

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Requested Reports, Updates, and Discussions
May 17, 2005

SUBJECT: Update on DOE/Microsoft Partnership and “Sunshine Connections”

PROPOSED BOARD ACTION

Accept and discuss status report.

AUTHORITY FOR STATE BOARD ACTION

Goal 1: Highest Student Achievement, and Goal 4: Quality Efficient Services

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In December 2004, following nearly two years of planning and negotiation, the Florida Department of Education and Microsoft Corporation embarked on a unique, one-of-a-kind, five-year partnership to provide teachers and other educators with information and resources to fuel the achievement of every student.

This suite of resources, called “***Sunshine Connections***” is a unique collection of Web-based tools — created with direct input from the teachers who will use it — that is designed to foster innovation in the classroom, create valuable interrelationships between educators and other stakeholders, and, ultimately, improve student achievement in Florida.

Sunshine Connections will be rolled out in phases with all districts provided access beginning Fall 2006. Phase I districts of Bay County, Duval County, Dade County, fourteen school districts of the North Eastern Florida Education Consortium, and Indian River Community College will pilot “Release 1 – Back to School 2005” beginning this summer. Additional releases will incorporate additional users in the Phase I districts and will expand users into other districts with revised “Releases” provided throughout the five-year partnership.

To date, the following major activities have contributed to the development of the “Back to School 2005” Release of Sunshine Connections:

- Conducted Phase I district focus groups of teachers and other classroom users
- Secured the DOE Education Data Center as the host of the server farm
- Secured partnership of Florida Education Foundation to serve as fiscal agent
- Adopted the core function of FCAT student analysis as primary to “Release 1”
- Held first meeting of the Statewide Advisory Council of representative users

The “Back to School” Release of Sunshine Connections will be formally presented in August, with that and any version thereafter available for review by the State Board. Find more information at: www.fldoe.org/sunshine_connections.

Supporting Documentation Included: Governor’s April 27, 2005 Press Release; Sunshine Connections Statewide Advisory Council Membership List

Facilitators/Presenters: Dr. Theresa Klebacha, Director of Strategic Initiatives