



Update

Consultation

A report on the February 2016 Consultation Meetings

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. Our 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.

Student Behavior and Discipline

Incidents generating the most referrals

The focus of our ongoing discussions regarding student behavior and discipline has been around the importance of a school and classroom environment that is conducive to learning.

This month our Alliance team and the administration's team reviewed student behavior data from the first semester. At the high school and middle school levels, the top three SCOC violations reported as discipline referrals were: **leaving class without permission, insubordination, and disrupting class**. These offenses are categorized in the SAISD Student Code of Conduct (SCOC) as Level 1 – Serious Offenses. Repeatedly violating a Level 1 offense can elevate the offense to a Level 2 – Major Offenses status. At high school, 72% of all referrals were for these three offenses (37% were for leaving class without permission; 23% were for insubordination; 12% were for disrupting class). At middle school, 62% of all referrals were for these three offenses (19% were for leaving class without permission; 21% were for insubordination; 22% were for disrupting class).

Exhibiting disrespect or directs profanity, vulgar language, or obscene gestures toward another person was the next highest offense at both middle and high school (15% at middle school; 9% at high school). This offense is in Level 2 – Major Offenses in the SCOC. Under the SCOC, engaging in two or more documented Level 2 Offenses in the same school year may result in a Level 3 – DAEP Offense.

The teams had excellent discussion as to underlying reasons students may engage in these behaviors. For example, students may leave class without permission because they do not have the prerequisite skills/knowledge to succeed in the class and do not want to be embarrassed or because they are walking away from a conflict with another student or because they want to hang out with friends who are at lunch that period or any number of other reasons. The teams discussed how the long-term fix for the student who does not have the prerequisite skills/knowledge is different than for the student who wants to go hang out with friends and different than for the student who is walking away from conflict.

Suspension of students

Our Alliance leaders reported that some teachers are hearing from principals that the assistant superintendents are directing them not to suspend students. Dr. Castro noted that the district was cited for the number of suspensions of special education students and that the administration is encouraging principals to try other options with special education students.

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The SCOC, which is adopted by the SAISD Board of Trustees, lists suspension as a consequence that may be used by campus administrators. Additionally, the SCOC section on Level 2, Major Offenses states, “These offenses will typically result in suspension (in school or out of school), although all consequences shall be at the discretion of the campus administrator.”

There are limitations, however, on the number of days that special education students can be suspended without an ARD. For general education students, there are not such limitations. For all students, if the consequence is administered repeatedly and the student’s behavior is not changing, a different consequence should be tried since the purpose of consequences is to change behavior. Page 11 of the SCOC lists a number of possible consequences administrators may use including: participation in peer conflict resolution proceedings; assignment of school duties such as cleaning, picking up litter, or campus maintenance; request parent to shadow child during school; withdrawal of privileges; reassignment to another classroom; disciplinary transfer to another campus, as determined by the Superintendent or designee. The SCOC can be found on the SAISD website under the “Employees” tab.

Alliance Survey Results

Results from our Alliance Secondary Discipline Issues Survey were presented. 340 people responded to the survey.

Cell Phone Usage:

85% of the respondents said that cell phone use is a problem at their campus. Even though current district guidelines in the Board-adopted Student Code of Conduct prohibit use of cell phones by students on school property, 54% of respondents said cell phone usage is allowed on their campus during lunch and 41% said it is allowed during passing period. Additionally, 79% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that cell phone usage is a distraction in their classroom.

Use of Inappropriate Language:

93% of respondents stated that inappropriate language by students, peer to peer, is a problem at their campus in common areas. 67% said it is a

problem in their classroom. For the question on use of inappropriate language by student to staff members, 76% said it is a problem in common areas and 49% said it is a problem in their classroom. Finally, when asked whether use of inappropriate language by students is negatively impacting the learning environment at their campus, 89% agreed or strongly agreed that it is.

Based on the results of the survey and the first semester data analysis, **our union team and district administration decided to create a joint task force** to do some in-depth collaborative work on addressing students leaving class without permission, cell phone usage, and use of inappropriate language.

2016-17 Instructional Calendar

Administration presented the draft of the 2016-17 calendar. The draft would have teachers start August 10 and students start on August 22. Our Alliance team expressed concern about the early start date for staff. Deputy Superintendent Weber said that the district needs the eight days upfront for training teachers in the new state evaluation system as well as the new curriculum management system. The calendar would include five early release days for professional development and one early release day at the end of the first grading period for Teacher Professional Time.

The possibility of a later start date as well as a holiday in October rather than on President’s Day were discussed. The teams made a decision that the calendar will be **posted on the district website for comments for ten days beginning Tuesday, Feb. 16.** (“Employees” tab on district website, “Other Actions” heading, and last item) Once that feedback has been obtained, discussion will continue.

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

Shelley Potter -- President
 Gracie Oviedo -- Highland Park ES
 Susan Castro – Hawthorne Academy
 Andraya Young – Burbank HS
 Ernest Gonzales – Whittier MS
 Yvonne Clemons – Bowden ES

Semester Exams

Deputy Superintendent Weber and Assistant Superintendent Girard were present for the frank discussion about the implementation of exams for the first semester. Our Alliance leaders had requested data, which were distributed at the meeting. Prior to the semester exams, 3,827 students (18%) were failing at least one core course. After taking the exams, 5,364 (25%) students were failing at least one core course. 15,810 students had their semester grade drop a letter grade due to their semester exam score. 7,582 students dropped from A to B; 9,787 dropped from B to C; 2,709 dropped from C to D; and 826 dropped from D to F.

Discussion points included: unfair negative impact on students (tested on material not covered, student fatigue, especially for 6th graders, lack of accommodations for special ed students, scoring standards), inconsistency, poor communication, potential burn-out with simulations following so closely after the exams, data clerks overwhelmed with grade changes, and no time built in for make ups for absent students.

A group of principals and teachers met on **Wednesday, Feb. 17** to discuss possible remedies. Those possible remedies will go back to Consultation.

Our team asked when exams will be posted for the second semester. Dr. Weber said they plan to post by the **beginning of April**. This will give teachers more opportunity to review the exams prior to the testing.

Adrian Reyna, teacher from Longfellow, made the point that having the exam count 15% for 6th graders might be too much when they are still adjusting to the big change from elementary to middle school. Dr. Weber agreed to the idea of starting with a lower percentage for 6th grade and working up from there.

Alliance Consultation Update

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120 Adams St.
San Antonio, TX 78210
(210) 225-7174/FAX (210) 226-4400

First Grade Report Card

Progress on the 1st grade report card, scheduled for implementation next school year, was discussed. A team of teachers and principals have worked on the report card for the past two years. There will be a forum for 1st grade teachers at Carroll ECE auditorium (463 Holmgreen Rd.) on **Tues., March 1** from 4-6 p.m. Teachers who served on the committee will present and gather feedback. **Please RSVP** for the forum by calling the Alliance office at **210-225-7174** or by emailing info@sanantonioalliance.org.

Discipline Referrals By Support Personnel

Our Alliance team had previously raised the need for a clear process for non-teaching staff to use when they witness a violation of the Student Code of Conduct. Principals received notice that instructional assistants can submit electronic referrals. Instructional assistants received an email with a link to video training, and principals were instructed to provide time in the schedule for assistants to do the approximately 20-minute training. Our Alliance team also recommended that there be some face-to-face training offered.

Based on feedback at the previous Consultation meeting, David Goree, District Instructional Coordinator, has been working on a “Tips for Completing Discipline Referrals” document to provide guidance in writing referrals. The “Tips” document should be ready soon and will incorporate suggestions from our Alliance team.

Deputy Superintendent Castro informed principals on Feb. 10th that they will be getting an update in the Feb. 22nd memo packet about how to deal with paper referrals.

Additionally, Mr. Goree will work on getting clarification regarding when to do a discipline referral and when to do a witness statement.

ES Data Clerks/Attendance Clerks

Our Alliance team emphasized again that ES data clerks who are stationed in the main office constantly have to perform other duties besides their primary duties because of where they are located. They need at least the two hours of uninterrupted time in a secluded location per day.

It is difficult for the data clerks to concentrate and focus on their essential work with so many interruptions and distractions. It is also difficult to maintain the confidentiality of records for clerks that are working most of the time in a common or open area. Accurate attendance data is vital to the individual school and to the district as a whole, and the current work environment for many data clerks is impeding this work.

The draft of the best practices document was presented for feedback. Additionally, the Data Clerk Task Force is forming again. Any data clerk interested in serving and advocating on the task force should contact Rachel Martinez at 210-225-7174 or via email at rachelm@sanantonioalliance.org.

Insufficient Custodial Staffing

All year, our Alliance leaders and staff have been hearing from custodians that they do not have sufficient time in the day to clean all of their designated areas appropriately. As Alliance staff reviewed individual custodian's situations, we found disparities between the custodians' hours and the district's time-to-task guidelines.

The district has guidelines for how long each area should take to clean (15 minutes for a classroom, 30 minutes for a small restroom, 45-60 minutes to sweep and mop hallways, etc.). When we added up the minutes needed for a custodian's assigned areas, it frequently totaled to considerably more than the 8 hours a custodian works.

Our Alliance leaders did an Open Records Request for custodial allocations and vacancies and

for campus square footage and acreage. There are no national standards rather each state's comptroller makes those recommendations. So our leaders reviewed the recommendations from the Texas State Comptroller's office.

At the previous meeting, our Alliance team presented a chart to show, by campus, the gap between the actual manpower hours available for daily labor/cleaning and the hours needed. Two follow-up meetings were held between our union leaders and district administrators, including Kamal ElHabr and Michael Sanchez.

ElHabr stated that according to a TEA report from years back, the district had too many custodians. He questioned what that would look like now with the porter position added. Our union leaders questioned the way porter allocations are currently figured.

Mr. Sanchez stated that the grounds of the campus should only be done by the custodians if they have time; however, our Alliance leaders pointed out that many campus principals want the grounds done regularly. Many daily custodian schedules include monitoring the grounds and exterior of the buildings for graffiti, damages, trash, etc.

Our union leaders pushed for custodians to be included in the discussions since they know the concerns and solutions better than anyone. It was agreed that our union and the administration will conduct a focus group of custodians. That information will go out as soon as we have set a date.

Alliance's 2014-15 Para/Classified Consultation Team

Shelley Potter -- President
 Rachel Martinez -- Exec. Vice Pres.
 Hilda Cantu -- Irving MS
 Terry Armstrong -- Plant Svcs/Maint.
 Jack Crum -- Beacon Hill/Kelly
 Cheryl Solis -- Rogers MS
 Catherine Rodriguez -- Jeff HS
 Nora Mercado -- Navarro Academy

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REAL Results for Students and the Community***