

November 2008

Florida's Charter Schools News

Governing Board Training



On June 17, 2008, the State Board of Education approved Rule 6A-6.0784, FAC, Approval of Charter School Governance Training, requiring every member of the governing body of a charter school operating in Florida to participate in governance training on or before August 1 of each calendar year.

The Department recognizes the challenges faced by charter schools and their sponsors in ensuring that all charter school governing boards participate in approved training by August 1, 2008. Therefore, to ensure fair and equitable implementation of the

rule, the following guidelines are in effect for the remainder of the current calendar year:

- All charter school governing board members are to participate in four hours of approved governance training by December 31, 2008.
- The names and contact information for approved trainers can be found at the following link: http://www.floridaschoolchoice.org/Information/Charter_Schools/.

The rule contains a grandfathering clause for governance training that was provided prior to approval of the rule. Governing boards that

participated in governance training between January 1, 2008, and the effective date of the rule will be considered to have met the training requirement if it was delivered according to a training plan that is subsequently approved by the Department.

It is important to remember that the training cycle for the 2009-2010 school year will begin on January 1, 2009, and training for all governing boards is to be completed by August 1. You will note that the rule includes a two-hour refresher option for governing boards with members who have served continuously on the board and met the four-hour training requirement.

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2008 Florida Charter School Conference

The Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice presents the Twelfth Annual Florida Charter School Conference to be held November 20-21, 2008, at the DoubleTree Hotel at the Entrance to Universal

Orlando. The theme is *"Charters: Providing Choice, Creating Change."* Come and share the experience of collaboration and education with all charter school stakeholders.

If you have not registered, onsite registration will be available.

We look forward to seeing each of you there to help celebrate another year of success!



FLORIDA'S
CHARTER
Schools



Staff Spotlight: Charter Schools Grant Staff



Seated from left to right: Laura Pond and Phillip Prior. Standing from left to right: Jan Harris, grant manager and Charlene Burke.

In order to successfully monitor federally awarded grant funds and develop a closer relationship with each sub-grant recipient and district charter school contact, three grant specialists were hired in the charter school office. Each grant specialist is responsible for providing technical assistance to sub-grantees within a specific region of the state. In addition, site visits are conducted by each grant specialist to determine how well sub-grantees are complying with federal grant requirements and guidelines in the areas of grant implementation, fiscal accountability, and property management.

The areas of responsibility for each grant specialist are as follows:

Charlene Burke: Brevard, Broward, Indian River, Lake, Orange, Polk and St. Lucie

Laura Pond: Alachua, Bay, Duval, Escambia, Flagler, Hillsborough, Jefferson, Lee, Leon, Manatee, Pasco, Pinellas, St. Johns, Sarasota

Phillip Prior: Miami-Dade and Palm Beach

Jan Harris: grant manager

Interesting facts about the grant staff follows:

Charlene's grandfather was a Rough Rider with Teddy Roosevelt during the Spanish-American War. After the war, he went to Panama to help the country win its independence from Colombia, paving the way for the U.S. to build the Panama Canal. Charlene's father was born and raised in Panama. Her mother grew up in upstate New York, near Syracuse. After WWII her mother went to Panama, where she met Charlene's father. That's how Charlene came to be born and raised in Panama. Charlene came from a family of five girls and one boy. She was hired by the Department of Education, Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice, after retiring from the City of Tallahassee. Charlene worked with grants while at the city, but working with a federal grant has been a new challenge. She is married and has two sons - ages 18 and 22.

Jan Harris graduated from Miami University (Ohio) with a degree in business. She has been employed by the State of Florida for over 20 years, the last 6 years at the Department of Education. Jan is married and has 2 daughters, one living in Charlotte and the other in Orlando. She enjoys reading and traveling.

Laura is originally from Delray Beach, Florida and moved to Tallahassee five years ago. Her background is diverse, having worked at several universities, hotels and in banking. She even has been a Disney character for a very short time. Laura is a graduate of Florida State University and Webster University. In her free time, she is an active member of a local community service organization and enjoys travel.

Phillip Prior has a degree from Florida State University in Mathematics Education and recently got married.

If you have any questions or need assistance with your grant, please call the grant specialist in your area at 850-245-0502.

The Chiles Academy



New Home of Chiles Academy

The Chiles Academy serves pregnant or parenting teens in East Volusia County from grades 6-12. Children aged from two weeks to three years old may attend too. In addition, the academy offers a specialized computer-based curriculum, self contained classes, parenting classes and on-site child care. Volusia County buses provide transportation to and from the site.

The academic focus of The Chiles Academy is to provide students with the opportunity to earn a high school diploma. Although the core subjects are delivered in a competency-based computerized curriculum, there is the opportunity for a student who experiences frustration in reading to participate in our unique reading program. Pre-natal health care, parenting education, early childhood development education, counseling, and outreach and social skills training are integral parts of the charter school. The heart and soul of our curriculum is the comprehensive parenting and early childhood development reading program provided by Morning Glory Press' [Teen Parenting Series](#).

Another successful aspect of our school can be attributed to the hands-on experience all students

receive in a caring, child care environment. It is a family environment, where learning happens naturally. Students practice what they learn in the classroom through interaction with the babies. The Chiles Academy has a licensed and trained staff of child caregivers who oversee and carefully guide and teach the students how to take care of babies. Two of the child caregivers are former students.

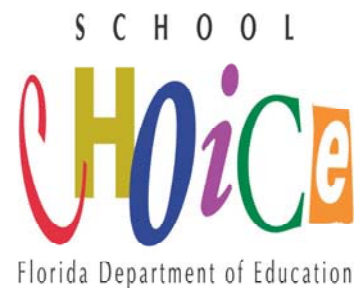
The common denominator for most of the students is poverty and the rules of society can be different when neglect, abuse, and homelessness are prevalent in daily life. The Chiles Academy tried the traditional methods of recruiting students but what works best is word of mouth. Most of the kids are scared and angry, and have no hope for the future. They drop out of school. When they run into friends who are pregnant or have a baby and find out that they are enrolled in school, they want to know that our school is "ok." Staff keep in close touch with counselors in the middle and high schools, the health department, and other social agencies in the area.

Attendance averages around 62%, which is good for a school serving this population. The national average is 50%. Absent and tardy students are called every single day. If they can't be reached by phone, someone is sent to their home.

Recently The Chiles Academy was awarded a Comprehensive School Reform (CSR) MicroSociety grant. MicroSociety is an innovative school design where students create the real world within their school. This program has been adopted by more than 250 schools in 40 states and has received national recognition as a comprehensive school reform model. The Chiles Academy is the first high school in the country to receive this grant and hopes to be a model for this program once it is fully

implemented into the school environment. Students will have a role in running their society. Entrepreneurs will produce goods and services, elected officials will establish laws, judges will arbitrate disputes, and reporters will track down stories. All the students will pay taxes, pay for tuition and child care, and they will deposit and borrow money from the bank.

In three years as a charter school, 75 students, most of them dropouts, have graduated from high school. The Chiles Academy is so proud of their graduates!



**Office of Independent
Education and Parental
Choice**

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**School Choice Hotline:
1-800-447-1636**

www.floridaschoolchoice.org