



# Consultation

## *A report on the March 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. 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.*

### **Administration backs off proposed change to EOY grading deadline**

In February, the administration brought forward a proposal to change the deadlines for the end-of-year grading whereby teachers' deadline for inputting grades would be June 1.

Our Alliance team expressed several concerns based on feedback from teachers and other professional staff:

- **Attendance** might suffer once students know grades are completed (especially a concern at secondary).
- Adjustments would need to be made to **curriculum** so as to complete all lessons prior to grades being done.
- **Student behavior** could be negatively impacted.
- Completing grades earlier would not allow for as much opportunity for students to do **make-up work** and/or turn in late work and therefore, could result in lower grades.

At the March Consultation meeting, the administration's team reported that they have decided to only pilot the change this year. An email was being sent out to principals to find schools that would be willing to pilot. Any principal interested in piloting would need to get feedback from campus staff first.

### **Semester Exam Proposal Update**

In February, the administration team reported that they were considering creating end-of-semester exams for core subjects as a replacement for two or three CBAs (Curriculum-Based Assessments).

At the March Consultation meeting, the administration's team proposed that C&I create the exams for courses that have an EOC or STAAR link and that all other semester exams be created by teachers at the campus level. Administration's recommendation is a 90-minute exam that will count for 15% of the student's semester grade. Accommodations will have to be included for special education students because of the exam counting as a grade.

Our Alliance leaders held a forum for secondary teachers on February 25 to hear teachers' views, on this proposal and have now sent out a survey to all secondary teachers to get widespread feedback

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regarding specific aspects of the administration's proposal. To date the survey has 102 responses.

Please take a minute to let your voice be heard.

### **K and 1st Grade Promotion, Retention, Grading**

In January, the administration brought forward the issue of kindergarten and first grade promotion for discussion.

Current SAISD policy does not reference kindergarten retention. Discussion has focused on whether it makes sense to allow retention in kindergarten when it is not mandatory under state law for children to attend kindergarten.

The other major topic was whether to continue using numeric averages for grades in 1st grade or shift to some form of letter grades, such as E, S, N, U.

Administration formed a task force, initially of principals and later adding teachers, to have in-depth conversations regarding the subject.

At the March Consultation meeting, administration said they were ready to take a policy change to the school board and that details would be decided later and put in administrative procedure. Our Alliance team requested that the policy not move forward until there was more clarity as to what would be in the administrative procedures.

On April 16<sup>th</sup>, the Alliance held a meeting for K and 1<sup>st</sup> grade teachers to get feedback to help guide our Alliance Consultation team in the ongoing discussions with administration.

Discussion will continue at the April Consultation meeting.

### **List of required tests to be posted**

In February, our Alliance team proposed that the list of required tests be posted 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.

At the March meeting, the administration’s team reported that the list is being finalized and should be posted in early July.

Our 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. In February, the Alliance put forward several specific proposals to begin eliminating some testing. (See Feb. 2015 Consultation Update.)

### **Update on Electronic Discipline Referral**

Progress on the electronic referral slowed temporarily due to some staff changes within the administration but is now moving again. Three campuses – Lanier, Whittier, and Highland Park – are piloting the electronic referral process during the last nine weeks. The pilot will allow for working out any kinks so that the process can start at all campuses at the beginning of next school year.

Our Alliance team recommended that there be a way for those at the pilots to give feedback. It was determined that a survey and/or focus group would be conducted. There will also be a review of how the pilot is going at the end of three weeks and six weeks.

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

### Equipment for library operations



At the January Consultation meeting, our Alliance team raised the concern that many library printers are not dedicated specifically for library use. Additionally, many libraries have old circulation computers. Our Alliance team requested that the district find out which libraries have dedicated printers as well as the age of the circulation computers.

The administration team reported in March that an inventory survey went out and that there was response rate of around 50% as of March 26 with the survey set to close on March 27.

### Duty of notary given to secretaries



Our Alliance team stated that school secretaries have questions regarding a newly assigned duty of being a notary. Our Alliance team asked for clarification as to whether it is mandatory and what the rationale is. The administration said that the rationale is to make it more convenient for parents when they need school-related documents notarized. Rather than the parents having to leave and then come back, they can just get the documents notarized right at the school.

The administration also feels that it is a benefit for the secretaries in that they can take their notary status with them if they were to leave the district. The district is paying the fee for the secretaries to become notaries and is also bonding them.

There were questions as to how the decision was made that the secretary would be the one to have this responsibility. There was also discussion that the secretaries are not as familiar with the forms as the data clerks.

Discussion will continue at the April Consultation meeting.

### Porters report to head custodians

Our Alliance team reported that the porters still feel caught between the Food Services manager and the head custodian. The porter reports to the head custodian and there needs to be some way to make that clear to everyone involved.

Two ideas were discussed. One is to create a poster that would be posted in both the kitchen and the head custodian’s office that states that the porter reports to the head custodian. Additionally, the administration team noted that a document exists notating whether or not each task listed can be done by a porter. That document could be more widely circulated.

<b>Alliance’s 2014-15 Para/Classified Consultation Team</b>
<p>Shelley Potter -- President          Rachel Martinez -- Exec. Vice Pres.          Hilda Cantu -- Houston HS          Terry Armstrong -- Plant Svcs/Maint.          Jack Crum -- Beacon Hill/Kelly          Cheryl Solis -- Rogers MS          Catherine Rodriguez -- Jeff HS          Nora Mercado – Harris MS</p>

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REAL Results for Students and the Community***

# ***Current Alliance actions and upcoming activities***

## **Moving forward with Special Ed recommendations at May 11th Board meeting**

- ARD Facilitators; reinstatement of CMP days
- ERFs should be sent automatically to teachers

Our Alliance invites all special education teachers to attend the May 11th SAISD Board meeting at the Burnet Center, 406 Barrera St., at 5:30 p.m. Several Special Education teachers will be speaking. Please RSVP to [info@sanantonioalliance.org](mailto:info@sanantonioalliance.org) or by calling 210-225-7174.

## **Survey on semester exam proposal**

As our elected Consultation organization, the Alliance is conducting a survey of teachers in all the middle schools and high schools, to gather information for further discussion with the district administration on the creation of end-of-the-semester exams. Secondary teachers are asked to take a few minutes to answer a short survey to have your voice heard.

<https://leadernet.aft.org/webform/semester-exam-survey>

## **Superintendent Finalists**

The two finalists for SAISD Superintendent will be in San Antonio to meet with employees and the community. Pedro Martinez is scheduled for Monday, April 27, and Scott Muri is scheduled for Wednesday, April 29. Each day, a general meeting for district employees is scheduled from 5:00-6:00 PM at Alamo Convocation Center. Alliance members, please see the recent email sent out from our Alliance leaders regarding the finalists' visits.

## **Alliance Cluster Partnership Session for ARs, Communicators**

ARs and Communicators are invited to a Cluster Partnership Session at our Alliance office on Tues., April 28 from 5-6:30 PM. Food will be provided. Contact Katy or Joseph for more details.

## **May 9th SAISD School Board Elections**

On May 9<sup>th</sup>, two SAISD Board of Trustee seats are up for election. Districts 2 and 6 have contested elections. The District 5 seat was also up for election; however, current trustee Patti Radle did not have a challenger and so was declared the winner at a recent Board meeting.

## **May 20th Alliance Member Benefits Training**

Alliance members, mark your calendars for this come-and-go session between 5:00 and 7:00 PM at our Alliance office. Learn about utilizing your member benefits during the summer months. Find out how to save on trips, purchases, and much more.

## **Alliance End-of-Year Movie Night on May 30th**

Alliance members, plan now to attend our Movie Night on Sat., May 30th. This will be a family-friendly, kid-friendly event. Watch for more details coming soon!