

**STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**Update**  
November 16, 2016

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

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**PROPOSED BOARD ACTION**

N/A

**AUTHORITY FOR STATE BOARD ACTION**

N/A

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

An update will be provided by Superintendent Ken Kenworthy, Okeechobee County Public Schools on issues relating to K-12 education initiatives.

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**Supporting Documentation Included:** Talking Points

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

# **Florida Association of District School Superintendents**

## **Comments Ke Kenworthy, Superintendent Okeechobee County**

**State Board of Education  
Omni Orlando Resort  
ChampionsGate, Florida**

**November 16, 2016**

### **Introductions/Welcome**

Good morning. On behalf of the school superintendents in the State of Florida, thank you for allowing us time to highlight some of the great things happening in education.

### **District Highlights**

One item that I want to highlight is that 43 school districts have applied for and received recognition through the Florida Healthy School District Initiative. This validates that school districts are stepping up to ensure the infrastructure is in place to mitigate barriers to student learning. Health and wellness education, physical activity, nutritional services, counseling/psychological and social services, safe and supportive school environment as well as family and community involvement are just a few of the areas our districts have addressed. These school districts have not only received recognition, but are ensuring that the needs of our students are met so they may focus on student achievement.

### **Rural District Highlights**

As a superintendent of a rural district, it is important to recognize the untapped talent of our students as compared to students in larger districts. The STEM Scholars program that began during the ARRA era has continued at the consortium level to ensure our gifted and talented students are fully exposed and immersed in STEM areas. Through a series of forums at Indian River State College, Florida Gulf Coast University, Florida Southwestern State College, Florida Polytechnic University and South Florida State College, our students have been able to explore careers in engineering, math applications, health science, STEM aviation, and forensic science. It is important for small and rural districts to increase opportunities for real-world STEM problem solving and research. Since ARRA funds went away, the superintendents in the heartland area have continued the STEM Scholars program through funding at the local level to

give our students the opportunities that are similar to those that may be more available in more urban districts.

The last highlight from a rural perspective is the work many small districts have been engaging in with District to District (D2D). The D2D program is funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation; and focuses on curriculum, assessment, teacher professional development, leader professional development and the use of evaluation systems to support improvement. For any district to continue on the path to improved student achievement, the curriculum must be aligned, high quality instruction based on the Florida Standards as measured by both formative and summative data must be observed, and professional development must be afforded to each teacher and school based leader and their performance reflected in his or her evaluation. To do all of this, we need capable assistance from cutting edge experts and D2D has provided us with this assistance. Our instructional walkthroughs in our own schools as well as schools in neighboring districts have helped us to collaborate, calibrate and set additional goals for both our students and staff.

### **Teacher Recruitment/Retention**

In order for these great things to continue happening, we are forced to examine where our workforce will come from in the future. School superintendents are facing a growing teacher shortage. In addition to traditional shortages in STEM related fields and ESE; superintendents are experiencing a shortage of qualified candidates at the elementary school level.

FADSS has created a working group to begin identifying ways to address this growing shortage, and look forward to working with the State Board and Commissioner on this issue.

Some of the ideas expressed during the first conference call with Dr. Brian Dassler and the work group include:

- Teacher recruitment and retention can be broken down into three areas – preparation, recruitment and retention.
- Preparation – Teacher preparation programs in universities and colleges are not producing enough teachers to fill vacancies. Some programs have closed and others are not at capacity.
  - DOE conduct a study on the teacher preparation programs at the postsecondary level and develop recommendations to increase the number of students who are prepared to enter the classroom upon graduation.
  - Students graduating from teacher preparation programs should have all of the required endorsements before entering the professions such as reading endorsements, required ESE training, required ESOL training, etc.
- Preparation – The barriers should be reduced or eliminated for individuals entering the teaching profession without having an education degree.
  - Review test/certification requirements and ensure that assessments are aligned with the courses the incoming teacher will be teaching. For example, should an

English Language Arts teacher have to take and pass the math portion of the assessment?

- Provide tutoring for the required assessments.
- Examine the required endorsements for reading, ESE training and required ESOL training, etc. to ensure it is not a barrier to new teachers.
- Recruitment
  - Maintain and fund the Florida Teach-In.
  - Maintain [www.teachers.org](http://www.teachers.org) website.
  - Expand induction programs. For example some school districts:
    - Hire student teachers for an extended period and then hire them.
    - Hire a master teacher to supervise 10 to 15 new teachers with the goal of making the new teachers successful.
  - Provide incentives such as scholarships for school employees (instructional aides, etc.) to become certified teachers.
- Retention
  - Provide coaching or supervision of new teachers.
  - Assist new teachers in becoming certified or meeting required endorsements.

As we look forward to continuing the great work the State of Florida has started, it is imperative that we have the human capital in place to fill our classrooms and be able to provide ongoing support so that student potential is maximized.