

CHARTER SCHOOLS NEWSLETTER

November 2011

Title I Funds for New Charter Schools

The Charter School Office would like to remind you that eligible charter schools are entitled to receive Title I funds within five months of opening or significantly expanding enrollment. If you are a first year charter school, and you believe that you are eligible for Title I funds (based on your percentage of students eligible for Free and Reduced Lunch), you should contact your school district to discuss the eligibility threshold.

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as amended by No Child Left Behind in 2001, requires that Local Education Agencies (School Districts) implement procedures that ensure that each charter school opening for the first time receives the proportionate amount of Title I funds for which it is eligible within five months of the date the charter school opens. Section 1002.33, Florida Statutes, includes the same provisions.

The federal regulations also include a general prohibition against School Districts relying on enrollment or eligibility data from a prior year in determining a charter school's eligibility to receive Title I funds during an academic year in which the charter school opens for the first time, even if allocations to other public schools are based on a prior year's data. In other words, your current year's enrollment data must be used to determine Title I eligibility.

For more information about Title I, please review the Department's Title I Handbook for Charter Schools at http://www.floridaschoolchoice.org/information/Charter_schools/files/Title_1_Manual_TOC.pdf.

In the Know: DOE Notices

Computer-Based Testing Winter Certification 2011-2012—Nine hundred sixty-two schools completed the Computer-Based Testing Certification tool for Fall Retakes. Districts who are testing in December must submit their school certifications of CBT readiness no later than **November 18, 2011**, and those testing in January should submit their school certifications no later than **December 23, 2011**. Please review: <http://info.fldoe.org/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-6215/dps-2011-177memo.pdf>

2012 Florida School-Related Employee of the Year Nomination Packet—The Florida Department of Education has issued information regarding the 2012 Florida School-Related Employee of the Year Nomination Packet: <http://info.fldoe.org/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-6211/dps-2011-160.pdf>.

K-12 Bibliographic Database—The K-12 public school bibliographic database is now accessible at <http://k12.floridalibraries.org> through the College Center for Library Automation's online discovery tool. These resources have been made available so that school district students, staff and parents will be able to see all the library materials held in their local district schools as well as the school library holdings throughout the state. The site also allows patrons to see whether a book is at a public library. Please address any questions regarding the K-12 bibliographic database to Katrina Figgett in the Bureau of Curriculum and Instruction at Katrina.Figgett@fldoe.org.

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Parental Involvement Representative

One of the changes that was made during the 2011 Legislative Session was to require that all charter school governing boards appoint a representative to facilitate parental involvement and to post the contact information of that representative on the school's website. The statutory language is provided below.

Section 1002.33(7)(d)1., Florida Statutes: Each charter school's governing board must appoint a representative to facilitate parental involvement, provide access to information, assist parents and others with questions and concerns, and resolve disputes. The representative must reside in the school district in which the charter school is located and may be a governing board member, charter school employee, or individual contracted to represent the governing board. If the governing board oversees multiple charter schools in the same school district, the governing board must appoint a separate individual representative for each charter school in the district. The representative's contact information must be provided annually in writing to parents and posted prominently on the charter school's website if a website is maintained by the school. The sponsor may not require that governing board members reside in the school district in which the charter school is located if the charter school complies with this paragraph.

For a summary of the various changes applicable to charter schools resulting from the 2011 Legislative Session, please review our 2011 Legislative Summary at http://www.floridaschoolchoice.org/information/Charter_schools/files/2011_Legislative_Summary.pdf.

Program Reminders

- **Capital Outlay Plans** - Sponsors must review and provide the final submission by November 30. For further information, go to <http://www.fldoe.org/edfacil/oef/cs2012.asp>.
- **Charter School Accountability Report**—E-mail notification was sent in October. Schools will have until November 30 to submit the Report. The District portion must be submitted by January 31.
- **First year charter schools** may be eligible for Title I funding. For more information, go to the Department's [Title 1 Handbook for Charter Schools](#).
- **Weekly**—Visit our [Charter School News Feed](#) to find out what's new! More resources are added all the time, so check back frequently.

Professional Development

Statewide Online Tobacco Prevention and Intervention Teacher Training Project

In the continued effort to reduce and prevent tobacco use among school-aged children, the Florida Department of Education (DOE) is working in partnership with the School District of Palm Beach County to provide a statewide online tobacco prevention education course.

This distance learning course is a professional development opportunity for all public school K12 teachers and guidance staff. Registration is ongoing through May 11, 2012. There is no cost to personnel who participate in the online course, and they will have 24-hour access seven days a week to complete the course. Participants receive effective teaching strategies and integrated approaches to delivering tobacco prevention education in science, social studies, language arts, mathematics, health, and physical education.

This is the second year the course has been provided statewide. Based upon the evaluation of the first year's results, teachers increased their knowledge, and the students increased their knowledge about tobacco and changed their attitudes and behavior regarding tobacco use. Districts may award participants who complete the course up to 60 in-service points toward teacher recertification. For more information, visit www.tobaccopreventiontraining.org.



Charters in the News

A round-up of local and national charter stories

SIGSBEE NETS HALF-MILLION-DOLLAR MILITARY GRANT

BY GWEN FILOSA CITIZEN STAFF KEYSNEWS.COM

Sigsbee Charter School, which serves mostly children whose parents work at Naval Air Station Key West, has received a \$540,000 federal grant. The hefty grant arrives at the K-6 school one year after it left the Monroe County School District's supervision and was transformed into a charter school by locals, both civilian and Navy, who tore out the drywall, painted classrooms and stripped floors to reopen the school building at the Sigsbee Park Annex.

Sigsbee Principal Elisa Jannes said the \$540,000 will allow the school to develop a "cutting edge" Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) program over the next three years. The program is designed to help military-connected students who face academic obstacles due to multiple moves due to deployment. [Read more....](#)

NEW GRADES ON CHARTER SCHOOLS

IN ORDER TO CREATE SOME GOOD ONES, WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO LIVE WITH SOME LEMONS

BY ANDREW J. ROTHERHAM NOVEMBER 3, 2011 TIME.COM

The two most common criticisms about charter schools are that A) many of them aren't that good and B) the good ones can't be replicated to serve enough kids to really make a difference. TIME got an exclusive first look at the most comprehensive evaluation of charter school networks ever, and although the study, which will be released on Nov. 4, underscores the challenge of creating quality schools, it also makes clear that it is indeed possible to build a lot of schools that are game-changers for a lot of students. [Read more....](#)

THE BROAD FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES NEW AWARD FOR URBAN CHARTER SCHOOLS

BY CHRISTINA SAMUELS ON OCTOBER 31, 2011 5:58 PM

The Eli and Edythe Broad Foundation today announced a new annual award, the Broad Prize for Public Charter Schools, that will be bestowed to the charter management organization demonstrating the best academic outcomes for black and Latino students and those coming from low-income families. The winner of the 2012 prize will be announced at the June 2012 National Charter Schools Conference in Minneapolis, hosted annually by the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, the nationwide advocacy organization for the charter school sector. To be eligible, charter management organizations must have five or more public charter schools in operation and 1,500 students enrolled as of the 2007-2008 school year; at least 40 percent of students eligible for free or reduced-price school lunches since 2008-09; 40 percent or more students from minority groups since 2008-09 and 75 percent of its schools located in urban areas. Twenty organizations meet the criteria, including KIPP, YES Prep and Green Dot Public Schools. After the winner is announced, a team of experienced researchers and practitioners will conduct a site visit to identify

practices that supported student achievement performance. These best practices will be released shortly thereafter. [Read more...](#)

REPORT DOCUMENTS CHARTER SCHOOL GROWTH

BY VALERIE STRAUSS FROM WASHINGTONPOST.COM

Six school districts across the country now have at least 30 percent of their public school students enrolled in charter schools — with Washington D.C. at No. 2 on the list. And 18 systems have more than 20 percent of their students attending charters, according to a [new report](#). The charter demographics report, released by the [National Alliance for Public Charter Schools](#), lists Los Angeles as topping the list (see below) of districts with the highest number of charter school students — 79,385 (which was 12,576 more this school year than last). If those students were in a single school system, it would be in the top 45 of the largest U.S. school districts. [Read more....](#)

PRO-CHARTER SCHOOL LOBBYING GROUP EMERGES

BY MATT DIXON - POLITIJAX NEWS SERVICE OF FLORIDA: ON OCTOBER 24, 2011

A new lobbying group for charter schools officially launched on Monday. With support from the Walton Family Foundation, the Florida Charter School Alliance will advocate for policies that benefit charter schools. The alliance notes that there are over 500 charter schools in the state and demand for new charter schools increases ever year. The formation of this group is further evidence of the increasing political potency of charters and the divisions between them and traditional public schools.

The press release announcing the launch says the group will "work to bring high-quality charter schools to all communities in Florida" and "actively advocate for the equitable treatment and funding of all public school students." [Read more....](#)

CITY-BASED STRATEGIES FOR EXCELLENT CHARTER SCHOOLS

BY BRYAN HASSEL AND EMILY AYSUCJE HASSEL 11/02/2011 FROM EDUCATION NEXT

A number of forward looking cities have set aside contentious debates about charter schools, and have instead chosen to embrace *high-quality* charter schools in their reform strategies. This is a welcome development for students stuck in underperforming schools. But these city-based movements are not without challenges.

Addressing these challenges is the focus of three new white papers a [Public Impact](#) team led by Lucy Steiner recently produced with the support of the [National Charter School Resource Center](#) and the U.S. Department of Education's [Charter Schools Program](#). The papers in this series, co-authored by Steiner, Daniela Doyle and Joe Ableidinger, offer practical ways for city-based organizations to support creation of high-quality charter schools, foster development of talent pipelines, and guide prospective investors. [Read more....](#)

Perspectives



Jenna Hodgens is FACSAs Vice President and Supervisor of Charter Schools for Hillsborough County.

The National Association of Charter School Authorizers Conference in Amelia Island

Contributed by Jenna Hodgens

Beautiful Amelia Island...waves crashing, sun shining and lots of Northerners wiggling their toes in the sand. Those are some of the sights you would have seen had you attended the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA) Conference recently. But more important, you would have been a part of lively conversations on accountability, teacher effectiveness, legislative issues and parental choice and empowerment.

The conference kicked off with our very own Carolyn Bridges, President of the Florida Association of Charter School Authorizers (FACSA) welcoming all to our beautiful state and this perfect location for networking, learning and debating. Next, Chiefs for Change, including our new Commissioner, Gerard Robinson, talked about how charter authorizing is playing an integral role in closing the achievement gap.

Three other plenary sessions filled Tuesday's and Wednesday's schedule with breakout sessions each afternoon. Some of the breakout sessions included information on incubating charters, helping turn around failing charters, special education, and many other interesting topics. One of the Florida group's favorite topics was virtual charters. Several sessions were held on this topic and provided good information for us in consideration of our new statute relating to virtual.

Carolyn Bridges and I, as representatives of FACSA, were able to present with the Michigan Council of Charter School Authorizers and the Ohio Association of Charter School Authorizers, on how state organizations can help provide support and best practices so that quality authorizing is embraced throughout the state.

I presented, as a representative of Hillsborough County Public Schools, on Authorizing on a Tight Budget. Joining me was South Carolina Public Charter School District and Volunteers of America-Minnesota. The presentation elicited lively conversation with lots of interaction from the attendees.

As you can see, the conference was full of learning and interaction with other professionals. Next year the conference will take place in Memphis, Tennessee on October 22-25. Mark your calendars now so you don't miss this great professional experience.

The Charter School Newsletter welcomes guest articles on timely charter issues. Please contact us at Charterschools@fldoe.org.

Let's Move!

Let's Move! is a comprehensive initiative, launched by the First Lady Michelle Obama, dedicated to solving the problem of obesity within a generation, so that children born today will grow up healthier and able to pursue their dreams. Combining comprehensive strategies with common sense, *Let's Move!* is about putting children on the path to a healthy future during their earliest months and years. Giving parents helpful information and fostering environments that support healthy choices. Providing healthier foods in our schools. Ensuring that every family has access to healthy, affordable food. And, helping children become more physically active.

For information, please visit: <http://www.letsmove.gov>



Funding Opportunities

Whole Kids Foundation School Garden Grants - The School Garden Grant Program is the joint effort of Whole Kids Foundation, Whole Foods Market and FoodCorps. The Whole Kids Foundation is able to provide grants of \$2,000 to support school garden projects in the United States, United Kingdom and Canada. Eligibility: applicants must be a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization or nonprofit K-12 school that is developing or currently maintaining a school garden project that will help children engage with fresh fruits and vegetables. Maximum award: \$2,000. **Deadline: December 31, 2011**

Microsoft: DigiGirlz High Tech Camp - Microsoft DigiGirlz High Tech Camp for girls works to dispel stereotypes of the high-tech industry. During the camp session, girls listen to executive speakers, participate in technology tours and demonstrations, network, and learn through hands-on experience in workshops. This year camps will take place at various dates throughout the summer in Stonybrook, NY; Charlotte, NC; Fargo, ND; Redmond, WA; Las Colinas, TX; and St. Louis, MO. Maximum award: free attendance to camp. Eligibility: girls grades 9-11 in the 2010-2011 school year and at least age 13 at time of application, with the exception of the Fargo, ND and Las Colinas, TX locations, where eligibility is restricted to grades 7-10 and 8-11, respectively. **Deadline: Varies by location**

Best Buy Teach@15 Award - The Teach@15 Award program improves classroom learning by helping schools (grades 7-12) meet technology needs. A teen member (age 13-18) who is a registered member on www.at15.com can nominate his/her school to win a Teach@15 Award. Maximum Award: \$1,500 in Best Buy GiftCards. Eligibility: accredited, nonprofit junior or senior public, private, parochial, and charter high schools. **Deadline: Ongoing**

Ben & Jerry's Foundation: National Grassroots Grant Program - Through the National Grassroots Grant Program, Ben & Jerry's Foundation grant program aims to further social justice, protect the environment and support sustainable food systems. Grants of up to \$15,000 are provided to grassroots, constituent-led organizations that are using community organizing strategies to accomplish their goals as well as organizations that provide technical support and/or resources to such groups. **Deadline: Rolling**

Earthwatch Education Fellowships - The Earthwatch Institute offers educators fully funded fellowships for hands-on learning with leading scientists doing field research and conservation on one of 130 projects. Earthwatch's Education Fellowships are national in scope, and supported by a wide range of businesses, foundations, and individuals. Maximum award: full cost of expedition, including all research costs, meals, housing, on-site travel, etc. Eligibility: K-12 classroom educators of any subject(s) from public or private schools nationwide. **Deadline: Rolling basis throughout the spring.**

Brown Rudnick Charitable Foundation Grants - The Brown Rudnick Charitable Foundation Corporation's Limited GEO: Grants to Help Inner-City Educators fund specific, one-time future education-related needs or ideas that promise to improve inner city education within one year of the grant award in one of the cities eligible for foundation grants. Maximum award: \$2,000. Eligibility: small, concrete projects that will improve inner-city education in Boston, Hartford, Providence, New York or Washington, D.C. within the coming year. **Deadline: None**

Campbell's Labels for Education - The Labels for Education Program gives schools free educational equipment in exchange for labels from Campbell products. Maximum award: varies. Eligibility: Schools or parents coordinate label drives to raise resources for schools. **Deadline: None**

For more information about these and other opportunities, go online to America's Promise Alliance.



Shining Stars

Clark Student's Artwork Selected by U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Clark Advanced Learning Center high school student Christian Birkett's artwork, "Woodstork", was recently selected by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as the 10th grade winner for their 2012 Endangered Species Day Calendar. Birkett's artwork was chosen out of 335 entries and will represent one month in their 2012 calendar. Each winner also received a \$100 U.S. savings bond. The calendar helps the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services promote awareness of Endangered Species Day and the national conservation effort to protect the nation's endangered species and their habitats.

Birkett, of Palm City, is majoring in Digital Media/ Graphics and has already earned 18 credits toward an Associate in Arts degree from Indian River State College. Clark Advanced Learning Center students have an opportunity to complete one to two years of college at no cost through dual enrollment. Students engage in internships related to their interests and utilize technology in project-based learning. A personal laptop computer is assigned to each student while in attendance at the school. An A-rated public charter high school, the Clark Advanced Learning Center is located at the Indian River State College Chastain Campus. For more information, call (772) 419-5750 or visit www.clarkadvancedlearningcenter.org.



Christian Birkett proudly displays his winning artwork selected by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service at the 2011 Treasure Coast Students Endangered Species Calendar Art Contest.

Share the accomplishments of your Shining Stars!

Please send submissions via e-mail to our newsletter editor at 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.



To see more Shining Stars, go to the Charter Schools website:

http://www.floridaschoolchoice.org/information/Charter_Schools/Success_Stories.asp



Improving K-12 Educational Choice Options

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