HOUSTON FEDERATION OF TEACHERS

Consultation Report

November 29, 2018

HFT Items

1. **Teacher Assistants**

Teacher Assistants who are assigned to follow individual students do not have the easy access to computers that TA’s assigned to a classroom have. What can be done to assign computers to these individuals?

**District Response:** *Teaching assistants are able to log in on any computer on campus with their individual log-in credentials. Computer labs and most libraries have computers available for TA's to use during their break time. If a TA needs a computer for specific student-based need, they can request one be issued to them by the campus principal and/or the special education department if applicable.*

The district requested names of specific schools where this is a problem

1. **Staff Development On Early Dismissal Days**

Teachers often find themselves pulled in several different directions on early dismissal days as to what professional development they need, want, or required to attend. In the end principals have the final say on whether or not teachers will be released to attend off campus training and often permission is denied because of scheduled campus-based training. What is a teacher to do? BQB (Legal) states that school SDMC’s shall “shall be involved” in decisions involving staff development. The policy further stated the SDMC “must approve the portions of the campus plan addressing campus staff development needs.” Our members often report to us that the SDMC had no input in campus-based staff development decisions. What can be done to ensure that all principals are made aware of the role of the SDMC in campus-based staff development.

**District Response:** *SDMC members have input in campus-based staff development decisions when developing and approving the campus school improvement plan. Area Superintendents will remind principals about the role of the SDMC in making future campus-based staff development decisions.*

**3. PPA’s in Achieve 180 Schools**

We are seeing a large number of PPA’s being issued in Achieve 180 schools in the latter part of November. We wonder how many of these PPA’s are truly intended to develop teachers and how many might be issued to avoid the payment of first semester stipends. Who looks at the validity of these PPA’s above the campus level?

**District Response:**

***•*** *There is an increase in PPAs across all areas during this time of year because there has been sufficient time to evaluate a teacher's progress and impact on student learning.*

*• Achieve 180 schools have various support systems in place to provide continuous assistance to teachers (i.e. TDS, Reading Specialist, Data Specialists, Curriculum leads). Although there are instances where teachers are still struggling and need more prescriptive sustenance because either teacher behaviors are not improving, or student progress is not improving.*

**4. Teacher Investigation Process**

1. Please describe the Teacher Removal process for inappropriate conduct starting with the initial report. Who can file a report? Which department at HMW handles the overall investigation? How are the investigations handled on the campus level? Are there deadlines?

2. Which Austin administrators are trained in the proper techniques to conduct interviews? When did they last receive training from Employee Relations? Are they familiar with HISD policy (DH, DH2) governing Employee Standards of Conduct?

3. When a student makes a written statement or answers questions during an interview, do your administrators admonish students that making false statements is a serious infraction of the Student Code and HISD policy including campus removal?

4. What are our current consequences for students who make false accusations or unsubstantiated statements against a teacher?

**District Response:**

*RESPONSE TO QUESTION 1 All District personnel (full and part-time); Students and parents; Patrons of the District; and Members of the general public can make a report. Once we receive a report of inappropriate conduct (this can come from a student, employee, parent, etc.) we make a determination on the seriousness of it, and when the validity of the reported allegations are hard to judge, we contact our direct supervisor. After that discussion, and if deemed necessary or need clarity on next steps, we report it to Employee Relations. Employee Relations personnel listens to the situation and makes a determination on whether we will investigate and the next steps to take if an investigation will be carried out (sometimes Employee Relation investigators conduct the investigation). Typical actions and deliverables include: employee removal, investigation templates, CPS reporting, HISD PD reporting, and other relevant next steps.*

*RESPONSE TO QUESTION 2Employee Relations will train Austin administrators. The training will include types of questions to ask and how to select students for investigations. There are specific deliverables that we are given via email to ensure we submit a completed investigation. If an investigation report is submitted, employee relations reviews it and may require additional follow-up interviews with relevant subjects. Austin administrators are familiar with HISD Board Policy and work with the principal to assist in conducting investigations and to answer questions through the process. Administrators have also been trained to call legal if they need advice on any situation.*

*RESPONSE TO QUESTION 3 When conducting an investigation that involves interviewing students, our main goal is to make them feel safe; so, they are able to provide their statement without the threat of disciplinary action. Since the students are pulled at random, from different classes, the concern of them giving us a false statement is not*

*high. Appropriate action would be taken if we discovered that a student knowingly made a false statement in accordance with the HISD Code of Student Conduct (see below).*

*RESPONSE TO QUESTION 4 Response: Every student is bound by the Code of Student Conduct and individual action is taken based on the situation. The Code of Student Conduct Handbook states, "Code (TEC) Chapter 37.001*

*(a)(4), an administrator must consider the following factors: (1) self-defense; (2) intent or lack of intent when the student engaged in the conduct; (3) a student's disciplinary history; and, (4) a disability that substantially impairs the student's capacity to appreciate the wrongfulness of the student's conduct." when assigning a consequence.*

*Additionally, the Code of Student Conduct handbook states, "Level Ill Acts of Misconduct Include Such Behavior as: Knowingly making a false report against a staff member that is later determined to be unsubstantiated at the conclusion of any investigation initiated as a result of the report."*

**District Items:**

**K-1: PROPOSED REVISIONS TO BOARD POLICY AE(LOCAL), EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY – SECOND READING**

Changes in this policy reflect updated goals, goal progress measures, and constraints, and a calendar by which these metrics will be monitored.