

**TEACHERS' ADVISORY COUNCIL  
OCTOBER 16, 2013  
DELAND BOARD ROOM**

**MINUTES**

**Tom Russell**, Area Superintendent, opened the meeting and thanked everyone for volunteering to represent their school on the Teacher's Advisory Council. The following members were present:

Dorothy Adams	Chantelle Fletcher	Angel Jordan	Bill Rogers
Annette Ailes	Monica Fordham	Vicky Kessler	Stacy Sampson
Barbara Bailey	Felicia Freeman	Lisa Kolmetz	Wayne Sampson
Susie Baldwin	Cheryl Gherst	Carol Kustodowicz	Susan Sappington
Donah Bartleson	Ella Godbee	Nancie Lenois	Jennifer Scorza
Christina Boivin	Marcy Godun	Maureen Mack	Betty Smith
Barbara Bragers	Cynthia Goodknecht	Robert Miller	Elizabeth Sokerka
Alan Canetti	Robbin Hammonds-Durden	Ann "Beth" Milliken	Michelle Stull
Omar Cardona	Mary Hoffmann	John Mirabile	Holly Ward
Mike Chase	Sue Hofstrand	Laurel Moehring	Sheri L. Wiggins
Maria Cintron	Gabriele Hughes	Barbara Nenno	Wendy Wilson
Kathy Clements	Julienne Ivory-Saccone	Miriam Newman	Sarah Wright
Barbara Coleman	Sherry Jaramillo	Stanley Palmer	
Sabrina Conroy	Bree Johnson	Tiffany Parson	
Jeanette DeLuca	Deborah J. Johnson	Eden Rhynehart	
Julian Doster	Deborah R. Johnson	Karen Richter	

**Mr. Russell** introduced the new Area Superintendent, **Mrs. Vickie Presley**. She shared her history with Volusia County Schools and thanked the teachers for their commitment to students.

**Dr. Margaret Smith**, Superintendent of Schools stated how much she valued the Teachers' Advisory Council and the opportunity for dialogue with the teachers. She addressed a question which was asked regarding the Teacher Leadership Cadre. The teacher wanted to know why the Teacher Leadership Cadre was being formed when the TAC already existed. Dr. Smith stated that this is about communication. She wants to be able to talk to as many teachers as possible, problem solve together and listen to ideas and suggestions. The more opportunities she has to meet with teacher groups and have different types of meetings are very positive. She also informed the group that she will be scheduling regional meetings for teachers this year. Due to the large size of the county, she plans to divide the groups by westside and eastside schools. The meetings will be opened to anyone who would like to attend and they will be held each semester. They will be discussing a variety of interests and it will also be opened up for questions. More information on these regional meetings will be forthcoming.

**Dr. Smith** discussed the selection of teachers for the leadership cadre. She explained she had over 370 teachers interested in working with her. She selected them randomly by each School Board Member's district; by Elementary, Middle and High as well as other areas. She plans to change the cadre members yearly.

**Dr. Smith** also suggested changing the format of the Teachers' Advisory Council meetings. She would like to send out a survey to the TAC representatives and have them select two (2) topics of interest for upcoming meetings; i.e. you'd like to hear from Technology Services, Professional Development, HR, etc. She'll then ask the district administrator of that department to attend the meeting to address questions. Only questions from these selected departments will be discussed. There will no longer be a Q & A hand-out. She believes this will be a more effective way to communicate and work together. The survey will be forthcoming.

**Dr. Smith** opened the meeting up to questions/suggestions. The following was discussed:

- Past TAC Meetings
  - The Q & A is lengthy (22 pages) – many questions do not pertain to everyone
  - Q & A could be organized by elementary, middle & high
  - TAC meetings could be more open to discussion

- We had more meetings; although some meetings are okay

**Dr. Smith** addressed the following topics:

- Half-Cents Sales Tax
  - Will be placed on the November 4, 2014 ballot
  - Will help in the areas of Facilities, Technology Infrastructure, Transportation and Safety/Security
- Spoke about the Volusia County Legislative Delegation meeting recently held. She was able to speak to the delegation about:
  - Common Core Curriculum Standards
  - VCS Funding (3 points)
    - DCD (District Cost Differential)
    - Dual Enrollment
    - Florida Virtual School

**Dr. Smith** addressed the following questions:

- Why do we have so many substitutes? *We projected a loss of 600 students (the numbers are submitted in December). Over 700 students entered and we were not prepared to hire so many teachers. We also needed to meet class size. We are holding job fairs and in the meantime, we are using substitutes to co-teach, separate classes, etc. She also informed the teachers that background checks are taking up to 2 months to process and this is a state-wide issue.*
- Many teachers are being pulled for either a district position or transferred. *Two weeks ago we looked at the situation with teachers being transferred between schools and/or to the district level. This has become disruptive for the students; therefore, we have placed a hold on transfers. We have become very concerned about continuing instruction and making sure this is our first priority.*
- Have we considered broadening our Volusia Virtual program and keep FTE in the county and downsize Florida Virtual? *It is the parent's choice either they want VVS or FVS; however, we are making more courses available in VVS.*

**Betty Shepherd**, Assistant Director, Copy Center distributed calendars and materials that were created at the Copy Center. She stated they offer a 10% discount if the "date needed" is not changed. Other services offered:

- Certificates
- Laminate
- They can print:
  - colored copies
  - card stock (but not construction paper)
  - brochures
  - posters
  - banners
  - calendars
  - DOD items
  - Yearbooks

The following Q & A was distributed to the TAC members. Several questions, which were not previously answered, have been included.

#### **SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE:**

**Question:** A few days ago, I received an email from Dr. Smith inviting me to participate in a "Teacher Leadership Cadre." Could our district's Teacher Advisory Council be used for the same purpose? These teachers were nominated and voted upon by each school, so they not only represent each school, but carry a lot of respect and encouragement from the faculty.

**Answer:** *The purpose of forming another teacher group is to provide an opportunity for more teachers to have input and involvement, not to replace TAC. I value the TAC committee and look forward to continuing to attend the meetings and sharing information and responding to questions. TAC members' communication with teachers at their schools is very important.*

*-Dr. Margaret Smith, Superintendent*

## **FINANCIAL & BUSINESS SERVICES:**

**Question:** This team teaching, a teacher comes to our room for 1/2 period, has no idea what we are doing, no real responsibilities and is getting paid. We have to do attendance, plan, and it seems to me all the work and we are not getting extra money for it??? If the other teacher does not meet before or after school to plan it is really not much help!!! Please do not mention my name in this, but something different should be done. Like hire another teacher even if half time to take up the extra students. **For clarification of question:** It is not ESE, the school has taken teachers and added them into classes a few days per week to meet class size requirements. Those teachers are working their planning periods as "co-teachers". I think the teachers working their planning period are assigned more than one class. So they are either in each class half a period or maybe splitting days between classes... This just started recently.

**Answer:** *Team teaching is permitted under statute as a class size intervention strategy. The fact is that we would all like to hire the additional teachers, but right now there is a significant deficit of teacher applicants for (nearly 200) vacancies. For that reason, the VTO has entered into a signed memorandum of understanding with the school district to allow the use of certified substitute teachers to assist in the classroom as a team teacher three days a week for school year 2013-14. This isn't the most preferred option, but the best one under the circumstances.*

*-Dr. Robert Moll, Deputy Superintendent*

## **INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES:**

**Question:** It's my understanding that Tracy Blinn and Sue Schilsky (English Office) are supposed to become "boots on the ground" visiting our English classrooms making sure English teachers are implementing county requirements. Isn't it enough that we have administrator evaluators making their visits?

**Answer:** *When district personnel (coordinators, specialists, TOAs, and coaches) make classroom visits, it is not evaluative. They are making observations for the purpose of assessing school, classroom, and student needs, with a specific focus on professional development and individual coaching needs. However, as far as evaluations are concerned, a qualified observer, upon written request of the teacher, may perform a second scheduled observation. Also, a number of individuals may conduct Walk-Through observations for feedback. For the purpose of the evaluation, the evaluator might be the principal, the assistant principal, a PAR Evaluator, a district administrator, or a combination thereof.*

*-Vickie J. Presley, Area Superintendent*

**Question:** Isn't this a violation of our VTO negotiated contract?

**Answer:** *It is not a violation of the VTO contract.*

**Question:** Will their comments now become part of the evaluation process?

**Answer:** *Their comments could be part of VSET.*

*-Dana Paige-Pender, Director, Personnel Screening and Referral*

**Question:** I would like to know why Pinnacle does not round off grades. In Pinnacle a 79.9% is a C, not a B. If I can submit a grade change request because I want to round-off grades, wouldn't it be simpler and less paper work for everyone if the District would simply allow us to round-off grades in Pinnacle? We never had this problem with Pinnacle in previous years. **Answer:** *The VIMS Leadership team decided to adopt the same rounding setting for all schools for the 2013-2014 school year. We believe it is important for schools to have a consistent rounding setting. As always, teachers have the option to override a student's grade as long as it accurately reflects the student's learning. They can do this prior to finalizing grades for report cards; therefore eliminating the need for a grade change request.*

*-Lyndi Goepfert, Coordinator, Elementary Curriculum & District Accreditation*

**Question:** I would like for there to be discussion about the lack of textbooks in order for there to be enough for each student to have one, and to have enough in class. If you would please bring that up for discussion. I have a 7<sup>th</sup> grade Civics class of 20 students, and only 6 books. NONE of the students have a textbook at home, because there aren't any more.

**Answer:** *Wherever possible, we aim to provide one textbook per student. Sometimes, costs of textbooks permit us to purchase class sets for teachers so that students do not have to carry books back and forth from home to school. However, recent textbook purchase costs have not afforded us the luxury of having both student textbooks and class sets.*

*Sixth grade Ancient World History is the only middle school course that offers class sets of textbooks. The curriculum for sixth grade Ancient World History is Teachers Curriculum Institute (TCI). As the entire curriculum is online, students have access 24/7 to the curriculum materials via the internet.*

*For seventh and eighth grade, Civics and US History do not offer class sets of textbooks because a textbook has been purchased for every student. The curriculum for seventh and eighth grade is McGraw Hill.*

*The reason for different textbook situations in these grade levels are due to purchase price differences between TCI and McGraw Hill.*

*Kati Dyer, Coordinator, 6-12 Curriculum and School Improvement  
Cookie Grafton, Specialist, Instructional Materials  
Scott Hallett, Specialist, Social Studies*

**Question:** How can we get enough Civics textbooks so every student has one? We are currently out of textbooks and a number of students do not have one. Also, we do not have class sets of books for our classrooms. This inhibits the students ability to learn.

**Answer:** *Thank you for making us aware of this issue. We do not want students in Civics to go without having textbooks. We have verified with Instructional Materials Specialist Cookie Grafton that we are able to accommodate the need of 14 textbooks to allow for all 20 students to have their own textbook. Please have your school administrator contact Cookie Grafton or Scott Hallett (Social Studies Specialist) via email to request the textbooks needed at this particular school.*

*Kati Dyer, Coordinator, 6-12 Curriculum and School Improvement  
Cookie Grafton, Specialist, Instructional Materials  
Scott Hallett, Specialist, Social Studies*

**Question:** The Interim Reports look like report cards and there is no place for parents to sign. The parents are confused. We need two copies. We could not make our own copies because they were delivered to us too late. We got them at 1:30 on the day they were supposed to be sent home. We need to receive them sooner so we have time to place them in the student's take home folders or make copies if needed.

**Answer:** *It is up to the individual school if they want to print two copies. As far as the time is concerned, we are sure that it was a result of the process being new to everyone. Next go around should be much smoother. Directions concerning interim reports were sent out by Jennifer Hoag and included suggestions on how to add comments including a comment card template. The school determines when the report cards are distributed to teachers and when they go home. As with any change, communication to parents help alleviate confusion and many schools sent out a cover letter explaining the new process to parents.*

*-Lyndi Goepfert, Coordinator, Elementary Curriculum & District Accreditation*

**Question:** Why do we not have separate reading grades now? We use the reading grade to judge if the students should be promoted to the next grade level. We would like to have reading grades separate from language arts grades.

**Answer:** *Effective the 2013-2014 school year Elementary Reading course for grades K-5 was deleted at the state level. Reading was therefore deleted from the report card and should be incorporated into a 2 hour blocked course for Language Arts. English / Language Arts for grades 1-5 includes: Reading, the Writing Process, and Conventions.*

*-Lyndi Goepfert, Coordinator, Elementary Curriculum & District Accreditation*

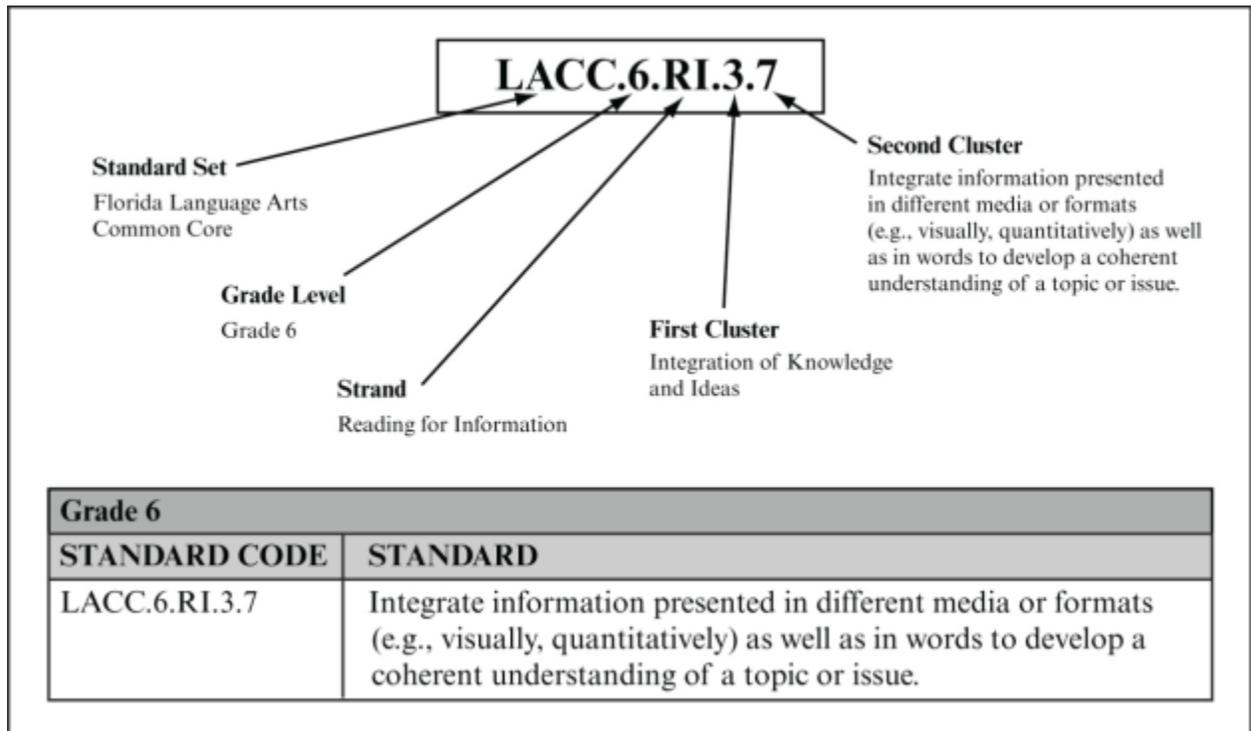
**Question:** I am wondering why we are picking and choosing common core standards for multi grade levels in reading where in all the other subjects we only teach our grade level curriculum. The idea of common core was to get rid of the mile wide inch deep teaching, and now I am struggling to access 1-4 grade standards because they are in our maps that way. I am following the maps, but would rather plug through just one grade levels curriculum.

**Answer:** *The Elementary Language Arts curriculum maps only include the specific grade level standards. We do not have multiple grade level standards within the map. Below is an explanation on how to read the standards.*

*The Florida CCSS are labeled with a system of numbers and letters.*

- The four letters in the first position of the code identify the Florida Language Arts Common Core standard set.*
- The number(s) in the second position represent the grade level to which the standard set belongs.*

- The letter(s) in the third position represent the strand.
- The number in the fourth position represents the cluster in the strand.
- The number in the last position represents the standard.
- The sentence after the code is the “standard language” or the standard itself.



-Lyndi Goepfert, Coordinator, Elementary Curriculum & District Accreditation

**Question:** What are the expectations on our lesson plans regarding differentiated instruction? Do we have to list all levels or are we trusted?

**Answer:** *Sample lesson plan formats were shared during the summer CCIA that included key components when planning. Teachers have flexibility in how they plan their lessons and the components they include.*

-Lyndi Goepfert, Coordinator, Elementary Curriculum & District Accreditation

**Question:** Students who are 8R's are on the computer in Odyssey to remediate their middle school quality points for promotion, while at the same time online with VVS, to begin their high school coursework. Due to our lab not having a full time Odyssey instructor, the master schedule does not allow for student access to the lab for the full day. Therefore, daily supervision of these students is a concern. What is the districts long term plan for 8r's for direct teacher assignment when the middle schools do not have a full time Odyssey lab manager? **Answer:** *It is recommended that schools develop a plan for each 8R student. Our recommendation is that schools do one of the following, based on their circumstances:*

- *Provide students with an assigned locale on campus to work on virtual course(s). For example, media center, guidance area, classroom, or other area with adult supervision.*
- *Make arrangements with parent to allow student to leave campus to work on VVS only courses.*
- *Devise another plan with parent input to ensure the student will have an appropriate place with computer and internet to work on virtual courses. (Attendance is documented by virtual teacher so location is not an issue).*

*For additional information about appropriate scheduling for 8R students, please contact Melissa Carr.*

*Kati Dyer, Coordinator, 6-12 Curriculum and School Improvement*

**Question:** When I go into Pinnacle with my honors classes, I cannot find all of the standards. Standards all appear for pre-IB classes, but not honors. Some language and writing standards are missing. I have talked to the English office

because I could not use the standards we were instructed to use for the new 9<sup>th</sup> grade writing test, but I still have the problem. Other English teachers are confirming that they are having the same problem. ***Answer: Through the process of digging into this issue – it was discovered that Level 4 standards had not been linked. They have now been linked to all High Schools that offer English Honors.***

***-Terry Osteen, Office Specialist, C&SIS***

**Question:** In addition, Pinnacle takes all line breaks, indents, etc. out of written narrations so that the writing becomes substandard in format. This is not usable for English teachers (or anyone who cares about form). I want to use Pinnacle for assignment explanations. Will this be possible at any point? Will the style from the past be restored, or will I be unable to use Pinnacle for anything other than grades? Pinnacle has been so usable for me in the past, but no longer. Why the change to substandard format? (By the way, I only found out that the changes occurred after I saved my narratives by going back in to make an addition later. I was shocked. I apologized to parents at Open House for the formatting issues.)

**Answer:** ***We contacted Global Scholar regarding this issue – they have issued a work ticket #DA4B644173 – as soon as Global Scholar gets this resolved, we will communicate that to you.***

***-Terry Osteen, Office Specialist, C&SIS***

**Question:** Support Facilitators in the Middle School would like to have access to Pinnacle for the classes to which they are assigned. Currently we can only access our support facilitation students one at a time to check their grades. Checking 92 grades for 69 students individually takes over an hour as opposed to being able to look at 10 classes as a whole. It is also helpful to be able to see how the ESE students are doing in relation to the regular education students in the classroom. In addition, the Support Facilitator is supposed to be able to offer help to the regular students who are struggling in the class as well which is problematic if they are unable to monitor their grades and missing assignments. We actually had access for one day and then it was taken away for unexplained reasons. Would it be possible for Support Facilitators to have access to Pinnacle for the classes to which they are assigned?

**Answer:** ***A representative team of district and ESE staff met to discuss the options for Pinnacle/gradebook viewing rights for ESE support facilitation and consultation teachers. The team reviewed the different roles within the system to determine the role needed for facilitators to work independently to access student data with read only access. Options were discussed and the process was put in place for changed access. The new processes and procedures are being reviewed and training is planned for facilitators to work with staff on accessing additional screens and reports.***

***-Kati Dyer, Coordinator, 6-12 Curriculum and School Improvement***

**Question:** Thank you for listening to teachers and revising our district grading guidelines. However, the grade weightings are still treated as a one-size-fits-all (60/40), meaning IB Calculus uses the same grade weighting as regular English I as Basketball as Construction. Will the district consider differentiating grade weightings according to each discipline and level, so all Algebra I classes across the district use the same weightings? Perhaps differentiate and define within the curriculum maps?

**Answer:** ***Members of the stakeholder groups who have given input have seen the need for consistent Gradebook weightings. It is our desire to provide clarity for all stakeholders, communicate consistent expectations, and ensure the accurate reporting of student achievement.***

***-Kati Dyer, Coordinator, 6-12 Curriculum and School Improvement***

**Question:** Why has the district chosen to not automatically round off grades (e.g., 79.8% is a C, and does not round up to a B)? Pinnacle used to automatically round up, so is this a new policy? How has this been publicized to parents? Is this a movement across our state and/or nation? Because our students are competing against others whose grades do round up, our students are hindered for college acceptance and scholarships.

**Answer:** ***The rounding setting for Pinnacle Gradebook was determined by looking at each school's rounding setting for 2012-2013. The majority of secondary gradebooks rounded to the nearest tenth. This setting was communicated to all VIMS Gradebook Managers at their summer training for inclusion in each school's pre-planning Pinnacle training. Pinnacle grades for each 9 weeks are rounded to the nearest tenth. In Cross Pointe, the semester grade is determined based on the average of each nine weeks letter grade on a four-point scale.***

***1st 9 weeks: 79.8= C (2.0)***

***2nd 9 weeks: 84= B (3.0)***

***2.0+3.0=5.0/2= 2.5= B***

***Semester grade: B***

**Student Progression Policy states that teachers do have the authority to override final grades. This policy is also cited in the Secondary Grading Guidelines.**

- **Teacher's Authority to Override Final Grade: A teacher may override the final grade if a student's overall performance warrants it. Before the grade override is finalized, the teacher must notify the parent/guardian concerning the student's performance if the override may result in a lower final grade. The teacher may issue a failing grade override based on the student's overall performance only with the approval of the principal.**

**-Kati Dyer, Coordinator, 6-12 Curriculum and School Improvement**

**Question:** Students are coming to the middle school level with failing grades in math and a one on FCAT. Why are they promoted?

**Answer:** *Elementary schools use documentation of data trends to make the best decision for student's progress into the next grade. They look at the student as a whole and performance on multiple measures based on end of year benchmarks. That documentation in the student's cum should be reviewed and a few questions should be asked such as – Is the child ESOL or ESE? Do they have a 504? Have they already been retained? What does their data trends documentation show? – etc. Then the middle school teachers need to differentiate instruction based on the students needs.*

**-Lyndi Goepfert, Coordinator, Elementary Curriculum & District Accreditation**

**Question:** By letting us complete Interims the way we used to we have had parents ask what skills their child is working on. With the new form K-2 is just boxes nothing really solid to build on. Can we look into revising with drop down boxes?

**Answer:** *The elementary interims look almost identical to the report cards. This was done to create a consistent form of communication with parents throughout the school year. If teachers feel parents need specific details about their child's progress on certain skills/concepts, they can add that information to the comment page that was sent out with the interim directions.*

**-Lyndi Goepfert, Coordinator, Elementary Curriculum & District Accreditation**

**Question:** What has happened to the First Grade Collaboration Site? It was a wonderful resource for many years and now it is so difficult to use! I am teaching First Grade Gifted and we are on Unit 5 of the First Grade book and none of the Units past 2 have been downloaded...why?

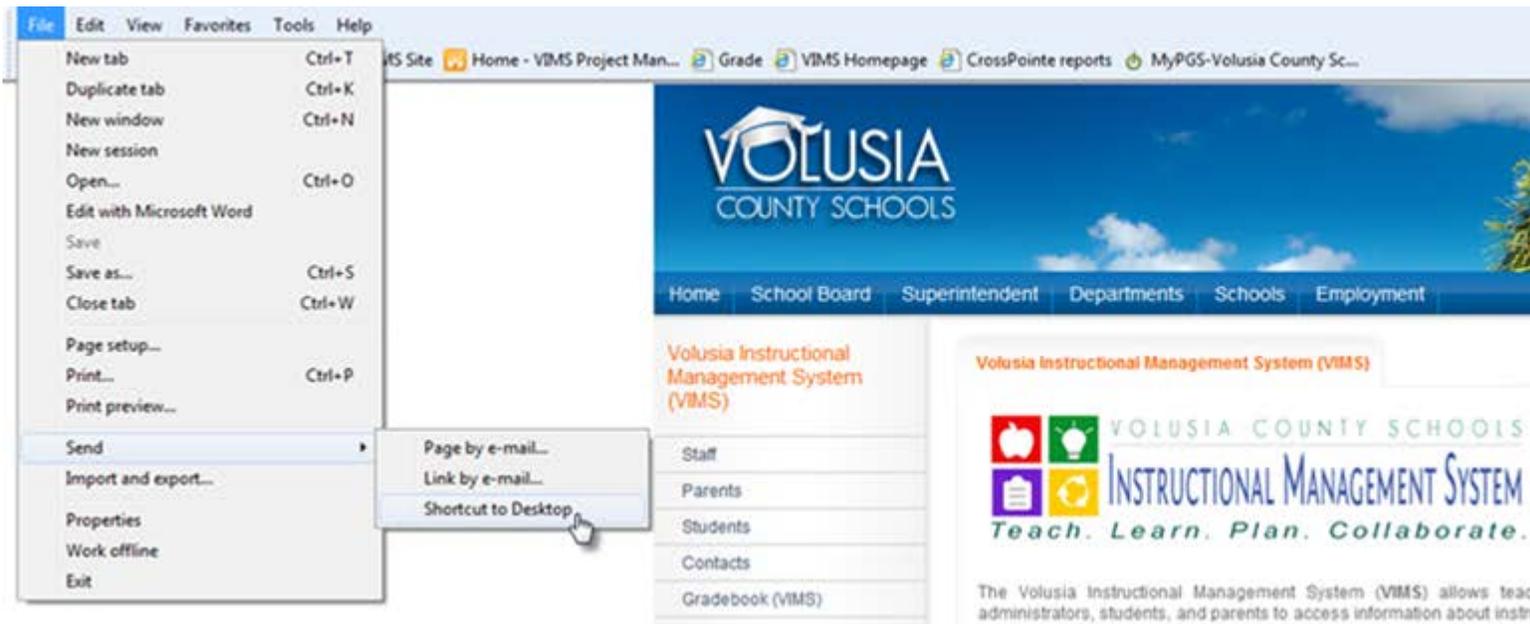
**Answer:** *All items that were on the blackboard collaboration sites were moved to the new Sharepoint location and placed in the Archive folder within each grade level. New information can be easily added by teachers for each nine weeks by subject area. Information on how to access the site has been shared through Area Superintendent's Friday messages, ISTOAs, Coaches meetings, and during the pre-planning grade level representative meetings. The site can be accessed from the VIMS homepage. Click on the Site Links tab at the right of the VIMS homepage. Then click Volusia Teacher Collaboration Site link. If you have any issues finding something, contact your ISTOA or your coach.*

**-Lyndi Goepfert, Coordinator, Elementary Curriculum & District Accreditation**

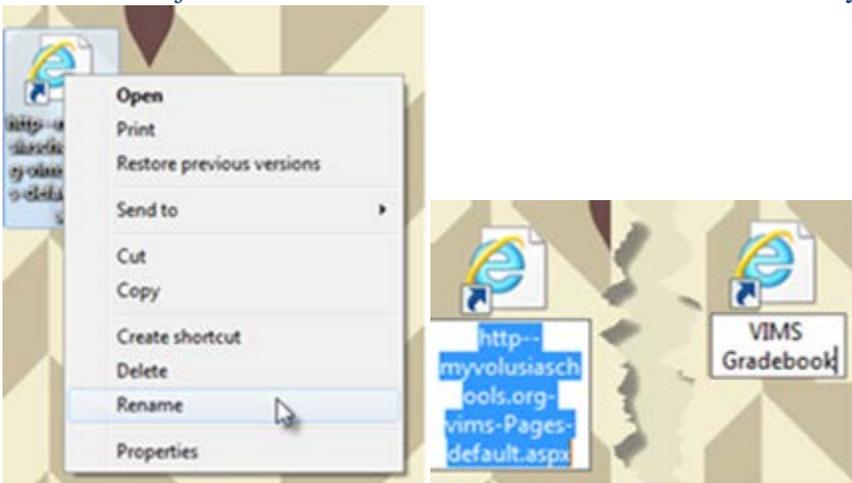
**Question:** Please bring up our concerns about the Volusia county website. It now takes four windows before we are finally on Pinnacle. With the updated versions this year, at least one step has been added, often more to the process of trying to find where needed pages are. It is a "Where's Waldo" experience, and our main job is not to navigate the convoluted website, it is to teach students.

**Answer:** *The reason we decided to use the VIMS homepage as the "start/landing" page, is due to the important information and resources available to Staff, Parents and Students. Once you have navigated to the VIMS page (<http://myvolusiaschools.org/VIMS>), you can create a shortcut on your desktop.*

**Click on File > Send > Shortcut to Desktop**



This will create a shortcut to the site on your desktop. To rename this shortcut: go to your desktop > right click on the icon it just created > click Rename > rename the icon to fit your needs



-Terry Osteen, Office Specialist, C&SIS

**ESE & STUDENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT:**

**Question:** As class sizes get tightened. There is a human resource concern in which co-taught teachers can have up to 44 students in the class. Granted, there are two teachers, but, in reality, only one teacher is teaching on any given day. The other teacher is usually walking around and assisting those who need help, but rarely lead a lesson. What is happening is that the core teacher is responsible for instruction and lessons, but do not benefit from the teacher bonus. Co-taught implies two teachers, teaching the course. Is it possible for the ESE department to collaborate with the curricular supervisor and develop a district policy of shared responsibility in teaching and in grading?

**Answer:** *Co-Teaching is defined as "a classroom in which two teachers, an Exceptional Student Education (ESE) and a General Education (GE) teacher, share responsibility for planning, delivering, and evaluating instruction for all students in a class, some of whom are ESE and some of whom are not." This is a quote from the Volusia County Schools K-12 Collaborative Practices Guide for Students with Disabilities which can be found on the Volusia County Schools (VCS) web page. More information is included in the guide--see page 8. As demonstrated, VCS has a guide for shared responsibility and it addresses all Collaborative Practices Models. In addition, VCS offers professional development. Secondary Co-Teaching is offered October 15 at Atlantic High and October 17 at University High. Both co-teachers are encouraged to attend, and a stipend of \$15.00 an hour is available as the training is 3:30 - 6:30 pm.*

Here is the direct link to the guide: [http://intranet.volusia.k12.fl.us/departments/ese-programs-services/Documents/vemildk-12/Collaborative% 20Practices% 20for% 20SWDs% 20Guide% 20.pdf](http://intranet.volusia.k12.fl.us/departments/ese-programs-services/Documents/vemildk-12/Collaborative%20Practices%20for%20SWDs%20Guide%20.pdf)

*-Barbara Bush, Director, Exceptional Student Education*

**Question:** Please explain why a parent may request their child be screened for Gifted and the request is granted in a timely manner but when we see students with major difficulties working below level and suspect they need ESE services, the PST process is such a lengthy process.

**Answer:** *The process for determining eligibility for gifted and for students suspected of having a disability differs greatly. As illustration, when evaluating students for gifted eligibility, State Board Rule solely requires the administration of an individually administered assessment of intellectual abilities. In addition to need for services, the only pre-referral requirement is screening information to determine if a referral for gifted evaluation is warranted.*

*An evaluation for a student suspected of a disability is a much more intensive process, as required by federal regulations and state statutes. When a student is suspected of a disability, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 and the General Education Intervention Procedures, Identification Evaluation, Reevaluation and the Initial Provision of Exceptional Educational Services (i.e., Rule 6A-6.0331 of Florida Administrative Code) require that the student be provided with interventions targeted to the area of concern and that the response to these interventions be considered as part of the eligibility determination. Furthermore, regulations require that the evidence-based interventions be implemented for a reasonable period of time. In the majority of cases, these interventions that are implemented throughout the problem solving process occur prior to the comprehensive evaluation and are required pre-referral activities within the PST process.*

*While the purpose of the gifted evaluation is to determine if a student obtains a score that qualifies for gifted services, the evaluation that occurs as a result of the PST process is to determine in large part the supports necessary for students to be successful. This requires a thorough analysis of the problem, the implementation of interventions, and a comprehensive evaluation which typically includes psychological evaluations and a graphic reporting of a student's response to interventions. As intended by federal and state policies, this practice helps to ensure that a student suspected of a disability is not a "curriculum casualty" but has been afforded the opportunity to be provided with high quality instruction and targeted interventions.*

*-Dr. Mary Alice Myers, Coordinator, School Psychological Services*

#### **PROGRAM ACCOUNTABILITY:**

**Question:** Is there a relationship between absenteeism and students performing low on district assessments, EOC's, and state tests?

**Answer:** *We have not conducted a research study on Volusia students and the impact of attendance and student performance in recent years. However, there is plenty of research in the field of education that supports the conclusion that increase in absenteeism negatively impacts student achievement.*

*-Alicia Parker, Asst. Director, Program Accountability*

**Question:** If so, will the district please consider updating, publicizing, and enforcing an attendance policy?

**Answer:** *The district has an attendance policy which has been adopted by the School Board as Policy 206, "School Attendance Policy." That policy provides a set of interventions and consequences. The policy is also provided annually to all students and parents as part of the "Student and Family Policy and Code of Student Conduct and Discipline."*

*-Mike Dyer, Chief Counsel*

**Question:** Will the district also consider updating our discipline code and consequences to reduce time out of class?

**Answer:** *We review and update SB Policy 208 (Code of Student Conduct & Discipline) every year and always request input from students, staff, parents and community members. I will be soliciting input between December and March so any policy changes can be completed in time for printing and distribution the first day of the 2013-14 school year. I meet with school based administrators as well as the District Advisory Committee, then ask each principal to discuss potential updates and solicit suggestions at staff, SAC and PTA meetings prior to my deadline.*

*That being said, I am not sure this particular question addresses Policy 208 directly. There is nothing in the Code of Conduct that gives specific consequences for any violation. For example, we don't say that "Insubordination" is automatically two days of in or out of school suspension. There is a menu of consequences and the administrator dealing with the issue determines the appropriate consequence/action from the "menu". This would be a school based decision unless there is a referral for expulsion in which case there is a mandatory 10 day suspension (unless/until a different consequence is determined by either a district committee or a manifestation meeting).*

*-Cindy Fisher, Coordinator, Student Discipline*

#### **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:**

**Question:** Professional development hours have taken a shift from during the school day and moved to training sessions from 4-6 p.m., or perhaps on Saturday. Summer trainings are also made available for teachers. Why then are administrators out of the office so much to attend trainings and professional development sessions? With schools working harder with fewer support staff, it is crucial that our administrative team be accessible to our school community during the day. As teachers, we understand that taking additional coursework or attending PD courses is completed on our own time. Why then doesn't the county set the same expectation for the administrative team? Curriculum meetings and internship training could take place at a school campus from 4-6 p.m., leaving the school staffed with supervision and intervention.

**Answer:** *Professional learning opportunities can and do occur in a variety delivery models for teachers and administrators. The delivery model is determined according to a variety of criteria including but not limited to:*

*Content*

*Priority status*

*Audience, who and how many*

*Funding available*

*Access to resources*

*After hour duties*

*-Karen Beattie, Coordinator, Professional Development & Support*

**Question:** The monthly required teacher workshops should have been planned well ahead of time, with guidelines from the district on the material to be covered or the goals to be accomplished. Methods to facilitate teacher and student success should be at the top of the district priority list. It often feels as if the district staff is throwing out REQUIRED workshop information at the last minute, which, as we all know, is a very poor way to convey information and to insure that meaningful learning experiences take place. This lack of planning puts the dedicated administration and faculty at schools at a disadvantage. **Answer:** *An analysis of teacher and leader feedback regarding the 2012-2013 Early Release Professional Development sessions was used to design the 2013-2014 professional development plans. This feedback combined with the results of teacher evaluations, student achievement data, and the expectations of Common Core State Standards and NGSSS, resulted in a year-long plan. This plan of Early Release Professional Development sessions, Professional Development Day and Temporary Duty Days was provided to school leadership on August 8<sup>th</sup>. Follow-up information was provided to principals for the September 4 ERPD on August 28. Please keep in mind that in addition to a brief presentation on the new SIP process, the first ERPD was to have been school focused on following up on the Common Core in Action Institute. All schools had teams of teacher leaders who had received significant professional learning in June with expectations explained for implementation with their colleagues when school started.*

*Principals received the content for the September 23 Professional Development Day on September 5. This day was divided into three sections - Common Core in Action, School Improvement Plan process, and Deliberate Practice Plan. Both elementary and secondary content specialists provided additional support to teacher leaders in preparation for the morning of September 23.*

*In keeping with the process of providing the specific content in advance to school leadership, the October 2 ERPD content was provided to curriculum assistant principals on September 12, followed by the coaches and ISTOAs receiving the content on September 20. This process repeats monthly so that the content for November 6, is distributed to leadership beginning on October 3. It should be noted that the content provided includes optional activities and videos for schools to use to customize the training for their staffs.*

**Additionally, there will be two upcoming ERPD sessions that will be the total responsibility of school leadership. Again, the plan was distributed on August 8 with sufficient time and materials given to school leadership to be able to lead valuable professional learning for their staffs. The school leadership team should include both administrators and lead teachers due to the complex expectations of effective professional learning resulting in changing adult professional practice and effectively impacting student achievement.**

**-Karen Beattie, Coordinator, Professional Development & Support**

**Question:** I would like to see addressed the PDD Monday when we were asked to go to two work locations and travel over 80 miles round trip to return for a less than 2 hours afternoon session that was not even operational due to the lack of county planning for technology. **Answer:** *September 23 is the contracted Professional Development Day for all instructional personnel. The approximately 4000 individuals needing to complete the VSET DPP had from August 13 - September 30 to submit the DPP online. The platform which supports the evaluation process can support 2000 logins at one time. The Human Resources responded to platform parameters in a proactive manner increasing access as needed.*

**-Karen Beattie, Coordinator, Professional Development & Support**

**Question:** Teachers are excited to begin using tools for continuous collaboration beyond one's own campus (as required by Domain IV). It is very frustrating to want to share with a colleague and be blocked on the vcs-014 login network. This collaboration should be done at school on our Wed early release days, staff development days, or planning times - not after hours at coffee and sandwich shops. We are appreciative to the refocus of personal choice in our PD, but we need the online tools. Many of the tools and VCS PD initiatives introduced last year are underutilized and do not have the volume, reach, and interest of other educators beyond our district. Many school districts, large and small, are collaborating with educators globally now. When can our teachers expect to have professional approval, access, and training to use online tools professionally such as Google+, Google Hangouts, Google Drive, Twitter, Skype, Pinterest, etc.?

**Answer:** *Although we appreciate the interest in so many new technologies, we actually have solutions such as Edmodo for social media, Microsoft Lync for collaboration, and many new tools coming forth. On a periodic basis, we review the best applications to offer and open access to staff. Not all applications/systems work well in enterprise or large-scale environments. We are currently reviewing newer technologies but must also maintain appropriate filtering for an educational network.*

**-Don Boulware, Executive Director, Technology Services**

***MtPGS is accessible from any computer anywhere by logging into the VCS website and Staff. This includes MyPGS, PD360 and the new Lynda.com program. PD360 collaboration tool connects educators internationally. The Office of Professional Development and Support will continue to support educator learning and collaboration through technology in cooperation with Technology Services. Technology Services will soon be providing new training on the most recent version of Edmodo.***

**-Karen Beattie, Coordinator, Professional Development & Support**

**Question:** Why do professional development days continue to go over models that have been taught for years with just a different name? We get very little time to lesson plan and work on our DPP's for our own classrooms due to this type of training.

**Answer:** *The professional learning was transferrable to all content areas and roles in our schools. As with any lesson, in a classroom with students or with teachers in a session, the lesson should be designed with differentiation. The Early Release series and the Professional Development Day sessions have been designed by district staff and meet the criteria of transfer and differentiation. The delivery of the content is the responsibility of the school leadership team. The readiness of the individual learner to embrace the learning experience is central to the success of professional learning for the individual learner.*

**-Karen Beattie, Coordinator, Professional Development & Support**

**Question:** Could the district consider differentiating our professional development training? We are all at different levels of experience and expertise and our time would be better used if differentiated training was offered rather than the one-size-fits-all method currently being used. Many teachers felt that the Wednesday PD on the Gradual Release Model was unnecessarily long and a poor use of PD time.

**Answer:** *The content for the Early Release Professional Development series is provided to schools with options in order to ensure differentiation. Presentation materials and activities can and should be modified to the specific needs of the schools. Additionally, the district provided content is only the first hour of the*

*two hour session with suggestions for teacher collaboration activities for the second hour. As with any learning, either with students in the classroom or educators in sessions, the learner readiness to learn plays a significant role in the learning experience.*

*-Karen Beattie, Coordinator, Professional Development & Support*

**Question:** If we are required to take professional development classes, why are they not offered during our contractual hours? I am tired of giving up my own time to do things for work that I am not compensated for! Almost all of the workshops I have been interested in are from 3:30-5:30 and unfortunately I have a family that plays sports and I can't do things at those times!

**Answer:** *Required or mandatory professional development courses are offered either during the work day or participants are paid a stipend. Professional development courses that are voluntary are offered after hours and do not include a stipend.*

*-Karen Beattie, Coordinator, Professional Development & Support*

#### **HUMAN RESOURCES:**

**Question:** Yearly, administrative teams are switched around for the growth of the school. As a result, many are not aware of the school program or duties their assigned until they arrive upon campus. As the district is re-vamping their professional development program, all administrators should be crossed-trained in facilities, security, buses, data, and curriculum. Duties as assigned become limited opportunities when the school year begins and only one administrative team member understands the data process, the security procedures or how the buses move..... Cross Training should be a requirement of all administrative team members.

**Answer:** *It is the principal's responsibility to assign administrative duties to team members as well as provide opportunities for the necessary training.*

*-Vickie J. Presley, Area Superintendent*

**Question:** Regarding the new requirement for teacher recertification states that beginning July 1, 2014 an applicant for renewal of a professional certificate must earn at least one college credit or the equivalent 20 in-service points in teaching student with disabilities (ESE). The questions are:

#1: Are you going to start providing FREE classes for teachers to take? –

**Answer:** *In the Friday, September 20<sup>th</sup> Area Superintendents email to principals, information was provided from Human Resources to be shared with staff regarding the new ESE requirement and the certification process. From the professional development perspective, we encourage all teachers and administrators to do the following:*

*To find out your certificate validity period:*

*Log into ePortal*

*Click on the Human Resources tab*

*Click on Certs and Licenses*

*To see inservice credits earned prior to October 1, 2012:*

*Log into ePortal*

*Click on the Professional Development Tab*

*Click on In-service Points*

*To see inservice credits earned since October 1, 2012:*

*Log into My PGS*

*Click on the "Courses Completed" button.*

*If the certificate must be renewed prior to July 1, 2015 and the individual has the necessary 120 inservice credits to renew, we encourage the individual to renew now, thus avoiding the new requirement. However, for individuals that renew certification after July 1, 2014, there will be significant professional learning opportunities available to meet the 20 inservice credit requirement. At this time, DOE is in the process of determining which ESE professional learning components will meet the requirement. As soon as the Office of Professional Development and Support receives additional direction from DOE, information on offerings will be provided to all staff.*

*-Karen Beattie, Coordinator, Professional Development & Support*

#2: If you are ESE certified do you have to get the points?

**Answer:** *Yes, the rule applies to everyone who holds a professional certificate.*

*-Robin King, Certification Specialist*

**Question:** Please see previous email below. (Question continued below)

*Teacher Recertification: The 2013 Legislative session passed a new requirement for teacher recertification.*

*Section 1012.585 F. S. states that beginning July 1, 2014:*

*An applicant for renewal of a professional certificate must earn at least one (1) college credit or the equivalent 20 in-service points in teaching student with disabilities (ESE).*

*The applicant must earn a minimum of six (6) semester hours of college credits or the equivalent 120 in-service points for certificate renewal and this new requirement for credit in teaching students with disabilities (ESE) may not increase the total renewal credit required. Please note that this requirement is effective based on the date the application is submitted for renewal of the professional certificate. The credit in teaching students with disabilities (ESE) will not be required for those who submit applications to renew prior to July 1, 2014. However anyone whose certificate expires on June 30, 2014 who submits their application after the expiration date will be expected to have satisfied the requirement for credit in teaching students with disabilities (ESE). If you have any questions regarding this new requirement, please contact Robin King, certification specialist at extension 20660.*

**Question continued:** I contacted Robin King because I had some questions about the requirements. My first question was, are teachers certified in ESE and currently teaching ESE required to take the 20 in-service points or the college credit? The answer I got was yes; even certified ESE teachers are required to get the 1 college credit or 20 in-service points. The second question was, what in-service points/workshops would count towards requirement? I ask this because I have taken many ESE workshops/ online courses such as Elementary Support Facilitation. The answer I received was, they cannot tell us what will count and what will not count. This answer concerns me the most, that teachers are already certified in ESE, we are required to take more courses but they cannot tell us what will count and what will not count. I know this is coming from the state but, this is not making sense. When I heard this was coming during the VTO meeting this summer I assumed it was for regular education teachers and not ESE teachers.

**Answer:** *FLDOE has not distributed a technical paper on the acceptable courses/in-service credit to meet the new requirement. During the webinar last month on the new legislation FLDOE anticipated the information would be available next month at the conference update.*

*-Robin King, Certification Specialist*

**Question:** Why were the specialized rubrics for media specialist, guidance counselors, reading coaches, etc. taken away, and all of those groups were put on the teacher rubric? I respectfully ask for those to be changed back. I have heard from some sources that it will be changed back soon, that the teacher rubric that is in MyPGS was a temporary fix while

they were updating the program over the summer. I have heard from others that it is a permanent fix because the administrators were uncomfortable with having so many rubrics to learn. If it is temporary, you can ignore the rest of the question! If this is permanent, please clarify why. While I understand that having multiple rubrics to become familiar with can be taxing for an administrator, shouldn't they be familiar with the many facets that our specialized jobs entail? That should make learning different rubrics well worth their time! The teacher rubric does not even cover half of what my job entails. Using the specialized rubric last year initiated great conversation with my principal as he learned about many parts of my job that he was never familiar with—things that are mainly off-stage. While ultimately we are all teachers, and we can be successful with the teacher rubric if needed, it is a more authentic assessment of our skills if you utilize the rubrics that fit our job roles! Even Charlotte Danielson has specialized rubrics for specialized job roles.

**Answer:** *The MyPGS system only contains the Classroom Teacher rubric. All administrators were trained on the updated VSET process this summer. As a part of the training, they were informed that while the only rubric in the My PGS system was the Classroom Teacher rubric, the specialized rubrics from last year are available in PDF format on the VSET Online Help tab. These rubrics are to be used as a tool when evaluating instructional staff in these specialized roles. In addition, when evidence is entered in the system based on the specialized rubrics, the evaluator will indicate "based on the XX rubric, ..." The Pre-Observation questions were rewritten to be applicable to all job roles this year. There is a team of individuals that will work this year to develop look-fors or a non-classroom instructional rubric to be used in the 2014-2015 evaluation system.*

*-Dana Paige-Pender, Director, Personnel Screening and Referral*

**Question:** When a teacher is told that they will be physically moving their classroom after the school year has started, when are they supposed to do this? Can a substitute be provided? **Answer:** *A substitute may be provided.*  
*-Vickie J. Presley, Area Superintendent*

**Question:** A few years ago under VCTAS, experienced teachers in good standing had the option of "Cycle 3" for our evaluation tool. Our current VSET tool has us all (except for newer teachers or those teachers on an action plan) in the same boat. This system demands a lot and sucks the life out of teachers and administrators. Will the district consider differentiating this evaluation tool, including expectations for the DPP?

**Answer:** *There are no plans to make changes to VSET procedures during this school year.*  
*-Dana Paige-Pender, Director Personnel Screening and Referral*

**Question:** Will you please define the scope for "beyond your job role" as expected to be distinguished with our DPP? If we are to be measured on this item, the district really needs to provide exemplars. Also, teachers will not be as involved with extra school duties if it limits this "beyond your job role" clause.

**Answer:** *According to the Understanding the Deliberate Practice Performance Rating Rubric video available in My PGS on the VSET Help tab, beyond his or her job role means:*

*"Participating in PLCs, department meetings, grade level meetings are within your job role. To be distinguished, the interactions must be outside of your normal job role."*

*-Dana Paige-Pender, Director, Personnel Screening and Referral*

**Question:** Morale is very low. I think it goes without saying that last year was very, very rough, and this year has picked up where it left off. A few years ago, when cuts were starting to slice into budgets, school board members as well as district personnel helped at schools as substitutes and assisted teachers in the classroom. They were able to walk in a teacher's shoes to see what really happens in the classroom at the school level, and many of these district-leader substitutes gained a lot of respect from teachers, administrators, students, and families. Will district leaders please consider doing something like this again, and see firsthand a teacher's day? Much of the decision-making, communication, and expectations seem disconnected from what is really happening in the classroom. We are all Team Volusia!

**Answer:** *We wish we were able to honor this request but the district offices have been drastically down sized over the years.*

*-Peromnia Grant, Asst. Superintendent for Human Resources*

#### **TECHNOLOGY SERVICES:**

**Question:** This is a question we have from multiple teachers who have changed classrooms this school year. We have printers/scanners (The Brother models) in our classrooms where we can scan our tests for Scantron directly. If we change classrooms, we can no longer scan tests. We are being told to go to the "Central Scanner" in the school. We have never had to utilize this before, as we each have our own. So much teacher time is wasted on scanning all of these tests and making corrections, etc. Why can't we just get our existing IP address changed so we can scan the tests right in our classroom? We need administrator access for this, and Technology Services says that they don't do this anymore. Why not?

**Answer:** *We are reviewing this procedure and will do our very best to improve this process.*

**Question: (Received after the Q & A was printed):** This year we are unable receive emails from common app in order to complete letters of recommendation at our school email. This requires us to hand out our home emails to students as well as creating an account from our home emails not @volusia.k12.fl.us. I don't think this looks professional. In addition teachers are having issues with submitting information due to the version of Internet Explorer that we have at school requiring them to work at home to do the recommendations. Would the district please fix this so that I can help my wonderful students get into the colleges and universities they deserve to attend?

**Answer:** *The issues appear to be within the application itself. We will review any barriers we have. See attached article:*

*<http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/answer-sheet/wp/2013/10/15/online-common-application-problems-lead-colleges-to-push-back-deadlines/>*

*-Don Boulware, Executive Director, Technology Services*

**Question:** Why do only Title 1 schools seem to have all of the technology? As a non-Title 1 school, we have to raise money for technology. This just doesn't seem equitable.

**Answer:** *Title I investments in technology are based on Federal funding. In addition, capital funding sources have been reduced severely which limit the district's ability to invest in technology across the board.*

*-Don Boulware, Executive Director, Technology Services*

**COMMUNITY INFORMATION:**

**Question #1:** Why can't teachers vote on the calendar like we used to do? Many teachers are retiring May 31, 2016 and want to vote for school to end before that date. Can teachers please have a voice?

**Question #2:** Many teachers (who wanted to get the full 6% interest for DROP) are retiring in 2016. Have the people who are in charge of making decisions about the calendar taking into consideration that as of May 31, 2016 many teachers must retire? This is going to cost much more money to have to bring in substitutes to finish the school year if these teachers must leave before school is out. Can this please be taken into consideration?

**Answer:** *Thank you for your comments regarding the school calendar. The process for establishing a school calendar involves receiving input from all of our stakeholders. The school board accomplishes this by appointing a calendar committee consisting of teachers, parents, students, administrators and community/business leaders. This committee is charged with making a recommendation for the school calendar to the superintendent for consideration by the school board. By policy, the school board has the ultimate authority and responsibility to make final decisions regarding the school calendar.*

*State law requires school districts to adopt a school year calendar that starts no sooner than 14 days prior to Labor Day. When the school year cannot begin until mid/late August, it historically ends in June (see below). We recognize the school year could be shortened and still meet the required 180 days; however, it would affect the length of winter break and spring break. Additionally, we learned from the hurricanes of 2004 that make-up days should be built into the calendar so that scheduled holidays are not utilized to make up for lost instructional time.*

*Another major consideration is the state testing calendar. School must remain in session to give our students every opportunity to complete necessary tests, which now extend through the first week of June.*

*If you are interested in serving on the calendar committee, please let your principal and/or area superintendent know. We will be seeking appointees in late February or early March for the 2015-16 calendar committee.*

<i>School Year</i>	<i>First Day of School (students)</i>	<i>Winter Break</i>	<i>Spring Break</i>	<i>Last Day of School (students)</i>
<i>1991-92</i>	<i>August 26</i>	<i>December 22</i>	<i>March 27</i>	<i>June 5</i>
<i>1992-93</i>	<i>August 24</i>	<i>December 21</i>	<i>March 26</i>	<i>June 4</i>
<i>1993-94</i>	<i>August 23</i>	<i>December 20</i>	<i>March 27</i>	<i>June 3</i>
<i>1994-95</i>	<i>August 22</i>	<i>December 21</i>	<i>April 10</i>	<i>June 2</i>
<i>1995-96</i>	<i>August 21</i>	<i>December 22</i>	<i>April 1</i>	<i>May 31</i>
<i>1996-97</i>	<i>August 19</i>	<i>December 23</i>	<i>March 24</i>	<i>June 3</i>
<i>1997-98</i>	<i>August 25</i>	<i>December 22</i>	<i>April 13</i>	<i>June 9</i>
<i>1998-99</i>	<i>August 24</i>	<i>December 21</i>	<i>April 5</i>	<i>June 8</i>
<i>1999-00</i>	<i>August 18</i>	<i>December 20</i>	<i>April 17</i>	<i>June 2</i>
<i>2000-01</i>	<i>August 7</i>	<i>December 15</i>	<i>April 9</i>	<i>May 22</i>
<i>2001-02</i>	<i>August 13</i>	<i>December 20</i>	<i>March 29</i>	<i>May 29</i>
<i>2002-03</i>	<i>August 12</i>	<i>December 20</i>	<i>April 14</i>	<i>May 28</i>
<i>2003-04</i>	<i>August 11</i>	<i>December 19</i>	<i>April 9</i>	<i>May 25</i>
<i>2004-05</i>	<i>August 9</i>	<i>December 17</i>	<i>March 25</i>	<i>May 25</i>
<i>2005-06</i>	<i>August 8</i>	<i>December 16</i>	<i>March 17</i>	<i>May 24</i>
<i>2006-07</i>	<i>August 7</i>	<i>December 21</i>	<i>March 16</i>	<i>May 23</i>
<i>2007-08</i>	<i>August 20</i>	<i>December 21</i>	<i>March 27</i>	<i>June 6</i>

2008-09	August 18	December 22	April 6	June 5
2009-10	August 24	December 21	March 26	June 8
2010-11	August 16	December 17	March 11	May 27
2011-12	August 22	December 16	March 16	June 8
2012-13	August 20	December 21	March 25	June 4
2013-14	August 19	December 20	March 29	June 6

*-Nancy Wait, Director, Community Information*

**HEALTH SERVICES:**

**Question:** Student health and wellness is becoming a great concern each passing year. We have students who are diabetic, allergic to numerous sources, and in need of clinic attention. Our school nurse works very hard with our students, but she is not scheduled for a full day. Our clerical staff must take over when her abbreviated work day comes to a close or she has not yet arrived at her scheduled time. Medications and student ills still need to be addressed, even though there is no clinical coverage beside the clerical staff. They are taken from their duties to attend to medical/health issues. Is it possible for the nurse to be on duty for a full school day?

**Answer:** *Health Services has been striving to provide coverage in school clinics to the greatest extent possible. Clinic personnel hours are worked around the timing of student medications to minimize coverage from clerical staff. We are in process of hiring for newly allotted positions to provide coverage for each clinic five days per week in schools that currently share personnel.*

*-Cheryl Selesky, Coordinator, Student Health Services*

**Question:** Why are children who have head lice allowed to come into the classroom without being treated, and given the option to be picked up, rather than have it mandated? Also, class checks should still be required/permitted. Students are not allowed in school for other contagious skin/health issues, and as a parent and teacher, I feel it is definitely a health concern-causing an infestation in the classroom. If students were required to come back to the classroom once cleared, there would be a lot less of an issue.

**Answer:** *Several attachments are provided regarding head lice control in schools which are summarized below. The recommendations from the Center for Disease Control (CDC), the American Academy of Pediatric, National Association of School Nurses and other research provides the basis for Pediculosis management/procedures in our schools.*

*Information from our website:*

<http://myvolusiaschools.org/student-health-services/Pages/Head-Lice-Information.aspx>

*Information from CDC:*

<http://www.cdc.gov/parasites/lice/head/schools.html>

*Information from the National Association of School Nurses:*

<http://www.nasn.org/Portals/0/positions/2011pspediculosis.pdf>

*Head lice is not associated with disease nor poor hygiene. Additionally, it is not reportable to the health department as a communicable disease. The organizations listed above do not consider lice infestation a health or medical issue.*

*Control in school is managed on a case by case basis. Head lice do not jump or fly, nor do they transmit disease but are a nuisance. If a child is suspected of having head lice, the child will be discreetly referred to the school clinic to be checked. If lice are found, the parent will be contacted and provided information for treatment. Research demonstrates that exclusion from school is not effective in reducing the transmission of lice. If properly treated, children should be able to return to school in 72 hours or less. Children should not miss excessive days from school for head lice infestation. If a child has reoccurrences of head lice, additional support to the family is provided by the Nursing Supervisor and if needed the School Social Worker.*

*Both the American Association of Pediatrics and the National Association of School Nurses advocate that "no-nit" policies be discontinued. "No-nit" policies require a child to be free of nits before they can return to schools. You can read more about that in the CDC information.*

*We work hard to manage the issue and insure there is minimal disruption to the educational process. Since head lice is common in children ages 3-11 and are primarily transmitted by direct head-to-head contact, we encourage parents to check their child(ren) on a weekly bases for signs of head lice. Pediculosis die off quickly once away from their food source. Nor do they have claws to hold onto other items such as backpacks or head phones and easily fall off and die.*

*-Cheryl Selesky, Coordinator, Student Health Services*

**INSURANCE AND EMPLOYEE BENEFITS:**

**Question:** In light of the recent Federal Government's repeal of the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA); many companies, institutions, and organizations (several operating here in Florida) are now insuring all legally married spouses, both same sex and opposite sex, regardless of the law of the state in which they reside. Could Volusia County Schools begin offering benefits to all legally married employees so that spousal coverage and federal tax benefits are equal? Such action would adhere and truly reinforce the VCS nondiscrimination policy to their gay and lesbian employees and (in keeping with the sole purpose of TAC) send a positive message and example to our LGBT (and non-LGBT) students.

**Answer:** *As of today, Volusia County Schools does not recognize same sex marriages for insurance purposes. A change in the current practice would ultimately be made through the legal department have to be approved by the Superintendent and by the Board.*

*-Sandy Higginbotham, Director, Insurance and Employee Benefits*

**SCHOOL WAY CAFÉ:**

**Question:** Where are the days that kids could eat free for the first 20 days? Kids with no money get a "cheese" or "pbj", really? We can buy laptops and computers, but we make a fuss when the kids want chicken nuggets even when they have no money. I realize that we cannot make a habit of it, but feeding a student who has no money should not be a negative experience.

**Answer:** *All students who were free and reduced the prior year are eligible to receive their same status up to 30 days or until a new application is submitted. If the parents do not fill out a new application the student changes to a paid classification. Each school principal sets the guidelines for students without meal money.*

*Joan Young, Director, School Way Cafe*

**SECURITY:**

**Question:** Is it possible to change the policy of not allowing teachers to come into school to work on week-ends? This creates a problem for several teachers, especially those who have families with weekly commitments with their own children. Because a teacher's work load is ever increasing, it becomes necessary at times to catch up over the week-end.

**Answer:** *We are endeavoring to conserve energy at our schools. This is a cost savings measure for the district. If special activities are scheduled during the weekend, principals usually alert district staff, and accommodations are made as needed.*

*-Vickie J. Presley & Tom Russell, Area Superintendents*

**Question:** I understand the need for added security for the safety of our children. Is there a way that common area such as media, planning rooms, lounge areas, etc.; can have a magnetic key system where all staff members can swipe a card and access these common areas?

**Answer:** *We are looking at possible solutions to our common areas on our campuses. We are exploring all possible solutions to our gaps in security. Each school has unique challenges and our district vulnerability assessment identified the need at each school. That list is being prioritized and we are looking for capital funding to resolve these challenges.*

*-Greg Akin, Director, Transportation Services*

Meeting adjourned at 5:20 p.m.

**UPCOMING TEACHERS' ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETINGS**

**JANUARY 29, 2014 – 4:00 – DELAND BOARD ROOM**

**MARCH 12, 2014 – 4:00 – DELAND BOARD ROOM**

**(This meeting replaces the April 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting)**