

Mesquite Education Association FR Questions - October 2018

1. How much money has MISD made from the current drink contract with Dr. Pepper/Snapple?

The Dr. Pepper/Snapple funds are deposited directly into each school's Coke accounts. The amount earned is deposited by each campus and depends on the amount sold.

2. Our custodians are given fair tickets but have to work on Fair Day. Can they not be given the day off like everyone else?

Custodians are on a 260-day calendar for their pay scale. They are free to use one of their vacation days. The tickets are good through the entire State Fair period.

3. Our school has roaches and has been sprayed to no avail. Knowing that roach dust is one of most common triggers for asthma, what is the district doing to control roaches?

The district has a monthly monitoring system in place for all kitchens and cafeterias. This system is set up to let the district know the severity of any infestation. The district only uses natural oils such as Thyme and Rosemary oil. All of the products are on the Green Label list for schools. After evidence of these products not working, we are allowed to use a gel based bait that is on the Yellow Label list. It is a process that is required for schools.

4. Why does the district choose to not follow national dates for Bullying Prevention (the first Monday of October of every year and the second week of October every year) and National Red Ribbon Week (October 23-31st of most years)?

To the greatest extent possible, MISD follows national dates for initiatives such as National Bullying Prevention and Red Ribbon Week. This year, MISD sent the Red Ribbon Week materials to campuses early to give it the focus and attention it deserves but will continue to observe Red Ribbon Week during the official week. Bullying Prevention will be recognized Oct. 29-Nov. 2 in MISD, which is in line with the national dates. Campus principals, of course, have discretion to observe anti-bullying, anti-drug, dating violence, and other good-decision-making programs at any time they choose.

5. Can you please add bus monitors to all transportation bus routes? Discipline issues need to be addressed and students need to have consequences for misbehaving on a school bus.

MISD follows general procedures that address bullying on the school bus, bus safety rules for students, discipline referrals, seating charts, and the student code of conduct. Discipline referrals made by bus drivers and monitors are electronically sent to the campus and dealt with immediately by the campus principal. Students are subject to a continuum of consequences as outlined in the MISD Student Handbook. Bus monitor assignments are subject to educational program analysis, route evaluation, and individual education plan committee decisions.

6. Texas Education Code, Section 21.404 says a teacher conference period may not be less than 45 minutes within the instructional day. How can the district require teachers to attend PLC meetings twice a week? I understand that a teacher's conference time is for planning and PLC's are planning, but in the Strater v. Houston ISD (1986) lawsuit, the courts relieved the teacher of "any duty during this period of time and prohibits the district and its administration from requiring the teacher to engage in any other activity the administration determines to be useful and important".

The schedule for structured instructional preparation periods is set at the campus level. Each classroom teacher is entitled to at least 450 minutes in each two-week period but not less than 45 minutes within the instructional day. MISD's Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) are expressly dedicated to evaluating students' work and planning and, therefore, not considered a "duty."

7. Middle school Reading and English teachers signed contracts stating that if we did not have our ESL certification by last May, we would not have a job with MISD. Why are teachers teaching without the ESL certification?

It was a district expectation for all 6th-8th ELAR teachers to be ESL certified by December 2017. The majority of this group was able to accomplish the goal; however, a small percentage was not able to pass the test after multiple attempts. An extension until December 2018 was granted only to employees who demonstrated great efforts to comply with the expectation.

8. Is there a certain time of year that district employees can make suggestions on the upcoming school calendar?

The process of creating the next year's school calendar always begins in early fall, and the process involves gathering input from the calendar committee (a new group created this year), the MEA Executive Committee, Council of PTAs, the District Site-Based Decision Making Committee and the Cabinet. Once consensus is reached among those groups, a draft calendar is sent to all employees and posted online to gather public comments. Input is always welcome prior to the final draft, which is presented to the School Board in February for approval. Any suggestions or questions may be sent to Laura Jobe at ljobe@mesquiteisd.org.

9. Can Istation be on the Mesquite ISD portal for students?

Due to how Istation collects data for ISIP testing, a downloaded app is required on the device. This ensures accurate data and optimal performance by the application, as well as verifies the student is testing while at school. Istation is continually working on product development so this may be possible in the future, just not now.

10. When does the district plan to distribute a new handbook to all employees? The most current one I have is dated August 2012.

We are currently completing the final updates to the MISD Employee Handbook which will be made available to all MISD employees via the MISD website in a couple of weeks. In our continued efforts to go paperless and to save money, hard copies of the handbook will no longer be distributed to district employees.

11. What is the expectation for employees to check their professional emails over holidays, breaks, weekends, or the summer? Does the district expect an employee to check professional emails even during non-working, off times?

While it is not a requirement to check emails outside of the work day, it is an expectation to do so. Numerous things occur outside of the regular work day that must be communicated to faculty and staff members before the next business day. Often times communicating information via email, the district's website or through the district's Phone App are the quickest and most effective ways to push information out to the masses. If you have an MISD email account it is an expectation of the district to check it regularly during the work day as well as outside of the work day so as not to miss out on important information.

12. When can workers for athletic events expect a raise? With increased responsibilities, \$35 for four hours of work does not compete with other second jobs.

The Athletic Department will review by looking at what other comparable districts pay and consider as part of the budgeting process for 2019-2020.

13. Will employees be receiving the holiday bonus this year?

This will be evaluated by the School Board in November and is dependent on the past year and present year budget.