

April 10, 2015

4th Quarter Coffee with the Principal
Open Question & Answer

On Friday, April 10, 2015, PTO hosted LPA's 4th Quarter Coffee and then had a General Meeting. In attendance: Pam W., Carolyn H., Kim D., Cathy R., Kathy B., Erika W., Mrs. Thayer and other PTO members as well.

Q: Has legislature approved limits in testing?

A: Currently there is an exam for every course (DDA) e.g. Art for Kindergarten

-This is the first full-blown year for Elementary and Middle Grades students taking all required testing.

-Legislation passed this week (in the House) to eliminate exam for every course (probably in effect in July) it was fast tracked to the Senate and passed, Governor has seven days to sign.

-The new law would decrease the impact of testing/student performance on teacher evaluation from ½ to 1/3

-Also limits the amount of time on state assessments to 5% of school year or 45 hours.

-The proposed Accountability Bill states that school grades will not be issued until an independent evaluation of the validity of the FSA has been completed and creates a panel to select the vendor who will do the verification.

-DDAs may go away

- Secondary DDA assessments will be reviewed and school average will be set at a 75% as a concordant score. Other scores will then be set when data is reviewed. In every case, DDA's will not harm students.

-Elementary DDA's do not carry a grade.

- FSA does not set a percentage grade. The state FSA will use an equipercentile ranking to ensure that students are not harmed this first year. If 5 students earned a "Level 1" in Reading last year, we can expect that to be the same this year.

-Also know that our Superintendent is working very hard behind the scenes

Q: Is there any talk of abandoning FSA?

A: We have not had heard that – common core is gone but FL will still have strong standards

Q: How will we deal with issues of students getting bumped off during new computer testing?

A: We haven't had too much trouble. The first week we had one day with an issue, shut down and tested successfully the next day. The biggest improvement to computer testing is improving bandwidth. We have been fortunate.

Q: Any new information on road construction/new neighborhood?

A: Highway pilings expected next spring. The new neighborhood will have 97 homes. There are approximately 7-8 contracts currently. We are working with district on granting waivers for hardship registrations to families even though the home won't be ready until September. Walkers and bike riders from the neighborhood will need sidewalk; we are working with district and county on completing necessary improvements.

Q: How does virtual school affect our students?

A: There are options for all students of St. Johns County and all of Florida to take online courses. Mostly Middle Grades students and higher and usually register for a single course for enrichment or acceleration. If Elementary student it is usually a fulltime/home school registration. If a student wishes to take an online course we have to know by July 13th in order to staff and plan appropriately. It is possible to take a student home for that course vs. take the course at school but must be designated as “home school” for that time. When course is taken during school hours the school has the right to make the schedule as best works for the school so the class may not necessarily be at the beginning or end of day. Student would essentially take the virtual class in lieu of elective course. HOPE is popular. Virtual courses are much more popular in High School.

There are two virtual schools. Florida Virtual (FLVS) and St. Johns Virtual (SJV). FLVS is a for profit/business. Taking virtual courses does negatively affect out funding – affects our FTE. SJV courses allows for money to stay within St. Johns County.

Class size amendment requires that we monitor the seat availability. This greatly affects our middle school classes. It is sometimes possible that depending on when a student registers, a student may not be able to take a live course if all seats are taken and will instead take the course virtually. However, this depends on the time of the year such a registration occurs.

Q: Are there plans for more portables or double decker portables?

A: There will be nothing new in the next year. There is approximately 2 million spent every year, everyone turned in needs, 6.8 million is allocated to various needs in county, LPA is not on the list.

People ask about rezoning but where, questions about adding on to the building or additional portables. We don't know as we get new students what classes they will enter. Our biggest issue is movement between classes and things like lunch rotations.

Q: What was original intent of Common Core?

A: Not curriculum but standards. Ultimately states have the right to choose. Florida pulled out of Common Core and alternatively does FSA, reintroduces handwriting.

Q: What is Advanced Reading?

A: Reading and writing. Advanced Reading is a required course for all 6th graders at LPA in 2015-2016. Each student will take either advanced or intensive.

Q: Why are we changing the way we teach math?

A: In order to go deeper into why it works – go beyond just getting an answer.

9:55am – Q&A concluded

Reminder: Little Mermaid Jr. is April 29, 30 and May 1 – amazing production the whole family can enjoy.

9:56am-9:57am PTO announcement – positions still open for the 2015/2016 PTO Board if you want to get involved.