**Mesquite Education Association**

**FR Questions – October 2019**

1. **Why are we no longer aloud to have structured "play" time in our classrooms or R station time any longer?**

Play is developmentally appropriate for young learners. It can be incorporated into all subject areas. The new ELA curriculum incorporates play in Kindergarten and 1st grade in the new Creation Station. The purpose of this station is to read, play, talk, and write. There is also play incorporated as a part of the Inquiry/Research station in grades K-5 that lends to creativity and play. The use of R-Time is a campus decision not determined at the district level.

1. **What is the reason that MISD is still using Xerox DocuShare and how much does the district spend annually on the software? Would the district be willing to move forward and start using Google Instead? MISD would be able to transfer all the Xerox Docushare documents to Google Docs and it would make it much easier to search and find the documents needed?**

The three primary platforms the district provides for file sharing are DocuShare, Private Network Folders and Google Drive. Each of these has its strong point and staff members can select whichever platform best meets their needs. The storage hardware for DocuShare is internal to the District which provides faster dowloads and is less of a load on our internet bandwidth, we pay for the bandwidth. With Docushare we have more robust permissioning options which allows us full control of data and how it is shared. We back-up data on DocuShare with our in-house back system and can keep deleted items indefinitely, limited only by storage. Google Drive would require a separate cloud backup service to be able to restore older documents within Google, so there is a cost involved with that. Google will only keep deleted documents for a limited time which retstricts how far back we can recover an accidentally deleted file. DocuShare provides Industry leading search tools which includes more metadata options for classifying documents.

1. **Is there a limit on the amount of planning and meetings required for teachers throughout the week? Or are administrators not required to take into consideration the amount of personal planning time provided to teachers?**

There is not a district requirement on the amount of planning and meetings required for teachers. Concerns about requirements for planning should be discussed in collaboration with your principal.

1. **Since the district is short on subs, would it make more sense to hold the "new to primary" training on more than one day so teachers aren't having to split classes all in one day?**

The original number of "new to primary" teachers was much lower than the number who ultimately needed to attend the training. The importance of teachers new to primary grades having the training and time together to understand all the components of a quality ELA program is so important. We are already making plans to divide the training next year. We understand not having a sub to cover classes is frustrating.

1. **Could the district consider changing Shaw Elementary from Agnew to Wilkinson?**

Zoning to campuses is determined by the number of students in an area and the capacity of the buildings. Wilkinson would not have the capacity to add another elementary school without adding portables.

1. **Could the athletic department change the middle school football schedules to reflect the size of the school competing?**

With the addition of Middle School #10, we have already looked at scheduling sporting events for next year utilizing different models. We have definitely noticed the discrepancies in the level of success of our middle school teams over time. We will however continue to evaluate this and make the best decisions for all students, including taking a closer look at enrollment numbers. We do want to emphasize that our mission is to ensure our students are prepared for the competitive level they will encounter at the high school level. In conclusion, the addition of 6th grade pre-athletics is also a strategy we are currently using to increase the number of athletes on all campuses.

1. **Does the district provide the funds needed to purchase parts and make the neccessary repairs to our buses? When could we purchase new buses to replace the aging ones?**

The district does provide funding to purchase parts and to make necessary repairs to the fleet of district buses. The district utilizes a replacement cycle whereby older buses are replaced with new models.

1. **How can the district retain current drivers and hire new ones more effectively and be more competitive with nearby districts in the immediate future?**

The bus driver shortage that we are currently experiencing is a huge issue across the nation. This year, our bus drivers received a $3.00/hour rate increase as well as the 5% salary increase. In addition, the bonus structure, which the Board approved for them last year, remains in place. We will continue to review salaries for all of our departments on a regular basis to ensure equity in all areas.

1. **How many local and personal days do we get each year?**

State law entitles all employees to five days of paid personal leave per year. Personal leave is available for use at the beginning of the year. A day of personal leave is equivalent to the number of hours per day in an employee’s usual assignment, whether full-time or part-time. State personal leave accumulates without limit and is transferable to other Texas school districts. Professional employees shall earn three paid local personal leave days per school year. All other employees shall earn one, two, or three paid local personal leave days per school year, based on each employee’s years of service in the district. Local personal days shall be noncumulative.

1. **When going through the 504 process in Skyward, why does the students Skyward paperwork not automatically pop up when I click to view the form? Instead we get a message to look at the attachments. Can we make this be more streamlined?**

The District looks for ways to streamline processes for distributing and verifying Section 504 services plans. The process of viewing the form and attachments allows teachers to view the plans in Skyward rather than having to open a separate application. Additionally,counselors can verify the legal obligation to distribute the services plans to teachers in met. Verifying that the services plans have been recieved by campus personnel provides a layer of protection for students and staff.

1. **Why does the district schedule several staff development sessions during DCP week? Can the district schedule these trainings where they would not overlap for some teachers?**

Professional learning sessions are scheduled to meet timelines set by the state or at the availability of presenters. The DCP calendar is scheduled in advance of professional learning that needs to occur. There may be some overlap. The good news is that the DCP schedule can be shifted a few days either way and still meet the scan by date needed for district level data. There are so many moving parts to all the training and sessions that occur throughout the district. There will inevitably be some conflicts but we strive for those to be minimal.

1. **How and when is Mesquite ISD going to implement the reading practices requirement for K-3rd grade teachers and administrators?**

We are waiting on the state to release information regarding the Reading Academies. They are targeting March for the state-wide roll out. As soon as the information is available, we will make a plan for implementation in our district.

1. **When playing the radio for students, are we limited to KEOM, or is there any other stations permissible?**

Our district sponsored station, KEOM, is always a great choice! Currently, there is not a policy or regulation on this issue. It is more an issue not about the station, but about the content and the music being played. The content MUST be appropriate. If you have other questions, please talk with your building administrator.