

Hillsborough County Board Of Education Meets During Teachers' Protest

In their first meeting since the COVID-19 shutdown, the Florida Board of Education met to discuss how county schools would move forward with the 2020-2021 school year despite the increasing cases of the Coronavirus in Florida.

Superintendent Addison Davis and Governor Ron DeSantis were among those who attended the meeting at Strawberry Crest High School on July 15th to create a plan for upcoming school year.

Before the meeting, a group of concerned parents and teachers rallied outside Strawberry Crest to peacefully protest and voice their concerns for the health of school staff, students, and families with signs that read "listen to teachers" and "face to face will be a disgrace." Protesters called for a decision based on scientific evidence that shows it is safe to return to the classroom, using #14DaysNoNewCases on their Facebook page.

Many teachers, such as Scott and Laura Hottenstein from Rodgers Middle School, came to the protest to voice their concerns for the mental health of their students and employees of the district. For them, the request was simple: decide on a plan and stop "putting politics over their kids."

Yolanda Turner, a teacher for Sumner Academy, echoed those concerns. "My colleagues and I believe that it is not safe right now for teachers or kids to go back to school."

Superintendent Addison Davis understands that teachers want a concrete plan and students want to get back to normal school but said that “we don’t have a playbook for this.” After the Board of Education meeting, Davis released a statement to Hillsborough County families.

“Based on ongoing medical consultations, I will be recommending to the School Board that we delay the start of the 2020-2021 school year for students by two weeks until August 24th.”

On July 23rd, , the Hillsborough County School Board unanimously voted to delay the start of the school year, following Davis’ recommendation. The decision came after approximately half of Hillsborough County families submitted their form of intent to send their students back to campuses despite an emotional argument against allowing these families to attend physical school from teachers at the meeting. The last step will be approval of the plan from the State of Florida.

For more information, visit the Hillsborough County School Website at <https://www.sdhc.k12.fl.us/>