

**Mesquite Education Association  
FR Questions - May 2018**

- 1. Teachers come early and stay late yet the AC does not accommodate our schedules. Is there a reason this can't be changed to at least make teachers who are working extra hours comfortable?**

The high school air conditioning is on a chiller system. It is programmed to run starting at 7:00 a.m. and turns off at 4:30. We have gone to an energy conservation system to save money.

- 2. What recourse do teachers have when constantly dealing with disrespectful students?**

Campus administrators are equipped to implement the Student Code of Conduct when situations arise that involve a substantial disruption. The Code provides a range of consequences based on TEC Ch. 37. There are a myriad of training opportunities offered in the District, as well as Region X that focus on teacher/student relationships, classroom management, and restorative practices.

- 3. Will third graders have two music classes next year since they won't be going to library for specials?**

Yes, two 45-minute times per week.

- 4. Teachers are required to have 10 grades per 6 weeks, but they can input those grades at any point. Would it be possible to require teachers to enter one grade a week?**

Grading and reporting are among the most important responsibilities of a teacher. Scoring student work and evaluating student progress is essentially a function of the classroom teacher. The grading policy currently does not have a requirement about how many grades a teacher enters per week. With Skyward, the expectation is that teachers enter grades as soon as possible so that students and parents are informed of progress. The grades should reflect the relative mastery of the assignment and the TEKS in a given subject.

- 5. How many district and campus mandated (but non-compensated) after school, evening, and Saturday meetings and events are deemed fair for teachers to expect throughout a school year?**

Although principals make every effort to be cognizant and considerate of everyone's time, a teacher as an exempt employee may be required to stay longer if needed to complete the day's work, confer with parents, attend faculty meetings, or perform other school duties including meetings and events. The number is left to the discretion of the principal with the expectation that the extra requirements are within reason.

- 6. Black out days: What is the point of them? Are we keeping them? If the problem is to alleviate the need for so many subs. I haven't noticed a difference. Has the district?**

As previously indicated, the primary purpose of adjusting the policy regarding the use of discretionary personal days (including black out days) is to help alleviate the substitute shortage and imposition on other teachers who often have to absorb additional students or sacrifice conference periods. In regard to black out days specifically, the policy is definitely working as intended on a district-wide basis in that through April, absences are down on these days by 35% from 5,294 in 2016-17 to 3,461 in 2017-18. Therefore, the plan is to keep the policy intact.

**7. Why does the fixed assets inventory not pull from Eduphoria when it comes to technology? This creates an unnecessary amount of additional work to update a spreadsheet that is emailed to administrators rather than importing live data that is more accurate.**

Munis is the official fixed assets inventory system for Mesquite ISD that houses all assets including technology. For audit and insurance purposes, all assets must be entered and maintained for accuracy in Munis. Eduphoria was a solution put in place to allow campus administrators easy access to move and keep track of technology inventory at the campus level. However, Eduphoria and Munis do not and will not integrate with each other. We are currently evaluating other solutions to eliminate the additional work for the campus and district level inventory.

**8. How can we stop leaving the MEA and MEPA baskets up to just one person and start putting these baskets together as a campus/team?**

Our Facility Representatives for MEA and MEPA are invaluable and do accept many responsibilities throughout the year. At many facilities, the faculty and staff are helpful with baskets, but most of the work is done by the representative (collecting money or items for basket). Without this support, both MEA and MEPA would not be able to fund scholarships. It might take more organization at the facility level, but perhaps groups could be organized to create and support the basket. This cooperative resourcefulness, including the principal, has worked at several facilities but does require time and organization. Thanks again to all MEA and MEPA representatives for your leadership and willingness to volunteer your time and talent.

**9. How can we help inform our colleagues about voting for educational friendly candidates in November?**

A school district can not endorse an individual for a local, state or federal office. However, it is legal to provide information about each candidate running in the race and include their stance on public education issues. This school year, Mesquite ISD made a concerted effort to better inform the staff and the community on candidates running for office.

The Board of Trustees unanimously passed four separate board resolutions supporting issues that would advance public education in Mesquite and in the State of Texas. The board resolutions covered school funding, vouchers, economic development, and academic achievement. The Board felt candidates supporting these resolutions would represent Mesquite ISD and public education well. These resolutions can be viewed on the district's website.

We also started a new publication this year called "The Advocate." This publication is provided monthly to our staff and often discusses the state and federal legislation being proposed for public education. Please continue to read this publication and stay informed on legislative issues affecting public education in Texas and across the country.

The Mesquite Education Association has a political action committee (PAC), which is a separate entity, allowing them to engage in the political process and to endorse individual candidates. The PAC has been extremely active this year through their advocacy efforts in the community, and specifically, hosted two candidate forums. After these forums, the PAC chose to endorse specific candidates that were pro-public education.

Even though we can not endorse individual candidates, we will continue to inform and educate everyone on the issues concerning public education. Mesquite ISD is committed to this mission, and will continue to provide accurate and up-to-date information.

**10. Our campus is adding a huge number of students next year which means a much larger number of ARDS. Right now, students who are 13 and older require a transition teacher to be present in addition to the regular education teacher. Is it possible for us to use teachers other than the CTE teachers on campus for that transition position?**

The requirement that a CTE representative be in attendance at any ARD where CTE will be discussed is not a district requirement; it is a requirement of IDEA. Without this representation, it is not a legally constituted ARD committee. The CTE representative is there to discuss CTE courses, not as a transition representative. In order to serve as the CTE representative, the teacher must be certified as such and be teaching CTE courses.

In trying to ensure appropriate participation by our CTE teachers while also honoring their time, the Special Education department implemented a policy in Fall 2017 which allows the CTE representative to submit written input to the ARD committee prior to the ARD which is sent to the parent along with the ARD notice, give the parent their contact information so that any questions can be answered, and with parental agreement, the CTE representative can be excused from attending the ARD. When a CTE representative is in attendance at the ARD, once transition services have been addressed, if there are no questions regarding the Schedule of Services and the parent is in agreement, the CTE representative can be excused from the remainder of the ARD. Additionally, if the student is not currently in CTE courses and no CTE courses are being considered for the next school year, a CTE representative is not a required member of the ARD, unless it is an initial ARD. A CTE representative is a required member of all initial ARDs for students who are 13 or older.

The Special Education department continues to look for ways to ensure meaningful participation by all required ARD committee members in the most efficient way possible; however, we must ensure that we have the necessary members for a legally constituted ARD committee.

**11. How can we condense the amount of goals classroom teachers have so that goal setting is more productive?**

There is not a specific requirement from the district that individual goals are set in multiple areas. However, the expectation is for staff to continuously improve in all areas of their work. The thought is that staff are growing in our different points of focus across the district. When working on several goals, one suggestion would be to align areas of growth between the goals, and include them in T-TESS.