

September 2009

Florida's Charter Schools News

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE DOCUMENTS



In our continued efforts to provide relevant and necessary technical assistance to charter schools, the Department has prepared a Technical Assistance Paper (TAP) on charter school financial practices. The TAP aims to assist governing board members as they exercise continuing oversight over charter school operations. It provides board members with suggestions related to developing sound financial practices and monitoring a charter school's financial condition. The TAP is posted in the Technical Assistance section of our Web site, under the **Financial/Funding** header at http://www.floridaschoolchoice.org/information/Charter_schools/technical_assistance.asp.

We have also added two additional documents to this page. The first one is a TAP on the provision of transportation services to homeless students and the other is a Title 1 Handbook that includes links to Non-Regulatory Guidance published by the US Department of Education, TAPs published by the Florida Department of Education, and additional internet resources. Both of these documents are located under the **State and Federal Requirements** header.

Please send any questions or suggestions for technical assistance topics to charterschools@fldoe.org.

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State Board Rule Development Updates

The Department of Education has prepared draft rule language to present to the State Board of Education for adoption later this year. The purpose of the rule development is to further clarify statutory requirements related to charter school capital outlay funding, the conversion process, model forms, financial conditions, governance training, and new applicant training. Draft language for each rule is available on the Charter School Web site at http://www.floridaschoolchoice.org/Information/Charter_Schools/. We encourage stakeholders to review the draft language and provide comments or feedback through the Department's [State Board Rules Under Review](#) Web site.



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C-PALMS Web Site

The Florida Department of Education, in collaboration with the Florida Center for Research in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (FCR-STEM) has been working to develop the **Curriculum Planning and Learning Management System (C-PALMS)**. C-PALMS is designed to be a one-stop "home page" for Florida K – 12 teachers to get information about content standards, professional development opportunities, and instructional resources related to the courses they are

teaching and content standards that make up those courses.

Although this system is still in the development phase, there are several useful tools that are currently accessible from the C-PALMS Web site such as the Standards Database which allows users to navigate the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards. Users can even download a small application to connect to the Standards Database directly

from their desktop (Quick Connect). Visit www.cpalms.org today to see what is currently available, or take an online "tour" at <http://www.cpalms.org/graphics/flash/screentour/screentour.html> to see what the C-PALMS portal will look like upon completion.



Free Online K-12 Educator Recruitment Service Available for All Florida Charter Schools

TEACHERS-TEACHERS.COM[®]

Education's Premier Recruitment Service

[Teachers-Teachers.com](http://www.teachers-teachers.com) is a nationwide, online K-12 educator recruitment service designed to help school systems recruit and hire the most qualified educators in all applicable subject areas, to include administrators. This service is free for all Florida charter schools and school districts to use in posting jobs, searching resumes, and emailing candidates within the largest K-12 educator database in the U.S., that includes a pool of over 20,000 certified candidates interested in teaching in Florida.

The Florida Department of Education (FLDOE) has issued the following memorandum regarding Teachers-Teachers.com being available free for all Florida charter schools and school districts: <http://info.fl DOE.org/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-4531/k12-07-119memo.pdf>

The FLDOE has purchased a full membership for all Florida charter schools and school districts to use this free resource from July 1, 2007, to June 30, 2010. Those Florida charter schools that are not currently registered with Teachers-Teachers.com should promptly register by visiting the Florida portal of Teachers-Teachers.com available at: www.teachers-teachers.com/florida. After completing your registration, the Teachers-Teachers.com Florida Recruitment Coordinator - Dave Pfisterer will contact you to inform you more about the multiple uses of this free service.

If you need additional information concerning Teachers-Teachers.com in Florida, contact Dave Pfisterer at: dpfisterer@teachers-teachers.com or (877) 812-4071, ext. 78. If you have any questions concerning availability of membership with the Florida Department of Education, contact Ian Barker at ian.barker@fldoe.org or by phone at (850) 245-0435.



Manatee School of Arts & Sciences, Manatee County was chosen a winner of the 2009 Governor's Fitness Challenge. Governor Charlie Crist announced eight elementary and eight middle schools as the winners of the 2009 Governor's Fitness Challenge. The announcement was made in Tampa on Aug. 20 during a meeting of the Governor's Council on Physical Fitness. The Governor also launched a new Fitness Challenge Web site at www.GovernorsFitnessChallenge.com that will allow students easier access to register for the Fitness Challenge, track their progress and see the results.

Eight public or private schools with at least 50 percent of students participating in the challenge were randomly selected to receive \$2,500 to purchase sports or fitness equipment. Eight additional public schools that met the 50 percent participation requirement and also demonstrated improvement in students' fitness performance areas were randomly selected to receive \$5,000. Activities for the Fitness Challenge were developed in conjunction with in-kind support from Titus Sports Academy, a sports conditioning and training center. A grant from SunTrust Banks of Florida Foundation provided the

award funding for the winning schools to purchase sports or fitness equipment.

Elementary and middle schools throughout the state are encouraged to participate in the 2009-10 Governor's Fitness Challenge. For more information or to register, visit

www.GovernorsFitnessChallenge.com.



Miami Community Charter School

Dr. Jila Rezaie, principal of Miami Community Charter School (MCCS), was one of five principals and the only principal from a charter school who met with Governor Charlie Crist on Tuesday, August 18, 2009. The governor extended an invitation to five schools to attend a morning gathering in the Governor's Mansion in Tallahassee.

Miami Community Charter School's great effort in changing the school's status from being a sanctioned school in 2008 to becoming an "A" school and meeting AYP in 2009, was also noted by the Florida Department of Education when the Department featured the MCCS in a press release issued on June 25, 2009.

Miami Community Charter School offers a unique program to the community. The essence of the school program is based on three simple elements: order, procedure and cultural exposure. In addition to a strong academic program which puts the school in the top 5 percent of all schools in South Miami Dade, the school has sustained a zero percent suspension and detention rate since its inception. In this Title I school, 96 percent of students speak English as their second language. Nonetheless, based on the nationally norm-referenced test, CTBS, at the end of 2008-2009 school year, MCCS' students in grade 8 were reading on a tenth grade level. As well, in mathematics, they scored a year and a half above grade level. As a Title I school, MCCS operates on a limited but well managed budget. Eighty-five percent of the staff are teaching faculty and in classrooms. All reading and math classes have a certified teacher and one full-time qualified paraprofessional.

The Intensive Intervention Program starts a month before the regular school year to prepare a small group of students who may need more time. During the last nine weeks of each school year, 90-95 percent of students enter the "Move Up" program. By this, students in grades K-5 move to the next year's teacher, classroom and curriculum. The students then receive a summer math and reading assignment which must be completed by the first day of the school year. The school is open from 6:30 A.M. to 6:30 P.M. for curricular and extracurricular activities. Our community believes success is not an accident!

Article submitted by Jila Rezaie, Ed. D., Miami Community Charter School

Congratulations!

One Room School House Charter School is Highest Performing Title One School in State



The One Room School House, a charter elementary school in Gainesville, Florida, graded out as the highest performing Title One school in the entire state in 2009. The school scored 707 out of a possible 800 points on Florida's school grading system. This was good enough for a top ten finish among all Florida elementary schools.

The One Room School House attributes its success with at risk students to its fierce pursuit of innovation. The school takes its role as an agent of change very seriously. We have been modifying our program consistently for the past twelve years to meet the changing needs of our students and the metamorphosis of education due to the reform and accountability movements.

Some of the programs that have made a big difference at our school include:

- Small school and class size: one small class at each grade level, teachers rotate between classes so every teacher knows every student.
- Administrator teachers: Principals have always had a big teaching load, which allows them to better understand the needs of the families they serve
- Unique scheduling: Graduation is in March following the state testing. Students have an entire year to prepare for next year's FCAT test.
- Computer education: All students take a computer class every day and become proficient in keyboarding, word processing and other Twenty-first Century skills.

By constantly adjusting to the needs of its students and the demands of a changing educational landscape, *The One Room School House* fulfills its dual mission of serving a diverse community of students and their families while fulfilling its legislated role as an engine of educational innovation.

As submitted by: Neil Drake, Founder & Project Development Director

Race to the Top

The \$4.35 billion Race to the Top Fund is the largest-ever federal competitive investment in school reform. It will reward states for past accomplishments and create incentives for future improvements. The funding criteria that the U.S. Department of Education proposes to use will challenge states to create comprehensive strategies for addressing the four central areas of reform that will drive school improvement:



- Adopting internationally benchmarked standards and assessments that prepare students for success in college and the workplace;
- Recruiting, developing, retaining, and rewarding effective teachers and principals;
- Building data systems that measure student success and inform teachers and principals how they can improve their practices; and
- Turning around our lowest-performing schools.

If you have suggestions or ideas about how charter schools in Florida can address the areas of reform, please send them to us. Send your ideas to charterschools@fldoe.org with a subject line "Race to the Top".

Charter School Annual Accountability Report will be available September 30, 2009

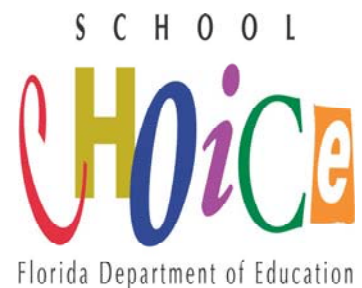
Governance Trainer Plans are due October 1, 2009

Proposed Revised State Board Rule 6A-6.0784, Florida Administrative Code (FAC) is a revised rule to improve the process by which charter school governance training plans are approved by the Department and to ensure consistency with Section 1002.33(9)(k), F. S.

The Department will conduct two review periods for applications, with deadlines for submitting applications on or before October 1 and on or before May 1. Forms for submitting training plans are posted at: http://www.floridaschoolchoice.org/Information/Charter_Schools/. A training provider seeking approval must submit the original and three (3) copies of the form, or an original and an electronic copy on a CD saved as a PDF file, to the Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice as described on the form.

Each approval shall be granted for up to two years from date of approval. No earlier than six (6) months prior to the expiration of approval, a training provider may submit a request for renewal of an approved training plan by completing and submitting Form IEPC-10, Charter School Governance Training, Application to Renew an Approved Training Plan. Form IEPC-10 is posted at: http://www.floridaschoolchoice.org/Information/Charter_Schools/.

If additional assistance is needed, please contact LaCrest McCary at (850) 245-0502 or via e-mail at CharterSchools@fldoe.org.



**Office of Independent
Education and Parental
Choice**

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School Choice Hotline:
1-800-447-1636

www.floridaschoolchoice.org