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The Governor, Education Commissioner Richard Corcoran, Chancellor of K-12 Education Jacob Oliva, Florida Virtual School Executive Director Dr. Louis Algaze, Pinellas County Superintendent of Schools Mike Grego, and a teacher and parent from Florida's education community held a Covid-19 Education meeting in the Cabinet Room this afternoon.

Governor Ron DeSantis:

- Wishes for a Happy Passover, the State of Florida will not close a church or synagogue but encourage folks to observe in a socially distant manner
- Supplies
 - Department of Emergency Management is sending out the largest distribution in the department's history:
 - 2 million surgical masks
 - 300,000 face shields
 - 50,000 hand sanitizers
 - 100,000 gowns
 - 50,000 shoe coverings
- Testing
 - Over 150,000 tests
 - Three drive-thru sites (Jacksonville, Orlando, Miami) were all federally supported sites
 - Was helpful but was limited to 250 swabs a day, that runs out tomorrow, so the State of Florida will provide the resources to each site
 - National Guard will be sent out to the sites
 - Because we are no longer under the federal restrictions, we will be able to process more
 - Our other sites have run 700-800 people a day which will be good
 - To get more people in, we will expand testing eligibility
 - Identify people who have had repeated contact with individuals that have been positively identified
 - While we are working on the antibodies test, beyond that, we must look at how many people have had it
 - Deploying rapid tests from Abbott Labs, the State has received 15 that we are distributing
- Contingency Plan
 - In Miami yesterday, moving forward with the Convention Center, we will have the Pan American hospital with a step-down ICU
 - Working with Nicklaus on identifying 50 beds
 - We do have the ability to move field hospitals and beds
 - These are all staffed with national guard and others to really supplement what we already have

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- Monitoring bed availability occupancy is trending down:
 - 104 statewide
 - 122 in Dade
 - Flat in Broward, Orange and Hillsboro
- 1875 hospitalizations
- 43% hospital beds vacant
- Education
 - One of our biggest challenge is the change in parents effectively becoming teachers
 - Asked Commissioner Corcoran to bring
 - VP Pence recognized Florida as the leader in distance learning
 - Recognizing that there are challenges, and we are constantly working
 - Working with all 67 districts
 - FL Virtual School 100 courses available for free for all districts
 - FLVS ready to serve 2.7 million students if they need
 - DOE made 100 free resources available if needed
 - 32,674 laptops purchased
 - Cancel state assessments for the year
 - Delayed teacher certification test requirements and eliminated test cost for 22,000 teachers
 - DOE conducting webinars for technical assistance for Early Learning Coalitions and others
 - Working hard on making sure our education priorities stick

Commissioner Richard Corcoran

- Thank you, Governor, for your leadership, it has made it as easy as possible in this difficult time
- Number one priority is to keep students safe and number two is to provide world class education
- Default will continue to be compassion and grace, as you see with the 22,000 fee waivers
- What we are seeing is the beginning of another greatest generation given all that they had to survive
- We always say we are the education state, what has been clear as Secretary DeVos and VP Pence and others is that nothing has changed. In days, we stood up a system for 200,000 teachers and millions of students
- At the beginning of March, our team recognizing what was coming out of Wuhan, beefed up our virtual platform
- FLVS is even serving students in Alaska
- We have principals driving to students' houses to help them and check-in on them



Chancellor of K-12 Education Jacob Oliva

- Mental Health
 - Our goal is to keep students safe and do what we can to continue to provide a safety net for our students
 - Our formula to success is to get good teachers, get good leaders and get out of their way
 - Our teachers have stepped up to develop learning plans for
 - First Lady DeSantis tasked our agency to work with others to make sure all students have access to systems of care, now our focus is on transitioning these services to a virtual environment

Andrew Weatherall, Director of Student Support Services

- Support Services
 - Continue to work to ensure all students have all their access to nurses, social workers and other counselors like they would in a school, but now virtually
 - We are having virtual counseling sessions because it is important to make sure our students' basic needs are being met so they can get the education from their teachers they need
 -

Dr. Louis Algaze

- Thank you, Governor and Commissioner Corcoran, your leadership has allowed our team to move forward without red tape
- Launched multiple support services starting with technical assistance for teachers
- Offered virtual learning best practices for both district and charter schools
- 33 school districts and over 100 charter schools, we have 3400 teachers in the process being trained
- DOE offered stipends for professional development
- 94% of teachers rated our trainings helpful
- We decided to make all our content available so teachers can pick up where they left off
- By May 4th, we are ramping up little by little to make it available to all 2.7 million students
- In last four days we have had 103,000 students come onto the platform from district, private and charter schools
- Teacher training website has had 18,000 hits
- 22,000 hits for parents on tips for them
- Evolved robust online learning community from K-12, 400 participants in live webinars
- Parents can enroll their students in flex programs more easily

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- 13,000 students online in the flex program, put them in a specific server coding understanding they may be temporarily enrolled
- Starting off with 300 students in Alaska who have a hard time in accessing education
- Training their teachers and they will be using their own digital content once they have their own system

Superintendent Mike Grego

- My comments maybe directed to Pinellas, but thank you on behalf of all superintendents
- What we have accomplished is monumental
- Daily calls with Chancellor Oliva, he always makes himself available
- Our goals are to support our schools, support our students and support our parents
- The Commissioner said that while our schools may be closed, learning must continue
- Engagement is 97%, it shows the commitment of our residents overall
- After the distribution of thousands of laptops this week, we anticipate it will be less than 1% of non-participation
- Working with our schools to continuing to provide meals
- Digital platform transition was going to be a challenge, but we had 1.3 million logins by students and 1.5 million by teachers so it's working
- We have child study teams of social workers and other administrators to find out why students are not participating
- Thank you to the internet companies for providing access
- Community funders are funding access for students including hotspots
- Quality over quantity
- Grace before grades
- Love before lessons
- Governor- what's the feeling on the ground of parents and teachers?
 - While everyone is looking forward to returning to normalcy, and we have been doing deep cleanings of the schools, we appreciate everyone's commitment.
- Corcoran- some districts nationally are seeing non-engagement in the 10-15% range and while our 1% target is not even acceptable, our current 3% non-engagement is leaps and bounds above others

Principal Stephanie Woodford (Pinellas)

- Our teachers and staff have found two students who were not engaged and even someone on vacation.
- It has been amazing to see the balance that teachers are striking between meeting needs and being compassionate
- Continuing to focus on meeting individual needs

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- Some frustration has risen from parents feeling overwhelmed since they aren't learning the way they are before
- To address it, our teachers are logging on and embracing individualized education

Teacher Ruth Morales (Pinellas) & Sarah Hall (Seminole County)

- While it has been a challenge, it has been an amazing learning experience transitioning
- Our model has shifted to more of a caregiver mentality in a lot of ways
- The collaboration across district lines has been incredible to see
- The innovative experiences including a virtual trip we took to an aquarium this morning
- Our innovative solutions to some of the things we are missing
- Would like to advocate for social-emotional learning since we do not have eyes on them like we did
- Important to remember “Maslow before blue”, we must meet their basic needs before we can address other educational needs
- Governor- what went into the transition with a very short amount of notice, can you describe how that process has evolved?
 - Hall- some students are being raised by their grandparents, so the technological divide has been fascinating to watch as students teach their grandparents. It has taken innovation, but we've had success overall as students engage, including one-on-one experiences to develop levels of comfort with students. Differentiation is what we do, that's what makes Florida educators so successful.

Parent Khann-Lien Banko (Alachua)

- I don't feel alone, there is still a partnership with the school district, it is just being done in a different way
- I see nothing but everyone trying to reach their kids
- We are fortunate that all our kids have a technological device
- As a parent, it is important to remind kids that this is hard
- Parents can't give their kids what they can't give themselves
- Important to recognize that kids miss their school, they are going through a grieving process
- Can't say enough about our food service workers
- One thing this has helped was adaptability, the things that our children have faced as post-9/11 children is unprecedented, but our educational staff has been amazing
- Governor- thank you to you and all the parents. I am concerned about the longer this drags on, the economic disadvantages will be very difficult, and we are working hard at addressing that. The social dimension is a big deal, taking away prom, sports, graduation, etc. we know it's a difficult challenge.



Governor DeSantis

- Our immediate response was to focus on testing, treatment and hospital capacity, that was the tip of the spear
- No other sector of our society has felt the impact of this quite like the education system
- We anticipated more issues, not saying that there aren't but we are thrilled with the roll-out

Press Questions

- May 4th date of return to school?
 - We are trying to return to some normalcy, and we know that this is not impacting young people as much, if there is a level of confidence and safety.
- Will you give parents the option of returning or continuing distance learning?
 - That's not a bad idea recognizing that it is impacting certain communities and individuals differently.
- Plans to cancel for the rest of the year?
 - We review data daily and recommendations from the taskforce and CDC, we want to give parents and teachers the ability to prepare. It may be that not every county will be treated the same. We should recognize that each county is different.
- Preparedness for hurricane season?
 - We assume we must deal with hurricanes every year. Much like this, we assume and prepare for the worst and hope for the best. Our Hurricane Michael recovery plan should be approved quickly, the Governor spoke to Secretary Carson.
- Unemployment
 - 35,000-50,000 applications on the main site, if we can't migrate to Connect, we have 2000 state workers ready to go. With the ramp up of servers, we have had higher traffic, there are now two separate websites to submit, it is on the State to migrate over. Paper applications are beginning to arrive from FedEx. All the Department of Revenue staff and other personnel shows how committed we are to respond adequately than this. We are in a better position than we are a week ago, but we still need to improve. There are still things that must be verified, although some requirements have been waived. Some of the slowdown has been in the connection to servers for social security verification.