

2nd Edition – Friday, July 18, 2008

## NOW YOU KNOW!

CALENDAR, NEWS AND NOTES

### IT'S NOT OVER!!!!

Editor: Andrea Samson

**TUESDAY, JULY 22, 2008**

OCPS Board meeting, 5:30 p.m. ELC Building,  
445 W. Amelia St., Orlando 32801

#### MAGNET SCHOOL PARENTS:

Erica Hobbs  
ehobbs@orlandosentinel.com is  
looking for parents to contact her  
about magnet transportation  
problems that are the result of the  
flipped schedules. CONTACT HER  
A.S.A.P.

Tuesday is "Date Night" with OCPS. This is a regularly scheduled board meeting. Agenda is available on-line. Google OCPS FL and up pops the web site. Agenda is published 7 days in advance of the meeting.

**MONDAY, JULY 28, 2008**

CANDIDATES NIGHT! We published information about this last newsletter, but this is too important for you to miss, so we are doing it again. Happy or not happy with unfolding events lately, you need to make a choice in two districts – District 4 and District 7. Be informed, ask the hard questions. Meet, Q & A, judge for yourself. Take your children too. The civics lesson to be learned through your involvement is a lesson for life and an exercise in democracy.

**TUESDAY, JULY 29, 2008**

**PUBLIC HEARING – ADOPTION OF 2008 – 2009 BUDGET**

**PUBLIC MEETING – APPROVAL OF SCHOOL BUS ROUTES.** BUS ROUTE HEARING IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWS PUBLIC HEARING ON ADOPTION OF 2008–2009 TENTATIVE BUDGET. MARK THIS IN YOUR CALENDAR!!!!!! Check the OCPS web site on July 22 for detailed agenda which (as above) should be published seven days in advance of this meeting. We will check and publish important detail to you via e-mail. **DO NOT MISS THIS MEETING.**

THREE WHO LISTENED TO THEIR COMMUNITY.....ONE WHO DIDN'T AND LIVED TO REGRET IT.

**7/17/08 VISTA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT** reverses decision to change bell times. Schedules will stay the same as last year after parents complained that proposed times were far too early for middle school students.

**SAN DIEGO COUNTY:** Schedule flip reversed after receiving huge protest from parents.

**7/7/2008 HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY.** Scores of e-mails from parents about lack of notification, after school care issues, and dangerous school bus stops makes district re-think decision to change. District plans a series of meetings with residents to be held at ten high schools.

**2002 LEE COUNTY.** School board flips times without community input. According to Ms. Jeanne Dozier, current School Board Chairman and past president of the Florida School Board Association, "I fought long and hard and was the only board member here to vote against the switch. The times were changed and we lived with the change for an entire school year. We had thousands of tardies and the community was turned upside down for a year." The flip apparently also COST THEM A COUPLE OF MILLION.

**PLAN:** noun. A procedure or a method of proceeding developed in advance.  
**IMPLEMENT:** verb. To put into effect according to a definite plan or procedure.

For more than two months, we have been trying to find out exactly how the middle school after-school care program will work. The response is over and over the same.....the principals are working it out. First, we find out that neither the Boys and Girls Club or the "Y" was ever consulted prior to the May 13 vote to flip the schedule. As late as last Thursday, we find out that the county has yet to approve the budget that funds the Boys and Girls Club. At last Monday's community meeting, an OCPS representative said that maybe paraprofessionals will be used. It was pointed out to her that those people had been let go. There are rumblings about teachers being asked to staff after school care with "compensatory" time, by coming in later.

Maybe the school custodian will be called in to help. WHO KNOWS? THIS IS THE CLASSIC "CART BEFORE THE HORSE." They have it backwards. You are supposed to plan before you implement, and the staff at OCPS is being paid the big bucks! Much more than our teachers.

Oh, and is it not rather rude and presumptuous to commit another agencies scarce resources to your scheme before you have even asked them? Do they know how many children can be served in the "grand scheme" without the whole thing collapsing of its own weight?

From what we can tell from all of the confusion over **HOW** it will work, no one at the ELC emerged from their well equipped cocoon or picked up the phone to find out how their "little" decision to flip schedules affected agencies, communities, families, and students. From what we can tell since then, few inside the copper cocoon seem think anyone else's opinion matters – no matter how qualified "any one else" is. They have heard some well-qualified and well documented opinions that the flip calculations and justifications are just plain wrong, yet they keep moving forward – head down.

July is a good time to talk about democracy....the right to be represented by elected officials, the right to speak out and to petition, and have those petitions be taken seriously. Even kings do not rule for very long when the subjects get upset with being ignored or mistreated. Reference: The Declaration of Independence.

Last thought: There are some restrictions, but not many, governing how school boards

### From the East Orange Sun, June 2008

"The district will not save anywhere near 2.3 million, said Mr. Alan Burke Systems Analyst from Lockheed Martin. " If I thought there was a \$6 million savings, I would grudgingly support it; it's better than losing teachers or programs. But if one of my junior engineers were to bring me something that looked like this – and they wouldn't – I would start asking questions, because these numbers fail simple sanity tests. According to Burke, after looking at the OCPS justification, it's just "bad math." According to Burke, the same 37 bus savings could be accomplished by bumping out certain start times by just fifteen minutes. That would allow all levels three runs and eliminate the same 2-run routes.

Said Burke, "Looking at the information, it didn't make sense. I started trying to figure out how the numbers they're quoting could happen. I'm now convinced it's unlikely they're going to save money, and if they do, it will be significantly less. It appears to me as if someone decided to do the flip, and then worked backward to justify it. People have a strong tendency to justify what they believe, not analyze and make decisions from facts."

**FROM THE DESK OF REGINA D MORROW**, Ed.S., LMFT, LMHC, NCC, FL Marriage and Family Therapist, FL Mental Health Counselor, American Assoc. of Marriage and Family Therapy, Clinical Member American Counseling Association.

Letter to the Orlando Sentinel dated 7/12:

"Middle schoolers have less maturity and therefore they need greater supervision than high schoolers. I believe the flip will remove much needed supervision from our community middle schoolers. Our community will see the results of the lack of supervision within three years with higher drop out rates, pregnancies, drug use, and family conflict.

It appears to me that members of the school board who voted for the flip were short sighted. I suspect the costs this flip will incur have yet to be measured in the health of our community. I applaud the efforts our community is making to fight this change."

**Excerpt from State of FL DOE:** "Among the specific responsibilities Florida law assigns to school boards is to maintain a system of school improvement and education accountability as provided by statute and the State Board of Education rule. The following six state education priorities establish the framework for school improvement: (1) learning and completion at all levels, including increased high school graduation rate, (2), (3), (4), (5) and(6) "parental, student, family, educational institution, and community involvement."

**"Now You Know" Editor's note:** Does anyone at ELC monitor drop outs so that we can know who dropped out of school because of the flip? Does the staff at ELC decide what kind of community or parental involvement will be allowed. Are we restricted to

**KIWANIS IS ALL ABOUT KIDS.** At a recent Kiwanis meeting, one of our members was invited last minute to give a very impromptu, but impassioned speech about the impact of the flipped schedules on our kids. She just happened to have our petition form with her, and without exception, all 50 or so in attendance signed it! Some even took blank petitions with them back into the community.

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