

# THE TAMPA TRIBUNE

## Retirement proposal dropped

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LAND O' LAKES – The Pasco County school district won't be moving forward any time soon on an enhanced early retirement package.

Superintendent Heather Fiorentino told the school board Tuesday evening that, as she and the district staff analyzed employment numbers, they decided to hold off on the early retirement plan.

The idea could be revived later, though, Fiorentino said.

The school board held a workshop in May to discuss offering employees an early retirement benefit as part of an effort to reduce the work force during tight budget times.

The board never reached the point of deciding which employees to target and what kind incentives to offer.

In other action Tuesday:

- The board approved plans to start a virtual instruction program for students in grades K-12.

The online program would meet the requirements of a new state law that directs all 67 school districts to provide virtual instruction.

Pasco plans to contract with two online educational services providers – Florida Virtual School's Connections Academy and K12 Florida Virtual Academy – to handle classes for elementary school students. For middle and high school classes, the district plans to become a franchise of Florida Virtual School and use its own teachers.

A part-time program for grades six through 12 will be open to any student in public, private and charter schools in Pasco, as well as students who are home-schooled.

A full-time program, though, will have eligibility requirements restricting who can sign up for it.

An assistant principal, who will be housed at Crews Lake Middle in Shady Hills, will oversee the virtual program. Registration for the online classes will be held in July.

- The board extended by 60 days the board's contract with Athenian Academy of Pasco, a charter school in New Port Richey. The contract would have expired June 30.

The district is negotiating a new contract with the school, but several issues caused delays. The extension will allow the school to remain open and the contract negotiations to continue.

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