

CHARTER SCHOOLS NEWSLETTER

April 2012

Charter School Students Excel Across the Board

~ New report compares performance of charter school students with traditional public school students ~

TALLAHASSEE - A new report from the Florida Department of Education shows that students who attend charter schools outpace their traditional public school counterparts on state assessments. Required by state law, the report, *Student Achievement in Florida's Charter Schools: A Comparison with Achievement in Traditional Public Schools*, is a statewide analysis of student achievement in charter schools versus the achievement of comparable students in traditional public schools.

"This report clearly demonstrates that charter schools are a viable option for parents," said Florida Education Commissioner Gerard Robinson. "Charter schools offer a wide range of educational environments to meet the needs of students and their families."

Using data from the 2010-11 school year, the report makes 168 comparisons covering three measurements: FCAT proficiency percentages, achievement gaps, and learning gains. Each of these measurement areas are further broken down to offer a more detailed view of student achievement.

- The FCAT proficiency section of the report contains 54 separate comparisons of student achievement using both overall rates of proficiency by grade groupings and comparisons of subgroup performance. In 50 of the 54 comparisons, charter school students outperformed traditional public school students.
- The achievement gap section contains both longitudinal and current data to analyze the gap between white students and African American students, and white students and Hispanic students in reading, math and science. The achievement gap was smaller for charter school students in 16 of the 18 comparisons.
- The learning gains section of the report makes 96 comparisons of learning gains made by charter school students and traditional public school students. Charter school students had higher average learning gains in 79 of the 96 comparisons.

The report, *Student Achievement in Florida's Charter Schools: A Comparison with Achievement in Traditional Public Schools*, can be found at [https://www.floridaschoolchoice.org/pdf/Charter Student Achievement 2011.pdf](https://www.floridaschoolchoice.org/pdf/Charter_Student_Achievement_2011.pdf) (PDF).



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New Website: Autism Florida

Autism of Florida has launched their website, [Autism Florida: Your First Source for Autism Information](#) for citizens of Florida. Autism Florida offers simplicity of use and easy navigation to access information about autism quickly. As a centralized, single entry point for Florida autism information, the website links to existing resources, including information from Florida's Center for Autism and Related Disabilities (CARD), state agency websites, the Dan Marino Foundation, and other organizations. The website was developed by the Florida State University Autism Institute at the request of the Governor's Task Force on ASD in collaboration with CARD and the Florida Department of Health.

Section 504 Training

The Bureau of Exceptional Student Education and Student Services (BEES) is pleased to announce a training opportunity on Section 504. The training will focus on the changes to Section 504 as a result of the Americans with Disabilities Amendment Act of 2008, as well as the recent Office for Civil Rights' technical assistance for public elementary and secondary schools. The training will be held at the Panhandle Area Educational Consortium (PAEC) center in Chipley, Florida on Tuesday, **May 15, 2012**, from 9:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m. (Central Time). See the attached flyer for registration information. You may also visit the PAEC website for additional information at <http://www.paec.org/fldata/details.aspx?ID=22274>. Registration is encouraged so that ample handouts can be provided. For more information, please contact Bettye Hyle, at (850) 245-7851 or via email at bettye.hyle@fldoe.org.

April is Autism Awareness Month!



Autism Awareness events planned for the month of April may be found at <http://www.florida-card.org/>.

Information and resources related to Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) may also be found on the Florida Department of Education's ASD website at <http://www.fldoe.org/ese/asd.asp> or on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/index.html>.

The presidential proclamation may be viewed at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/04/01/presidential-proclamation-world-autism-awareness-day>.

Department Notes

Postsecondary Education Readiness Test (P.E.R.T.) <http://info.fldoe.org/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-6314/dps-2012-35.pdf>

FBI Changes in Fingerprint Processing <http://info.fldoe.org/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-6315/dps-2012-42.pdf>

Save the Date – 2012 Common Core State Standards Summer Institutes for School-Based Teams <http://info.fldoe.org/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-6316/dps-2012-45.pdf> (Memo) <http://info.fldoe.org/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-6317/dps-2012-45a.pdf> (Attachment A)

Program Reminders

- **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 prior to submitting. For more information, see <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/charter-rehqcs/applicant.html>.

New grant aims to improve charter schools

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — Florida is a hotbed of charter school growth. Just under 12 percent of Florida's public schools are charter schools – the highest percentage of any state, according to the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools. Yet despite increased numbers of teachers and principals, these schools continue to face unique challenges, including how to connect with one another when they are scattered across some 450 campuses from the Panhandle to the Keys.

But there's good news in store for charter school educators: Experts at the [Florida State University Schools](http://www.fsu.edu) (FSUS) and the university's [Florida Center for Research in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics](http://www.fsu.edu) (FCR-STEM) are building an online community especially for them. Designed to support curriculum, instruction and assessment, the community will be integrated into the popular [CPALMS](http://www.fsu.edu) system, the official online source for state K-12 education standards and course information built by FCR-STEM.

For more information, contact Lynn Wicker, (850) 245-3712 or lwicker@fsu.edu, or visit <http://www.lsi.fsu.edu/media/news/2012/14march.html>.

National Charter School Week May 6-12

- Entry deadline coming up! -

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

Send us your stories and displays sharing your school's unique approach to student success.

Written submissions should be 200 words or less and may include a photo with caption. Please send by e-mail to charterschools@fldoe.org with *NCSW 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. 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

Charter school targets migrant students

By YVETTE C. HAMMETT | *The Tampa Tribune*

SEFFNER -- A new charter school opening on Parsons Avenue this fall will target migrant students, whose families follow crop seasons throughout Florida and into other states.

"We were approved Dec. 13 as a charter in Seffner and are the only charter elementary school in that area," said Zenobia J. Cann, who helped apply for the new charter school. . . .

"Our focus is every student, but we will concentrate on migrant families that are highly mobile students transitioning from Immokalee, Ruskin, Wimauma, Plant City and out of the state," Cann said. [Read more at http://www2.tbo.com/news/brandon/2012/mar/21/brnews06-charter-school-targets-migrant-students-ar-382673/](http://www2.tbo.com/news/brandon/2012/mar/21/brnews06-charter-school-targets-migrant-students-ar-382673/)

Teacher Coaching and High Expectations Key to Charter Performance

By Sarah D. Sparks | Guest blog post by Jaclyn Zubrzycki

Recent research has indicated that teacher coaching and high expectations for student behavior are characteristics of the most effective charter schools. In "[Learning from Charter School Management Organizations: Strategies for Student Behavior and Teacher Coaching,](http://www.coreeducationllc.com/blog.php?post=301&qoback=%2Egde%201739047%20member%20104326915)" researchers from the University of Washington's Center for Reinventing Public Education and New Jersey-based research firm Mathematica probe into exactly what those polices look like. [Read more at http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/inside-school-research/2012/03/teacher-coaching-and-high-expe.html?qs=charter](http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/inside-school-research/2012/03/teacher-coaching-and-high-expe.html?qs=charter)

Cheri Shannon: Continue the conversation on quality charter schools

Cheri Shannon is president and CEO of the Florida Charter School Alliance.

At the close of its 60-day session, the Legislature left many issues on the table that would have triggered long-term benefits for Florida's education system. . . . Our legislative goal on behalf of Florida's

public charter schools is, and always has been, to expand school choice and give our students access to the best public education option that fits their individual needs and provides them with the tools to be successful. [Read more at http://www.tallahassee.com/article/20120325/OPINION05/203250321/Cheri-Shannon-Continue-conversation-quality-charter-schools](http://www.tallahassee.com/article/20120325/OPINION05/203250321/Cheri-Shannon-Continue-conversation-quality-charter-schools)

Report Reveals Promising Practices of High-Impact CMOs

From Core Education LLC

The Center on Reinventing Public Education (CRPE) and Mathematica recently released a follow-up study to their January report on successful charter management organizations (CMOs). The new report, [Learning from Charter School Management Organizations: Strategies for Student Behavior and Teacher Coaching,](http://www.coreeducationllc.com/blog.php?post=301&qoback=%2Egde%201739047%20member%20104326915) delves deeper, explaining how five successful CMOs put two successful approaches into practice. [Read more at http://www.coreeducationllc.com/blog.php?post=301&qoback=%2Egde%201739047%20member%20104326915](http://www.coreeducationllc.com/blog.php?post=301&qoback=%2Egde%201739047%20member%20104326915)

To Go Charter or Not: Charter Schools Are Part of Choice

By Jesse L. Jackson | Special to TheLedger.com

The notion of converting a traditional public school into a public charter school has become a real consideration for several local communities. . . .

As superintendent of the Lake Wales Charter Schools system and past superintendent of Florida State University Charter Schools, I know all too well the many challenges and opportunities that are associated with managing charter schools. [Read more at http://www.theledger.com/article/20120402/COLUMNISTS03/120409945/1382/edit?p=1&tc=pg](http://www.theledger.com/article/20120402/COLUMNISTS03/120409945/1382/edit?p=1&tc=pg).

Read Part 2 of this three-part series, [Converting Schools: ID Facts vs. Fiction](http://www.theledger.com/article/20120409/COLUMNISTS03/120409385/1001/BUSINESS?), at <http://www.theledger.com/article/20120409/COLUMNISTS03/120409385/1001/BUSINESS?>

Funding Opportunities

Six Competitive Dissemination Sub-grants to be rolled out in 2012

The Florida Department of Education plans to fund at least six competitive dissemination sub-grants for charter schools during 2012. These sub-grants, authorized in Florida's new federal 2011-2016 CSP grant, are designed to improve student academic achievement. The competitive Requests For Proposal (RFPs) for the 2011-2016 CSP dissemination sub-grants are briefly described below:

Instructional Best Practices (IBP): The Department proposes to fund three (3) dissemination sub-grants (approximately \$250,000/sub-grant) to eligible charter schools for the purpose of disseminating unique, innovative and highly effective instructional practices to charter school teachers and leaders across the state. The Department will focus on instructional practices that have proven effective with educationally and/or economically disadvantaged students. This dissemination grant aims to improve instructional practices and increase student academic achievement. The first IBP will request applications that provide targeted assistance to charter schools that serve students with disabilities (SWDs). The IBP-SWD dissemination sub-grant applications has been publicly advertised via LISTSERV and on the Florida's Charter Schools website.

The next two IBP sub-grants will be advertised later in the spring. One sub-grant will focus on assisting disadvantaged K-8 students, and the second will target disadvantaged secondary school students in grades 6-12.

The following competitive RFPs for the 2011-2016 CSP dissemination sub-grants (approximately \$500,000/sub-grant) are expected to be released during the fall or winter of 2012.

Increasing Graduation Rates (IGR): The Department proposes to fund one dissemination sub-grant (approximately \$500,000) to an eligible charter school that has demonstrated high levels of success in improving graduation rates, especially among economically disadvantaged students, English language learners, students with disabilities, and students in rural areas. It is expected that this dissemination sub-grant will result in increased graduation rates.

Recruitment and Retention of Highly-Effective Teachers (R&R): The Department proposes to fund one dissemination sub-grant (approximately \$500,000) to an eligible charter school for the purpose of disseminating policies, procedures, and practices that are aimed at recruiting and retaining highly-effective teachers. The Department is interested in charter schools that have developed relationships with Institutions of Higher Education and take advantage of the alternative certification system to identify and hire teachers that are highly effective.

Accelerated Learning Options (ALO): The Department proposes to fund one dissemination sub-grant (approximately \$500,000) to an eligible charter school that has demonstrated success in offering accelerated learning options such as dual-enrollment and/or advanced placement through a partnership with a college or university. The dissemination grant will provide funds to the charter school for the purposes of supporting the creation of new charter schools that will partner with colleges and universities and offer accelerated learning options.

Applicants for these dissemination sub-grants must be high-performing and able to demonstrate success in the sub-grant focus area. Please contact Dr. Chris Muire at chris.muire@fldoe.org if you have any questions.



Shining Stars

Samsula Academy's Nutrition Challenge

In its second year, Samsula Academy's Nutrition Challenge, created by Coach Sue Carignan, has taken hold. During the 2010-11 school year, the Challenge was held once for 4 weeks. This year, due to the tremendous support and impact, the Challenge was scheduled to take place three times. The Challenge is based on the following criteria: students earn 1 point for every fruit, vegetable, white milk, 100% juice and water they eat during their school lunch. For each individual challenge, the class with the most points got to eat lunch with Coach Carignan under the PE Pavilion, had their picture taken for the year-book, consumed 100% juice pops and received a small prize. The class with the most points for all 3 challenges, being named Healthiest Class of the Year, got a 'hands on' food party, including a food fight. 'Several people questioned the food fight and my response is that if you don't go big, then the students will not want to strive to win next year. Nutrition, in general, can be a sensitive subject, so I'm striving to make the most positive impact I can, and I think a food fight will easily allow them remember the Nutrition Challenge,' said Coach Carignan.



Mrs. Jordan's 1st grade and Mrs. Ledger's 5th grade classes after the Food Fight!

Share the accomplishments of your **Shining Stars!** Please send submissions via e-mail to our newsletter editor at 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.

Mrs. Jordan's 1st grade class won the distinction of Healthiest Class of the Year. Mrs. Ledger's fifth grade class did the data collecting along with compiling the results for the Challenge. By allowing 5th grade to do the data collecting, math, science and vocabulary were incorporated into their curriculum. Mrs. Ledger's students have written a summary of the entire process and developed data collection charts. Then using the collected data, they created colored, graphic charts and matrices and presented the results for all to see.



*Improving K-12 Educational
Choice Options*

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