Osceola School District News

Osceola County School Board Approves Superintendent’s Recommendations on Salaries and Benefits For Teachers

Released By Osceola School District

I n order to recognize Osceola teachers for their time and talents in inspiring students each and every day, the Osceola County School District has approved the following salary and benefits package for teachers for the 2018-2019 school year, including:

• Average of 2% salary increase per instructional employee, with $1,200 for “highly-effective” status and $900 for “effective” status on the performance pay schedule and $1,150 for Grandfathered status. This is the largest raise for instructional employees that has been given in the past five years;
• Increased starting salary of $41,000 for new teachers to the district;
• Employee recruitment incentive equal to $250 for each job candidate referred to and successfully hired by the district and who successfully completes 90 days of employment;
• Design changes to the school district’s major medical Health Insurance Plan that ensure a no-cost option for individual employees and that the district’s Health Benefits Trust Fund remains fiscally sound;
• Flexible Spending Account Match, where the School Board will match an employee’s FSA savings of $750 or more with a contribution of $250 in order to assist the employee towards meeting the deductible; and
• Continued commitment to the district’s Center for Employee Health, providing no-co-pay for doctor visits or prescription costs.

Teachers will see their salary increase beginning with the September 28 paycheck. In the true spirit of collaboration and doing what is in the best interest of Osceola’s dedicated teachers, the School Board echoed the Superintendent’s desire to immediately continue the collaborative bargaining process with OCEA to reach Memorandums of Understanding on additional contract language to improve working conditions.

“Of all the work that occurs at every level of our education system, the interaction between teacher and student is the primary determinant of student success,” said School Board Chairman Ricky Booth. “My fellow Board Members and I dedicated as much of the limited dollars we receive from the state as we could towards higher compensation and benefits for our teachers, and the district will now quickly get the additional salary dollars in the pockets of our teachers where they belong. The Osceola County School Board remains committed to working collaboratively with our teachers to lessen their workload while they serve our students with excellence.”

Osceola School District To Improve Parent Communication Regarding School Transportation

With New Here Comes The Bus Mobile App

Released By Osceola School District

O n Monday, August 27, the Osceola School District rolled out an innovative free mobile app entitled Here Comes The Bus to districtwide in an effort to improve communication with the 27,000 students who ride a school bus and their parents. Here Comes The Bus allows parents to view the real-time location of their child’s school bus on their smartphone, tablet, or computer. With it, parents will have the information they need to send their children to the bus stop at just the right time, helping to protect them from inclement weather and to better gauge the actual arrival time of the bus.

Here Comes The Bus enables parents to:
• See the location of their child’s bus both before and after school;
• Confirm that their child’s bus has arrived at the bus stop, at school, or both; and
• Receive a push notification or email message when the bus is near their child’s stop or when the district’s Transportation Department has important information to relay.

The free app is available in three languages (English, Spanish, and French), and it can be downloaded from the App Store, Google Play, or at herecomesthebus.com. Parents then click on the “sign up” button, and enter the school code (73760). Parents then complete a user profile. Under “My Students”, parents should click “add” and enter their child’s last name and the student’s ID number. Parents with multiple children riding different buses will need to put each student’s ID number into the app.

Parents needing assistance in signing up for Here Comes The Bus are encouraged to call the Transportation Department’s Parent Hotline at 407-483-3673 Mondays through Fridays during school hours.

Survivors of Child Abuse Paint Rocks to Raise Awareness and Funds For Children’s Advocacy Center Osceola

“CAC Rocks” Campaign Invites Community on Scavenger Hunt

C hild abuse survivors and their advocates are uniting to raise awareness and funds for Children’s Advocacy Center Osceola (CAC Osceola), which provides care for victims of abuse.

Community Care of Central Florida (CBCF) kicks off “CAC Rocks” on Mon., Sept. 10, by hiding 200 rocks painted with words of encouragement and hope at various locations in Historic Downtown Kissimmee, including restaurants, banks and the Hart Memorial Central Library.

The rocks were painted by 10 people who survived child abuse, or who are helping children move through their healing.

“Child abuse has become a public health crisis,” said Glen Casel, president and CEO of Community Based Care of Central Florida. “Our goal with ‘CAC Rocks’ is to break the silence and recruit community members to engage in conversations about prevention.”

A community scavenger hunt will run from Sept. 12 through Oct. 12. Anyone who finds a rock is asked to post on social media, using the hashtag #CACRocks. Orlando Health will donate $10 for each rock found. These funds will help CBCF continue to provide therapy and other critical services for children who have been abused and their families.

At the end of the campaign, the names of participants will be entered into a drawing for a chance to win a prize, such as a Echo Dot, a children’s book basket or tickets to Disney.

“Airt is often used in the healing process because it provides a physical outlet to express feelings,” said Joy Chatterton, executive director of Children’s Advocacy Center Osceola. “The children we see daily have been in situations no child should experience. We work with them to understand what happened is not their fault, while providing a safe environment.”

One in five children experiences abuse before the age of 18.

Second Harvest Food Bank Challenges Community To “Share A Meal” During Hunger Action Month

O ne in six Central Floridians struggle with hunger. This September, Second Harvest Food Bank of Central Florida is challenging the community to “Share A Meal” in honor of Hunger Action Month.

“We have seen the face of hunger increase to include many middle-class working families, who are forced to decide between paying rent and buying groceries,” said Dave Krepcich, president and CEO of Second Harvest Food Bank of Central Florida. “We’re calling for everyone to become a hunger hero this September through our ‘Share a Meal’ challenge. You can donate time or money and eliminate uncertainty about the next meal for local seniors, families, veterans and children.”

The average person spends $10 eating lunch out. For that amount, Second Harvest can distribute 40 meals through its feeding programs, such as food pantries, soup kitchens, women’s shelters, senior centers and daycares.

Those who accept the challenge are asked to follow these steps:
• Share a picture of a favorite meal on social media.
• Use the hashtag #shareameal
• Challenge three friends
• Donate the cost of that meal

An anonymous donor will be matching gifts up to $5,000.

According to a recent study by Feeding America, Osceola County has the greatest need for meal assistance in Central Florida. While Second Harvest Food Bank has increased its capacity with the help of 38 feeding partners, the Meal Gap study found that 31,650 people in Osceola County do not know where their next meal will come from.

To learn more about how to help close the food gap, especially through the “Share a Meal” challenge, visit www.FeedHopeNow.org.