

March 2009

Florida's Charter Schools News

Charter School of Excellence



The Charter School of Excellence, located at 1217 SE 3rd Avenue in Ft. Lauderdale was just awarded the New Leaders for New Schools' Effective Practice Incentive Community (EPIC) Program Grant / Gold-gain award from the National Charter School Consortium for dramatically improving students' academic performance.

Recognized for its high student achievement gains on the Florida achievement tests between the 2006-2007 and 2007-2008

school years, the Charter School of Excellence – a K-5th grade public charter school – was among the 21 highest ranked charter schools of the 144 schools in the EPIC National Charter School Consortium and **the only elementary school in the nation to receive the Gold-EPIC award.** Educators at the school will receive financial rewards of \$4,000 in exchange for working with New Leaders for New Schools to document and share the practices that led to the award-winning gains.

EPIC is unique in that the program compares charter school achievement gains across states and financially rewards educators for sharing their effective practices. EPIC is in its second year of a five-year grant funded primarily by the federal government. Schools have the opportunity to win in multiple years. EPIC awards are based on the progress students make over time, rather than overall proficiency rates. In this way, EPIC identifies and rewards schools that have had a clear impact on their students' learning. Additional information on the EPIC program can be found at www.nlms.org/epic.jsp.

The Charter School of Excellence, an "A" school, is one of the top ten performing public schools in the state. It currently serves more than 300 students in its downtown Ft. Lauderdale campus. In August 2008, a second K-5th grade campus opened in the Davie / Pembroke Pines area.

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Staff Spotlight: Grants Management – Unit C

The Office of Grants Management serves the educational community by managing the distribution of grant funding. Its mission is to serve all valued customers, both external and internal, by assisting them in the processes and procedures for accessing funds to educate students throughout the State. To that end, staff participates in the process for pre-approval program funding allocations, and the receipt and processing of applications. Staff provides intake, data entry, budget approval, generation of Project Award Notices and dissemination of the documents to the appropriate destinations. The section supports eleven bureaus and offices and the comptrollers office. An average of 4,500 applications are accepted and processed by our team of 15 full-time staff and one (1) OPS staff. The Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice, Charter section is supported by Unit C – which includes a director and a team of three who work diligently to fund Florida's charter schools.



Wanda Akisanya began her career in state employment with the Florida Commission on Ethics. Over the past twenty-five years, she has worked for Florida State University, Florida Department of Financial Services, Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles and Florida A&M University. The majority of these years were spent working as a Personnel Specialist in Human Resources with employees explaining benefits.

Ms. Akisanya is the youngest of ten children. She attended J. W. Lockhart Elementary School (formerly College Hill) in Hillsborough County. After her family relocated to Tallahassee, she attended Augusta Rae Middle School and graduated from Leon High School in 1976. She received her B.S. degree in Office Administration from Florida A&M University in 1985. She returned to school and received her Masters in Guidance and Counseling from Florida A&M University in 1998. She is a member of Greater Mount Zion Primitive Baptist Church and currently lives in Tallahassee with her son, Shola. She enjoys reading, singing in the church choir and listening to gospel music.



Mark Curtis - "I am immensely grateful for the unique and rewarding opportunity while working in conjunction with the Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice in providing grant application auxiliary services to students and educators of Florida's charter schools and will enthusiastically work to ensure their continued success."



Phyllis Vickers White has been in state government for many years. She has worked for the Florida Department of Revenue and the Florida Department of Education (DOE). Within DOE, Phyllis has worked in the Bureau of Exceptional Student Education, Office of Early Intervention and School Readiness and Financial Management.

She currently works as a Grants Specialist within Financial Management, Office of Grants Management, Unit C. In this position, she assists with processing, managing/monitoring numerous state/federal programs, including, but not limited to, Public Charter Schools, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Reading First, Governor's Summer Program, Florida Learn & Serve, Title III Immigrant and Refugee, Personnel Development Partnerships, and Florida Inclusion Network.



Sue Wilkinson is the director of the Office of Grants Management in the Bureau of Contracts, Grants & Procurement Services, at the Florida Department of Education (DOE). Her chief responsibility is oversight of the application process for flow through federal funds and funds appropriated by the Florida Legislature. The major funds sources are No Child Left Behind (NCLB), Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Adult Education, and Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education.

Sue is a native Floridian with a varied background. Her career has covered horticulture, social work, boat captain, and the culinary arts. She has served the state of Florida in a grants management capacity for 9 years.

Charter Schools Students visit Washington, D.C.



In response to the fervor, fascination and utter infatuation generated by the recent election of our nation's 44th President of the United States of America, staff on the campus of **Paragon Elementary Charter and Pompano Charter Middle School** put together a fieldtrip for students to attend the Inaugural festivities in Washington, D.C.

Impressed by the numerous positive examples of leadership that now President Barack Obama exhibited throughout his campaign, empowered by the relevance of his story towards glory and pride fully emboldened by the mirror image of his reflection as an African American scholar, the students couldn't wait to connect with him and the history he was about to create.

However, as the only two Title-I charter schools in Broward County to be graded as "A" schools by the Florida Department of Education in 2008, like President Obama, the students know a thing or two about seemingly impossible to overcome obstacles and improbably historic outcomes themselves.

Amidst the backdrop of a struggling economy and under the light of the students' socio economic reality, staff and students raised both the momentum and money necessary to send a small group of students and parents to Washington.

The atmosphere on the 16-hour bus ride and in the city itself was one of harmony and goodwill. Individuals from all races, classes, communities and continents around the world were on scene in a serene unprecedented display of benevolence.

The students had the opportunity to see and visit The White House, The Smithsonian Institute, The Capital Building, Washington Monument, various museums, and at a very close range, our nation's President of the United States of America, Barack Obama.

As Principal, with the help of a caring and competent staff, I've taken these small two charter schools to a lot of memorable heights since my arrival; however, when I heard a fifth grader who had never been out of the city or seen snow before say "I had the most fun I've ever had in my life!" I have to concede that this trip ranks right up there with the best of them.

Ardonnis Lumpkin, E.d. S.



Congratulations!



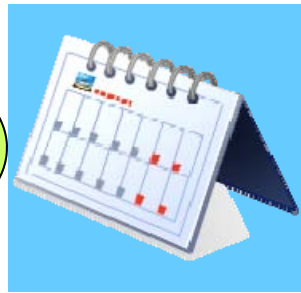
Ms. Ferguson receives award.

Chiles Academy -Five Star School Award

The Five Star School Award is the highest award for community involvement that is bestowed by the Florida Department of Education. To qualify for this award, a school must achieve 100% of the 29 criteria in the categories of Business Partnership, Family Involvement, Volunteers, Student Community Service, and School Advisory Councils. This is the fifth year in a row that The Chiles Academy has received this award!

Mark your calendar!

Make plans to celebrate
National Charter Schools Week
May 3-9, 2009



2009 Florida Charter School
Conference
November 16-18, 2009
Orlando, Florida

Second International Symposium on Assessment in Music Education

April 15-17, 2009

Paramount Plaza Hotel and Suites, Gainesville, FL

The music education faculty of the University of Florida School of Music will host a Symposium on Assessment in Music Education from April 15-17, 2009, at the Paramount Plaza Hotel and Suites in Gainesville, Fla. This symposium will focus on identifying and exploring effective assessment frameworks, models, and designs for the assessment of PreKindergarten through 12th grade and postsecondary music students and music programs. Keynote Speakers include Dr. Eric Smith, Florida Commissioner of Education, Dr. Richard Colwell, Dr. David Elliott and Dr. Edwin Gordon. For more details, visit <http://conferences.dce.ufl.edu/isame/>.

SCHOOL
CHOICE
Florida Department of Education

Governance Training

The deadline for board members to receive training is August 1, 2009 for the 2009-2010 school year.

Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice

Phone: 850-245-0502
Fax: 850-245-0875

School Choice Hotline:
1-800-447-1636

Congratulations to Orlando Science Middle School!!!



The middle school participated in the Science Olympiad Tournament and received 2 individual second places and became the 7th school among 63 schools in the tournament.

www.floridaschoolchoice.org