

Mesquite Education Association
FR Questions - April 2018

1. Why do we allow teachers to work part time in other departments i.e... paint crews and other areas, but restrict custodians from making extra income?

This is for financial reasons and due primarily to the Fair Labor Standards Act. Teachers (contract employees) are classified as exempt and not subject to overtime, whereas hourly employees are non-exempt and must be paid overtime for taking on any additional duties.

2. Where is the new choice high school going to be located?

Mesquite ISD owns two sites in the southeastern portion of the district near the softball complex. One of these sites will be selected as the location of the new choice career high school if the bond package is approved by voters.

3. Is there any truth to the rumor circulating that the MEHC is going to be changed into a walk in only clinic and regular Dr. appointments will no longer be taken?

There are no plans to change the current format at this time.

4. Please explain the proper procedure for handling district work orders.

The school secretary places all work orders into the system. The work orders are submitted and printed out to each Facilities Management Department Supervisor each morning. The work orders are analyzed and placed on a priority list. The completed work orders are then submitted back to the office staff and logged into the system. The information includes date completion, hours worked, employee ID, material and a brief description of the work completed. Some work orders such as roofs can take several attempts to repair due to pin pointing the exact issue because it could be a result of several problems.

5. What can the district do to help with the rodent problem we have on campus?

MISD follows an adopted I.P.M. policy that is based on accepted tenets of integrated pest management tactics compatible with human health and environmental protection regulations. This includes identification of pest problems, monitoring programs to determine when pests are present or severe, use of nonchemical strategies and preferential use of least toxic chemical controls when pesticides are needed.

6. Do I have to have my principal's permission to use one of my state absent days if it isn't a black out day?

Principals/supervisors do sign off on the use of discretionary personal days. As indicated last month, this has to do with substitute availability and the effort to reduce the number of teachers who have to take on more students or use their conference period to cover classes. On any given day on average, there are approximately 9-10 subs available for each high school, 5-6 subs for each middle school, and 2-3 for each elementary. According to policy, requests for discretionary leave (days that the employee simply chooses to be out) can be granted on a first-come, first-served basis. The supervisor can consider the impact of the employee's absence on the educational program, District operations, as well as the availability of substitutes and can restrict accordingly.

It should be noted that this does not apply to non-discretionary days that can't be helped (personal illness, illness of a child, death in the family, etc.).

7. How is the pay for athletic events determined?

There are several varying positions at each event that are paid different amounts due to the level of responsibility. All workers are paid by the event and not by the hour. Some events run longer than others.

8. Can we update our fine arts programs to involve younger students?

With the current state mandated P.E. minutes combined with extended language arts and math minutes at the elementary level, time for enrichment classes are extremely limited. In a 30-minute time block, the actual amount of art instruction after set-up and clean-up is minimal. The plan is to schedule 3rd grade art for 45 minutes at all elementary campuses. General education teachers are able to integrate the Chapter 117 Fine Arts TEKS into the curriculum. With the current funding allocations, the limited instruction time does not justify the cost to double our current elementary fine arts staff.

9. Are there any talks or ideas to up security or even putting a SRO in elementary schools?

The District is currently reviewing all safety practices and making recommendations to the Board of Trustees for additional features. Additional requested personnel and hardware is contingent upon the landscape of the total MISD budget.

10. Has the district ever considered spots for Employee Pre-K based on the number of years of service within MISD instead of the current lottery system and preference with regards to address?

Each spring, the guidelines for our Employee Preschool Program are reviewed prior to beginning the enrollment process. Since the enrollment deadline has already passed for this year, any changes would have to be made for the 2019-2020 school year. Your suggestions will be brought forward for consideration by the district level group which makes those decisions next spring prior to enrollment.

11. With the amount of movement within the district due to all the changes in the bilingual program and middle school make up, why is the district not doing a better job of securing displaced teachers a job for next year?

Has the district considered stopping the intake of out-of-district applications until all of their current employees are secured a job?

We have made placing our own the first priority and will continue to do so until everyone has an offer or has a position secured. Significant progress has been made in this endeavor and things should continue to progress as resignations/retirements come in. Although applications are accepted at all times, candidates are not being hired in the affected content areas until our current employees are taken care of. We know this is stressful and once again want to assure those being displaced that they will have a position. However, if a job is offered and subsequently declined, there is no guarantee. (It should be noted that we are moving forward and hiring in shortage and specialty areas in order not to fall behind.)