

School Matters - August 15, 2013

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School Matters

Thursday, August 15, 2013

While Davie County Early College High School successfully started the new school year last Tuesday, we continue to prepare for the opening of the rest of the schools on Monday, August 26. We are looking forward to a wonderful school year and wish our students much academic success.

Reduction of State Funding in the Teacher Assistant Allotment

Unfortunately, the State Legislature decided to reduce the funding in the Teacher Assistant allotment. This reduction weighs heavy on the Davie County Schools' administration and the Board of Education. After meeting with principals and a teacher assistant representative from each school, two options were presented to the Board for consideration. Neither was recommended, but one of the two was necessary given the cuts by the legislature. We have 174 teacher assistants working from 3 to 8 hours a day; 112 of those assistants are employed for more than 6 hours a day. Teacher assistants have been employed for 215 days each year, just as our teachers.

Reduction in term of employment summary:

- reduce all teacher assistants from 215 to 207 days
- reduce teacher assistants who work more than 6 hours to only 6 hours, therefore, reducing the number of total hours principals are allotted at each school for teacher assistants
- not fill any of our current teacher assistant vacancies
- move some positions to other schools based on enrollment needs

This reduction in terms of employment was approved unanimously by the Board of Education on August 6 and addresses the State cuts without anyone currently employed losing their job. All teacher assistants working at least 6 hours per day will continue to earn benefits. Teacher assistants who were working more than 6 hours can be considered for a full time bus route, if they wish to work more hours. Dr. Hartness met with all teachers assistants earlier this week to explain these changes. Teacher assistants are an important part of the instructional process and these State budget cuts will have a negative impact on the way we deliver a quality education.

Davie County Schools' 4-Year Graduation Rate Remains Steady; 5-Year Rate Shows Significant Increase

Davie County Schools' four-year cohort graduation rate remained the same as last year at 83.2 percent, which was an all time high since the rate started being measured in 2005-06, and came in above the State average. Davie County Schools' five-year cohort graduation rate was 85.3 percent for students entering 9th grade in 2008-09 and graduating in 2012-13 or earlier. This was a significant increase from last year's rate of 78.2 percent. Superintendent Hartness stated, "The reported graduation rate is a result of hard work and dedication. The significant increase in the 5-year graduation rate is evidence that our staff does not give up on students who need a little more time to complete their graduation requirements. Our teachers, counselors, and administrators have implemented numerous strategies to address the graduation rate over the past several years and those strategies are working. Graduation is a culminating event resulting in successful learning experiences and partnerships between students, teachers, principals, counselors, parents, and our community. Graduation from high school is essential, and we must continue to ensure our students are graduating equipped with the necessary skills to continue their education or enter the workforce. Our focus on academic success and increasing the graduation rate will continue, and our community should celebrate this report. While we celebrate, we will not be satisfied with an 83.2% rate, but will strive for at least a 2% increase in the rate in next year's report as outlined in our strategic plan." For the full story, please visit our website or [click here](#).

Sincerely,



Darrin L. Hartness, Ed. D.
Superintendent

Response to DCHS Locker Room Concern

Dr. Hartness received a call from the county manager last Tuesday afternoon making him aware of the issue expressed to the Board of Commissioners on Monday night, August 5, during the public comment section of their meeting. Dr. Hartness made a call first thing Wednesday morning to the Davie County Health Department, requesting that they send someone out to inspect the locker room that was questioned. A health inspector conducted an inspection at 10:30 AM on August 7, 2013.

The health inspector advised the caulk in the trough drain in the shower needed to be removed, cleaned, and re-caulked. The inspector also indicated that some tiles in the shower area needed to be replaced to avoid standing water. The inspector found nothing that would cause the health department to “padlock and shut down” the locker room as requested of the commissioners.

This boys’ PE locker room has not been used since school was dismissed in June. Our maintenance staff and custodial staff are already addressing the items identified by the health department, and these items will be addressed before students arrive on August 26. Our staff continues to work diligently in all of our schools to clean and prepare our facilities for a new school year.

What the Health Inspector found is being addressed with routine maintenance, but replacing some tiles and re-caulking the

WEMS Math Camp

William Ellis Middle School

completed their sixth consecutive three-day summer math camp for a group of 14 rising 8th graders. The camp is designed to give kids a leg up for Algebra in the upcoming year by reviewing key Integrated Math I skills. A special thanks to Mr. Steve Rareshide for his commitment and dedication for holding this camp over the last six years.

shower in the boys' locker room alone does not address the long-range facility needs that have been identified at Davie County High School. Our architects and engineers have clearly stated that continuing to remodel the current facility is not the most cost effective, long-range solution to addressing the facility issues they identified on that campus.

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