

CHARTER SCHOOLS NEWSLETTER

May 2012

IBP-SWD Dissemination Grant RFP now open

The Florida Department of Education has just released a Dissemination Grant RFP for the development of a 24-month program to assist public charter schools with implementing Instructional Best Practices for Students With Disabilities (IBP-SWD) in inclusive settings.

High-quality charter schools which have been in operation for more than three years, have not previously received a dissemination grant, and have demonstrated overall operational and academic success are eligible to apply for this grant. This is a competitive grant and the Department will award one grant for this project (up to \$250,000).

The complete RFP and all required application materials are posted on the School Choice website at: http://www.floridaschoolchoice.org/Information/Charter_Schools/dissemination_grant.asp.

The deadline to apply for the IBP-SWD Dissemination Grant is June 1, 2012. Please contact Dr. Chris Muire at chris.muire@fldoe.org if you have any questions.



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In the Know:

Message from the Commissioner

Dear Colleagues,

In honor of Teacher Appreciation Week, I am sending you a special note of gratitude for all you do for Florida's students.

It takes a special person to embrace the teaching profession. The role you play in helping students grow and become productive citizens makes you true heroes in our communities.

To help celebrate this auspicious week, one of our Partners in Education, Wet 'n Wild, is offering a special discount for all Florida school teachers and public school personnel. Please visit the Florida Education Foundation website or [Just for Teachers](#) on the Florida Department of Education website for all the details.

On behalf of the State Board of Education and the Department of Education, thank you again for all you do on behalf of Florida's students.

Commissioner Robinson

Florida Teacher Community Expands Resources

TALLAHASSEE – The Florida Department of Education (FLDOE) Teacher Community, in partnership with Novachi, is enhancing resources available to Florida’s educators through an online launchpad with applications and collaborative tools designed to help teachers in the classroom. This week, the Teacher Classroom Collaboration (TCC) tool was added to the launchpad. The TCC is a social learning platform designed to facilitate online education by providing virtual classrooms on top of a social network. This innovative application combines the best social networking features with private classroom-level security to create a whole new way to learn and communicate.

“The new Teacher Classroom Collaboration tool will allow teachers to connect directly with parents and students online by simply adding their information to the virtual interface,” said FLDOE Deputy Director of Educator Relations Kelly Seay. “This type of collaboration is important because it enhances the level of teacher communication with parents and encourages involvement in their child’s learning routine.”

Teacher Classroom Collaboration enables teachers to work with students and parents in a classroom-like setting with confidence that the classroom activities are private. Teachers have the ability to create new classes, invite students and parents, and act as the administrator for their newly created virtual classrooms. Students can find their list of classes, participate in classroom activities and discussions, upload assignments, review shared content, class requirements and calendars, access learning trees (created by teachers or fellow peers), and view photos and videos.

Teachers who already have an account on Florida’s Teacher Community through Novachi will automatically view the new Teacher Classroom Collaboration application on the launchpad. For more information about Florida’s Teacher Community, please visit <http://www.fldoe.org/justforteachers/>.

Florida Certificate of Immunization Update

Florida State Health Online Tracking System (SHOTS) has installed an update for the electronic version of the Florida Certificate of Immunization, DH 680 Part B. This update prohibits the issuance of the DH 680 Part B, Temporary Medical Exemption (TME) for children who are up-to-date for all vaccinations required for Kindergarten entry.

The Florida SHOTS update was installed on May 1, 2012, to curtail healthcare providers from incorrectly issuing Kindergarten students a TME with an extended expiration date when the student is complete for all required school immunizations except for the middle school dose of Tetanus (Tdap) vaccine. The inappropriate issuance of a TME skews the students’ immunization status to give the inaccurate representation of under-immunized kindergarten students. Although this Florida SHOTS update will prevent inappropriate issuance of an electronic DH 680 TME, please note that this update will not prevent incorrect manual or written versions of the DH 680 TME from being issued to students for Kindergarten entry. Schools are encouraged to enroll in Florida SHOTS for view-only access at <http://www.flshots.com/enrollment/school.html>.



School visits highlight National Charter School Week

Florida's weeklong celebration of **National Charter School Week** (May 6-12) included visits by state education officials to six charter schools around the state. A visit to Sigsbee Charter School in Key West by School Choice Director Mike Kooi and State Board of Education Member John Padget kicked off the visits.



Left to right, Mike Kooi, Elisa Jannes- Sigsbee Charter School principal, John Padget, Sandra Higgs - SCS Board Member, Lynn Abbot, Tiffany Pellicier - Monroe County School District Advisory Committee, John O'Neill - SCS Board Member, Stanley Rzad - SCS Board Member, and Andy Griffiths - MCSD Board Member

Also in celebration of Charter School Week, three educational entities aligned to unveil new resources enhancing Florida School Choice opportunities. UCP of Central Florida (a not-for-profit charter school and pediatric therapy clinic), the Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice, and CPALMS Charter (created by Florida State University School) hosted an event on Wednesday attended by charter school teachers and school district leaders. The event highlighted the success and growth of charter schools within Florida, showcased the unique and successful charter school of UCP, and launched CPALMS Charter (www.cpalmscharter.org) - the official online learning community for charter school teachers and leaders.

A program featuring Dr. Ilene Wilkins, President and CEO of UCP of Central Florida; Adam Miller, Charter Schools Director at the Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice; and Dr. Lynn Wicker, Di-

rector Florida State University Schools and Principal Investigator for CPALMS Charter, (*shown below*) was followed by demonstrations/tours of the Mobile Parent Resource Center, a RV unit equipped with educational visuals and tools.



"UCP of Central Florida offers another quality choice for parents," said Adam Miller, Charter Schools Director at the Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice. "What makes them unique is their ability to provide an inclusive educational environment where children of all abilities can reach their full potential."

Later in the day, a parent workshop was held presenting tips to help prevent the summer slide in children while strengthening reading and learning skills during summer months, one of six workshops held throughout the state this week by the Florida School Choice Parent Resource Centers in partnership with the Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice.

The Florida Consortium of Public Charter Schools also participated in the week's activities by hosting an A+ celebration honoring more than 100 public charter schools across Florida.

From small beginnings in 1996, the number of charter schools in Florida has grown to over 519 in 2011. Charter schools now serve well over 179,000 students.

PD Portal for Exceptional Student Educators available

A Professional Development (PD) Portal for Exceptional Student Educators has been created by the Florida Center for Interactive Media (FCIM) at Florida State University (FSU) to help make professional development more accessible to Florida's educators, thus enhancing the education of students with disabilities in Florida. The Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services (BEESS) discretionary projects that provide training or facilitate training events have posted their state and regional training events on the portal. The portal includes a description and contact information for each state or regional training event. The PD Portal can be found at <http://pdportal.florida-ese.org>. For content questions, please contact Anne Glass, BEESS Program Director, at Anne.Glass@fldoe.org or (850) 245-0478. For technical questions, please contact Lezlie Cline, FCIM Project Manager at lezlie@fcim.org or (850) 645-7132.

Program Reminders

Reminder: Please see the memo linked below for information relating to implementation of Senate Bill 736 (Student Success Act) for charter schools.

<http://info.fldoe.org/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-6347/dps-2012-49.pdf>

The 2012-15 Instructional Best Practices for Students With Disabilities (IBP-SWD) Dissemination Grant Request For Proposals (RFP) has been released. IBP-SWD applications are due **June 1, 2012**. For additional information and access to all IBP-SWD application materials, visit: http://www.floridaschoolchoice.org/Information/Charter_Schools/dissemination_grant.asp.

Department Notes

Local Educational Agency (LEA) Premethod and Postmethod Request for Supplemental Educational Services <http://info.fldoe.org/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-6359/dps2012-54.pdf> ; <http://info.fldoe.org/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-6360/dps2012-54a.pdf>

2012-2013 21st Century Community Learning Centers Request for Proposal <http://info.fldoe.org/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-6358/dps2012-56.pdf>

Technical Assistance Relative to District-Developed Assessments and Educator Evaluation <http://info.fldoe.org/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-6361/dps2012-59.pdf> ; <http://info.fldoe.org/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-6362/dps2012-59a.pdf>

2012 Common Core State Standards Summer Institutes – Registration Open <http://info.fldoe.org/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-6363/dps2012-73.pdf>

Is your contact information up to date?

Make sure you are receiving all Program Office communications.

Update your contact information through your charter school login at https://www.floridaschoolchoice.org/login/login_charter_school.asp, or e-mail Charterschools@fldoe.org.



Charters in the News

A round-up of local and national charter stories

Converting Schools: Charter Effect on District Schools Part 3 of 3

By JESSE L. JACKSON from *TheLedger.com*

This final part in the series "Converting Schools" addresses several of the more contentious issues that exist between charter schools and public school districts. A common argument among many charter school opponents is that the schools take money away from regular public schools. A charter school receives operating funds from the Florida Education Finance Program based on the number of full-time students enrolled.... [Read more at http://www.theledger.com/article/20120416/COLUMNISTS03/120419479/1001/BUSINESS?Title=Converting-Schools-Charter-Effect-on-District-Schools](http://www.theledger.com/article/20120416/COLUMNISTS03/120419479/1001/BUSINESS?Title=Converting-Schools-Charter-Effect-on-District-Schools)

Teacher Evaluations: We Need Trust, Not Just Tools

By Robin Lake from *EdWeek.org*
Note: Robin Lake is director of the Center on Reinventing Public Education (CRPE) at the University of Washington.

As almost everyone admits, the traditional teacher evaluation system is about as useful as the old Mac Plus buried in my basement. As we work to improve it, we find ourselves immersed in meetings, studies, and nasty political fights. The friction is fine; we need change, and change begets conflict. (...)

I spend a lot of time studying charter management organizations (CMOs), which are often obsessive about ongoing evaluation and improvement. But as an upcoming report from my CRPE colleague Michael DeArmond shows, the evaluation tools that CMOs use are not especially sophisticated. In fact, in effective charter schools, annual or twice-annual evaluations play a far less important role than ongoing feedback and coaching. Test scores often have a place in CMO evaluations, but so do many other factors. CMOs tend to base bonuses and career ad-

vancement on a definition of high performance that includes principal judgment but is not necessarily hard-wired to test-score gains. ... [Read more at http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/rick_hess_straight_up/2012/04/teacher_evaluations_we_need_trust_not_just_tools.html?qs=charter_schools](http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/rick_hess_straight_up/2012/04/teacher_evaluations_we_need_trust_not_just_tools.html?qs=charter_schools)

Charter school celebrates grant award

By Jessica Tuggle from *Hometownnewsol.com*

SEBASTIAN - Science class at Sebastian Charter Junior High [School](#) currently moves around to various rooms on the temporary campus, but now a permanent science lab is a little closer to reality.

The charter school was awarded \$100,000 by the philanthropic group Impact 100 last month and the [funds](#) will be used to furnish the school when its new campus is completed, said Principal Martha McAdams.

"I get teary-eyed when I think of all the stuff we're going to be able to do. It's so different from what we have right now," she said.... [Read more at http://www.myhometownnews.net/index.php?id=92319](http://www.myhometownnews.net/index.php?id=92319)

Charter Week is observed in Keys

BY GWEN FILOSA from *KeyNews.com*

State education officials chose classrooms in the Florida Keys to visit Monday as launchpads for National Charter School Week, at a time when 12 percent of Monroe County children attend charters.

"I'm really jealous," Florida Board of Education member John Padgett told students at Key West Collegiate High School, which opened last fall.

"I went to school in a very small town and I had no choice. You get a choice. You build your own school."[Read more at http://keysnews.com/node/39771](http://keysnews.com/node/39771)

Perspectives

Running a Rural Charter School: Challenges and Benefits

By Geri Melosh, Principal of the Children's Reading Center Charter School

Charter schools serving rural populations are a relative rarity, making up only 16% of all charter schools nationwide based on 2009-10 statistics. They face both unique challenges and special benefits. Here are some of those.

The Challenges

As a rule, rural communities are poorer than their suburban and metropolitan counterparts and poverty brings with it attendant problems: higher unemployment rates, lower levels of parental education, and higher levels of domestic and substance abuse that are often coupled with relatively few social services to deal with them.

These social and family problems *bleed* into schools and make educating children more difficult. Schools must be proactive in assisting parents in finding the services they need to help address their problems.

Recruiting high quality, well-trained teachers to rural communities rather than more metropolitan ones can be difficult due to lower salaries, fewer cultural benefits, and the challenge of rural demographics. Schools must advertise for positions early, keep their salaries competitive, and offer work environments for their staff superior to other traditional schools.



The Children's Reading Center Charter School

The Benefits

Rural families have often been members of the same community for generations. As a result, word of mouth travels fast! When parents perceive their children are well-cared for – academically, physically, and emotionally – and that they themselves are valued, they are quick to tell their friends and neighbors the good news. For charter schools this leads to long waiting lists and small advertising budgets.

Poor demographics cut both ways. Organizations often love to grant money to well-run schools that have successfully met the challenges of their communities. For example, our tough demographics set the stage for the USDA Rural Development to provide us with a fixed rate, low interest, and long-term loan to build our dome school (featured above). Aggressively pursuing grant opportunities for your rural charter school can lead to major financial benefits.

The Children's Reading Center Charter School is a public charter school in operation since 2003 in Palatka Florida. It has been a Florida "A" school for four out of the last five years.

The Charter School Newsletter welcomes articles from charter school stakeholders on issues of broad interest. If you have an idea and would like to contribute, please contact Julia.somers-arthur@fldoe.org.

Funding Opportunities

Federal Charter Schools Program Seeks Comments on Plan for Charter-District Collaboration Awards

A plan for an awards competition to encourage collaboration between charter schools and traditional district schools has been announced by the U.S. Department of Education.

The department's [Charter Schools Program](#) is seeking comments about the [Exemplary Charter School Collaboration Awards](#) competition plan published in the Federal Register on April 25, 2012. The deadline to submit comments is May 25, 2012.

The competition would "encourage charter schools and non-chartered public schools or non-chartered LEAs [local education agencies] to share resources and responsibilities, build trust and teamwork, boost academic excellence in charter schools and non-chartered public schools alike, and provide students and their parents with a range of effective educational options," according to the Federal Register notice. The estimated amount of funding available for the competition and the expected number of awards will be announced in a notice inviting applications.

For more information, contact Erin Pfeltz, 202-205-3525, erin.pfeltz@ed.gov, or Nancy Paulu, 202-205-5392, nancy.paulu@ed.gov.

The United States Department of Education (USDOE) announces grant opportunity

Model Demonstration Projects on Reentry of Students with Disabilities from Juvenile Justice Facilities into Education, Employment, and Community Programs (CFDA Number 84.326M) Grant. Details can be accessed by going to: <http://www07.grants.gov/search/search.do?&mode=VIEW&opId=168954>

Professional Development Resources

TED-Ed – Online Lesson Resource

TED, which stands for Technology, Entertainment, Design, is a nonprofit organization that produces a popular annual conference on ideas. The organization is launching **TED-Ed**, an online collection of lessons it hopes will bring the best educators to any classroom with an Internet connection. **TED-Ed** is the latest wave in a growing trend of free online education. With offerings from the [Khan Academy](#), founded in 2004 when Salman Khan began posting math tutorials on *YouTube*, and undergraduate courses from prestigious universities such as [Yale](#) and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, free classes and lectures are proliferating on the Web.

To access **TED-Ed**, GO TO: <http://ed.ted.com/>.

Freebies for teachers from the NIH

Two new curriculum supplements from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) inform students about human health while building communication, critical-thinking, and teamwork skills. Each contains five lessons that are interactive, easily incorporated into the curriculum, and aligned to both common core state standards and national and state education standards.

Evolution and Medicine, (<http://science.education.nih.gov/customers.nsf/HSEvolution.htm>) for grades 9-12, presents current examples to help students understand the role evolution plays in human health, biomedical problems, and disease treatment.

Rare Diseases and Scientific Inquiry, (<http://science.education.nih.gov/customers.nsf/MSDiseases.htm>) for grades 6-8, explores how scientists use inquiry to research rare diseases and treatments and to further understand the workings of the human body.



Shining Stars

Imagine at North Manatee proud of student success

We at Imagine Schools, North Manatee pride ourselves on the relationships we build with our students and families as well as the way we strive to make learning fun and teaching meaningful. Every day is an opportunity for a “teachable moment”, and every day brings us another chance to reach a child and open the door for success.



Ryan McRee is one such success story. His experience is unique unto itself, but similar to that of many of our students. He comes to us from Orange Ridge, where family struggles and the loss of his father had brought him to a very low point. He now resides with his cousins who enrolled him at Imagine North Manatee as a last chance to help him find himself.

Here, motivated on a daily basis by his family, friends and educators, he is encouraged by our commitment to his growth. When asked how he turned his life around, he said, “My teachers are really nice and care more for me than anyone did in the past. Everyone is willing to offer help and listen to my needs.” At Imagine we are able to offer classes that allow students to learn by using their heads and their hands and not just to read from a text book. This has helped to stimulate better learning amongst our students including Ryan and many like him who needed to be pushed, but supported along the way. It allows a sense of freedom, and ownership of what is being taught. Ryan described his thoughts best by saying “I can’t picture things in my mind, but I can build it and show you how to do it. We all have different ways of learning.” Ryan has moved from an at-risk student to a proficient level in his last benchmark assessments. We showed him we believe in him, and we gave him the tools he needed with the opportunities to see his own success.

Submitted by: *Jennifer Lucas, Principal, Imagine at North Manatee* Jennifer.lucas@imagineschools.com

CHANGE

By Ryan McRee

I was a drug user.
 I remember losing all my friends.
 I heard every one call me a no-good
 druggie.
 I saw my life fall apart.
 I worried about nothing.
 I thought I wasn't hurting anyone.
 But, I want to change!
 I am a hard worker.
 I think I am a better person now.
 I need someone to believe in me.
 I try to keep a good attitude.
 I feel stronger.
 I forgive myself.
 Now I can change!
 I will be a better person.
 I choose to stay clean.
 I dream I will do well in life.
 I hope that it will never happen
 again.
 I predict I'll have a good job.
 I know I'm a better person now.
I will change!!



*Improving K-12 Educational
 Choice Options*

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