

School Matters

District School Board of Pasco County

Kurt S. Browning, Superintendent of Schools

September 27, 2013



Common Core State Standards

Last Friday, I sent a letter to Governor Scott and leaders of the Florida House and Senate reiterating that I strongly support CCSS because they raise the bar for student achievement and will help Florida build a world-class education system. I also strongly urged the governor NOT to support the development of a “home grown” assessment similar to the current FCAT 2.0.

On Monday, the governor issued an executive order telling the Florida Education Commissioner and State Board of Education to withdraw from participation as the fiscal agent for the PARCC consortium. He also ordered the FLDOE to accept bids for the development of Florida’s Common Core assessment tool.

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) provide a consistent, clear, understanding of what students are expected to learn, so teachers and parents know what they need to do to support them. The standards are designed to be robust and relevant to the real world, reflecting the knowledge and skills that our young people need for success in college, careers, and life.

Through our district-wide priorities — Professional Learning Communities, Professional Growth System, and Standards-Based Instruction — we are committed to developing and supporting our leaders and teachers so they can provide all students with the skills and knowledge needed for success.

Florida is at a crossroads with educational reform and we need to take this opportunity to “wipe the slate clean” and develop a new, aligned system of accountability where curriculum, instruction, and assessment are aligned with each other and with the CCSS.

Those of us who work in public education and understand what the standards are — and what they are not — also have an obligation to speak out to correct the misleading information that some otherwise responsible citizens and elected officials are repeating. The CCSS were developed by the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers — NOT the federal government. The CCSS are standards — NOT curriculum. Local and state educators are creating the curriculum — NOT the federal government.



Together We Stand

October is National Bullying Prevention Month. Bullying is an unacceptable behavior that adults and students have a responsibility to stop. Please join us in creating a safe, caring, respectful community for ALL students. Please visit the district website, www.pascocounty.org, and the following links to learn more. <http://www.stopbullying.gov/> <http://www.nasponline.org/bullying>



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What is Canvas Live?

CanvasLIVE is a free webinar series designed to give Canvas users additional training and an opportunity to share their knowledge with the community. Each session includes a brief tutorial on a Canvas tool or feature, focused demonstration, and a short Q&A with Canvas experts. Join us to learn something new and share your ideas and best practices with other Canvas users. Webinars are open to everyone. <http://guides.instructure.com/s/2204/m/4151/1/140653-what-is-canvaslive>

Disability Awareness

The State of Florida has declared the first two weeks in October as Disability History and Awareness Weeks. The District School Board of Pasco County approved a proclamation at the last School Board meeting recognizing Disability History and Awareness. Each school will be receiving a letter with some materials for discussing disability history and awareness. We are gathering additional resources that we can highlight on the district website.



District, USEP, Chamber, and Crowne Consulting/CareHere representatives held a ribbon cutting today for the district's 4th CareHere Health & Wellness Center at Hudson Middle School.



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Resetting our Teacher Evaluation Model from Compliance to a Professional Growth System

Good teaching is nurtured in a school and in a school system culture that values constant feedback, analysis, and refinement of the quality of teaching. In Pasco, the future of teacher evaluation lies in more than collecting static pictures of how well teachers perform in any given moment. Our Professional Growth System will help teachers improve their instruction over time, leading students to higher achievement.

Pasco administrators have recently completed 5 days of intensive training to help our district move towards the Professional Growth System. This training, which started during the summer, has both deepened our learning and renewed our commitment to providing meaningful feedback for the purpose of professional growth for all educators. Please see an overview of each training day below:

Day 1: Framework Training: Framework training focused on building the common language and organization of the Marzano Framework and how it serves to support growth and teacher expertise. The training also described the desired effect of each Design Question in Domain 1. Further, the training described the role and impact of intentional teacher planning in this model.

Day 2: Protocol Training: Building upon the learning objectives from the Framework training, Protocol training emphasized the strength in developing a common language of instruction. The training also focused on understanding the purpose and components of the Marzano Protocols for observation and how protocols are used to provide feedback to teachers.

Day 3: Inter-rater Reliability and Scoring Learning Targets: With the goal of inter-rater reliability, Day 3 training deepened understanding of the developmental scale. The training also focused on identifying dominant elements through the use of lesson plans and classroom observations.

Day 4: Inter-rater Reliability and Feedback: The focus of Day 4 training was to help refine administrator observation skills and give administrators the skills to construct feedback to help teachers grow in their planning and use of instructional strategies.

Day 5: Understanding Unit Design: Understanding Unit Design focused on describing a process for standards-based unit planning and how it relates to a continuous improvement cycle. Furthermore, it described the Formal Observation Cycle and how it is supported by Domains 2-4.

Building Common Knowledge and Understanding

Beginning next week, we will be highlighting elements and resources in Domain 1 of the Marzano Teacher Evaluation Model.

The Marzano Teacher Evaluation Model incorporates research-based strategies that create causal links to raising student achievement when strategies are used accurately and in the right context. The Marzano Teacher Evaluation Model contains 60 elements, divided into four domains, designed to inform the instructional practices of teachers.

Domain 1: Classroom Strategies and Behaviors

Domain 1 focuses on classroom strategies and behaviors that impact student achievement.

Domain 2: Planning and Preparing

Domain 2 focuses on planning and preparing, both of which are directly linked to classroom strategies and behaviors.

Domain 3: Reflecting on Teaching

Domain 3 focuses on teacher self-reflection, a vital metacognitive step in teacher development.

Domain 4: Collegiality and Professionalism

Domain 4 focuses on teacher collegiality and professional behavior.

Town Hall

One of our three priority areas that guide our work is the further development of a Professional Growth System. This system begins with building a common language and allowing all stakeholders to both deepen knowledge and ask questions. To facilitate these efforts, the District School Board of Pasco County has partnered with an expert from the Marzano Institute to conduct two Town Hall meetings. All Pasco employees are encouraged to attend these important events. Please see below for details.

Eastside Town Hall Meeting

Location: Wesley Chapel High School Center for the Performing Arts

Date: November 6, 2013 Time: 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Westside Town Hall Meeting

Location: River Ridge High School Center for the Performing Arts

Date: November 7, 2013 Time: 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.

*Employees are invited to attend the session that is most convenient.