



CHARTER SCHOOLS NEWSLETTER

December 2011

Regional Focus Groups now being formed

The Department is developing a strategic plan for supporting charter schools in their efforts to comply with Senate Bill 736 (Student Success Act) and the core goals of Race to the Top. In order to provide relevant and timely support that meets the needs of charter schools across the state, we have partnered with Keystone Consulting to administer surveys to all charter schools and district charter school liaisons and conduct a series of focus groups. Our goal is to identify the topics for which charter schools are in greatest need of assistance, and then develop and implement an effective system of support. **Information from the surveys and focus groups will determine the type of training and other support the Department will provide in the future.**



Surveys – In early January, the Department will e-mail all charter school administrators and district charter school liaisons with a link to the survey. Please be on the lookout and plan to respond – We need your input!

Focus Groups – Eight regional discussion groups focusing on topics critical to the attainment of Florida's stu-

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In the Know: Proposed Legislation

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The 2012 regular Legislative Session opens January 10 and continues until March 9. At this time, two bills have been filed which, if passed, will affect charter schools.

HB 903: Charter Schools, is a general bill which authorizes district school board to share revenue generated by capital outlay millage levy with charter schools on per-student pro rata basis; provides for recalculation of school district's FEFP allocation if millage levy revenue is not shared and for distribution of recalculated funds; requires payment to charter schools of certain federal funds; and revises requirements for designation as high-performing charter school; and revises or authorizes several provisions regarding high-performing charter schools. The full summary and text of this bill may be viewed at: <http://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2012/903> .

SB 1162: Family Charter Academies, is a general bill authorizing the formation of family charter academies as part of the state's public school system; providing guiding principles and purposes for family charter academies; and providing requirements for application, contracting and sponsor duties. The full summary and text of this bill may be viewed at: <http://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2012/1162>.

Program Reminders

- **Capital Outlay Plans:** Sponsors should have reviewed and provided final submission to the Charter Office by November 30. For further information, go to <http://www.fldoe.org/edfacil/oef/cs2012.asp>.
- **Charter School Accountability Report:** The District portion of the CSAR must be submitted by January 31.

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dent achievement goals will be held. If possible, schools are encouraged to send three-member teams comprising a school administrator, a teacher or other school-based staff member, and a Board member. Specific locations will be provided as soon as they are confirmed. **Please plan to attend a session near you!**

<u>Date</u>	<u>District /Time</u>
December 20, 2011	Lee or Collier 10:00 am – 12:00 pm
January 6, 2012	Bay or Okaloosa 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm
January 11, 2012	Orange 10:00 am – 12:00 pm
January 12, 2012	Polk 10:00 am – 12:00 pm
January 17, 2012	Dade 10:00 am – 12:00 pm
January 17, 2012	Broward 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm
January 18, 2012	Palm Beach 10:00 am – 12:00 pm
January 27, 2012	Hillsborough, Pinellas, or Pasco 10:00 am – 12:00 pm

If you have questions or comments regarding the focus groups or surveys, please contact Christy Noe or Kim Komisar at keystoneconsulting@me.com.

Department Notes

NEW MTSS and IDEA Compliance Resource

Multi-tiered System of Supports (MTSS) and the IDEA Child Find Requirements: How to Ensure Compliance within the “Rtl” Culture is a memorandum with questions and answers to assist school teams in appropriately meeting Child Find requirements and determining what instruction and interventions accelerate student learning and what resources must be allocated to meet their intervention needs. See attached memorandum or you may access the memorandum on Florida’s Rtl website at <http://florida-rti.org/>.

Revised Arts Courses Aligned to the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards and Common Core State Standards

The Department of Education has issued the following memorandum regarding Revised Arts Courses Aligned to the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards and Common Core State Standards. The memorandum may be viewed at:

<http://info.fldoe.org/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-6255/dps-2011-191.pdf> (Memo);
<http://info.fldoe.org/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-6256/dps-2011-191a.pdf> (Attachment A).

Awareness and Support to Military Children

The anticipated re-entry of many service men and women who have served in the military brings its own set of challenges for military families and school communities. In partnership with the Massachusetts Department of Health, the Red Sox Foundation, the Massachusetts General Hospital Home Base Program has developed toolkits and posters to help increase awareness and support to military children. The toolkits and posters are available at no cost at <http://www.homebaseprogram.org/>.

Large turnout for 15th Annual Charter School Conference–

The fifteenth annual Florida Charter School Conference took place November 14-16, 2011, in Orlando, Florida, at the DoubleTree Hotel at the Entrance to Universal Orlando. The theme was "**Stronger Communities through Quality Schools.**" The conference took its focus from Florida's Race to the Top grant, with the goal of expanding the capacity of high-quality charter schools in underperforming communities. With 720 attendees, this was the most successful conference in FCSC's 15-year history.

Participants had an opportunity to network with other charter school representatives, obtain information on issues affecting charter schools, learn different strategies for helping students, and receive encouragement for the task of educating Florida's students. Stunning performances from the Villages Charter School choral ensemble and BOK Academy's Steel Drum Band opened the conference, and Manatee School for the Arts dance team HEAT wowed the closing session audience.

Visit the [Florida Charter School Conference Website](#) for presentations from the conference.

Thank you to all conference participants!





Charters in the News

A round-up of local and national charter stories

Bay County Charter School Recognized for Work with Persons With Disabilities

Students from the Chautauqua Learn and Serve Charter School in Panama City earned a standing ovation recently during the Second International Conference for Youth Volunteerism in Barranquilla, Columbia, when it was announced that the school was selected by Peace Jam to work with a former Nobel Prize winner on their cause to advance the rights of people with disabilities. A delegation of students attended the conference to share ideas, network with other international volunteers, and celebrate volunteer movements in other parts of the world. Peace Jam brings young people together with Nobel Peace Laureates to tackle some of the most difficult issues facing the planet today.

New Charter School Applications Soar

From West Orlando News Online

Florida school districts are flooded with applications for new charter schools.... Nearly 100 more new charter school applications have been filed for the 2012-13 school year than were filed at the same time last year, a 38 percent increase, according to statistics from the Department of Education.

Statewide, school districts have received 348 charter school applications. Last year, districts received 252 applications. A charter doesn't get automatic approval; the district must approve charter applications. [Read More....](#)

Number of students attending charter schools soars

By CHRISTINE ARMARIO 12-07-11 From tbo.com

The number of students attending charter schools has soared to more than 2 million as states pass laws lifting caps and encouraging their expansion.

The National Alliance for Public Charter Schools released new figures today showing a 13 percent growth in enrollment. That's the equivalent of about 200,000 students. More than 500 new charter schools opened for the 2011-12 school year. [Read more...](#)

Harvard Study Flips Conventional Wisdom on Good Schools

By ABBY ROGERS AND GUS LUBIN| 2-06-11 FROM BUSINESSINSIDER.COM

According to the [Business Insider](#), two Harvard professors published a [study](#) this week that is likely to cause controversy among educators. Will Dobbie and Roland G. Fryer studied 35 New York charter schools to see whether the traditional models of assessing a school's effectiveness, like class size, were really meaningful. Surprisingly enough, they weren't. [Read more....](#)

Glades Academy holds open house for new building

By Allison Ross 12-12-11 from PalmBeachPost.com

Glades Academy Elementary Charter School, the K-5 charter school located in Pahokee, will have a ribbon-cutting ceremony and grand opening for its new school at 11 a.m. today.

The charter school, which houses about 100 students, has been open since the beginning of the school year.

[Read more....](#)

Russ Lemmon: Field trip results in greater appreciation for charter school

By RUSS LEMMON 12-07-11 FROM TCPALM.COM

.... Indian River Charter High School is a public school and it offers Chinese classes.

OK, OK.

I'm going to suspend my self-imposed punishment — writing the above sentence 50 times on a blackboard — and share details of a field trip I took Tuesday to the school that's situated between 58th Avenue and Indian River State College. [Read more...](#)

Mapping Charter School Gaps

By Matt Stiles 23 Nov 2011 08:00 AM PST from NPR

This map shows charter school attendance in every Florida county. Click on the image for an interactive map. More than two dozen counties did not have a charter school during the last school year, despite a rising percentage of Florida students attending charter schools. These interactive maps show the counties without charters and the percentage of students in each county that attend charter schools.

Click [here](#) to view the interactive maps.

Student Opportunities

White House Internship Program

The White House has opened the application for the **Summer 2012 White House Internship Program**, which runs from May 29, 2012 through August 10, 2012. The application deadline is January 22, 2012. If you are interested in public service – [Apply](#). Be part of a program where there's no typical day, and where young people from across the country dedicate their time, talents, and energy to better the White House, the community, and the nation.

Congress-Bundestag Vocational Exchange

Florida is once again participating in the **Congress-Bundestag Vocational Exchange Scholarship Program**. This scholarship/exchange program provides an opportunity for 25 graduating high school seniors to spend one year in Germany exploring their career interests.

Each high school may nominate up to three students. Although previous study of German is advantageous, it is not a prerequisite. Completed [applications](#) must be postmarked and mailed no later than **January 31, 2012**.

KidCare Act Out for Health Contest Accepting Entries

The annual **KidCare Act-Out for Health Contest** is accepting student entries for television public service announcements, billboards and essays. Students in grades 4-12 are eligible to design a billboard, write an essay or create a 30-second commercial that promotes a healthy lifestyle. Lesson plans for teachers are also available. The deadline to submit an entry is **Jan. 6, 2012**. For more information, visit <http://www.actoutforhealth.org>.

National STEM Video Game Challenge

The **2012 National STEM Video Challenge** is a new initiative designed to unlock breakthrough technologies to transform teaching and learning. The Challenge is a multi-year competition with the goal to motivate interest in STEM learning by tapping into students' natural passion for playing and making video games. The contest is open to students and game designers in middle school, high school, college and graduate students, and educators. Entrants must submit their games and ideas by **March 12, 2012**. For details, visit <http://stemchallenge.org/Default.aspx>.



Professional Development Resources

From STEM to STEAM

Educators may be aware of the movement afoot to change the acronym STEM, which we all know stands for "Science, Technology, Engineering and Math," to STEAM, adding in the arts. Think about it. Many of history's greatest scientific leaps arose from a vision or intuitive knowledge which later proved true. Think Watson and Crick's snake dream.

Experienced teachers know that art (including language arts) is a very important way to help students of all ages to imagine, visualize and enact the science they are learning. Project WILD and many other STEM-focused curricula have extensions for incorporating creative arts activities (writing poetry, drawing, etc.) with the science content.

Here are a few recent STEM to STEAM articles exploring its impact:

http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2011/12/01/13steam_ep.h31.html

http://scienceblogs.com/art_of_science_learning/2011/04/stem_or_steam.php

<http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/imagine/201103/stem-steam-stream-writing-essential-component-science-education>

Is your contact information up to date?

Make sure you are receiving all Program Office communications. Update you contact information through your charter school login at https://www.floridaschoolchoice.org/login/login_charter_school.asp, or e-mail Charterschools@fldoe.org.



Shining Stars

Hillcrest Elementary declared 'high performing charter school'



Hillcrest Elementary has been verified as a "high performing charter school" by the Florida Department of Education.

"Thank you for your continued participation in our mission to improve the quality of educational options for Florida's students," said Florida Commissioner of Education **Gerard Robinson**, in a letter dated October 3.

"We are thrilled with this recognition from the State of Florida," said Principal **Barbara Jones**. "Hillcrest Elementary has a long tradition of teachers and support staff who are committed to providing the best possible learning envi-

ronment for our students. This recognition is for everyone who has contributed to the success at Hillcrest."

In Spring 2011, the Florida Legislature created Florida Statute s.1002.331, establishing criteria for high performing charter schools. According to the new law, schools like Hillcrest must: receive at least two school grades of A and no grade below B during each of the previous three school years; receive an unqualified opinion on each annual financial audit in the most recent three fiscal years; and not receive a financial audit that reveals one or more financial emergency conditions in the most recent three fiscal years.

Contact Frances McMichael at 863-679-6560 x227 or via e-mail at fmcmichael@LWCharterSchools.com for additional information.

To see more **Shining Stars**, go to the Charter Schools website: http://www.floridaschoolchoice.org/information/Charter_Schools/Success_Stories.asp

Share the accomplishments of your **ShiningStars!**

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.



*Improving K-12 Educational
Choice Options*

Charter Schools Office
Adam Miller—Charter Director
Helen Giraitis—Grants Manager

Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice

Michael Kooi, Esq.—Executive Director

325 West Gaines Street, Suite 522
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0400

Toll-free: 800-447-1636
Phone: 850-245-0502
Fax: 850-245-0875

E-mail: Charterschools@fldoe.org
On the Web: WWW.FLORIDASCHOOLCHOICE.ORG