

## CHARTER SCHOOLS NEWSLETTER

July 2012

### Short-term Sub-grant RFP Released



The Request for Proposal (RFP) for the 2012-13 Short-term Intensive (STI) Dissemination Sub-grants competition has been released. To obtain the RFP and all necessary forms to submit a full application for the STI competition, please go to:

[http://www.floridaschoolchoice.org/Information/Charter\\_Schools/](http://www.floridaschoolchoice.org/Information/Charter_Schools/)

Essentially, the 2012-13 STI program is prepared to make approximately 15 grant awards to eligible charter schools in Florida that have not previously received a CSP dissemination sub-grant. Each dissemination grant will be between \$100,000 - \$200,000 that must be budgeted over a 12 month project period.

According to federal Charter Schools Program (CSP) guidelines, a charter school may use dissemination grant funds to assist other public schools, including public charter schools, in adapting the charter school's program (or certain aspects of the charter school's program), or to disseminate information about the charter school through activities such as:

- developing curriculum materials, assessments, and other instructional supports that promote increased student achievement and are based on successful practices within the assisting charter school; and
- conducting evaluations and developing materials that document the successful practices of the assisting charter school and that are designed to improve student performance in other public schools.

The Department's priorities require short-term interventions that are focused on delivering research-based models in one of the following two categories:

#### **PRIORITY #1 – Improving Early Childhood Literacy (Grades K-5)**

Providing teachers and leaders in public schools, including public charter schools, with academic resources and professional support for developing lesson plans, curriculum materials, assessments, and implementing instructional approaches that promote early childhood literacy (reading, writing and language arts) for students in grades K-5. Project activities and deliverables must be based on scientifically-based research and the successful practices occurring within the assisting

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## Funding Opportunities

### State Farm Good Neighbor Student Achievement Grants - \$1,500:

State Farm™ is proud to team up with YSA (Youth Service America) to offer grants of up to \$1,500 for programs enhancing student achievement through service-learning in K-12 public schools in all fifty US states, the District of Columbia, and in the Canadian provinces of Alberta, Ontario and New Brunswick.

Each grant engages participating teachers and students in a service and learning program that promotes academic achievement, 21<sup>st</sup> Century student outcomes, and stronger communities. The State Farm Good Neighbor Student Achievement Grant requires a 12-to-14 week *Semester of Service™* starting on MLK Day of Service (January 21, 2013) and ending on Global Youth Service Day, (April 26-28, 2013).

**Deadline: July 31, 2012.** <http://www.ysa.org/goodneighbor>

### The Lorrie Otto Seeds for Education Grant Program:

The Lorrie Otto Seeds for Education Grant Program gives small monetary grants to schools, nature centers and other not-for-profit places of learning in the United States with a site available for a stewardship project. Established by Wild Ones in 1996, the Seeds for Education (SFE) Program honors the late Lorrie Otto, our "philosophical compass." Money for the grant program comes from donations from Wild Ones members, chapters and other benefactors. **Deadline: October 15th.** Notification of awards will be made by February 15th of the grant year. <http://www.for-wild.org/seedmony.htm>.



*Continued from page 1*

charter school. Evidence of success with promoting early childhood literacy must accompany the application along with a detailed explanation of how the products (lesson plans, curriculum materials, assessments, and instructional approaches) will be disseminated and employed.

### PRIORITY #2 – Increasing Parental Involvement in Grades K-12

Providing staff development, programmatic resources and strategic support to classroom teachers, leaders and other key stakeholders in public schools, including public charter schools, to increase the involvement of parents in the education of their children (students in grades K-12). Project activities may include assisting charter schools with identifying, developing and/or implementing a variety of parental involvement opportunities, with a special emphasis on providing meaningful participatory opportunities for parents of K-12 students considered at-risk of academic failure, including exceptional education students. Evidence of success with increasing parental involvement at the assisting charter school must accompany the application along with a detailed explanation of how the successful parental involvement program(s) will be disseminated and employed.

If you have any questions about the STI competition, please contact Dr. Chris Muire at [chris.muire@fldoe.org](mailto:chris.muire@fldoe.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.

## Outstanding Teachers Needed for RttT Assessment Bank

By Todd Clark, Director, Race to the Top Assessments



The Florida Department of Education (FDOE) has awarded a Race to the Top contract to Pearson for the Florida Interim Assessment Item Bank and Test Platform development.

Pearson, in collaboration with the FDOE, is seeking outstanding Florida teachers (grades K through 12), 300 writers and 75 reviewers, to write and review selected response, short response, constructed response, extended response, and essay response items as well as performance tasks in English / Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and Spanish.

As you are aware, Florida has adopted the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in English Language Arts and Mathematics to guide instruction and increase student achievement; ELA and Mathematics items will be developed to the CCSS. This includes CCSS literacy standards for Science and Social Studies. Items for Spanish, Social Studies, and Science will be developed to Florida's Next Generation Sunshine State Standards. The expertise of Florida teachers will be a key component in the creation of this online item bank that will support high-quality instruction and student achievement. To this end, we are requesting your recommendations for talented educators in your district to participate in this project.

For item writers, the time commitment for teachers selected will include 3-4 hours of WebEx training, followed by personal time to complete the writing of assigned item sets. Participants will be paid to attend the training (\$15 per hour, maximum of \$60) and will also be paid \$20.00 for each submitted item. Pearson will execute a consultant agreement

with the teachers selected for this opportunity.

For item reviewers, the time commitment for teachers selected will include 1-2 hours of WebEx training organized by content area, followed by personal time to complete the review of assigned item sets. Participants will be paid to attend the training (\$15 per hour) and will also be paid \$3.00 for each reviewed item. Pearson will execute a consultant agreement with the teachers selected for this opportunity.

To be considered for this project, a teacher must have at least three years' classroom teaching experience in the content area and grade level for which he or she is nominated to write items.

If you would like teachers from your district to have a pivotal role in this important work, please direct your nominees to complete the application form located at:

<http://www.cvent.com/d/bcqzmm> (for nominated item writers)

<http://www.cvent.com/d/scqzz7> (for nominated item reviewers)

We know that teachers may be difficult to reach during the summer, but we would like to receive the first round of nominations with completed applications prior to July 16, 2012.

Please keep in mind that selections will be made based on the information provided and on demographic diversity considerations.

If you have additional questions, please contact Ms. Michelle Worrell, FDOE Project Manager for the Florida Interim Assessment Item Bank and Test Platform ([Michelle.Worrell@fldoe.org](mailto:Michelle.Worrell@fldoe.org)).

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# Charters in the News

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

### Fewer disabled students enroll in charter schools

By CHRISTINE ARMARIO Bradenton Herald

As the number of charter schools expands nationwide, one group of students that is enrolling in those schools at a lower rate is children with disabilities. Eight percent of students at charter schools had disabilities in the 2009-2010 school year, compared with 11 percent at traditional public schools, according to a Government Accountability Office report. **Read more at . . . .** <http://www.bradenton.com/2012/06/19/4084390/fewer-disabled-students-enroll.html#storylink=cpy>

### The Charter Blog: Recent Report Shows How Charter Schools are Helping Defy Poverty, Redefine Public Education

Posted by: Fernando Zulueta, President of Academica, National Alliance for Public Charter Schools board member Wednesday, 27 June, 2012

Newsweek Magazine's recent 2012 ranking of "The Best High Schools in America" seeks to identify the nation's top public high schools based on which schools best prepare students for college. . . . The list can be sorted by several categories, including the percentage of students eligible for school lunch subsidies. Schools where more than fifty-percent of students are eligible for subsidies can be defined as low-income. Using that classification, one can compare schools where poverty is the norm to those where poverty is the exception. **Read more at . . . .** <http://www.publiccharters.org/Blog/Default.aspx?id=213>

### U.S. Department Of Education May Issue New Guidance on Charters and Special Education

According to *Education Daily*, the recent Government Accountability Office (GAO) report on public charter schools and special education has prompted U.S. Rep. George Miller, D-California, to call on the Senate to pass a charter school bill adopted last year by the House. "The bill requires charter schools to have recruitment and enrollment practices that promote inclusion, retention, and engage students with limited op-

portunities to attend charter schools," he said. U.S. Department of Education innovation and improvement chief James Shelton said new forthcoming guidelines may include "charter schools' obligations regarding recruitment, admissions, provision of a free appropriate public education, and accessibility." **Read more at . . . .** <http://www.publiccharters.org/Headlines/?id=796>

### Accountability for results and freedom from union rules attract the best teachers into the profession.

By DEBORAH KENNY from online.wsj.com

Twenty years ago, the country's first charter school opened in Minnesota. This is a momentous anniversary not just for the two million families who now send their children to public charter schools, but for all Americans. The charter movement is not only about opening charter schools—its goal has always been to fundamentally transform public education in this country.

Critics claim that charter schools are successful only because they cherry-pick students, because they have smaller class sizes, or because motivated parents apply for charter lotteries and non-motivated parents do not. And even if charters are successful, they argue, there is no way to scale that success to reform a large district. **Read more at . . . .** <http://online.wsj.com/article/>

### Academy dilemma well handled

Tuesday, June 26, 2012 ChronicleOnline.com

THE ISSUE: Academy of Environmental Science quandary. OUR OPINION: It's a joint effort.

The Academy of Environmental Science will continue to operate as a charter school at a unique facility on Fort Island Trail near Crystal River.

The academy is a charter school operated by the county school system and its future appeared at risk over funding issues and problems with some of the details of its lease. **Read more at . . . .** <http://www.chronicleonline.com/content/academy-dilemma-well-handled>

Perspectives

# Commissioner Robinson explains assessment system in letter to parents

Florida Department of Education Commissioner Gerard Robinson recently wrote to parents to explain Florida's accountability plans and allay misconceptions. Below, in full, is the text of the Commissioner's letter.



July 2012

Dear Parent/Guardian,

By now you have received your child's results on the state-required FCAT and End-of-Course assessments. These assessments serve as annual academic checkups to measure your child's progress in key subject areas and help ensure that your child is on track for college or career.

Florida also uses the results to calculate school grades. Schools that improve a letter grade or earn an A receive additional state funds – up to \$100 per student – in recognition of their academic achievement. Struggling schools can get assistance and additional funding – an average of almost \$2,000 per student for F schools – to help them improve.

As grades for elementary, middle and many combination schools become available, you may notice that some schools have lower grades than last year. That does not necessarily mean that the schools, teachers or students are not doing as well as they were before. There were a number of changes to the state's accountability system this year that impacted the results.

To help better prepare students for college and careers, the state has been moving to higher academic standards, new assessments that measure students' progress toward meeting the standards, and higher achievement levels for subjects such as reading and math. These new standards, assessments, and achievement levels are being used to determine school grades this year.

Also, Florida received a waiver from the federal government this year that allows the state to have one accountability system instead of two – one state and one federal. The waiver requires Florida to include all students – including those with disabilities and English language learners with at least one year of instruction in the U.S. – in its accountability system.

The combination of changes to Florida's accountability system will cause a temporary drop in some school grades. However, we can also expect student performance to improve as it did in 2007 when Florida made revisions to the school grading formula. At first, the number of A and B schools fell from about 2,000 to 1,952, but, in the two years that followed, A and B schools rose to 2,317.

Each time Florida's school grading system has increased expectations, student performance has improved over time, which is the primary goal of Florida's accountability system. Florida will continue to make the adjustments and investments necessary to ensure all students have the opportunity to get the knowledge and skills they need to be successful in school and beyond.

Please know that, along with the State Board of Education and your district leadership, I am working to make certain that schools and teachers have the resources they need to ensure that your child is getting the best education possible.

Thank you for supporting your child's education.

Gerard Robinson

More information on Florida's school grading system is available at <http://schoolgrades.fldoe.org>. For questions about school grades, visit [www.floridapathtosuccess.org](http://www.floridapathtosuccess.org) or call 1-866-507-1109. To receive periodic email updates about this topic and related issues, sign up here: <http://parents.fldoe.org/home>.

## Come to the site for charter school professionals!



[www.cpalmscharter.org](http://www.cpalmscharter.org)

**CPALMSCharter** is a new site supported by a grant from the Florida DOE that is designed to provide resources for the work of charter school professionals. On this site, charter school leaders and teachers will find:

- highly vetted lesson plans, units, and web resources tied to the Florida standards and Common Core State Standards,
- webinars,
- blogs,
- comment threads tied to resources,
- videos on best practices and current evaluation systems.

Charter school leaders will find support for the variety of challenges they must face, including:

- the demands of the latest legislation,
- teacher and principal evaluations,
- professional development,
- leader best practices.

Leaders will have the opportunity to interact and share ideas in a learning community environment through webinars, blogs, and videos. Leaders can also showcase their schools and teachers through videos, virtual tours and student artifacts!

***Join us today as we build a quality professional community for charter school teachers and leaders!***

## Department Notes

### Changes to School Grades for 2011-2012.

The Department of Education has issued the following memorandum regarding the Changes to School Grades for 2011-2012. The memorandum may be viewed at:

<http://info.fldoe.org/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-6413/dps-2012-96.pdf> (Memo) and  
<http://info.fldoe.org/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-6414/dps-2012-96a.pdf> (Attachment A)



## Is your contact information up to date?

To make sure you receive all Program Office communications, update your 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)

## Professional Development Resources

### 2012–2013 NSTA New Science Teacher Academy Application Deadline Extended

The deadline to submit applications for the 2012–2013 NSTA New Science Teacher Academy has been extended to August 24, 2012. Science teachers located throughout the country, who will be entering their second or third year of teaching and whose schedule is a minimum of 51 percent middle or high school science, are encouraged to apply. Hundreds of new science teachers will be awarded a place in the Academy.

NSTA Fellows chosen for the program receive a comprehensive membership package, online mentoring with trained mentors who teach in the same discipline, and the opportunity to participate in a variety of web-based professional development activities, including web seminars. In addition, each NSTA Fellow receives financial support to attend and participate in NSTA's National Conference on Science Education, taking place in San Antonio, April 11–14, 2013.

For more information about the NSTA New Science Teacher Academy or to learn how to apply to become a fellow, please visit [www.nsta.org/academy](http://www.nsta.org/academy). Applications must be submitted no later than August 24, 2012, to be considered.

### Webinar: Parent Engagement - Part One

**Source: America's Promise Alliance**

Dr. Joyce Epstein, Founder of the [National Network of Partnership Schools](http://www.nnps.org) (NNPS) at Johns Hopkins University kicked off the first parent engagement webinar in a two-part series on June 14. Dr. Epstein highlighted and dissected the America's Promise Alliance "Four A's Framework for Parent Engagement" (Attendance, Attainment, Achievement and Advocacy) by sharing what the NNPS has learned in over 20 years of research-based approaches to

organize and sustain excellent programs of family and community involvement increasing student success in school. NNPS aims to increase knowledge of new concepts and strategies; use research results to develop tools and materials that will improve policy and practice; provide professional development conferences and workshops; share best practices of parental involvement and community connections; and recognize excellent partnership programs at the school, district, organization, and state levels.

### Ten education blogs worth following

*E-School News* editor Meris Stansbury offers a valuable list of websites in this article.

From effectively using online media to organizing an early learning classroom, these blogs contain tons of useful information.

Education blogs, on any and every topic, abound online. Unfortunately, educators are probably the last people who have the time to go out and search for them. . . . In this time-saving list, you'll find 10 of the best education blogs that readers have recommended, that have won multiple awards, or that other educators just can't stop talking about.

1. [Edudemic](#) (social media)
2. [Flipped Learning](#) (new ways of teaching)
3. [Free Technology for Teachers](#) (free tech resources and tech reviews)
4. [The Innovative Educator](#) (creative teaching ideas)

*For the complete article and full list of blog links, please visit:*

<http://www.eschoolnews.com/2012/04/06/ten-education-blogs-worth-following/>



## Shining Stars

### *Four distinguished South Tech Academy students honored*

Four of South Tech Academy's finest students were recently recognized as being among the highest achieving students in Palm Beach County at the 34<sup>th</sup> Annual Scholastic Achievement Foundation Dinner, which recognized such distinguished scholars.

Juan Guerrero, senior in the Academy of Finance, was presented with the Mr. and Mrs. George Elmore Scholarship for \$1,000. Juan earned first place in the Region 5 SkillsUSA Competition Customer Service category and a notable fourth place in the DECA Competition's Entrepreneurship Written category. Juan has earned a full scholarship to Northwood University where he will begin the accelerated Masters of Business Administration (MBA) program in the fall.



*(L to R) Vanessa Stubbs, Judnia Theophile, Olly St. Felix, Juan Guerrero*

Judnia Theophile, senior in the Medical Sciences Academy, was presented with the Aurdey E. Ripley Scholarship for \$1,000. Judnia is in the Academy's Licensed Practical Nursing (LPN) track where she has received almost four years of practical nursing experience and will sit for the LPN exam this summer. Judnia has been accepted to the University of South Florida and will major in Nursing and minor in Psychology.

Olly St. Felix and Vanessa Stubbs, also both seniors in the Medical Sciences Academy, LPN track, were selected as Student Honorees. Throughout their academic careers at South Tech, they have taken rigorous honors and Advanced Placement (AP) courses in addition to excelling in the Dual Enrollment program at Palm Beach State College. Both have also earned practical nursing experience and will sit for the LPN exam upon graduation. Olly has been accepted to both the University of Florida and the University of South Florida. She plans to major in Biology and minor in Psychology. Vanessa plans to study at Palm Beach State College. Her career goals include travelling internationally to countries in need of medical care.

Mrs. Kurtz, Guidance Coordinator, notes, "These four students represented South Tech extremely well. It was an honor to share such a special evening with them."



*Improving K-12 Educational  
Choice Options*

**Charter Schools Office**

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**Helen Giraitis—Grants Manager**

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