

**Mesquite Education Association
FR Questions - March 2018**

1. In the light of recent events, what is the district doing to secure our campuses? Is the district willing to discuss allowing teachers to be armed on campuses?

MISD continues to take great measures to protect the safety and security of staff and students. The Emergency Operations Plan contains campus crisis information intended to assist campus- and district-level administration with the response to 33 emergency situations. Individual campus crisis teams meet and plan for Prevention-Mitigation, Preparedness, Response, and Recovery with regard to emergency situations.

Prevention tactics include the Mesquite United culture shift, the Behavior Framework, intentional student awareness and guidance through campus counseling services and the family support center, SROs on secondary campuses, campus safety assessments, adhering to the Texas Unified School Safety & Security Standards, and utilizing the campus threat assessment response tool.

Other preparedness tactics include emergency operations procedures for counselors, the power fail and bridge phones, campus emergency operations plans, EOP and staff training, and drills.

The District has 2800 high-definition security cameras at campuses and facilities. In addition to SROs, the District has direct communication between District officials and law enforcement agencies, including tabletop discussions and shared planning for crisis preparedness.

In consultation with local law enforcement agencies, at this time, the District does not intend to implement either the Guardian Plan or the School Marshal Program for arming teachers; however, the District continues to review campus challenges and investigate ways to keep our students and staff safe.

2. Why was Tuesday the chosen day for the fourth grade trips to Austin?

The 4th grade field trip to the capitol in Austin was a coordinated effort by many entities. The visitors' center at the capitol, our transportation department having available buses and the school in Austin hosting our students for the evening meal. The best day to schedule those trips that worked for everyone involved was Tuesdays.

3. With the implementation of the ETIP program is the district concerned about, or have we even considered, the fact that the number of Dual Credit qualified teachers will decrease?

The master's degree program associated with ETIP through Texas A&M-Commerce is in Curriculum & Instruction which includes content areas. Therefore, the number of Dual Credit qualified teachers should actually increase rather than decrease.

4. Is the district considering any incentive program or stipends for teachers that do not meet the requirements for ETIP?

There are no plans at the current time to expand the program to other areas. This is primarily due to the limited funding being provided by the state. If the lack of funding trend continues going forward, it will raise our concern about maintaining the level of current programs that are now underway.

5. Why does the principal have to approve it if I want to take a personal day that is not a blackout day?

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.).

6. Does our district really believe that it is ethical to give staff members incentives such as jeans days for voting?

The district wants to encourage all employees to engage in the voting process. To motivate employees to vote, the district provided Jeans Days as an incentive for them taking the time and energy to vote. Even though it can be viewed in different ways, allowing employees to wear jeans is just one way to encourage voting.

7. Is the district only promoting or supporting Republican candidates and the Republican Party during this primary?

MEA requested candidates for the Lt. Governor race in the Republican primary be invited to speak at the FR meeting held on February 27th. Both candidates were invited to address the group, but only one candidate accepted the invitation. MEA plans to request candidates for the Lt. Governor race in the November general election to address members at the FR meeting in the fall. Invitations will be provided to both candidates at a later date.

Propaganda or campaign literature supporting *one candidate* or *one party* should not be posted inside school district facilities. Administration will address this situation with campus and facility administrators to ensure material of this nature is not posted inside district buildings.

The district does not support or endorse one candidate, nor does the district support or endorse one party. However, a position can be taken by the Board of Trustees on issues that are important to the district. For instance, the MISD Board supported resolutions on accountability, economic development, funding and vouchers, which are important to the future of public education in Texas.

MEA has a separate entity called the Political Action Committee (PAC) which is completely outside of the district's purview or oversight. Since the PAC operates separately, it can legally endorse candidates and provide funding. The PAC held two candidate forums for Senate District 2 and House District 113. All candidates were invited to participate in these forums, and then the PAC chose to endorse one candidate in each of these races.

8. Are there procedures in place if a fire alarm is pulled during a code red/ lockdown?

There is no such thing as a "code red." Two years ago, MISD's Emergency Operations Plan was updated to meet the common language of Homeland Security, FEMA, and Texas Safe Schools' standard response protocol. During a true "lockdown" (e.g., active shooter), law enforcement has advised to stay locked down, silent, and out of sight until evacuated by law enforcement officers -- regardless of a fire alarm sounding after the lockdown has been called.