

District Advisory Committee Minutes

September 6, 2017

Carl Persis, school board member; Gary Marks, area superintendent; Susan Freeman, area superintendent; Rose Roland, area superintendent; Teresa Marcks, chief academic officer; Saralee Morrissey, director, planning; Rachel Hazel, executive director, K-12 curriculum; Kim Gilliland, director, ESE; and Nancy Wait, director, community information services were all in attendance.

Angela Kopnicky, district advisory committee chairman, reviewed members' responsibilities and bylaws. A vote was taken and approved to move January's meeting to December. Bylaws will be amended to reflect the change. Minutes were unanimously approved.

Teresa Marcks, chief academic officer, spoke on behalf of Superintendent Russell. The start of the school year was a success thanks to our teachers and parents all working together. This year's theme is "Together We Can," which reflected in the positive start of this school.

Next, Ms. Marcks spoke about chronic absenteeism. Chronic absenteeism is defined by a student who misses 10% of school. Most chronic absenteeism begins in kindergarten, first and second grades and continues as a student progresses through 12th grade. It is important to get the message out "Every Child, Every Day." Meaningful face-to-face conversations with your child/student to engage with what they learned that day at school will help them succeed. Put down the phones and ask your child what they did in school. There is a misconception that missing one day of school will be ok. Every day is a learning day for every child so missing even one day should try to be avoided. Constant contact with your child's teacher or school counselor should be initiated. Other avenues of receiving information would include checking the school's website, Facebook or Twitter.

Saralee Morrissey, director of planning, spoke regarding the process of preparing for the hurricane. Volusia County Schools is the sole proprietor of shelters in the county. Steps to begin the process of opening shelters include:

- Capital improvements- if school under construction it would not be available
- Analyze schools – are they up to code to handle the severity of the storm
- Create a team that can work 48 hours
- Designate facilities that can be pet friendly, handle special needs individuals such as people on oxygen and diabetics

The district works with the Volusia County Emergency Management Department to help provide safe shelter for residents; however, as the county grows and school facilities get older it becomes more challenging. During Hurricane Matthew, Volusia County Schools housed more than 4,000 people. We are anticipating housing more than 6,000 during Hurricane Irma.

Multiple issues must be taken into consideration when deciding to close schools. You do not want to declare an emergency and when it's not needed. We have a strong coalition with other counties when making the decision to be closed, which helps when asking for a waiver for make-up days from the Department of Education.

Elizabeth Albert, academic coach, Palm Terrace; and Kathi Delp, teacher, Sunrise Elementary, shared experiences on relationships between parents and students. Some easier ways to communicate with parents include text, email and social media. Two other ways to communicate with parents include My Reminder and Classroom Dojo. Classroom Dojo can be used to communicate to parents and other teachers. The teacher can send assignments, information and pictures to parents. Classroom Dojo seems to be the most popular form of communication at this time.

Carl Persis, school board member, thanked district advisory committee members for volunteering their time. He believes the committee serves as a sounding board before items come before the school board. He included as a footnote, as a retired principal of 27 years and having worked in shelters in the past, please do not go to a shelter unless absolutely necessary.

Angela asked members to share next month's meeting topic, which is Volusia County Schools budget, with their SAC members and to ask them what questions would they like discussed regarding the topic.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:05 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 4, at Deltona High.