



Consultation

A report on the February 2015 Consultation Meeting

Consultation is a structured process, outlined in SAISD Board Policy, which serves as a means by which the District consults with District employees on matters of educational policy and conditions of employment. The San Antonio Alliance of Teachers and Support Personnel is the organization elected by employees to serve as the Consultation organization. The Alliance Consultation Team meets with the SAISD Administration's Consultation Team to discuss issues and work towards solutions. There is a Paraprofessional/Classified Consultation meeting and a Teacher/Professional Consultation meeting each month during the school year.

Work to address excessive testing continues

The Alliance Excessive Testing Task Force has been working towards the goal of decreasing the number of tests administered to our students so that teachers can spend more time on instruction. At this month's Consultation meeting, the Alliance put forward three specific proposals related to testing.

Proposal #1: Post the completed list of required tests on the SAISD website under the employee tab in the "forms and documents" section so that all campus-based staff have access to this information in order to know what is and is not required from the district perspective.

Response: The district will post the information once the list is finalized.

Proposal #2: Verify whether the LAP 3, Early Literacy Screening Assessment (ELSA), and the Child Observation Record (COR) are required. In a previous Consultation meeting, the administration's team had

deleted several assessments from the required assessment list saying that the assessments were no longer required, the program no longer existed, or no department knew what the assessment was. Teachers are still reporting that they have to do these three assessments, which were among those deleted from the required list, so clarification is needed.

Response: Rachel Cervantes, Executive Director of C&I, will follow up with ECE/Head Start and Special Education for clarification.

Proposal #3: Begin to eliminate some testing.

- For placement into System 44 or Read 180, use I-Station or another reading exam that is already given rather than requiring the Scholastic Phonics Inventory (SPI) and Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI).

If you have specific recommendations for how to streamline assessment, please send your suggestions to gracieo@sanantonioalliance.org.

Discussion: High school does not have I-Station so a different assessment would need to be used at that level. Will I-Station align with System 44 and Read 180? Would it be possible to flip and do the SPI and the SRI in place of I-Station?

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- Some teachers have reported that SRI is being used as progress monitoring for dyslexia students or special education students. Use I-Station or another reading exam that is already given for progress monitoring for this group of students.
- Eliminate Renaissance Universal Screening as a math screener.

Discussion: High school teachers have reported that the screener is given but results are not analyzed for student interventions, and no programs or interventions require this screener. If a replacement for this screener is needed, the HMH Gold Math book placement test from the textbook could be used and is frequently given by teachers. Dr. Cervantes noted that this screener was put in place before the new math adoption took place.

- Do not require Running Records. Allow teachers to use Rigby, Fontas and Pinnell, or leveled readers as a teacher tool only.

Discussion: Dr. Cervantes said the district supports F&P. She will find out whether it is required for principals to collect Running Records.

- Do not require Countdowns/Blitzes. Allow teachers to use as a teacher tool only

Discussion: Dr. Cervantes said when C&I writes the curriculum, they provide a comprehensive review (Countdown). She said it is intended to be a tool. Cervantes noted that while the district wants teachers to use the Countdown, there is nothing that requires a teacher to do it. Principals on the Consultation team,

however, said their understanding is that it is required by C&I department directors.

- The term CBA has been used for more than one type of assessment, which has resulted in confusion as to which assessment is being referred to when the term CBA is used. There is a need to distinguish between the allowable

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“benchmark simulation” that can be done once per year, the assessments that are given every nine weeks, and assessments that are campus-based teacher created. Each needs to have a distinct name and additional description of each was requested.

Discussion: Curriculum-Based Assessments are required and given every nine weeks by district. These are the CBAs. Mini weekly assessments are campus-based and are not required by the district. They are also sometimes referred to as campus-based assessments. Simulations are a practice for STAAR. The district can only do one per year. The teachers on the Alliance team pointed out that the last CBAs had more questions on some of the assessments than in the past. The original concept of the CBAs was that they would be short and could be done in one class period. Some secondary teachers reported that the last CBA could not be done in one class period. The Alliance had also heard concerns that the last round of CBAs lacked consistency. Some subjects had three answer choices while others had five or more answer choices. Some subjects required students to bubble answers while others required students to circle answers.

Dr. Cervantes stated that the district working group that has been discussing high school semester exams is expanding the scope of its work to include discussion of all assessments. She proposed having some Consultation members join that group. There was discussion that a clear

communications plan is needed as evidenced by the fact that campus administrators and district administrators did not always have the same interpretation as to whether an assessment is or is not required by the district.

Administration proposes change to EOY grading deadline

The administration brought forward a proposal to change the deadlines for the end-of-year grading as follows:

June 1 at 8:00 pm – **teachers’ deadline for inputting grades**

June 2 at 10:00 am – **principals’ deadline to verify grades are complete**

June 2 at 10:30 am – P&DS to begin processing student grades and report cards

June 3 at 7:30 am – report cards are ready for campus printing

The administration listed several benefits to making the change, including:

- Report cards and grades will be done before teachers are off contract.
- Missing grades can be reviewed and corrected, if needed.
- Elementary and middle school levels can review and adjust computer calculated promotion/retention status.
- Report cards will be available to send home with students instead of mailing all report cards home.
- Allows for more time to close out the school year for clerks on their last week of contract.
- One less thing for teacher checkout on the last day of contract

The Alliance team expressed several concerns based on initial feedback from teachers.

Attendance may be poor once students are aware that grades are done (especially a concern at secondary). **Curriculum** will have to be adjusted by teachers so that they have completed all lessons prior to grades being done. **Behavior** of students may be impacted once grades have been turned in. Completing grades earlier will

not allow for as much opportunity for students to **make up work** and therefore, could result in lower grades. (If teachers allow students to turn in make-up work after the grade reporting deadline, grade change paperwork would have to be completed by the teachers and would also result in additional work for data clerks.)

Administration said other area districts use the proposed deadlines. There will be follow up to check on what secondary schools in the other districts do on the last days with students after grades are already completed. There will also be some discussion with secondary principals to get their perspective.

End-of-semester exams proposal

SAISD administration is considering creating end-of-semester exams for core subjects as a replacement for two CBAs (Curriculum-Based Assessments). As your elected Consultation organization, the Alliance held a forum for secondary teachers on February 25 to hear teachers’ views, input, questions, and suggestions on this proposal, which will be discussed at next month’s Consultation meeting. Secondary teachers who were not able to attend the forum may still submit feedback to gracieo@sanantonioalliance.org.

Alliance’s 2014-15 Teacher/Prof. Consultation Team

Shelley Potter -- President
 Gracie Oviedo -- Highland Park ES
 Susan Castro – Hawthorne Academy
 Cynthia Paredes – Bexar County Juv. Det.
 Cathy Hazzard -- Longfellow MS
 Yvonne Clemons -- W.W. White ES

Results of Alliance survey on campus tardy policies

The SAISD Policy Review Committee is discussing the topic of campus tardy procedures/policies. The San Antonio Alliance representatives on the Policy Review Committee conducted a survey to solicit feedback for the discussion. The goal was to find out how many campuses have procedures/policies that are effective and how many need assistance in this area and also to identify campuses that have effective procedures/policies in place so that those can be replicated.

74 schools responded to the survey. Results of the survey were as follows:

My campus has an effective tardy procedure/policy for students.

Strongly agree	21
Agree	98
Disagree	153
Strongly disagree	159

The results seem to clearly indicate that campus tardy procedures/policies are an area in which many campuses need some assistance.

The survey also asked respondents who agreed that their campus' policy is effective to share what makes it effective. Characteristics shared included:

- Simple procedure
- Consistency
- Good communication with staff
- Good communication with parents (meeting with parent, calling parent)
- Incentives
- Home visits by administration as needed

Comments from respondents as to what was not effective included:

- No consequences
- No procedure
- Administration says there is nothing they can do about tardies
- Parents not held accountable
- Inconsistency in the way the policy is enforced
- No effective way to address chronic, habitual tardiness

The Alliance reps on the SAISD Policy Review Committee will share this feedback at the next meeting.

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REAL Results for Students and the Community***