



MEDIA RELEASE
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919 N Broad Street • Brooksville, FL 34601

District 'graduates' first Citizens Academy

Brooksville – At the June 28th board meeting, the Hernando School District recognized its first class of Citizens Academy graduates. The district launched their Citizens Academy in March as a way to offer the community an inside and up close look at key systems and current issues impacting the school district. For the first 'class' the school district sought a diverse group of community members, inviting elected officials, public servants, business owners and those who work in the non-profit sector to participate.

"Many of us have been immersed in public education for many years and deeply understand the nature of our work, whether it's food service, transportation, finance or the classroom," said Superintendent John Stratton. "But much of the work of operating a school district is not easily seen by those outside of the organization. With our Citizens Academy, we wanted to bring the community in and show them how we operate."

Leaning on their skills as educators, district staff identified areas that would be most relevant to the general public and developed interactive workshops hosted at 5 different sites throughout the district. Citizens Academy was made up of engaging and high interest sessions focused on academics, student services, facilities & finance, college and career education and transportation.

"I wanted to learn what academic changes occurred during the past few years. I was pleasantly surprised at the technology that exists in our district," said Amy Baldwin, judicial court supervisor and participant. "The schools went above and beyond to welcome us with student greeters and delicious food. The topics were interesting and informative. I learned something valuable at each location that I am now able to communicate to the rest of the community."

"It began as a way to give accurate information and encourage healthy dialogue," Stratton said. "It ended with 13 new relationships between the school district and the community. It was more powerful than I could imagine and we are looking forward to the next one."

"I believe community engagement builds a stronger relationship between the public and the community," Baldwin said.

District Plans are underway for the 2023 Citizens Academy.