

# School Matters

District School Board of Pasco County

Kurt S. Browning, Superintendent of Schools

October 25, 2013



## Deliberate Excellence: The Pursuit of Quality Teaching and Learning:

As we begin the second quarter, it is a good time to take stock. We are more committed than ever to improving teacher collaboration and development. Our goal is to deepen conversations of professional learning community teams, focus work on standards-based instruction, and increase the quality and coherence of teaching and learning across classrooms and schools.

We continue to build the capacity of school leaders (including teacher leaders) to support, monitor, and sustain high-performing Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). During this long-term partnership with the district, school teams continue to be introduced to the skills and tools they need to implement PLCs, maximize effectiveness, and make efficient use of resources.

This is a journey and our schools are in different places. For some schools, a "professional learning community" means getting teachers together to talk about instruction, with little guidance about what they do or how to move from talking together to changing practices, while other schools are further along. But let us be clear, we are proud of the progress of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) as a means to:

- Engage teachers in constructive dialogue to improve teaching practices and student learning
- Increase alignment of curriculum, instruction, and assessment with college- career-, and life-ready standards

During the past month, we have visited many schools and spoken to many teachers and school-based leaders. Based on their feedback, we have designed the next phases of curriculum development to better meet the needs of our elementary school teachers and students. Our goal is to increase the planning supports so teachers are able to spend more time planning for and reflecting on instruction during their PLCs. As such, we will provide additional resources for English/Language Arts and Mathematics. Beginning with Unit 3/Unit C these resources will include:

- Additional K-U-Ds and scales for the remaining focus standards;
- Sample tasks with explicit alignment to the Marzano Instructional Framework and Taxonomy for each unit;
- Common Unit Assessments.

We will increase efforts to develop capacity in each school. K-5 teacher representatives from each school will be invited to attend the ELA or Math grade specific PD sessions to gain a deeper understanding of the curriculum design and units. We will be sending more details soon.

As we move forward, we will continue to seek feedback, provide updates and additions to our curriculum resources through emails and Canvas notifications, and make the necessary adjustments.

## Common Core Myth vs. Fact

**Myth:** The goal of Common Core standards... is not simply to improve academic achievement but also to instill federally determined attitudes and mindsets in students including political and religious beliefs," the Florida Stop Common Core Coalition.

**Fact:** There is nothing in the standards suggesting anything about influencing students' political or religious beliefs. This claim is based on a standard data model created by a private corporation with the intent of helping states organize the data they collect. States can choose which data to collect, and according to the architect of this model, the questioned data is used by parochial and religious schools. Florida does not collect political and religious beliefs information.

You did it!  
*Congratulations*

Rotary Club of NPR honored **Ken Miesner**, principal of Richey Elementary, with the Vocational Service Award at their Rotary meeting on October 23. Ken was recognized for all the work he has done to make Richey Elementary School such a great place for teachers and students alike over his years of service.

## Get Out Your Good News!

Don't forget that the Office of Communications has an online form you can use to send them information about upcoming events or activities for potential news coverage. Visit the Communications & Government Relations webpage to access the link, or click [here](#) to access the page with the link.

**Great American  
Teach In is  
Wednesday,  
November 20.**



@kurtsbrowning  
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@cobbelinda

# FRAMEWORK FOCUS



DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD  
OF PASCO COUNTY  
Kurt S. Browning, Superintendent of Schools



VIDEO

“By identifying critical information, students understand what is important and how to best prioritize their learning.”

-Larry Ohearn

Click the button below to access Canvas for more information.



## Element 6 – Identifying Critical Information

*Desired Effect: Students can describe and explain the level of importance of the content.*

### Why Identify Critical Information?

By highlighting the information that is critical, students will be able to actively engage in the learning process and have a deeper understanding of the content.

### Examples of Identifying Critical Information

- ✓ Give students opportunities to discuss what they already know about the critical information.
- ✓ Incorporate relevant media (such as audio clips, video clips, or article excerpts) when presenting critical information.
- ✓ Show enthusiasm for the critical information.
- ✓ Explain the rationale for learning the critical information to students (real-world applications).
- ✓ Alert students before you begin to present critical information and let them know what to focus on.
- ✓ Avoid telling students that they need to learn the content because it will be on a state or national exam.



Click on the picture above to watch a **video** showing how Ms. Hibbs at Ridgewood High School identifies critical information in her classroom.

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## Evidence of Element 6 – Identifying Critical Information

### Teacher Evidence

- *Focus:* The teacher identifies a lesson or part of a lesson as involving important information to which students should pay particular attention.
- The teacher begins the lesson by explaining why upcoming content is important.
- The teacher tells students to get ready for some important information.
- The teacher cues the importance of upcoming information in some indirect fashion, such as:
  - body position
  - tone of voice
  - level of excitement

### Student Evidence

- Students can describe the level of importance of the information addressed in class.
- Students can explain why it is important to pay attention to the content.
- Students visibly adjust their level of engagement.

## What Could it Look Like in My Classroom?

Each learning goal should have highlighted critical information that provides focus for the teacher and students. These critical-input experiences should utilize a variety of learning modalities and be multi-faceted and engaging to help anchor the information in memory.

### Visual

- Storyboards
- Graphic Organizers
- Pictures
- Movie Clips
- Demonstrations

### Narrative

- Relevant Stories
- Personal Stories
- Dramatic Enactments
- Audio Presentations

### Body Language & Voice

- Raising or lowering voice
- Eye contact with students
- Gesturing
- Facial Expressions
- Movement around the room
- Pausing at key points



Click the button to access resources for  
Identifying Critical Information