDLE SCHOOL

Haltom Middle

14. With the passage of the bond, **what are the chances of having SROs back on individual campuses?**
- A. We currently have full-time police officers at Haltom HS, Richland HS, Birdville HS and Shannon HS, with a 50/50 cost for each entity (city). Over the last several years, BISD has been actively working with the police chiefs to place police officers at all secondary schools (at least on a half-time basis at the middle schools). We are in the middle of a phase-in plan that is based on the ability of both the cities and the District to pay for additional officers. The budget schedules for the cities begin on Oct. 1 of each year. Currently, we have an officer at Watauga MS, and we are in the process of adding officers in Richland Hills and North Richland Hills at the middle schools before the end of the 2014-15 school year. BISD will continue to phase-in officers as funds are available in all of our cities.

Smithfield

15. **Is there a timeline for the repairs/improvements for each campus? If so, when will it be made known to the individual campuses?**
- A. Now that the bond has passed the Board and Administration have begun the complex process of developing a timeline for completing the projects included in the bond referendum. We will publish the final plan as soon as it has been completed.

HIGH SCHOOL

Haltom

16. Last year, the district stipulated that graduation no longer counted toward being a flex day for the next year. **How is the district planning on compensating teachers for working graduation? What is the district's plan for staffing graduation if there are not enough volunteer teachers that would like to come over a holiday weekend? Is the district looking at changing the date of graduation in the future so that it is not held over a holiday weekend?**
- A. The purpose of flex time is for improving pedagogical skills and not for situations such as graduation. However, this could be worked with the high school principals to use this to make the last teacher work day a half-day instead of a full-day contract day.
- The District prefers not to have graduation on Memorial Day weekend, but that is the only day where we have a guaranteed facility large enough for our families to be part of this special day. The other option is to move graduation outdoors at the FAAC in June.

17. **Is the cabinet reviewing any of the studies that have recently been published regarding MS and HS students and sleep deprivation as associated with school start times?** While there is no way to make everyone happy, a later start time for HS students can allow for more extensive before school tutorials and rehearsals and relieve conflict with athletics which occurs primarily after school due to the early start. This is in addition to the research that shows students are more successful in the classroom with a later start to the day.

Haltom (Continued)

- A. BISD had a later start time for high school students, but at the request of our high school principals, the time was moved to a 7:30 a.m. start. According to our principals, the earlier start better fits the academic schedules on the campuses. The Cabinet is not considering further changes at this time.

Richland

18. What will be done to make world languages a priority in secondary education, especially as our native-speaking Spanish population continues to grow and as the dual-language programs in primary schools around the district become more developed?

- A. As a result of the passage of the bond, new technology will be available in all World Language classrooms. These technologies will enable teachers to expand the boundaries of the classroom and offer students opportunities they have not had in the past.

Consideration is being given to extending the native-speaker classes to all middle school campuses in an effort to prepare those students for more advanced coursework when they get to high school. Determination about these classes will be campus-based, dependent upon student interest in enrolling.

19. Is the pay in this district ever going to include step raises again? Teachers in the HEB school district make over \$100,000 more than teachers in BISD upon retirement. How would this attract bright, innovated teachers when they do the math - after working 20+ years teachers in BISD only get a \$12,000 raise - seems like the pay scale is front loaded.

- A. BISD's Board of Trustees supports and funds a teacher salary schedule that is very competitive with the districts in our area comparison group. Those districts include HEB, Keller, Grapevine-Colleyville, Carroll, and Eagle Mountain Saginaw. Each year, we compare BISD salaries at 0, 5, 10, 15, 20, and 25 years-of-service to those of the area districts and adjust salaries so that they remain competitive. Our salary schedule consistently ranks among the top in our area, and as a result, the District does attract the best teachers as evidenced by rising student achievement. The chart below addresses the 2014-15 teacher salaries for the area districts mentioned, and you can see that BISD fares very well in comparison.

Regarding a \$12,000 difference between Step 0 and Step 20 on the 2014-15 hiring schedule, that is accurate and is the case in other school districts as you can see from the chart below. However, this is a hiring pay scale, not a predictor of future salaries. For example:

Richland (Continued)

A beginning teacher with a Bachelor’s Degree in 1994-95 had a starting salary of \$24,596, and if hired the same year (1994-95) at step 20 the salary was \$36,000, a difference of about \$11,400. However, if hired in 1994-95 at \$24,596, our step 20 pay if hired 20 years later in 2014-15 is \$56,130, which is a difference of about \$31,500. I suppose one could argue from both sides, but one argument is that the first-year teacher has the same responsibilities, but yet makes about \$12,000 less than the teacher with 20 years of experience. Regardless, the chart shows that area districts have a similar approach to teacher pay regarding years of experience.

Surrounding Districts Teacher Salary Comparison

Years	Birdville	Keller	Hurst- Euleless- Bedford	Eagle Mtn Saginaw	Carroll	Grapevine- Colleyville	Average
0	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$52,750	\$47,080	\$48,200	\$50,000	\$49,671
5	\$51,830	\$51,849	\$52,803	\$49,241	\$49,553	\$51,000	\$51,046
10	\$53,280	\$54,519	\$54,364	\$51,699	\$51,495	\$52,000	\$52,892
15	\$54,680	\$56,019	\$55,748	\$53,608	\$53,217	\$53,000	\$54,378
20	\$56,130	\$58,069	\$57,808	\$56,501	\$54,939	\$54,000	\$56,241
25	\$62,000	\$61,294	\$63,161	\$61,497	\$58,672	\$58,145	\$60,794