Dr. Nikolai P. Vitti
Superintendent

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November 10, 2016

Dear Parents and Guardians,

As I believe you know, make-up days have been identified as a result of Hurricane Matthew and Tropical Storm Hermine. The district calendar is created in advance of the school year by a committee of parents, community constituents, teachers, district administrators, district and School Advisory Council Members, Parent Teacher Association members, and the Duval Teachers Union.

Historically, the Calendar Committee identifies Weather Days within each district calendar. These days are to be used if conditions exist to cancel regularly scheduled school days. With three make-up days required after the occurrence of Hurricane Matthew, we selected two weather days at the end of the winter break period, as well as a day in April when school was due to be closed. This was done in an effort to respect the original board approved calendar to the greatest extent possible.

Additionally, we recognized that the district calendar for 2016-2017, indicating which days would be used if regular school days were cancelled, had been posted for parent and community planning purposes over a year ago. At the same time, we also wanted to protect the two-week winter break as much as possible. This is why we previously did not select a weather day due to the missed day after Tropical Storm Hermine in September and why only two days were selected during the winter break, instead of three. The district worked with the Duval Teachers Union to survey teachers regarding what days should be considered for make-up days. Make-up days were discussed with the School Board at our monthly committee meeting on October 18, and a decision was made on that day to announce the make-up days for Hurricane Matthew. The make-up day for Topical Storm Hermine was announced earlier. Below are the approved weather make-up days:

Make-up Day Due to Tropical Storm Hermine	Make-up Days Due to Hurricane Matthew
Friday, January 13, 2017	Thursday January 5, 2017
	Friday, January 6, 2017
	Thursday, April 13, 2017

Despite new standards and assessments, students are demonstrating improvement in our district. Due to inclement weather, our students lost four days of teaching and learning. As an organization that owes its taxpayers the full academic and civic engagement of our children, those days should be provided. Despite the decision of some districts to accumulate extra daily instructional time for an entire calendar year to satisfy the annual required number of instructional time, we believe that make-up days are warranted to fulfill our commitment to taxpayers and children. This is why make-up days are identified in the calendar in advance. In addition, make-up days were required to satisfy the required amount of instructional time for schools required to offer additional time for reading. Lastly, teachers and personnel such as clerical staff, custodians, cafeteria workers, psychologists, and paraprofessionals are under contract to provide a specific number of working days each year to serve our children. This is established by days, not hours. To eliminate make-up days would lead to reduced salaries or salaries provided without the engagement of students. The district spends millions of taxpayer dollars each day on salaries.

We certainly recognize that many families already have plans in place and that some cannot be changed to accommodate the modified calendar. For those families in this scenario, please know that your child will be granted an excused absence and will be allowed to make-up any missed work for the make-up weather days. As with any absence, students will be required to make-up all assignments for any school days missed, per district policy. We continue to appreciate your involvement in our school district and understanding of the challenging situation we faced when making this decision.

Sincerely,

Nikolai P. Vitti, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

EVERY SCHOOL. EVERY CLASSROOM. EVERY STUDENT. EVERY DAY.