



Good Morning!

Tomorrow, August 12th, students in Brevard and Indian River County will head back to school. I want to wish all of the students and teachers a great year of learning!

Education is essential to our state's success, which is why the Florida Legislature invested nearly \$35 billion in our education system this year. The budget increased funding for the Florida Education Finance Program by \$783 million, including \$364 million in flexible funding that school districts can use for teacher pay increases, and \$285 million to recruit, retain and recognize our state's best teachers. Overall, our schools will receive an additional \$242 per student to bring the total per pupil funding up to a record high \$7,672 per student.

During the 2019 Session, the Florida Legislature also passed legislation that supports our public schools and gives parents the opportunity to choose the best education for their child. Senate Bill 7070 expanded choice options for both low and middle income families with the creation of the Family Empowerment Scholarship. This gives parents the opportunity to receive a voucher to enroll their child in the school that best fits their needs. For more information on this program, please visit FLDOE.org.

I consider it a great honor to represent all of the citizens and visitors of District 17. Please share [this link](#) with your friends and family so that they too can sign up for the [Mayfield Minute](#).

If you or someone you know needs my assistance, please don't hesitate to contact my office. My staff and I are here to serve you!

Red Tide Task Force Organized

Red Tide blooms have been documented along Florida's Gulf coast since the 1840s, and recently Florida experienced one of its most severe red tide blooms on record. Over the course of 16 months, from November of 2017 until February of 2019, this Red Tide event was recorded as the fifth longest since 1953, and the first since 2007 to impact Florida's southwest, northwest, and east coasts simultaneously.

Recently, Governor Ron DeSantis organized the new Red Tide Task Force by appointing eleven expert researchers and leading scientists to the board. This includes Dr. Duane DeFreeze, Executive Director of the Indian River Lagoon National Estuary Program. For over 15 years, this Task Force had been inactive and without funding until this re-organization under the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission (FWC).

"My administration will continue to press forward to find solutions and empower our brightest minds to help protect our environment," said Governor DeSantis. "The issues of Red Tide are complex, but with the appointments of these leading scientists and researchers, we hope to make a difference."

"Governor DeSantis has made it clear that the water quality in this state is a top priority," said Florida Department of Environmental Protection Secretary Noah Valenstein. "Bringing some of the state's top environmental scientists together to address Red Tide will complement the efforts of the experts on the Blue-Green Algae Task Force and enable us to expedite our efforts to restore and protect our fresh and marine waters."

The Red Tide Task Force will focus on the causes of Red Tide with support from FWC's Center for Red Tide Research. I am proud that during the 2019 Legislative Session the Florida Legislature appropriated \$4.8 million for this effort.

Hepatitis A Declared Public Health Emergency

Recently, Florida's Surgeon General Dr. Scott Rivkees declared a Public Health Emergency to address the increase in Hepatitis A cases in Florida. Brevard County was among those designated as critically impacted.

"The best way to prevent hepatitis A is through vaccination," said Dr. Scott Rivkees. "It is important that we vaccinate as many high-risk individuals as possible in order to achieve herd immunity."

Pursuant to the Public Health Emergency, the Florida Department of Health (FDOH) will request assistance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

While anyone can contract hepatitis A, individuals who are considered by the CDC and FDOH to be "high risk" include those who are experiencing homelessness; intravenous and non-intravenous drug users; individuals in an emergency room or other acute care setting, after being administered an opioid antagonist, such as naloxone; individuals working with homeless persons or intravenous drug users outside of health care settings; and first responders.

The declaration also recommends vaccination for individuals or who are at heightened risk for suffering serious complications from contracting hepatitis A. This includes individuals with chronic liver disease, clotting factor disorders, and individuals over 60 years of age with a serious underlying medical condition in critically impacted counties.

In Florida, the critically impacted counties are: Brevard, Citrus, Glades, Hernando, Hillsborough, Lake, Liberty, Manatee, Marion, Martin, Okeechobee, Orange, Pasco, Pinellas, Sumter, Taylor, and Volusia. Hepatitis A cases in 2019 thus far have already surpassed those in 2018. From January 1, 2019 through July 27, 2019, there were 2,034 hepatitis A cases were reported in Florida.

To prevent further spread of Hepatitis A, FDOH recommends all individuals practice good handwashing procedures. Washing hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after using bathrooms, changing diapers, and before preparing or eating food. Additionally, the declaration emphasized the importance of consistent sanitation practices for public and private facilities with restrooms and showers.

For questions about Hepatitis A, please contact HepA@flhealth.gov, call (844) 225-5364 or visit floridahealth.gov/hepa.

District 17 Highlights

Clean Water Coalition of Indian River County

The Clean Water Coalition of Indian River County will be hosting a meeting with speaker Dr. James Sullivan. Dr. Sullivan, Director of the Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute and member of the Blue-Green Algae Task Force, will be reporting on the state's new Blue Green Algae Task Force and initiatives.

[Clean Water Coalition of Indian River County Meeting](#)

Thursday, August 15th at 7:00 PM
Emerson Center, 1590 27th Ave, Vero Beach

The Clean Water Coalition is an independent organization working to protect and restore the surface and ground waters of Indian River County. For more information visit [CWC-IRC.org](#) or follow them on [Facebook](#).

Palm Bay Chamber Celebrates 30th Anniversary

This past week the Greater Palm Bay Chamber of Commerce celebrated their 30th Anniversary at Promise in Brevard. After serving the Palm Bay community for two years as the Palm Bay Business Men's Association, the founding fathers started the organization on April 20, 1989.

Since its founding, the Palm Bay Chamber has worked to support the growth of businesses and the community. They also offer member services such as business networking, advertising, events, and other business support assistance.

For more information or to join the Chamber, please contact (321) 951-9998 or visit [GreaterPalmBayChamber.com](#).

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