

Florida Association of District School Superintendents

State Board of Education

June 10, 2021

Florida State College at Jacksonville

Advanced Technology Center

401 West State Street,

Room T140/141

Jacksonville, FL 32202

Comments

Welcome/Introductions

Dr. Diana Greene, Superintendent

Duval County School District

Duval County Public Schools

Provide general comments about the district and the district's response to COVID-19.

General Comments

The 2020-21 academic year brought unprecedented challenges. These challenges required superintendents statewide to modify their district's approach to student learning and well-being. These modifications were mitigated by the DOE Emergency Orders issued during the 2020-21 school year. On behalf of Florida's superintendents, FADSS thanks you, Commissioner, for those emergency orders.

Now that the regular school year has ended, superintendents have turned their attention to summer programs and the next school year. While we do not yet know the statewide assessment results, districts have diligently monitored student progress and are prepared to provide robust summer learning programs using ESSER funds to remediate academic deficiencies. Even though school districts may not have school grades this year, superintendents are moving with all deliberate speed to eradicate the academic consequences of COVID-19 and get students back on track towards making appropriate academic progress. The availability of federal funds allows superintendents to create summer learning opportunities that will benefit our students far beyond anything districts have been able to offer before.

The people in this room recognize that Florida is at the forefront of K-12 education. Florida was the leader in opening schools and returning students to in-person instruction. Florida will be the leader in returning students to pre-pandemic learning through collaboration with the Department of Education, thoughtful use of federal funds, and the dedication of teachers, school support personnel, and district staff. Florida's superintendents are devoted to this cause.

As superintendents look forward to the 2021-22 school year, we see difficult terrain that we must traverse. The 2021-22 school year will require superintendents to continue to confront COVID-related issues, while also preparing for new challenges and opportunities such as the implementation of new laws and implementation of the B.E.S.T Standards. Superintendents must prepare for new laws revising curriculum and required instruction, requiring additional parental notification on a variety of topics, mandating a moment of silence, modifying student identification cards, and much more. These new laws require districts to adopt or revise policies and prepare teachers and staff before the start of the new school year.

School districts must also begin their transition to the B.E.S.T. Standards. The B.E.S.T. Standards for K-2 ELA, which the DOE staff has done tremendous work on, will be implemented in 2021-22. Superintendents continue to prepare for grades 3-12 ELA and K-12 math standards implementation and new statewide assessments in 2022-23. New ELA and mathematics instructional materials will also be reviewed and purchased over the next two years. The move to the B.E.S.T Standards provides a fantastic opportunity to improve student learning, but also presents the challenge of change.

I bring attention to these issues as a reminder that COVID isn't the only matter schools are dealing with and to help complete the K-12 education picture. It is easy to lose sight of the breadth and magnitude of the issues our students, teachers, and staff contend with. Education is dynamic. Teaching and learning are evolving. As superintendents we must adapt and lead through challenges and change. It is a charge we undertake with great resolve and FADSS appreciates the assistance that the Commissioner and DOE staff provide as we move education forward in Florida.