



OCSD Updates



Newsletter for District Educators and Staff

Marcus D. Chambers, Superintendent ~ Volume 4 – December 2020



COVID-19

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently revised guidelines for quarantining, but these have not yet been approved at the state level for implementation in Florida. We are working with the Department of Health and will notify you if/when that happens. We have been told specifically that quarantine guidelines remain as they have been until we are otherwise notified.

Important *mySchool Online* Updates

We hope you and your family are doing well as we move into the final weeks of the first semester of a challenging 2020-2021 school year. Throughout December, we will be communicating important updates to *mySchool Online* families.

Florida Governor Ron DeSantis announced Emergency Order No. 2020-EO-07 on November 30th requiring all Florida schools to remain open for in-person instruction through the Spring 2021 semester. Additionally, all school districts will continue to offer innovative learning platforms as an option for families. As you know, in Okaloosa County that learning platform is *mySchool Online*. The Emergency Order guarantees that parents throughout Florida will continue to have options for their child's education for the remainder of this school year.

The Governor's Emergency Order went a step further and stated that students enrolled in innovative learning platforms (*mySchool Online*) who *are not making adequate progress* must return to in-person learning for the second semester, if not sooner, unless the parent acknowledges in writing that they wish to keep their child in the program in spite of the academic difficulties they are experiencing. Poor academic performance can lead to grade retention, inability to earn course credits, or failure to graduate, which we would like to prevent.

Beginning the week of December 7th, schools will be reaching out by letter and phone call to parents whose students are struggling to discuss returning to in-school learning.

Of course, students who are making adequate progress in *mySchool Online* are also welcome to return to in-school learning. Parents need only to contact their school for assistance in setting up a brick-and-mortar class schedule for second semester.

Dates to Remember

Schools Will Discuss Second Semester Options with Families	December 8 - 18
Winter Break	December 21 – January 1, 2021
Students and Staff Return to School	January 4, 2021
Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday – No School	January 18, 2021
End of the Second Nine Weeks	January 22, 2021
Teacher Work Day – Student Holiday	January 25, 2021
Beginning of the Second Semester	January 26, 2021



Half-Cent Sales Tax Approved

On November 3rd, the voters of Okaloosa County approved a one-half cent sales surtax for the next ten years to meet the long-term capital needs of Okaloosa County schools. Thank you!!! Support for this referendum came from the grass roots level. Community and business leaders recognized investment in our schools would not only provide much-needed support for current students and families, but also that great schools produce great communities resulting in great places to live and work.



The District will begin to receive sales tax revenue in 2021. By Florida Statute, sales tax revenue must be used for fixed capital expenditures or fixed capital costs associated with construction, reconstruction, or improvement of school facilities and campuses. Each school has an approved capital project list that was developed over the past year with input from the school community. These lists are an important part of the process of creating the Next Generation of Okaloosa Schools. Each schools' list can be viewed at www.okaloosaschools.com.

It is important for everyone to know that the projects can't all be completed at once. They will be scheduled throughout the life of the sales tax as proceeds are received from the State of Florida. In Year One, campus safety projects to include single point of entry and perimeter security will be the priority. We will also address some of our most critical roofing needs. A Citizen's Oversight Committee will ensure transparency and accountability of the sales tax program.

A second critical piece of the Next Generation of Okaloosa Schools involves construction of new schools over the next several years to address growth and to reduce the use of portables. Funding for new school construction will not come from sales tax revenue. However, using the new sales tax revenue to address the capital needs of our current schools will give the district flexibility to use its existing capital budget to support new construction.

Both priorities, repairing/renovating our current schools and new school construction, must occur over the next ten years in order to create the Next Generation of Okaloosa Schools. In January, we'll launch a website that will provide all of the information related to the sales tax program. Stay Tuned!

Human Resources

Substitutes, Your Health, and the Holidays

As the holiday season approaches, all employees are encouraged to continue focusing on health and wellness...everything from proper diet and exercise, social distancing, handwashing, and striving to avoid workplace injury.

Please make every effort to avoid being a close contact, or worse, a positive COVID patient. Your health is important to you, your family, and your school, especially with the holidays approaching. Your health is also important to your friends here in Human Resources. Being sick is much more than a mere inconvenience. From our perspective, your health is the most important thing you bring to the table each day. It is the foundation of your effectiveness.

It is important that you have the following information about substitutes since your health impacts our daily substitute need. The following is the district-wide data concerning the number of substitutes needed each day. Please note that on October 26th, the Board approved an additional daily stipend for substitutes to encourage more substitutes to accept open jobs.

Prior to October 26th

- Average Number of Substitutes Needed: 169
- Average Number of Unfilled Substitute Jobs Across the District: 67 per day
- Average Daily Fill Rate: 60%

Since October 26th

- Average number of substitutes needed: 183
- Average number of unfilled sub jobs across the District: 56 per day
- Average daily fill rate: 70%

Comparison

- Our daily need for subs has risen.
- Our daily unfilled job total has decreased.
- There are still a great number of jobs going unfilled each day.

FYI

- Our average daily fill rates, by weekday, for the year to this point are as follows:
 - Monday – 62.89% of jobs filled
 - Tuesday – 63.71% of jobs filled
 - Wednesday – 64.63% of jobs filled
 - Thursday – 63.96 of jobs filled
 - Friday – 64.85 of jobs filled
- We have over 475 subs on our active and approved roster. The increased pay has certainly impacted our fill rates, but our needs are out-distancing our substitutes' ability to accept jobs.



The average daily need for substitutes is 183.

