



## **District Advisory Council Minutes August 27, 2020**

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm by Chairperson, Joe Suarez, and the following people were in attendance: Ken Kenworthy, Superintendent, Pat McCoy, Assistant Superintendent, Dylan Tedders, Assistant Superintendent, Joe Suarez, Chairperson, Alexandra Hurst, Vice Chairperson, Lisa Bell, Secretary, Steve Dobbs, community member; Ellen Williams, representative from Yearling Middle School, Cheryl Hollin, representative from Everglades Elementary, Tuuli Robinson, Principal from North Elementary, April Butler, representative from North Elementary School, Shannon Stripling, representative from Osceola Middle School, Katharine Williams, Director of Mental Health and Behavioral Supports, Heather Siler-Dobbs, Director of Grants and Special Programs, Vicki Goggans, Senior Administrator at Freshman Campus, Christie Torres, Assistant Principal at Central Elementary, Audie Ash, Assistant Principal at Okeechobee Achievement Academy

Mr. Suarez welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked for approval of the June 25th minutes. Corrections were made to Adam Cohen's last name. Alexandra Hurst made a motion to approve the minutes after Mr. Cohen's name was corrected and was seconded by Cheryl Hollin.

Mr. Kenworthy gave the group an update on COVID and its effect on our District. There are 1249 students enrolled in Okeechobee Virtual School or Option 3. In our Elementary schools, 60% of students are face-to-face, 20% have chosen Option 2 and 20% have chosen Option 3. At the middle school level, 53% are face-to-face, 25% are Option 2 and 22% are Option 3. At High School, 58% are face-to-face, 19% are Option 2 and 23% are Option 3. The window for final decision making is closing on 8/28/20. At that point, we will take a hard, firm date approach to choosing a learning option as daily 20-40 students are switching options.

The District spent 173,125.50 on COVID supplies such as disinfectant, masks, gloves, sanitizer Bioesque and other supplies.

Bus ridership is down which has made social distancing possible on the buses. There are a couple of buses at high capacity, however, these buses pick up several students with very short rides, so the high capacity is not for the duration of the ride of most students. There are a couple of buses with as low a number as eight on one bus and 11 on another. But we feel it is important to continue to service these students as we normally would.

COVID exclusions from schools since the start of the year have broken down in this way:

CES 3 Staff and 0 students  
NES 4 Staff and 0 students  
SES 2 Staff and 0 students  
OHS 1 Staff and 30 students  
SES 3 Staff and 24 students  
OHS 1 Staff and 0 students

Mr. Kenworthy gave the current status of a Lawsuit between Florida's Education Association and the State of Florida, to block the executive order requiring districts to reopen brick and mortar schools. In the ruling, the judge said the Florida Constitution requires the state ensure schools are operating safely, and said Florida officials were ignoring that mandate and giving school districts no "meaningful alternative" to hold class without reopening schools because they risk losing school funding if they don't reopen the schools. Commissioner Corcoran said that the state would automatically appeal the decision, which would cause a stay. If in the appeal, the Department of Education prevails, Mr. Kenworthy asked, "What do we do? Do we keep school open? What are you hearing about how teachers feel regarding their safety at school?"

April Butler commented that she picked Option 2 because she thought there would be inconsistencies.... This lawsuit is about the teachers, not the students.

Shannon Stripling said that at Osceola everyone was being so careful to follow protocol, cleaning as they should and social distancing. We are not really having issues. We are feeling fairly safe.

Alexandra Hurst added that as she goes into student classrooms, she feels completely safe personally. She said the kids are using manners and being safe. I feel very safe. Everything is so sanitized and structured that it was very safe in the return to class.

Vicki Goggins noted that she felt like this was our answer... "the teachers feel safe."

Cheryl Hollin, teacher at Everglades, said that her school has an excellent plan and everyone knows how to do what they are supposed to do. She feels safe and happy and the school is so clean. "I am so pleased".

Dylan Tedders added that what he was not hearing is that teachers don't feel safe. The struggle is the juggle of the face-to-face with the online students at the same time. Teachers are still learning how to take care of everyone at the same time and it remains a big struggle. They are wishing for more training. However, Mr. Tedders noted that the training is "fighting through it". The teachers are bothered because they want consistency across the board for their students.

Pat McCoy continued that they are getting really good with the technical but can't be in control of the one's (students) at home.

At that thought, April Butler interjected that it is very hard to manage online students, especially the elementary students. Teachers are constantly having to tell online students, "mute yourself, unmute yourself, sit up, sit down, where are you going, are you there, etc."

Mr. Kenworthy encouraged the group that these things should be temporary in hope of Option 2 transitions back to Face-To-Face learning. We are seeing a migration out of Option 2 for many of the reasons you just mentioned, April.

The district offered a virtual school this year. Right now, he said, there are 1249 students that have signed up for this option. This option requires quite a large investment and missed opportunities for funding as opposed to Options 2 & 3. The district forfeits class size reduction funding as virtual school is exempt from the constitutional amendment. This amounts to \$1300.00 per elementary student, \$1,000.00 for each middle school and \$900.00 for every high school student. Then we had to purchase software licenses for every student at \$545.00 per child. When they come back to Face-To-Face learning, that license is just lost - can't be transferred to another student. Some kids will definitely be successful with virtual, but it is not for everyone and that's why we are seeing the migration back to Face-To-Face learning.

Next on the Agenda, Katharine Williams discussed the Multi-Tier System of Support that we use with our students. MTSS is a framework that helps educators provide academic and behavioral strategies for students with various needs. This is a systematic approach that uses data-based problem solving and decision making across all levels of the education system. Why do we do it this way? So that EVERY student can achieve success. Our department worked hard over the summer in collaboration with "Branching Minds". Branching Minds is an application that uses the most advanced learning science and education research to help schools transform Response to Intervention (RTI)/MTSS for both academics and behavior. The software is up and going and we are really excited about the streamlined data that we have been able to accomplish. This will help us with the mental health of our students. We will look at all children from teacher grade-level teams, leadership levels and nominate students for Tier 2 or 3 support for externalizing and internalizing behaviors. Students will be scored and offered support and intervention based on their score. Tier 3 students will have a meeting with parents to come up with a plan for the individualized success of the child, to include targeted behaviors and intervention for 9 weeks. Once goals are met in Tier 3, they will move back to Tier 2 and then hopefully all the way back down to Tier 1. Referrals will come from teachers who are looking at Early Warning System (EWS) screenings. We will facilitate in 2 windows 1) Sept 14 - Oct 2 and 2) Jan 25th - Feb 12th. At that time we will be meeting, making our list and creating the Tiered Plan.

Shannon Stripling commented that she sat in on a MTSS meeting at Osceola and really like how it was aligned and streamlined as it allowed them to truly focus on the students who really

need the attention. She went on to say that this will make it so much easier to identify those kids who really need the help.

Next Heather Siler-Dobbs gave us an overview of Title I Part A, Title I Part C, and Title IV Funding. Title IA is a federal entitlement grant dedicated to “Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged.” All Okeechobee County Schools qualify as Title I schools. The District’s Title IA award this year will total \$2,449,766 and pays for portions of many positions, such as Title I paraprofessionals, the Migrant Advocates, the Homeless Liaison, the Director of Grants & Special Programs, the Coordinator of Assessment and Accountability, the Federal Programs Resource Teacher, the Shared Services Advocate, the Shared Services Secretary, and the Instructional Coaches. It also funds many supplemental instructional supports and supplies. Title IC is also a federal entitlement grant for the Migrant Education Program. Our Title IC award for 2020-2021 will total \$635,277. It pays a majority of the salaries for the Migrant Advocates, the Director of Grants & Special Programs, the Migrant Secretary, and the Title I Bookkeeper, and it pays a portion of the salaries for the Coordinator of Assessment & Accountability, the Federal Programs Resource Teacher, Migrant Tutorial teachers, and bus drivers for migrant tutorial. It also funds instructional supports and supplies for our migrant students. Title IV is a third federal entitlement grant focused on “Student Support and Academic Enrichment.” There are three major components which must be covered in the grant application: Well-Rounded Education, Safe & Healthy Schools, and Effective Use of Technology. The focus of the Well-Rounded Education portion of the grant this year was on supporting science instruction at all levels, providing many science program enhancements as well as funding for the Everglades Elementary Agriculture program and Instruction Partners, a long-term system of focus on improving instruction across the district. In Safe & Healthy Schools, the grant partially funds AVID programming, a Behavior Interventionist, a Family Engagement app for Seminole Elementary, and a social-emotional learning program for OHS, OFC, and OAA. We will receive \$170,175 in Title IV funding this year.

Following Mrs. Siler-Dobbs presentation, Joe Suarez moved to elect new officers for the Board for the 2020-21 School Year. April Butler noted that Mr. Suarez could no longer serve as Chairman, as he is now an employee of the Okeechobee County Schools. April Butler then nominated Mr. Steve Dobbs, who has served as Chairman of the Advisory Board for many years in the past. The nomination was seconded by Cheryl Hollin. Mr. Dobbs accepted the nomination and all were in favor. Mr. Dobbs then nominated Adam Cohen as Vice Chairman and was seconded by Cheryl Hollin. Mr. Cohen accepted the nomination and all were in favor. Mr. Dobbs then nominated Lisa Bell, the current secretary, to continue serving as the secretary for this year. She accepted and all were in favor.

#### School Highlights:

Cheryl Hollin from Everglades Elementary reported that they have dedicated employees who are devoted to their students and make a positive impact on their lives each and every day.

Each DAC, we'd like to highlight those who impact our students' academic performance, social and emotional development, and make EES a home for our students. We recognize our teachers, staff, students and parents for a successful start of the school year. Enrollment and Option 2 have been a challenge but that teachers are happy and they are making it happen! The students don't really mind wearing the mask. Our school will continue to embrace our Professional Development and Learning Plan with Literacy First. This plan involves professional development with our Literacy First consultant and PLC sessions where teachers and administrators disaggregate data, develop lesson plans, and plan for small group instruction.

Shannon Stripling reported for Osceola and complimented the way everyone pitched in to get ready for the start of school, painting and cleaning to get the buildings ready. Students had been very accommodating so far getting things done and listening to instructions. They have had a good start for this year in spite of the challenges.

Alexandra Hurst from Seminole noted that the year started off so much better than they thought it would. They are not having to constantly remind students to do what they are supposed to be doing. Teachers are building relationships in class and online and doing a good job with keeping everyone engaged. Alexandra also talked about how clean and nice their school was and how the students were proud and were keeping their areas clean as well.

Lauren Myers, Principal of the high school, said that masks and changing traffic patterns have helped them do a better job with social distancing. She added that adding the third lunch period where students go to class for 25 minutes, then are excused for lunch, and then go back to class again helped with lunch crowds. She and Mrs. Goggins have teamed up to combine daily announcements. There will also be a special facilities presentation this week and are "looking for good news on Thursday".

From Freshman Campus, Vicki Goggans reported that the students were doing great. "Whatever we have asked of them, they have not disappointed". They are working on perseverance and that is the Braham Way!

In closing, Pat McCoy reminded everyone that the bylaws would be emailed out to all.

Cheryl Hollin asked that the slide presentations be made available to all as well.

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting by Cheryl Hollin and seconded by Adam Cohen.