



Kurt S. Browning,
Superintendent of Schools



April 16, 2015

School Matters

Making a Difference...

If you have employees, parents, or students who are making a difference in your school, the communications department would like to feature them in a video on our district website and Facebook pages. Here is an [example](#) showcasing Jim Higgins, a custodian at Land O' Lakes High School. Please contact Andy Dunn to have your school featured by emailing him at adunn@pasco.k12.fl.us.

Smile Care A Van

The Florida Department of Health – Pasco County coordinated with Student Health Services a “soft launch” of the mobile dental bus at Pasco Elementary. The dental staff served 78 students; 45 received sealants and 47 were identified as needing additional dental services.



Legislative Update

Earlier this week, Governor Scott signed House Bill 7069 into law. This bill addresses many of the concerns that had been raised by school board members, superintendents, educators, and parents in Pasco and across the state. The bill does the following:

- authorizes school districts to set the school starting date as no earlier than August 10*;
- eliminates the 11th grade English Language Arts assessment;
- eliminates requirement for district-wide exams for non-state assessed courses and subjects;
- prohibits districts from giving finals in courses where statewide standardized exams already exist;
- eliminates requirement for progress monitoring;
- limits the amount of time for test administration to no more than 5% of total school hours per student, per year;
- requires that statewide assessment results be returned by the end of the year and district-wide assessment results be returned within 30 days; eliminates requirement for intensive remedial courses for secondary students;
- reduces the weight given to student performance data used in teacher evaluations from 50% to 33%;
- requires an independent verification of the psychometric validity of statewide, standardized assessments before school grades may be published and before student performance data may be used for teacher and administrator evaluations; and
- provides identification and interventions for students at risk of retention.

*As a result of this legislation passing, it is possible that the School Board will move the 2015-2016 school start date to the 3rd Monday in August (August 17), which was part of our legislative priorities. This move would enable our schools to complete first semester exams prior to winter break.

NEXT WEEK IS

Administrative Professionals Week – April 22 is **Administrative Professionals Day** – Don't forget to thank your office staff in person or by using #admins on social media. Click [here](#) for more information.

National Student Leadership Week – Encourage and recognize student leadership activities in secondary schools.

Climate Education Week – April 22 is **Earth Day** – Find educational activities [here](#).



IMPORTANT: Employee Volunteers

This information was sent in an email to all employees on September 10, 2014, but there still is confusion... It has been the District School Board of Pasco County's practice to require employees to complete the volunteer application process in order to volunteer at their children's schools. Because all employees go through a more thorough background check as a condition of employment, this requirement is unnecessary and duplicative. So, the superintendent has agreed that **employees no longer will have to go through the volunteer application process in order to volunteer at their children's schools and school events.** However, before you can volunteer to transport students on field trips or to other off-campus activities, employees must complete the Employee Application for Student Transportation Authority process. Click on this [link](#) to begin that process. (Schools should provide a means for employees to record their volunteer hours, though.) Thank you for what you do for the children of this district every day, and if you don't already volunteer at your child's school, please consider this your opportunity to start taking a more active role in their school activities.

Take Your Sons/Daughters to Work

The national Take Your Sons and Daughters to Work day is scheduled for Thursday, April 23. As you know, that day falls during state end-of-course exams. With this in mind, we will use the same process we've used the past couple of years for parents who wish to take their children to work with them at their place of employment outside the district. A principal may allow a parent to take his or her son or daughter out of school to participate in the national event if the student does not have a scheduled EOC on Thursday, April 23, AND the parent has prearranged the student's absence with his or her principal and teacher(s). District employees who wish to bring their school-age son or daughter to work with them may do so on **Friday, May 29**. Employees also must prearrange their children's absences with their principals and teachers if they plan to participate on May 29.

Kudos

I just wanted to let you know what an outstanding job our **ARM department** is doing in this very stressful testing season. They are very helpful, patient, knowledgeable, and such professionals!...**Mark (Butler)** sends out updates often and is ready and willing to solve the problem or get an answer and call me back quickly. I am proud to work for Pasco County [Schools] and appreciate all of the support that this department provides us. Testing has been very stressful; their support keeps us focused on the process and allows us to help our students get through this process.
- Karen Ward, Assistant Principal, Centennial Middle School

State Budget Update from FSBA

Budget negotiations have been at a stand-still between the House and Senate for a few weeks due to a significant disagreement between the two bodies on funding for the Low Income Pool (LIP), a program that provides funding to hospitals and health providers that provide care for uninsured and low-income Floridians and for an expansion of the Medicaid program. A consequence of this logjam is that differences between the House and Senate education budget provisions haven't been resolved. Both the House and Senate education budgets increase overall FEFP funding by about \$750 million — about a 4% increase over the current year — with the House budget providing about \$20 million more than Senate in total FEFP funding. The main difference between the two education budgets is that the House focuses on increasing funding for specific programs while the Senate provides more funding flexibility. See the FSBA comparison of the House and Senate education budgets by clicking [here](#). Complicating resolution of the differences between the existing education budgets are new FTE enrollment figures that show significant increase in enrollment that will require adjustment of both budgets.

April is Child Abuse Prevention Month

Did you know?

- **Every 10 seconds** a child is abused in our country and **every day 4 children die** from abuse or neglect.
- In Pinellas and Pasco counties, **every 30 minutes** a case of child abuse is investigated and **every day about 5 children** are removed from their homes due to abuse or neglect.
- Over the past year, the total number of children in care served daily rose from 3,100 to 3,400 – and more than 900 are being served in foster care.

More foster homes are needed in our community. Have you ever considered becoming a foster parent? If so, please click [here](#) for information on how to get involved.



These CAES anti-bullying club students will paint a positive word mural at the school from 8 a.m. to noon on Saturday, April 18, for Global Youth Service Day.