

# CHARTER SCHOOLS NEWSLETTER

January 2012

## New 2012-2015 RFP Released



The 2012-15 Charter School Program (CSP) Grant Request for Proposal has been released. The general purpose of the CSP Planning & Implementation Grant (also known as the "Start-up Grant") is to provide financial assistance for the initial implementation of charter schools and to expand the number of high quality charter schools in Florida.

This year's RFP provides \$19.1 million, and up to 45 charter schools will be selected. The focus of this RFP is to support the creation of high quality charter schools that will serve at-risk students. Incentives, including up to 15 preference points and additional funding will be awarded to schools serving Persistently Low-Performing Areas (PLAs) and those districts designated as Rural Low-Income School (RLIS) districts.

Only charter schools that have applied and been approved by their sponsor to open in the 2012-2013 school year or charter schools that opened in the 2011-12 school year and have not previously received a project award are eligible to apply. The latter would receive Implementation funds only. The application deadline is **February 23, 2012**.

**FAQs** — Frequently Asked Questions are available at [https://www.floridaschoolchoice.org/information/charter\\_schools/files/2012-15FAQ.pdf](https://www.floridaschoolchoice.org/information/charter_schools/files/2012-15FAQ.pdf).

**Training** — Charter Schools director, Adam Miller, recently hosted two pre-application technical assistance calls, addressing the RFP's technical requirements and the review process. The PowerPoint notes may be found at [https://www.floridaschoolchoice.org/information/charter\\_schools/files/RFP\\_Training2012\\_15.pdf](https://www.floridaschoolchoice.org/information/charter_schools/files/RFP_Training2012_15.pdf).

Additional details are provided in the RFP, and attachments are posted [here](#). A direct link to the RFP PDF file is provided [here](#). Please note that this is a competitive grant and eligible applicants are not guaranteed funding.

### Inside this issue:

Department Notes	2
Program Reminders	2
Call for Reviewers	2
Charters in the News	3
Professional Development Resources	4
Shining Stars	5

## Program Reminders

- **Capital Outlay Plans:** Sponsors should have reviewed and provided final submission to the Charter Office by November 30. For further information, go to <http://www.fldoe.org/edfacil/oef/cs2012.asp>.
- **Charter School Accountability Report:** The District portion of the CSAR must be submitted by January 31.
- **Charter Schools Week** is May 6—12, 2012. This year's theme: *Public Charter Schools: Because Every Child Can Succeed*. For more information visit <http://www.publiccharters.org/additional-pages/national-charter-schools-week.aspx>. What is your school doing for Charter Schools Week?

## Department Notes

### Revision to School Grades Rule

The State Board of Education and the Department are soliciting input on potential changes to the school grades rule. Department staff has solicited input from district superintendents and assessment and accountability directors through advisory groups, including the Leadership Policy Advisory Committee and the Assessment and Accountability Advisory Committee as well as other stakeholders. You can submit comments regarding school grades revisions on the Department's website at the following link: <https://app1.fldoe.org/rules/default.aspx>.

For additional information on the changes being considered for the school grades methodology, or to submit specific feedback, please review the following materials, which were presented at the rule development workshops. Feedback forms can be submitted to [ARM@fldoe.org](mailto:ARM@fldoe.org).

[Revisions to School Grades Workshop Presentation Feedback Form for School Grades Revisions](#)

## Call for Reviewers

*Stipend available*



The Florida Department of Education (FDOE) Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice is pleased to announce a **Call for Reviewers** for the Public Charter Schools Grant Program Request For Proposal (RFP) issued December 16, 2011.

All reviewers must agree to:

- Sign a FDOE Conflict of Interest Statement ensuring that they do not have a personal, professional, or financial interest in any proposal assigned to them;
- Participate in reviewer training that will be conducted by the Office of Grants Training and Development via conference call during February; and,
- Return their completed scoring sheets within the scheduled two-week review period.

**Reviewers will receive a stipend of \$70 for each completed review returned to the charter office by the scheduled due date (TBD).**

If you are interested in serving as a reviewer for the 2012-2015 PCSGP Peer Review, please submit a cover letter and resume for consideration by the close of business on **February 6, 2012**. You may email your documents to [charterschool-grant@fldoe.org](mailto:charterschool-grant@fldoe.org) with "Call for Reviewers, 2012-2015 RFP" in the subject line or fax them to the attention of Helen Giraitis at (850) 245-0875. Program staff will provide all interested persons with detailed information about the review process, training dates, and due dates for all required forms.



## Charters in the News

*A round-up of local and national charter stories*

### Florida Tops Nation In Charter School Laws, Study Says

By [Sarah Gonzalez](#) January 17, 2012 From *State Impact*

The Sunshine State ranks 3rd in the country for having some of the best charter school laws, according to a study by the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools (NAPCS).

Each of the 42 states with charter school laws are scored on how well their laws support charter school growth, accountability and quality.

Actual school performance isn't a factor in the NAPCS study. The study only looks at the charter school laws on the books. And they compare Florida laws to a model charter school application and contract that NAPCS created in 2009. [Read more....](#)

### Charter schools provide high-quality public education

BY [CHERI SHANNON](#) January 2, 2012 From *MiamiHerald.com*

More than 10 percent of Florida's public schools are charter schools. The first charter school in the state opened in 1996, and 15 years later, there are 520 charter schools serving more than 177,000 students. This clear and steady rise in enrollment is because parents want to provide their child with the best public educational option that fits their individual needs, instead of a one-size-fits-all neighborhood school.

With that in mind, charter schools are producing results. They are tuition-free public schools that are open to all students, regardless of ethnic background or socioeconomic status, in the districts where they operate. [Read More....](#)

### Charter schools: Wave of the future?

By [Steve Kastenbaum](#), *CNN Radio*

More students are attending class at charter schools across the U.S. than ever before, and the number is expected to continue growing in the coming years.

The [National Alliance for Public Charter Schools](#) recently released a report saying that more than 2 million children are enrolled in public charter schools this year. The nonprofit resource for charter schools said that more than 500 charter schools opened their doors across the country in the 2011-12 school year. In speech after speech, President Obama has said the charter schools play an important role in his education policy. His administration hopes to double the number of charters that were existence when he took office.

"We'll encourage states to take a better approach when it comes to charter schools and other innovative public schools," Obama said in a recent speech on education reform. [Read more....](#)

### Kids with disabilities enjoy Seagull holiday

By [Daphne Taylor](#) December 23, 2011 From *sfltimes.com*

Brittney may not have hit the perfect note every time but her rendition of Silent Night couldn't have been more perfect. Playing the role of an angel, complete with halo, and seated in her wheelchair, the 25-year-old West Palm Beach resident belted out the words of the carol with excitement and enthusiasm.

Brittney — whose first name only is being used for this story — was one of the performers at the annual holiday party for Seagull Industries for the Disabled in Revera Beach. . . .

The charter school opened in 2002. "Our goal is to assist them to transition from high school to independent living and self reliance," said Marni Greenberg, special events coordinator. [Read more....](#)

## Celebrate Literacy Week Online Book Drive

Research shows that students who read just 20 minutes extra per day are more likely to excel and be successful in school. The Florida Education Foundation and the Just Read, Florida! Office have partnered together to provide individual community members, educational partners, parents, grandparents and friends an opportunity to show support for their public schools. Through the Celebrate Literacy Week, Florida! *Take the Lead and Read* Book Donation site, individuals can select an elementary, middle or high school, and purchase the number of books they would like to donate to the school they have chosen. This is a wonderful opportunity for individuals, at your schools or in the community, to help build classroom libraries as well as school media center resources.

The goal of this donation site is to increase the number of books in schools so that all students have access to more text, providing them the opportunity to expand and advance their literacy skills. Please visit the book donation website at <http://data.fldoe.org/register/JustReadFlorida/> and share the [Take the Lead and Read Book Donation flyer](#) with your principals, teachers and community.



*Celebrate Literacy  
Week, January 24-27*

## January is National Mentoring Month



Research shows that quality mentoring can help students stay in school and avoid substance abuse and delinquency. Mentoring can also improve self esteem, social skills and career development. National Mentoring Month was created in 2002 to focus national attention on the need for mentors.

Learn more about National Mentoring Month at <http://www.nationalmentoringmonth.org/> . To find your local coordinator, go the statewide list at <http://www.nationalmentoringmonth.org/> .

## Professional Development Resources

**Register for the 2012 National Charter Schools Conference** to be held Tuesday, June 19 – Friday, June 22, 2012 at the Minneapolis Convention Center. The National Charter Schools Conference is the largest gathering of charter school leaders, educators and supporters from across the country. For more information, go to: <http://publiccharters.org/Conference/2012/Home.aspx>. **Early registration rates end February 15.**

### How to Engage Underperforming Students

By focusing tightly on instructional strategies and PD, educators at Cochrane Collegiate Academy saved their school from closure. In just three years, they have doubled student performance, and they continue to reach higher. [Read the article](#). [Interactive Video Player: Look for downloadable PDF worksheets and other resource links to appear under the player as you watch the video.]

<http://www.edutopia.org/stw-school-turnaround-student-engagement-video>

### Is your contact information up to date?

Make sure you are receiving all Program Office communications. Update you contact information through your charter school login at [https://www.floridaschoolchoice.org/login/login\\_charter\\_school.asp](https://www.floridaschoolchoice.org/login/login_charter_school.asp), or e-mail [Charterschools@fldoe.org](mailto:Charterschools@fldoe.org).



## Shining Stars

### *KCC First Lego League Team advances to Regionals, Brings home trophy!*



Congratulations to Kid's Community College Charter School and their Lego League team, the Terminators. The team competed in the Suncoast First Lego League Qualifying Tournament on January 7th, 2012. Out of the 16 teams that competed, the Terminators received 1 of 3 tickets given to compete in the Regional Tournament in February.

In addition, the team received a trophy from the judges as the "Best Rookie Team". Way to go Cougars ... You make us proud!

*First Lego League is a robotics program for 9 to 16 year olds, which is designed to get children excited about science and technology. The children are assigned the task of programming an autonomous robot to score points on a thematic playing surface, and create an innovative solution to a problem as part of their project.*

*Submitted by Kids Community College Charter School.*

To see more **Shining Stars**, go to the Charter Schools website: [http://www.floridaschoolchoice.org/information/Charter\\_Schools/Success\\_Stories.asp](http://www.floridaschoolchoice.org/information/Charter_Schools/Success_Stories.asp)

**Share the accomplishments of your *Shining Stars!*** Please send submissions via e-mail to our newsletter editor at [charterschools@fldoe.org](mailto:charterschools@fldoe.org).

- Indicate "Charter School Shining Stars" in the subject line.
  - Limit the story to 3-4 paragraphs or no more than 500 words.
  - Proofread and ensure story is ready for publication.
  - Include a contact person or web link for more information.
  - Include up to 2 photos, with captions (optional).
- Stories may appear in the newsletter, the website, or both.



**Improving K-12 Educational  
Choice Options**

**Charter Schools Office**  
Adam Miller—Charter Director  
Helen Giraitis—Grants Manager

### Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice

**Michael Kooi, Esq.—Executive Director**

325 West Gaines Street, Suite 522  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0400

Toll-free: 800-447-1636  
Phone: 850-245-0502  
Fax: 850-245-0875

E-mail: [Charterschools@fldoe.org](mailto:Charterschools@fldoe.org)  
On the Web: [WWW.FLORIDASCHOOLCHOICE.ORG](http://WWW.FLORIDASCHOOLCHOICE.ORG)