



# Communications Council

*October 2, 2008*

**A request was made to gather more feedback from the staff regarding the 2009-2010 school year calendar?** The Allen ISD Calendar Committee will be posting calendars for 2009-2010 will be posted on the Allen ISD website starting October 13. Staff and community members will have an opportunity to provide feedback online for several weeks. Details will be posted online with the calendars.

**Please consider expanding Parent Connect to the fifth grade level.** The school district is looking at replacing SASI with a Skyward product in 2009-2010. A new parent communication system would be part of that change. Once the change is made, we will look at what grade levels to expand into.

**Is there a guideline for the number of conference periods a teacher may give up?** There is not a district standard regarding conference periods and conflicts. Teachers with a concern about interrupted conference periods should speak with their supervisor.

**A concern was raised about technical problems with Safari at several campuses.** The Facilities Department has worked to fix any problems the campuses are having. If problems have been turned in through the help ticket desk, they will be addressed. The principal should communicate with the Facilities Department if problems persist.

**Can the school district please consider paying teachers a stipend for attending Sky Ranch?** There is currently no budget available for compensating teachers who attend Sky Ranch or Camp Grady Spruce.

**Will the school district continue to use United Streaming next year? Another campus expressed an interest in keeping United Streaming along with Montage as a teacher resource.** No decision has been made to discontinue United Streaming. The Learner Services Department will evaluate the usage of United Streaming and other resources through this year before making any recommendations.

**A concern was raised about the quality of service from LSW, the life insurance representatives?** The HR benefits office will look into the concerns. It would be helpful if employees having problems with LSW wrote HR with specific information.

**Why do high school students have a staggered start for the school day? Would it be more cost efficient to run busses once instead of twice for high school?** The staggered schedule was created to provide more course options for students and to better schedule programs such as band and athletics. The schedule also lessens the traffic flow as the students arrive and depart at two different times.

**A concern was raised about the growing problem of substitute teachers canceling assignments at the last minute and leaving schools and teachers without a sub.** The principal should report any problems regarding substitute performance or attendance to Dee Teel, who coordinates substitute assignments. An additional 150 substitutes were recently added to the system which should help with shortage problems on peak usage days.

**Please consider changing the timing for Eduphoria enrollment and surveys. The deadline for the survey is causing teachers not to receive credit for workshops? What about a supervisor override?** Staff members currently have 7 days to complete the evaluation survey after a workshop. The system does not have an option to remind staff members to complete the survey. The Staff development office will look at the possibility of extending the survey deadline. Staff members with specific concerns or needs regarding Eduphoria should contact Janis Mulligan in the staff development office.

**A concern was raised about the number of workshops that require staff members to be out of the classroom.** The staff development office uses feedback (surveys) from sessions to determine the needs and desired times for future staff development programs. The calendar committee will be looking at adding several staff development / student holidays for 2009-2010 but the calendar has not been set. If a staff member is experiencing scheduling problems with training they should talk to their supervisor.

**Please consider moving more training into the school year and out of the summer?** (see response to previous question).

**Is there a catalog of video titles available on safari?** A listing of Learner Services aligned media is now available online in the Document Library which can be accessed from Lotus Notes. Look under Safari/ Montage –Learner Services Aligned Media. Just a note, Learner Services checks content for alignment to TEKS and the campus administrator approves content.

**Would it be possible for the Sam's Club credit cards to be kept at the campus instead of the Purchasing Office?** The Sam's Club cards must be accompanied by a purchase order. Therefore it is preferred that the card and purchase order be picked up together. Maintaining the cards at a central location also reduces the number of cards being lost or misplaced.

**What happens to the televisions that were pulled from the classrooms when projectors were installed?** Any equipment that is determined as surplus by the school district must be sold in auction or donated to another Texas school / school district. Any televisions not moved to other locations will be sold in auction.

**Could the district consider offering training for teachers who work with students who are both AIM students and Alpha Phonics or special education?** Allen ISD is a member of the Region X GT cooperative. This would be a good option for teachers needing specialized training. Contact Barbara Myer for more information.

**Does the school district plan to install "buzz in" systems for the campuses?** The current bond proposal includes the addition of video cameras for school entrances and the Raptor system is in place at all campuses. There is no plan at this time to install a lock-out, buzz-in system for visitors..

**Could the secondary schools please list their school supplies at the start of the year?** There are too many variables for secondary schools to post their school supply lists in advance. The list is different for each student based on their schedule.

**Why are paraprofessionals paid less than teachers for doing the same jobs outside of the school day such as selling tickets, monitoring detentions?** The rates for non-teaching related duties such as selling tickets varies according to the assignment but they are not part of the salary schedule. The HR Department will need to research this further to determine how often this occurs and what employees are affected before making any recommendations..

**Could teachers with 10 years or more experience and excellent evaluations be compensated through incentives such as a 3-year evaluation cycle?** Teacher evaluation is set by statute and then board policy. Teachers can waive out of the formal observations every other year but the district cannot waive the formal annual performance evaluation.

**Please consider compensating teachers who mentor other teachers? Teachers are expected to mentor new colleagues and freely hand over years of intellectual work.** Teacher mentors do receive a stipend for participating in the program. Teachers helping other professionals at school during the work day would not be able to receive compensation. Compensation for intellectual property is also not allowed under teacher contract.

**The convocation PowerPoint did not include the accomplishments of social studies teachers and it was demoralizing to those teachers?** We apologize if faculty members were offended by the omission. For the sake of time, only two subjects were included in the TAKS score presentation.

**Why can't an employee's "local days" be given to spouse who is also an employee?** Board policy states that up to two sick days can be donated to a sick leave pool for another employee. In this scenario, two days could be donated by the spouse after sick leave and extended leave are exhausted.

**TEA requires a 7 hour work day. Can more consideration be given to teachers to flex those hours?** The work day hours are set to provide maximum service for students and parents. There are circumstances where an employee's hours may be adjusted to accommodate the work schedule.

**Please consider adding paraprofessionals to district committees that deal with areas such as forms and procedures?** This recommendation will be forwarded to those departments who may be creating new committees.

**Several concerns were expressed about the impact of new grading guidelines, the consistency of carrying out the new guidelines and the makeup of the committee that created them.** Central office and campus administrators began reviewing school board policy in the fall of 2007. Guidelines were then established to help clarify the board policy. The curriculum and instruction policies were reviewed in the spring of 2008. Administrators then gathered feedback on the guidelines from staff members at their respective schools. Since that time, other staff members have raised questions about the guidelines to the Learner Services staff. As a result, Learner Services is developing a more formal procedure for gathering feedback from staff members. They will also be reviewing the existing regulations based on comments from staff and may make adjustments at the mid-semester if any are needed.

**Kudos To:** Learner Services and the high school for the advanced academics program for parents  
Carl Cater and Rosa Pickering for their help in scheduling special education busses

**Attending the meeting were:** Dalton McGaha – Curtis/ Sandra Lawson – Dillard/ Amy Nell Sayors – Ereckson/ Kristen Kinnard – Lowery/ Kelli Abohosh – Evans/ Katie Barber – Norton/ Sharon Howard – Chandler/ Nikki Duncan– Rountree/ Amy Givonetti – Kerr/ Cheryl Goodwin – Anderson/ Jennifer Armentrout – Marion/ Arlene Thompson – Bolin/ Cheryl Mena – Vaughan/ Rose Neels – Boon/ Michelle Apgar - Boyd/ Andrea Brooks – Ford/ Citabra Profitt – Green/ Esther Buhidar – Allen HS/ Cheryl mena – Vaughan/ Sandra Lawson – Dillard Ctr./ Tim Carroll – Public Information/ and Dr. Ken Helvey, Superintendent of Schools