

FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

**At
Doolen MS**

1. List in three words what you like about being a teacher in this district?

- Like to teach, don't have three words that are good for this district.
- Teach because it's close to home.
- TUSD offers convenience.
- Kids, co-workers, creativity with resource center.
- Diversity of my school.
- Better salary than other school.
- Active TEA.
- Better salary and 2 mile commute. Can Taylor your needs because of the size of district.
- Superintendent's direction. The approach and testing
- Updates from district.
- Fun, Kids and Salary.
- Salary!
- Appreciate Mansfield.

2. Do the working conditions at your school help, hinder, or have no effect on your teaching?

- Like the climate at the school. Hinder –Science facilities are 20-30 years out of date. Need state of the art facility- don't like the kits
- Do not like the kits. Build own curriculum. My kids do full science projects. No books, not enough computers.
- Spend over \$1,000 of supplies for science projects. Love my school and principal not happy with district.
- Content objective. No heating or cooling conditions. Constantly putting in work orders. No books for the kids. Only have two microscopes for large class. Spend hundreds of \$\$ for my class every year. Long term substitutes.
- Spend a lot of money on paper. One case of paper for the whole year. \$75 budget.
- Administration at my school has their act together and functions well. Administration is critical to moral. No money for projects. School, climate and culture are critical to moral.
- 1,000 students with only 2 monitors. How do you keep up with students to make sure they are in the classroom?
- Santa Rita has more monitors with fewer students.

- Substitute teachers don't show up so it causes kayos.
- Have exceptional staff. Hinder- new principal does not know enough of Exceptional Ed. Have asked Administration to get policy from district. Need list of rolls of what the jobs are. Some teachers are thinking of leaving district because of more work load.
- Impressed with community. Hollinger is a bad neighborhood, but the community is great and teachers have been there for a long time. There is tradition and pride.
- Staff is amazing. Building is old, but the biggest issues are the shortage of supplies. Spend over \$1,000 a year. District does not have the money. District has older schools and need repairs.
- Good staff. Climate has changed due to certain person. Administrators drove the principal from school and changed the moral. Worried how long our new Superintendent will last.
- Need locks on cabinets because of dangerous chemicals. There may be a liability issue.

3. Do you feel supported by your principal, mentor, district staff, superintendent, and school board?

- 100% supported by language Acquisition. 1010 unrealistic. Ride our time. 1010 is not a part of who we are.
- National Multi Conference speech from Dr. Sanchez. Support Dr. Sanchez.
- Surprised with some of the things Dr. Sanchez has done in a positive way. Zero support from Ex Ed department. Break Federal Law? They are not in compliance.
- Head does not know what the body is doing. Feel supported by the teachers I work with. Issue is the people who are in curriculum development. Head of curriculum thinks he knows it all and does not respect input from staff and teachers. Have a problem when 1010 does not support.
- When we get observed, we never hear back from them how we are doing.
- My principal does a great job in keeping all of the political issues and problems from their school in order to function.
- Get support from principal, however there has to be a connection with 1010.
- Ex Ed is not supportive at all. Difficult to get things from Middle school and upper grades. We buy our own stuff and build our own curriculum. District is pushing inclusion but not every special Ed belongs in this class. Need to make sure we are maintaining the inclusion.
- Should have a survey on a full Inclusion.
- Speech Therapist takes lesson plan from me.

- Ex Ed department. Paid one year with legal planning. Ex Ed case worker should be the only one receive records. We need a list of people who get copy of lesson plan.
- Principal and Special Ed teachers protect us.
- IT people are great here. They respond quickly.
- IT told a teacher that her ticket was not important enough and students were not important enough.

4. Within your classroom environment what are some of things you would like the district to know?

- No support when I want to check out other classes. Is asked to take personal time to see other classes. Would like to see Ex Ed.
- My kids are working as hard as they can. Even if they fail. Sometimes the kids need to fail.
- 1010 should spend a full week in the classroom so they can understand what is needed and know how to recruit.
- Administration to know I create a high standard in my classroom. No real punishment to a misbehaved student. Don't feel that my school is a safe place.
- Have Inclusion- specific expectation for the kids. My inclusion is a whole bowl of wax. If a student fails, why do they pass them on to high school? The district needs to be consistent and not pass a student.
- I don't spend a dime in my classroom. Have a high classification in the classroom. Use language acquisitions to help English language learners succeed.
- District to understand middle school kids are a different breed. Need to spend time in a middle school before making policies.
- Got in trouble for 5 fiving my student because it was considered violence.
- How wonderful a place Miles is. There are some special places to work in TUSD. Know how wonderful parents are to do fundraisers for supplies.
- Can't do PD because I'm a late release at my school. Constantly looking for PD.

5. Concerning the year-to-year student placement process (balanced classrooms), how satisfied are you?

- Because we don't track we get students.
- Advanced students get disservice.
- Need proper materials to modify. Can't serve everyone properly.
- Can't put kids with 70 and higher range together. English teachers especially suffer.
- Is it due to bad scheduling?
- 27 – 1.
- Principals are still scheduling classes with sticky notes.

- Technology money needs to be spent to help with the scheduling of classes.

6. What single element do you feel “most” gets in your way of achieving your classroom and professional goals?

- Supplies and time
- Chronic disruptive students.
- Need one internet system.
- Standardized testing. Testing is bad. No resources that takes you to pacing.
- Have to teach other subjects in the classroom.
- Have technology so I can sit at home to do my work. Have access to files to do my work at home.
- Move from public education to for profit of charters or private school.
- Testing. Lose 4- 6 weeks of teaching.

7. How do you feel about the teachers’ union (or association) and its effectiveness in representing your interest and in championing the teaching profession?

- Union person.
- Can’t afford the dues. I do like some of the things they do.
- I love the Union. If I have a problem at school, the Union can represent me. If we did not have a Union, we would be in so much trouble.
- Union protects me from my principal.
- After 29 years docket on pay because of policy. Union made it come out of sick leave.
- 2nd year teaching had TEA to assist her with an unpleasant principal. Districts dealing the TEA are not always upfront.
- I don’t think that TEA bargain enough.
- I think that all the money goes where it needs to be. Can’t afford it.

Other input:

I don’t feel safe at my school. I can’t lock my classroom.

I’m in a portable and don’t feel safe. I’ve been told to keep my window open. Lock the gates and can’t get to car.

If the district wants to retain teachers, they need to pony up the money! Reality is if you are not going to value in the way you are going to treat them, then you better pay them enough. Underpaid as teachers and it is shameful and sinful.