**Mesquite Education Association**

**FR Questions – April 2019**

1. **Since we are a non-profit entity, how is the money the district is taking from employees on blackout days being spent?**

The money is left in the general fund. It is not allocated toward an expense.

1. **What is the district’s grading policy? What is the lowest grade that should be put in the grade book and on the report card?**

District policy and regulation regarding grading is EIA. The link to the policy is:

<https://pol.tasb.org/Policy/Code/369?filter=EIA>.

The link to the regulation is:

[https://doc.mesquiteisd.org/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-232287/EIA(REGULATION).pdf](https://doc.mesquiteisd.org/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-232287/EIA%28REGULATION%29.pdf)

Any concerns about grading should be discussed with your building principal.

1. **If budget constraints are the reason for not expanding elementary art classes, would the district consider adding full-time art teachers gradually over time, for example, several campuses could have a full-time art teacher and so on each year?**

We are continually looking at our quality programs and the ability to grow them. As you know, the ability to add programs depends on having the funds available for adequate staffing. With the uncertain future of public school funding and the anticipated decreased enrollment in MISD, the funds simply are not available to increase art staff to this level at this time.

1. **At the new High School of Choice, are there going to be AP Core Classes?**

Yes, AP and Dual Credit courses are planned for the new Choice High School.

1. **Out of all of our wonderful CTE classes, why do we not have any Agriculture Classes? Districts around us have these classes and programs in place so why are we missing out on the Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources Cluster?**

We offered various Ag courses for a number of years but enrollment steadily declined. Once the appropriately certified teachers left the district, we saw that as the best time to dissolve the program. In an effort to be able to offer courses from every cluster designated by the state to increase opportunities for our students, we have looked at various courses within that cluster as a possibility for the future. Funds, faculty, facilities and resources are all factors in making program decisions. If there is an interest in adding these courses, they can always be submitted for course revision in October of each year.

1. **Is there a link on the new website to report issues when trying to access information? Ex: I keep getting a 404 Page not found message when trying to access some of the links that are not in the portal, such as the Clinic page.**

Your suggestion is an excellent one. We have added an icon on the FOR STAFF page of the website that links directly to a form where users can report any issues they are experiencing. You may also contact our district webmaster, Beth Hisey, at ehisey@mesquiteisd.org. We are not aware of an issue with the link to the Clinic page. Please contact Beth with more details so that she can research and correct the problem.

1. **How can Mesquite ISD become less focused on testing and test scores and more focused on students and student growth?**

The accountability and required data submissions imposed at the federal and state levels have created our current assessment reality. Everyone is responsible for student success. The campus administrators and instructional specialist are charged with data evaluation and campus improvement. While we look at individual student achievement, we also focus on student growth. Our ISIP and ERG data look specifically at growing individual students. It will take legislative changes in order for our current assessment requirements to change. However, MISD has significantly reduced testing in the last few years. We

eliminated CCPs, reduced DCP’s by 1/3 and reduced ITBS testing in certain grade levels. In the meantime, our expectations will always remain high for teachers and students. Every student deserves a year’s growth, every year.

1. **Now that all elementary teachers have to be ESL certified, will there still be a need for an ESL pull out teacher?**

There is no intention, or plan, to eliminate any ESL position. Students that are at lower levels of language proficiency will still need to be seen by the ESL teacher as they need additional support. In addition, the ESL teacher is a resource to other teachers in assisting them with strategies to assist the classroom teacher in serving ESL students in his/her classroom.

1. **What is the expectation for serving ESL students during TELPAS testing time? Does the ESL teacher need to be present in the computer lab while the bilingual classes are testing and being monitored by their homeroom teacher?**

All students should be evaluated and monitored by their TELPAS rater. The manual reads: A TELPAS rater is a teacher designated to be the official rater of an EL’s English language proficiency. Each teacher selected to rate a student must have the student in class at the time of the spring assessment window; be knowledgeable about the student’s ability to use English. Raters may include bilingual teachers, ESL teachers, general education teachers, special education teachers, gifted and talented teachers, and teachers of enrichment subjects. Based on the manual, Testing Coordinators at each campus level designate who the raters are and the students that they will supervise. If your ESL students are part of the group being tested, either the ESL teacher or their classroom teacher should be present during the assessment.

1. **Why are staff members who are not evaluated with TTess required to complete a TTess goal, a notebook with documentation of completing job duties, and evaluated with some TTess domains? Does this mean we are being evaluated with two different instruments? If so, is this appropriate?**

Texas Education Code 150.1003 (l) (3) states that
In a year in which a teacher does not receive a full appraisal due to meeting the requirements identified in this subsection, a teacher shall participate in:

 (A) The Goal-setting and professional development plan process
 (B) The performance of teachers’ students (student growth measure, ) and
 (C) A modified end of year conference that addresses
 i. The progress on the goal setting and professional development plan
 ii. The performance of teachers’ students, and
 iii. The following year’s goal setting and professional development plan

The goal setting and professional development planning and student growth pieces are included for every

teacher and are not separate instruments. The forms for teachers receiving a full appraisal are different, as

they include 17 dimensions and not simply the professional development and growth measures.

1. **If the state legislature passes the bill to give teachers a $5000 raise, will MISD also give this to speech therapists, diagnosticians, nurses, and counselors?**

At this time, no final decisions have been made regarding this piece of legislation.

1. **Why aren't bilingual office personnel paid more than monolingual personnel?**

Each person who works in either a professional or paraprofessional position brings special skills to their particular job and, therefore, we have been reluctant to single out any for additional compensation unless it involves a critical shortage area. We agree that bilingual skills are extremely valuable, but supply and demand often dictates whether or not a stipend is warranted. Our salary studies indicate that we are competitive with most area districts and, thus far, have been able to secure an adequate number of qualified candidates for bilingual assistants.

**13. Will the new High School of Choice be geared towards the Top 10% of students on each campus or students who want to go from High School straight to the workforce?**

The new high school is not aimed at drawing the top 10% of students from our traditional high schools. The true intent of this school by design is to provide opportunities to all students where they can start developing career skills and experiences while in high school. Students now mainly experience extracurricular activities through Fine Arts and Athletics. At Choice/Career High School, students will do so through internships and opportunities to learn integration of disciplines. These experiences will prepare students for either college or career; it will be their choice.