

# CHARTER SCHOOLS NEWSLETTER

March 2012

## Charter School Program now accepting Replication and Expansion Grant applications

The U.S. Department of Education's Charter Schools Program has just announced the 2012 CSP Grants Competition for Replication and Expansion. This program is designed to assist non-profit charter management organizations and other entities that are not-for-profit entities in replicating or expanding high-quality charter schools with demonstrated records of success. Applicants must have experience operating more than one high-quality charter school.

In 2012, the Department plans to use up to \$13,500,000 for this competition, and estimates making between 7 and 11 awards. (However, the Department is not bound by any estimates.)

**Applications are due by May 7, 2012**, and must be submitted through [Grants.gov](http://Grants.gov). Applicants must register at Grants.gov prior to submitting an application. The registration process can take up to five business days, or longer if all steps are not completed in a timely manner, so applicants are advised to register early.

Descriptions of the previous grantees from 2010 and 2011 can be found at <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/charter-rehqcs/awards.html>.

**A pre-application meeting will be held via webinar on March 27, 2012** from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. (Washington, DC time). For those interested in attending, please RSVP to [charterschools@ed.gov](mailto:charterschools@ed.gov). More information is available at <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/charter-rehqcs/applicant.html>.



## Make a Note

### Our new mailing address:

Florida Department of Education  
Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice  
325 W. Gaines Street, **Suite 1044**  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0400

Office staff continue to be available at their current phone numbers and e-mail addresses.



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## Department Notes

### Memo, March 2, 2012: Students Required to Complete End-of-Course Assessments

This memo addresses questions about which students are required to complete statewide end-of-course (EOC) assessments. <http://info.fldoe.org/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-6304/dps-2012-12.pdf>

### Florida's Multi-tiered System of Supports Website

Visit Florida's new MTSS website at <http://www.florida-rti.org/> to browse for new materials, updates, and resources to assist you in implementing MTSS in your organization, district or school, with a common language and a common understanding of Florida's system. This website provides a central, comprehensive location for Florida-specific information and resources that promote system-wide practices to ensure highest possible student achievement in both academic and behavioral pursuits. The new site is organized around four sections including Florida's MTSS, One System, Educator Resources and Parent Resources. Go to <http://www.florida-rti.org/>, mark as a favorite, and spread the word!

### Paperless Communications

In an effort to communicate with Florida's educational community in a timely and cost efficient manner, the Department of Education developed the Paperless Communications System as a means of notifying interested parties when official correspondence is posted on our website. By signing up for this service, you will be able to receive e-mail notices containing links to messages, reports, legislative updates, technical assistance papers and official memorandums issued by the Department. All messages will link to PDF files which may be viewed, downloaded to your computer, or printed at your discretion. [Sign up for E-Mail Notices.](#)

## 2012 Legislative Wrap-up

*State lawmakers approve \$1 billion budget increase for education and bolster vital reforms*

**TALLAHASSEE** – During the recently closed 2012 Legislative Session, lawmakers heeded the Governor's message, and made education a major focus of the legislative session, resulting in the allocation to education of the \$1 billion sought by the Governor and the passage of many of the State Board of Education's priorities.

"I want to thank the members of the Florida Legislature for their hard work to ensure that our children continue to have the opportunity to compete on a global level," said Florida Education Commissioner Gerard Robinson. "The State Board of Education agrees with Florida's parents, teachers, and taxpayers that improving education must be a high priority, and I commend our senators and representatives for their support of public education for the next generation of students."

### [HB 7127- School Improvement and Education Accountability](#)

In an effort to provide more clarity while maintaining effective school accountability, this bill aligns Florida's Differentiated Accountably (DA) system with changes to the state's school grading system and Florida's ESEA flexibility waiver. The changes strategically target struggling schools and increase support to school districts in closing achievement gaps for all students.

### [HB 7063- Digital Learning](#)

This legislation continues to expand access to digital learning options for students in public schools. It allows students in grades K-5 to enroll on a part-time basis in the Florida Virtual School (FLVS) and expands part-time options for students in grades K-8 in district virtual instruction programs. The bill also authorizes FLVS full-time students to participate in interscholastic extracurricular activities.

The proposed bills require the Governor's signature before they become law. For more information, visit the Governor's bill action website [www.flgov.com/bill-action](http://www.flgov.com/bill-action).

## Program Reminders

- **Pre-application Webinar for Expansion & Replication RFP: March 27 from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.** (Eastern time). To attend, please RSVP to [charter-schools@ed.gov](mailto:charter-schools@ed.gov)
- **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?
- **Expansion & Replication RFP Due Date: May 7, 2012.** Applicants must register at [Grants.gov](http://Grants.gov) prior to submitting. For more information, see <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/charter-rehqcs/applicant.html>.

## Call for Charter Schools Program Peer Reviewers

The Charter Schools Program at the **U.S. Department of Education** is seeking peer reviewers (field readers) to read and evaluate discretionary grant applications submitted under the program's discretionary grant competitions. Serving as a peer reviewer is an excellent opportunity to contribute to our country's education reform efforts by ensuring the effective allocation of federal grant funds to the most promising grant projects. Peer reviewers will independently read, score, and provide written comments for grant applications submitted to the U.S. Department of Education under the CSP programs. Participation in panel calls, application review, and writing and editing comments is typically a significant time commitment during a three week period.

For more information on serving as a peer reviewer contact [CharterSchools@ed.gov](mailto:CharterSchools@ed.gov).

## National Charter School Week May 6-12

*Join us in sharing the good news about charter schools!*

**This year's theme:** *Public Charter Schools: Because Every Child Can Succeed.*

We are inviting Florida charter schools to celebrate National Charter School Week by raising awareness in your communities and around the state with stories and displays sharing your school's story. Your article or display board may highlight students, staff members, a program, parent/community testimonials, or another facet of your school worth bragging about.

Our office will share your school's contribution on our website, in our May Charter School Newsletter or through displays in the lobby of the Department of Education Turlington Building here in Tallahassee during Charter School Week.

**Written submissions** should be 200 words or less and may include a photo with caption. Please send by e-mail to [charterschools@fldoe.org](mailto:charterschools@fldoe.org) with *NSCW Article* in the subject line.

**Display boards** have no size limitation, but display space is limited. We will accept the first 20 schools that respond to this request. Please submit requests to participate to LaCrest McCary at [Lacrest.mccary@fldoe.org](mailto:Lacrest.mccary@fldoe.org). Display boards are to be mailed by April 30, 2012 to:

*OIEPC, Florida Department of Education  
Attn: LaCrest McCary  
325 W. Gaines Street, Room 1044  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0400*

For more ideas on celebrating National Charter School Week and raising awareness, visit the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools at <http://publiccharters.org/additional-pages/advocacy-and-tools.aspx> .



# Charters in the News

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

## There's no mystery to improving schools

*By David R. Colburn and Brian Dassler, special to the Times*

Anyone who is dedicated to public education reform and who is struggling to find the resources should read "*How the World's Most Improved School Systems Keep Getting Better.*" The report surveyed 20 public school systems in places as remote and stressed as Armenia, Minas Gerais (Brazil) and Western Cape (South Africa) to those as modern and advanced as England, Boston, South Korea and Singapore. [Read more....](#)

## An Evaluation Architect Says Teaching Is Hard, but Assessing It Shouldn't Be

*By Theodoric Meyer From The New York Times*

Sixteen years ago, Charlotte Danielson, an Oxford-trained economist, developed a description of good teaching that became the foundation for attempts by federal and state officials and school districts to quantify teacher performance. The [Danielson method](#) — articulated in her book, "[Enhancing Professional Practice: A Framework for Teaching](#)" (ASCD, 1996) — describes good teaching using numerous criteria within four broad areas of performance. [Read more....](#)

## Charter Schools: The Good, the Bad, the ... In-Between?

*Guest post by Jaclyn Zubrzycki From EdWeek.org*

Charters were meant to be a hotbed for innovation, so it's no surprise that they're one of the most-studied types of school (and school reform). . . . It turns out that when it comes down to it, some charters perform exceptionally well, some perform exceptionally poorly, and some—many—don't actually look that different than traditional public schools or neighborhood Catholic schools. [Read more....](#)

## Clark Advanced Learning Center ranked 7th Best High School in Florida

*For Immediate Release Contact Michele Abaldo*

High academic achievement, exceptional graduation rates and outstanding student success earned the Clark Advanced Learning Center designation as the 7th best high school in Florida, according to rankings released by the Florida Department of Education. Clark received 1,453 points, 91% of all possible points. The public charter high school is an "A" rated school located on the Chastain Campus of Indian River State College in Stuart. For more information, call (772) 419-5750 or visit [www.clarkadvancedlearningcenter.org](http://www.clarkadvancedlearningcenter.org).

## How To Grow Rural Charter Schools: A Primer

*By Diette Courrege From EdWeek.org*

Rural school enrollment is growing, but rural charter schools haven't kept pace. Only 16 percent of all charter schools nationwide were rural, compared with 33 percent of traditional schools, according to statistics from 2009-10.

The [National Alliance for Public Charter Schools](#) released a new brief Monday intended to help policy-makers, charter support organizations, and communities grow rural charter schools.

The 16-page brief, "[Beyond City Limits: Expanding Public Charter Schools in Rural America.](#)" highlights some of the challenges rural charter schools face and possible solutions to overcome them.

The brief provides some general characteristics of rural charter schools, including lower enrollments, smaller classes, and more-frequent use of alternative grade combinations (such as K-8 or K-12) than traditional schools. [Read more....](#)



## Funding Opportunities

The following grants and funding opportunities are currently accepting applicants.

### AT&T Aspire Local High School Impact Initiative RFP is now open

AT&T's Local Impact RFP will provide funding for currently operating high school retention programs consisting of elements aligned to the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) Dropout Prevention Practice Guide. AT&T is looking to support organizations that are ready to expand to serve additional students or locations, or to add components to strengthen successful programs. Payments ranging from \$100,000 to \$300,000 for 24 months (2012-14) are available for local programs that emphasize several key items. The deadline is April 27, 2012. [more](#)



**Additional grants accepting applications:**

[Sarah Mook Memorial Poetry Contest](#)

[Campbell's: Labels for Education](#)

[General Mills Twin Cities Grant Program](#)

[Ash Center: Innovations in American Government](#)

## Perspectives Community Relations Key to Successful Recruiting

*By Shane Vander Kooi, Director of Innovation & Operations, Gardens School of Technology*

A successful student recruitment drive is the lifeblood of any school, but for fledgling charters it can be a formidable challenge. We were in just such a position last year as we prepared to open Gardens School of Technology Arts. We could not finance a traditional advertising or recruitment campaign, so we really had to get creative. And our strategies worked. Through effective community relations, we ended up reaching our capacity target well ahead of schedule. Here is what we did.

**We involved our community partners right from the start.** We built active relationships with the church where we lease our space, with the long-time contacts our founding committee members had established within the local after-school and early childcare community, with our district charter school department, and with our various business partners and suppliers. We were also very fortunate in developing relationships with two well-established local charter schools whose principals were more than willing to share their wealth of experience. By leveraging our own personal contact lists and the contacts and social media networks of our community partners, we were able to multiply our efforts to communicate our vision.

**Through school sponsored and community events, we showcased the many unique technology arts activities that illustrated our charter school's focus.** Whether it was through demonstration activities at our local Green Market on the weekends, or through an inaugural launch celebration where our local elected officials and candidates were given a platform to voice their support for creative educational choice options, our team found ways to get the word out. We knew what parents and students were looking for, and when they could personally experience hands-on activities that our future students would be participating in, our vision came alive even though we didn't yet have a school.

**We organized opportunities for our school family to right away give back to the community.** Although on a small scale, we raised our profile locally by actively participating in fundraising and community service projects.

Give your local community an opportunity to actively experience what you do with your students and they will want to get involved and support you.

*Gardens School of Technology Arts is a tuition-free public charter school that opened on August 22, 2011 and currently serves 130 students K-6. Feel free to visit us at [www.mysota.net](http://www.mysota.net).*



## The National School Choice Resource Center

presents the

### National Conference on

*IMPROVING STUDENT OPPORTUNITIES WITH SYSTEMIC SCHOOL CHOICE*

**FRIDAY MARCH 30, 2012 FROM 9AM-4PM**

**The Holiday Inn Capitol**

550 C Street, SW  
Washington, DC  
Phone: 202-479-4000

[For more information, click here.](#)

## 2012 Florida Charter School Conference



### Important Conference Dates

February 22	Call for Program Committee Opens
March 14	Call for Presentations Opens
April 6	Exhibit Hall Booth Sales Opens
May 1	Attendee Registration Opens
June 1	Call for Student Performance Opens

## Professional Development Resources

### Register for the 2012 National Charter Schools Conference.

The conference will be held June 19 – 22, 2012 at the Minneapolis Convention Center. For more information, go to: <http://publiccharters.org/Conference/2012/Home.aspx>.

### Civics lessons focus on presidential primaries

The competitive Republican presidential primaries are offering numerous opportunities for educators to teach civics lessons to their students. One K-5 social-studies teacher in New York City finds age-appropriate election resources on [Time Magazine for Kids](#), while a special educator has crafted a curriculum that has one of her students mapping and tallying the results of the primary contests. [The New York Times \(tiered subscription model\)/SchoolBook blog](#)

### How to boost music education with project-based learning

Educational consultant Andrew Miller in this blog post advocates using project-based learning as part of music education as a way to enhance lessons and further increase the value of the subject as part of the curriculum. To do this, he suggests teachers take a close look at music-education standards, particularly the skills and concepts they contain. Teachers then must create learning contexts that engage all students, and then assess students through performance or other methods, he writes. [Edutopia.org/Andrew Miller's blog](http://Edutopia.org/Andrew-Miller's-blog)



## Shining Stars

### *Clark Advanced Learning Center Students named National Merit Scholarship finalists*

Two Clark Advanced Learning Center students were recently named finalists by the 2012 National Merit Scholarship Program for their exceptional academic achievements. To become a finalist, the students had to continuously earn high grades, have consistent high SAT scores and be recognized for achievement by the school's principal. National Merit scholars are outstanding students, representing less than one percent of high school seniors nationally.

National Merit Scholarship finalist, Meaghan McMahon, of Palm City, graduated from Clark in May 2011 and is currently attending Loyola University in New Orleans. McMahon earned 60 dual enrollment credits toward an Associate in Arts degree from Indian River State College and was president of the IRSC Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society and co-vice president of the National Honor Society.

Harlington Hanna, an Indiantown resident, has earned 45 dual enrollment credits toward an Associate of Arts degree from Indian River State College. Hanna is



*National Merit Scholarship finalists, Meaghan McMahon and Harlington Hanna*

presently a member of the National Honor Society and is majoring in Anthropology.

An A-rated public charter high school, the Clark Advanced Learning Center gives the opportunity to complete one to two years of college at no cost through dual enrollment. Students engage in internships related to their interests and utilize technology in project-based learning. For more information, visit [www.clarkadvancedlearningcenter.org](http://www.clarkadvancedlearningcenter.org).

*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*

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