



Spartan Parents,

The BISD Mission Statement states that educators intend to “engage and support every learner with a rigorous curriculum so that they can graduate college and career ready.” In order to fulfill this mission, teachers at Centennial High School are encouraged to pose higher level questions to their students in order to focus on important content rather than the memorization of facts, to promote thinking at a higher cognitive level, and to communicate their answers more comprehensibly. These are skills that are necessary for our students to be competitive in post-secondary education as well as in the workplace.

Research indicates that approximately 25% of all students do not participate in classroom discussions at all. By disengaging, these students are not advancing their own thinking, learning, or achievement. Research also indicates that a small minority of the students tend to dominate classroom discussions, thus somewhat prohibiting others from participating. The educators at Centennial High School believe that quality questioning engages **all** students in the discussion and learning process.

As teachers use the quality questioning techniques in their classrooms, students may begin to feel slightly uncomfortable. We deliberately work on helping them become more familiar with the process by teaching this new questioning behavior to the students. Within time, this format of teaching will be quite normal for a Spartan; however, they may become frustrated as they begin this practice, especially when they are not told if their answers are correct. Teachers are encouraged to hold back affirmations in order to allow more time for students to elaborate or expound on their answers; we call this “wait time.” Research indicates that wait time allows students to continue talking through their answers, further improving their logic and communication skills. When teachers probe after an answer is posed, students may be asked to “explain,” “defend,” or “prove” that their answers are correct rather than the teacher immediately saying, “Right,” and moving on. Teachers want to provide the opportunities for students to reflect on the issues within each question and to show that each child is capable of formulating an answer.

As we know, teachers are well versed in disseminating information to their students, but students must be able to think through issues and have conversations about those issues in order to make meaning of the information. We look forward to working with your students throughout their high school careers, and we hope that you will see tremendous cognitive development throughout their time at Centennial High School.

Centennial High School Staff