

**STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**January 21, 2003**

**SUBJECT: Palm Beach County School District Application  
for Charter School District Status**

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**PROPOSED BOARD ACTION**

Approve Palm Beach County School District's Application for Charter School District Status

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Based on the level of innovation and heightened student achievement brought to public education through charter schools, Florida has opted to explore the possibilities that are opened through offering an entire district charter status. Designation as a charter district means more freedom from state control. Florida adopted a model charter district law during the 1999 session.

Governor Bush, who had helped found a charter school in Miami's Liberty City before he was elected governor, has described the charter district demonstration project as a way to try out new ideas.

The Florida law allows up to six pilot districts to seek exemptions from all state statutes, rules, and policies except those that deal with electing school boards, public meetings and records, financial disclosure, conflict-of-interest, and sunshine laws. Yet, the law requires the charter district to establish performance goals, measures to assess progress, and a time frame for accomplishing the goals.

**Volusia County**

The Volusia County School District is the first Charter District in the state of Florida and one of the largest in the country. The school district began as a charter district in 1999; the charter has been renewed through June 2008. The school district's purpose is to achieve a significant acceleration in student achievement. The school district's graduation rate is 77% and the dropout rate is 1.4%. Seventy percent of Volusia County's public schools earned an "A" or a "B" in 2002. Sixty-three percent of Volusia County's Title I schools have earned an "A" or "B," demonstrating the success of the initiative to positively impact lower socio-economic students.

**Hillsborough County**

The Hillsborough County School District became Florida's second Charter District in the year 2000. The school district's vision is to be in the top 1% of school districts in the nation. Two-thirds of Hillsborough County schools were graded "A" or "B," with 64 schools receiving an "A." There are 79.9 % of Hillsborough County's high school graduates that intend on continuing on to college or advanced training. The drop out rate is 2.74%.

## **Orange County**

The Orange County Public School District was approved as the state's third charter school district in 2002. The Orange County public school system is the 14th largest district out of more than 16,000 in the nation and is the 4th largest in Florida. The school district's mission is to ensure that each student acquires the skills, attitudes and knowledge necessary to reach their full potential. Orange County has a 68.3% graduation rate and a 2.8% drop out rate. Seventy Orange County Public schools were graded an "A" or a "B."

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**Supporting Documentation Included:** History of Charter School Districts, Executive Summary, Palm Beach District Application for Charter School District Status

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