



Florida Department of Education

Letter to Teachers from Commissioner Smith

Dear Teachers,

In celebration of Teacher Appreciation Week, I would like to take this opportunity to extend a special "thank you" for your hard work and dedication to Florida's children. To become an educator is to choose a path unlike any other. When we teach, we carry with us the responsibility of helping to shape the lives of each and every child under our tutelage, encouraging our students to strive for personal success.

Having begun my career in education as a classroom teacher, I am keenly aware of the challenges you face every day when you enter your classroom. You embrace these challenges and help your students reach high levels of achievement. Your dedication to your students, school, and profession has resulted in Florida's education system being recognized as one of the top public education systems in the nation by Quality Counts, a national report published annually by Education Week that compares state education systems. In addition, the K-12 Student Achievement section of the Quality Counts report ranked Florida seventh in the nation. On the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), otherwise known as "the Nation's Report Card," Florida was one of only four states in the nation to improve significantly in both fourth and eighth grade reading while Florida high school students continued to excel in Advanced Placement (AP) participation and performance. Thanks to your tireless efforts, our students continue to achieve at higher levels.

To honor you during this special week, the Florida Department of Education has organized special events around the state, and partnered with businesses to provide special discounts and promotions for Florida teachers. These opportunities are available by accessing the "Just for Teachers" Web site at <http://www.fldoe.org/justforteachers>.

On behalf of the State Board of Education and the Florida Department of Education, I thank you for all you do for Florida's students.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Eric Smith".

Commissioner Eric Smith