

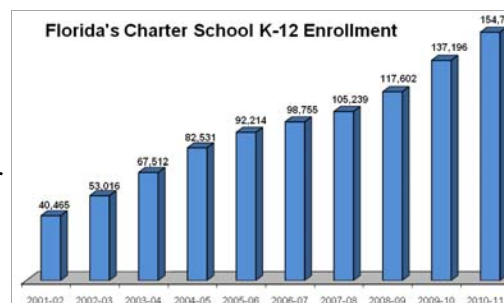
CHARTER SCHOOLS NEWSLETTER

September 2011

Florida's Charter Schools continue to grow in popularity

Since 1996, Florida charter schools have played a key role in increasing parental options in public education and providing innovative learning opportunities for students. Last year, with more than 154,000 students enrolled in 459 charter schools in 43 districts, Florida ranked third in the nation in charter school enrollment.

This year, Florida's charters are set to expand even further, both in numbers and the options offered to students. Currently, 492 charter schools are in operation, and 348 applications have been submitted for schools to open in the future. A number of charter virtual schools will certainly be among these, as once again Florida's innovations set the standard.



In the Know:

State Board of Education Rule Revision Adopted

The Department is in the process of revising several State Board Rules related to charter schools to align with recent legislative changes. The first rule revised was Rule 6A-6.0785, F.A.C., Charter School Applicant Training Standards. This rule established a procedure by which sponsors may require charter applicants to attend training provided by the sponsor in lieu of training provided by the Department. The amended rule modifies the Department's existing training standards to align with statutory changes and updates the deadline for sponsors to submit a form. The rule was adopted by the State Board of Education on September 20, 2011. The text of the revised rule is available on the [Florida Rules website](#).

Please note that all education related rules under development or revision are available on the Department's [List of Rules Under Review](#) website. The purpose of the site is to ensure that all stakeholders have the opportunity and access to request a rule development workshop and to express their concerns relating to specific rules of the State Board of Education. New charter school rules and rule amendment notices will be posted on this site. Existing charter school rules are available on the School Choice website at http://www.floridaschoolchoice.org/Information/Charter_Schools/statutes_and_rules.asp.

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Charter School Conference Coming Soon!

This year's Florida Charter School Conference is scheduled for November 14-16, 2011 at the DoubleTree Hotel at the Entrance to Universal Orlando. The theme for this year is "**Stronger Communities through Quality Schools.**" The conference takes its focus from Florida's Race to the Top grant, with the goal of expanding capacity of high-quality charter schools in underperforming communities. Sessions are targeted to authorizers, administrators, educators, and charter school stakeholders. Go to <http://www.charterschoolconference.com/2011/sessions.php> to view the exciting slate of presentations.

The exhibit hall will feature 108 companies that are excited to share with you their products and services. Take a look at the line up at <http://www.charterschoolconference.com/2011/exhibits.php>. (We are sorry, exhibit booths are sold out at this time.)



IMPORTANT DATES and DEADLINES:

- October 14 - Hotel Reservations - <http://www.charterschoolconference.com/2011/hotel.php>
- October 21 - Attendee Registration - <http://www.charterschoolconference.com/registration/index.php>

Program Reminders

- **Capital Outlay Plans** are now available. Plans are to be submitted online this year, and are due by October 28. Instructions were issued via e-mail.
- **Merit Award Program (MAP)** - Funds must be distributed and Compliance Reports must be submitted on or before October 1, 2011.
- **Charter School Accountability Report**—Look for e-mail notification early in October. Schools will have 30 days to submit the Report. The District portion is due in our office by January 31.
- **Annual Florida Charter School Conference** - November 14-16, 2011, Doubletree Hotel at Entrance to Universal Studios. <http://www.charterschoolconference.com/>
- **Weekly**—Visit our [Charter School News Feed](#) to find out what's new! More resources are added all the time, so check back frequently!
- **The Revenue Estimating Worksheet for Virtual Education** is now available online at the following site: <http://www.fldoe.org/fefp/worksheet.asp>.

Is your contact information up to date?

Make sure you are receiving all Program Office communications. Update your contact information on through your charter school login at https://www.floridaschoolchoice.org/login/login_charter_school.asp.

Charters in the News

A round-up of local and national charter stories

In Some Places, 'District-Charter Collaborations on the Rise'

According to [District Administration](#), suspicious relations between charter schools and districts are giving way, in some places, to "a desire for mutual learning." "The relationship between charter schools and districts has been evolving over time," said Alex Medler of the National Association of Charter School Authorizers. Strong mayors and supportive superintendents have helped district-charter collaborations in Chicago, Denver and New York. **Florida's Hillsborough County Public Schools** set up monthly meetings through which district and charter leaders discuss opportunities and resolve problems. The Massachusetts Department of Education recently created a database of best practices for districts and charters. "It's going to continue to grow," said Peter Groff, president and CEO of the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools. "Even the opponents will concede that charters are here to stay. Now that that's no longer the conversation, the question is 'How can we take some of the best of what charters are doing and give them to other public schools?'" [More...](#) Source: [District Administration](#)

Students Getting Nooks for Reading at Bok Academy

Edward W. Bok Academy is among those schools leading the way.

The middle school has purchased Nook readers for its students from Barnes and Noble, and started using them this year.

Teachers and staff plan to download dozens of e-books from the bookseller, said Allison Hunter, dean of Language Arts and the schools Academic Support and Title 1 funds coordinator. Students and staff may also download free classics from the Gutenberg Project or "borrow" e-books using a program called Overdrive through a partnership with the Polk County Public Library System, she said. The files will read on Nooks, Kindles, iPads, iPhones and other portable devices.

Principal Damien Moses said Nooks will enable students to "borrow" books from school servers and read them for two weeks like library books. [More...](#) Source: [TheLedger.com](#)

Charter-School Requests Booming in Central Florida

According to the [Orlando Sentinel](#), interest in opening new public charter schools is growing in Central Florida, thanks in part to a new state law which makes it easier for high-performing charters to expand and replicate, even over the objections of local school boards. "It just makes it easier to expand in areas where it may have been more difficult in the past," said Charter Schools USA spokeswoman Colleen Reynolds. Orange County, which will have 32 charter schools this fall, has received applications for 33 new schools, nearly double the applications received last year. In the 2009-2010 academic year, Florida ranked third in the nation in the number of charter schools, with 411 statewide. [More...](#) Source: [Orlando Sentinel](#)

Check out Commissioner Robinson's blog!



Did you know, Florida's Education Commissioner, Gerard Robinson is blogging about all sorts of things relating to education

in the Sunshine State. From his experiences regarding his "Look, Listen and Learn" tour, to his new motto for the Department of Education, Commissioner Robinson wants to keep you informed of his thoughts, ideas and insights on the educational process in Florida. Check back regularly to read and comment on his latest posts and to get informative details from guest bloggers on a variety of important topics affecting education stakeholders throughout the state.

▣ [Commissioner Robinson's Blog](#)

2011 Legislative Resources

The Department has published a [Question and Answer Document](#) related to Senate Bill 1546 and House Bill 7197. Legislation became effective July 1, 2011.

We also hosted a webinar on the legislative changes on August 18, 2011. If you missed the webinar, [click here to access the recording](#).

To request a PDF copy of the presentation, email tera.teders@fldoe.org.

Teacher Assisting Programs in Florida's Public Schools



At a time when many charter schools and other public schools are struggling to meet a teacher shortage, some schools have adopted a program to “grow their own.”

An increasing number of schools are offering the Teacher Assisting Program to prepare secondary students for employment as substitute teachers and teacher assistants (SOC 25-9041). The content includes competencies and skills needed to become a paraprofessional in the field of education. Students may also choose to go on to pursue a career as a certified teacher.

Department data show that in 2009-10, 150 public secondary schools, including 15 public charter schools, and 5 postsecondary career adult vocational (PSAV) schools in Florida offered the Teacher Assisting program for 12,335 students. High school officials report that many students who completed the Teacher Assisting Program received college level credit.

The Teacher Assisting (TA) Curriculum Framework approved for 2011-12 requires that a Career and Technical Student Organization (CTSO) such as the Florida Future Educators Association (FFEA) provide activities for students as an integral part of the instruction offered in this program sequence. This provides leadership training and reinforces career and technical skills. Many high schools report FFEA clubs are being sponsored and coordinated by TA instructors.

For more information about the Teacher Assisting program, go to: http://www.fldoe.org/workforce/dwdframe/edu_cluster_frame10.asp and click on the Teacher Assisting link.

Professional Development Resources

Grant and Funding Opportunities

Applying for external funding from both the public and private sector has become an important practice of teachers and leaders in K-12 schools. There are many well-known websites that identify and provide guidance on external grant funding, including:

<http://www.grantsalert.com/>

<http://www.grantwrangler.com/>

<http://www.teacherscount.org/teacher/awards.shtml?gclid=Clqh07il158CFQmdnAodtmbKag>

http://www.edreform.com/Issues/ABCs_of_Teaching/?Grants_and_Fellowships

The following grants and funding opportunities are currently accepting applicants. If you have questions about these opportunities, please follow the links provided in each item.

- **2012 Lewis Hine Awards**

<http://www.nationalchildlabor.org/lha.html>

The Lewis Hine Awards Program asks proposers to identify the outstanding work being done in communities on behalf of children and youth. That work can be of almost any kind, from health and welfare to education and recreation. The deadline for this year's nominations is **Friday, September 30, 2011**. A distinguished national panel of judges will make the selections and we will bring the awardees to New York City for a media-covered ceremony in late January 2012.

- **AGI: A World of Change in My Community**

<http://www.earthsciweek.org/contests/photography/index.html>

AGI is sponsoring a photography contest to celebrate Earth Science Week 2011. The photography theme for this year is: “A World of Change in My Community.”

- **Ezra Jack Keats Minigrants**

http://www.ezra-jack-keats.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=103&Itemid=65

The Ezra Jack Keats Foundation is **now accepting applications for mini-grants** from public schools, public libraries, and preschool Head Start programs in the United States, including Puerto Rico and Guam.

- **Extracurricular Activities Rock! Sweepstakes**

http://www.kidzrockinc.com/Win_50_Gift_Cards_Kids.html

Participation in the Extracurricular Activities Rock Sweepstakes is free of charge, easy to do, and lots of fun. Students in grades k-12 win one of three \$50 gift cards to amazon.com or \$10 gift cards in weekly drawings.

- **FFVF: Leavy Awards for Excellence in Private Enterprise Education**

<http://www.freedomfoundation.org/Leavy-Awards.cfm>

The awards program recognizes educators at the elementary, junior high school, high school, and college levels for innovative and effective techniques in teaching entrepreneurship and free enterprise education. Up to twenty cash awards are made annually, valued at \$7,500 each. One meritorious award of \$15,000 may be made for an outstanding entry.

