

SUPERINTENDENT'S BULLETIN

NOVEMBER 15, 2023
ISSUE 39

NEWS FOR SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS AND DISTRICT PERSONNEL



Dear School Board Members and District Personnel,

Have a wonderful Thanksgiving Holiday filled with peace, love and great food. Please accept my thanks for all the time and energy that you give to our students and families every day.

As we move near the end of the second nine weeks, I am concerned about the number of students who are receiving an “F” grade. Please give students an opportunity to turn in important work and clear the F’s they are carrying now. I am reminded of conversations that I’ve had with teachers about not accepting late work because they believe that they are teaching students to be responsible. Does that theory work in the real world?

It might be better to teach students how to negotiate. As adults, if we’re not able to meet a timeline, we do a variety of things to help ourselves. We may contact an institution, bank, real estate company or contractor to negotiate a different mutually acceptable timeline. This is responsible adult behavior that we need to foster in our students.

If we want students to be responsible, we teach them along the way by allowing them to make up important summative assessments through mutually negotiated timelines rather than assume punitive policies will change their behavior. If you give this approach a try, I think it will make a difference for most of the students. There will be some who don’t take the opportunity, but this number should be significantly smaller than number of “F’s” currently in the grade books.

**Yours in education,
Terri Axford**

ASSESSMENT & ACCOUNTABILITY

November starts our FCLE testing for all students enrolled in Government classes. This rolls directly into our next testing window opening December 4th for all our K-10 FAST ELA, K-8 FAST Math and K-2 STAR testing. The Winter window is open through the end of January for all FAST testing. Seniors and Juniors in need of meeting graduation requirements will have another opportunity to test by participating in the 10th grade FAST ELA retake along with the BEST Algebra and Geometry EOC tests this December. Please be on the lookout at your school for any upcoming testing dates and requirements.

CONTINUED ASSESSMENT & ACCOUNTABILITY

The state has also released its new cut scores for both FAST and BEST EOC's. These new cut scores will be loaded into the FAST reporting portal starting with PM 1 scores and, when available after testing, PM 2 scores. Parents can view the scores by logging into FOCUS parent portal and using the direct link to the FAST reporting portal, or accessing the portal using their students unique access code. Here is a link to view the new FAST and BEST cut scores:

<https://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/5663/urlt/BEST-CutScores.pdf>

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Veteran's Day was celebrated across the district with student's showing their patriotism and honoring community veterans with special programs and events. MCSD participated in the Key West Veterans Day parade with a school bus colorfully decorated bearing a message of thanks to all veterans.



VETERANS DAY
HONORING ALL WHO SERVED

PARENT INPUT NEEDED

PARENTS: The Monroe County School District requests your help and feedback to improve and support our schools. We encourage parents to participate in this brief survey to assist in the COGNIA Accreditation process which is required for school districts to be held to the highest standards of continuous improvement. The survey is available on all school websites. Thank you for your valuable responses as we look forward to educating and caring for our students and families.

CONTINUED COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Congratulations to AJ Smith, Key West High School's first State Champion swimmer. Smith, who also earned District and Regional gold medals, made school history, setting a new school record in the 50 freestyle event at 20.89 to become the 2A Champion. Kudos to longtime Conch Coach Lori Bosco for creating a top notch program that now includes a state championship.



Horace O'Bryant School football team claimed the Tri-County Championship in a tough game against Somerset Academy. Congratulations on an outstanding season!



The Key Largo School Unified corn hole team of James McCaffery and Bryan Leffler won gold at the State Meet in Orlando.

EXCEPTIONAL STUDENT EDUCATION

The ESE Department is working hard to provide high quality professional development across the Keys. We have provided "Classroom Management" in each region and trained 100% of the Horace O'Bryant para professionals, with two follow up presentations set for December and February. Our small American Recovery Act grant is coming to a close. It provided thousands of dollars of equipment materials and supplies to all schools who sent in an application. One hundred percent of the funds went to support schools and classrooms.

FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE

Open Enrollment is done! Another successful year using Focus for Open Enrollment. Benefits Department is working hard to implement the new Third Party Administration for Employee Benefits. This new and improved administration system will allow us to support our employees better regarding Health Insurance, Medical, Prescription, Dental and Vision, and Life Accidental Protection and Retirement. Benefits Team is also working on finding our school district's new Employee Assistant Program (EAP). It has been challenging for us after COVID-19 because of the cost and the new privacy regulations, but it is our top priority to take good care of all employees. We will continue our search and implement a better EAP for our district. Finance has completed the annual financial audit; thanks to everyone who provided information to the auditors, and will allow us to be the first district again to complete our audit. We are now waiting to have the Exit Conference with the Auditors. The Payroll Team has everything ready for the November 15th payroll to pay our Instructional Staff additional raises based on their evaluations.

Finally, we hope everyone has a happy Thanksgiving with their families! You all deserve it!!!



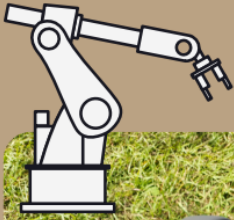
HUMAN RESOURCES AND INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

The Florida Association of School Personnel Administrators (FASPA) is composed of school district administrators who have roles and responsibilities associated with personnel and certification operations and is on top of the needs of our districts. FASPA works with all Florida bureaus in an amazing partnership that benefits all districts. We are very pleased to announce that Maria Curet has been elected to serve a two-year term as the Non-Instructional Staff Representative on the FASPA Board. "Being able to consult with the fellowship and friendship of other FASPA partners is priceless! Professionally, this opportunity is a great learning experience that will be with me for a lifetime." - Maria Curet Having served two years as a Director, Jerian Winn has been selected as President-Elect on the FASPA Board. "We do a lot of networking and sharing of ideas and concerns, which never stops – but neither do the needs of our districts. Bringing experience in the areas of educator certification and human capital management, I am honored to be chosen to represent our Florida partnership members and Monroe County School District." - Jerian Winn

We would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Maria and Jerian on this remarkable achievement and wish them all the best in their new roles.



OPERATIONS AND PLANNING



The Maintenance Department is excited to be piloting a robotic mower at Plantation Key School. This mower operates independently via differential GPS as well as numerous on-board sensors. It is safe to operate around a campus environment and is primarily activated at night and when the fields are not in use. Director of Maintenance, Jeff Barrow, has said that “these mowers provide a superior cut and we hope to see less than a two-year payback on the investment. As labor resources continue to become more challenging, we are constantly looking for ways to increase human productivity. This technology is a force multiplier.” If this pilot is successful, the department plans to roll these out to the district athletic fields and other areas where scheduling mowing is a challenge.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

This past week, MCSD celebrated and honored Veterans across the district. Our local Veterans were honored with breakfast, patriotic displays, reading of poems, singing of songs, and parades to show how much they are appreciated.



CONTINUED TEACHING AND LEARNING

Our State Regional Literacy Director, Dr. Mayte Dovale, visited Gerald Adams Elementary on November 2nd and 3rd as part of the Reading Achievement Initiative for Scholastic Excellence initiative. Classrooms were visited and feedback was given through the lens of improving student achievement in reading. The visit gave teachers and administrators a chance to reflect on current practices and actively plan to enhance instruction. It was a productive visit in which everyone involved felt motivated to improve student learning.



Associates from the Lastinger Center visited Gerald Adams last month and had round-table discussions to connect with students, teachers, and administrators to gather their perspectives on a variety of mathematics including educational experiences, systems, content, teaching practice, and professional learning. Thank you, GAE for hosting!