

Candidate: Scott Schneider

Brevard County Schools Superintendent

Written Responses

Brevard County Public Schools

1. With so many high priority items, how do you determine which are the first ones to address?

It is my firm belief that as a leader, you must have a proven and consistent information gathering process as it relates to increasing student outcomes. This process is to maintain transparency and gain the trust of all stakeholders. The process I utilize is to listen first and act second, when afforded the time. I would listen to what our children, educators, parents, community members and the governance board are saying. It is imperative all stakeholders have a voice. This voice along with the combined process of triangulating data will be the foundation used to set our guiding principles and district priorities. ***This process comes down to what the data says, stakeholders say, and how we can collaborate to implement a solution. This is a cyclical process. We diagnose, prescribe, and monitor results until we get it right.*** These district priorities will then guide all decision making.

In my current role I have incorporated this process when establishing our new classroom walkthrough tool and developing the appropriate professional development to coincide. Our data from 5 Essentials survey tool (University of Chicago), student performance in reading and math, as well as usage data from our on-line resources painted a clear picture. That picture told us that our teachers did not feel valued based on the feedback each received from our previous walkthrough tool, our student performance was not improving, and our teachers and students did not feel they had the autonomy to incorporate curricular resources. Our internal review and stakeholders input aligned to say our previous tool had become obsolete for many reasons. Some of those reasons include the shift of standards based to benchmark focus, the need to shift from teacher focus to student outcome focus, and quite honestly the need to shift from evaluating what teachers weren't doing to viewing student outcomes to drive additional tier I and potentially tier II interventions. ***The new walkthrough tool has been strategically implemented through a progression. This progression included professional development based on feedback as well as calibration walks to ensure usage consistency. Although we continue to strive for the "perfect" tool, we are continuing to get a great deal of positive feedback as well as results.*** The Florida Bureau of School Improvement team has also asked us to share our walkthrough tool and process with other districts.

2. What is the role of the central office of our school district?

As a previous teacher, principal, and current husband of a veteran teacher I am confident that the role of all positions throughout the district is to support our children. That support may look different at the school-based level all the way to the central office but must have a common goal. ***We must be able to visualize what we want to materialize to the extent that we can explain what it looks like, sounds like, smells like, tastes like, and feels like.*** The support for our children will look like a safe learning environment, fully staffed classrooms, and intentionally developed curriculum. It sounds like strategic conversation in a professional learning environment, student led groups to solve mathematical problems, and the central office gaining feedback from all stakeholders. It smells like a clean environment, delicious and nutritious food in our cafeterias, and the BBQ cookout used as a fund raiser to support our safety patrols. It tastes like those green cupcakes that are given to our students on the path to proficiency in reading, the spaghetti pre-game meal for our student athletes, and our welcome back breakfast for our amazing educators as they return from the summer break. It feels like students knowing their worth, parents and community trusting the school district, and teachers filled with pride. Our role at the central office is ultimately to remove all obstacles from view so that our teachers and students can focus on learning.

I still remember the first time, as a teacher, I told a young man it was good to see him and he replied, "It is good to be seen". It caught me off guard as it was not the typical reply. Those words, "it is good to be seen", have changed their meaning for me over the years but they still resonate with me today. Sometimes it is just nice to be told "I see you". In my current role as a representative of the central office and as Superintendent, I know the importance of being present in our schools as well as accessible. The central office is not simply a physical address but rather a support system for our schools. ***Our principals, teachers, and students need to know "I see you". Ultimately, I must lead by example and my actions should identify my priorities. If I say student outcomes, teacher and staff retention, as well as a positive climate and culture are my priorities then I must ensure I put myself where I can best impact these priorities.***