**Mesquite Education Association**

**FR Questions – November 2019**

1. ***Can the term "best practice" be used to establish ones personal preference instead of having it mean that your practices are the best for all educators?***

In the wide world of educational research, there are indeed "best practices" that have been proven statistically significant in achieving desired results in a classroom setting. That definitely does not mean that all "practices" are best practices. What might work for one teacher, may not work for another. There are a myriad of factors that influence teaching and learning in the classroom. If you hear the term "best practice" it is acceptable to ask, "what research and results would qualify this as a best practice?"

1. ***What is being done with our transportation deparment in regards to the shape our buses are in?***

MISD bus productivity is of the utmost importance and is a focus for Transportation Services at all times. The buses are evaluated frequently and have scheduled maintenance. Currently, MISD has a shortage of mechanics, drivers, and monitors, so those who are available are working overtime to maintain the fleet. Please report all issues with buses directly to the campus principal and the transportation director. Transportation Services is actively seeking qualified mechanics, mechanic assistants, bus drivers, and bus monitors. Please contact Transportation Services if interested in obtaining a Commercial Driver's License (CDL) or becoming a bus monitor.

1. ***Is the district planning on utilizing the Teacher Incentive Allotment designation system that resulted from House Bill 3?***

The district is considering utilizing the Teacher Incentive Allotment that resulted from HB3 however, at this time, TEA has not finalized the criteria that districts will have to meet in order to be eligible to use this money.

1. **Can someone please explain to us the new grading system that is being piloted at Mesquite High School?**

Mesquite High School is piloting a Standards Based Grading system that focuses on TEKS and standards rather than on “the assignment.” In the gradebook, the headings will no longer be connected to “the assignment” but rather the TEK. For example, a teacher, student, and parent will not look in the grade book and see “Animal Farm Quiz” with a grade of 70%. They will see “E1.5B analyze how authors develop complex yet believable characters in works of fiction through a range of literary devices, including character foils.” Thusly, the grade of 70% is a response to questions from a reading that are aligned to the TEK and is reflective of student mastery of that TEK. This method is intended to give the teacher, student, and parent clearer insight as to student performance.

1. After reading this article, what are the chances of having at least one laundromat in each feeder pattern encouraged to consider adding wi-fi to partner with the ReadPlayTalk initiative?

In our efforts to build powerful partnerships, the community education department and RPT is always open to enriching the students with those types of resources. However, the intent of the partenrship is to guide the partner into participating with something organic within their organization and low or no cost to their business. As we contiue to look for partners, we will keep a keen eye to opportunities like the ones expressed in the question.

1. **Can viewing 504 Service plans in Skyward be simplified? Is there a way to view the student's actual service plan when we click Print/View All since that is what allows us to click the Acknowledge Service Plan box?**

Unfortunately, no, not at this time. This was an option that was explored when service plans were migrated into Skyward. At this time, in order to be able to verify, the first form must be a generic form. While this does present an extra step right now, this process is constantly evolving and improving with the goal of being as efficient and simple as possible.

1. ***As a district, why do we compare apples to apples in a monolingual class vs a bilingual class?***

The comparisons we do at the district and campus levels mirror the comparisons done at the state level. In an effort to close gaps, we are responsible for all students regardless of their educational setting.

1. ***Why do bilingual teachers get an aide and higher pay when their class sizes are smaller compared to monolingual classroom teachers?***

Bilingual education is a high needs area on both the state and national levels. This position requires teachers to have dual language skills. In order for us to be able to recruit and retain quality bilingual teachers, it became necessary several years ago to offer a stipend in this area.

1. ***How can we make our technology devices more user friendly for prek, kinder, 1st and 2nd grade students?***

Tech Services staff have been working on a solution to allow younger students the ability to log in just using a badge and camera that most of our computers already have. This technology is being implemented and tested to make sure that it works smoothly, but we hope to have something ready in the next few months. In addition, Istation has recently made changes that will allow a link to be added to the portal. This will allow students a more streamlined access to their digital content. Testing is currently in progress and if all goes well, will be available to students soon.

1. ***Is MISD violating Texas Education Code, Section 21.404, by taking away a teachers conference time with required PLC meetings?***

PLC meetings held occasionally during conference periods are designed to be used as "planning time" for PLC's and therefore would not be a violation of Texas Education Code, Section 21.404. When PLC planning time is appropriately utilized, it can have a huge impact on the success of PLC's.

1. ***Why is it neccessary for teachers to look at students 504 paperwork if the student is not enrolled in the class we are teaching?***

It is not necessary for teachers to look at service plans for students who are not currently on their class rosters. Teachers can use filters in Skyward to view only their current students. Instructions for using the filter are in a PDF attachment that can be seen when teachers click Print/View All and see the first form.