

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Update

May 24, 2023

SUBJECT: K-12 Public Schools – Superintendent Kenworthy on behalf of the Florida Association of District School Superintendents

PROPOSED BOARD ACTION

N/A

AUTHORITY FOR STATE BOARD ACTION

N/A

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

An update will be provided by Mr. Ken Kenworthy, Superintendent of Okeechobee County Schools, on behalf of the Florida Association of District School Superintendents (FADSS).

This is one of the most exciting times of the year in Florida schools. School is almost out. Throughout the state, the Class of 2023 has already started walking across the stage, beginning their next great adventure whether that be college, the military, or the workforce. It is amazing what they have accomplished when you look at the number of AA degrees earned while still in high school, the number of graduates earning an industry certification, the offers of employment, the college acceptance letters, the number of volunteer hours this class has devoted to our community and the local, state, and national scholarships earned. Some students and their families overcame extreme hardships and demonstrated the resiliency necessary to be called a graduate. It truly is a time of celebration for over 200,000 families in Florida.

We just completed the first year of the new progress monitoring approach to assessments. This new system has allowed us to measure where our students are during the school year so that adjustments can be made to instruction. Coupled with the results being available immediately in all three administrations, the new system has made a positive impact on the level of service to students and their families. We are so thankful for the progress monitoring system and the quick results that give teachers the information to adjust instruction for students. We use the scores to select supplemental materials to fill gaps, create tutorial plans and remediate the essential standards. Over the summer teachers and instructional coaches revise curriculum maps and provide professional development using the results to better improve their craft. The online access portal for parents is an added plus allowing us to share results quicker and eliminate paper. I think we can all agree, the new system was a wise choice and well worth the investment.

Finally, the end of the school year is a time when we often have to say farewell to life-long educators and public servants as they transition to retirement. My fellow superintendents and I are thrilled that the Legislature has invested in teacher salary increases, extended temporary certificates to five years, and provided additional pathways to the classroom. All of these efforts will help with recruitment and retention of our teachers. In addition, some of those employees, who wisely took advantage of DROP while they could, will now be eligible to continue in DROP for a total of 8 years instead of just 5, and teachers will be able to extend up to 2 years beyond that. We have numerous employees who had to enter DROP when they did but may not be ready to say goodbye just yet, which means

districts across the state will be able to retain some of their most experienced and dedicated employees. Moreover, even for those who are ready to retire, the Legislature also passed a law this year that will allow them to volunteer during their first year of retirement. This will certainly benefit our students, as thousands of dedicated public servants will now have the ability to volunteer to serve our kids. Utilizing these volunteers will no doubt positively impact the classroom environment as well as lead to increased academic achievement.

As we move into the summer, people often assume school districts slow down when, actually, we shift into high gear. We are preparing budgets, hiring staff, cleaning schools, making repairs, washing buses, operating the summer feeding program, hosting instructional camps, staffing a robust summer school, providing professional development, going to conferences, revising strategic plans, writing school improvement plans, negotiating health insurance with carriers, preparing master schedules, and the list goes on. So, I guess you could say that school is out for everyone but us.

Supporting Documentation Included: N/A

Facilitator/Presenter: Ken Kenworthy, Superintendent, Okeechobee County Schools