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Florida Provides STEM Opportunities for Students in Small and Rural Districts

The FloridaLearns STEM grant has created opportunities for small and rural districts to develop new systems of support for their lowest-performing schools. The grant also targets and uses significant resources to improve student performance, and has created training and development programs to prepare school leaders for success in turning these schools around. Students have more access to rigorous learning opportunities, college-level courses, Advanced Placement (AP) classes, and science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) education, as well as more opportunities to learn outside of school hours.

The *White House Report: Race to the Top Setting the Pace for Gains across the Education System* published the following article about the FloridaLearns STEM program.

Phidell, a high school senior who lives in a thinly populated area of the Florida Panhandle, had two summer adventures. He spent four days alongside some of the nation's top scientists as part of a group analyzing nanomaterial, tiny particles with special characteristics. He also attended a forum of engineers representing various industries, where he learned that mechanical engineers have skills that can be useful in the field of animation, which Phidell has been considering as a career. Both opportunities came about because Phidell is one of hundreds of students from rural communities in Florida who are STEM Scholars – part of a state initiative to expose more students to opportunities in STEM through Florida's Race to the Top grant. In Florida, business leaders indicate that nearly nine out of 10 new jobs that become available over the next decade will be in STEM fields. The need for an increased emphasis on STEM is particularly acute in rural areas, where many schools are not able to hire fulltime teachers in these fields. Students in the STEM Scholars Program are paired with mentors and receive intensive hands-on experiences with STEM professionals, rigorous courses, leadership training, and opportunities to collaborate with other students. More than 1,000 high school students have participated in the STEM Scholars program since 2012. Enrollments are up 49 percent since 2009. In some rural counties, students received industry certifications for the first time in 2013. "Funds from Florida's Race to the Top award have expedited efforts already underway to better prepare students for college and careers," said Brenda Crouch, program manager for the FloridaLearns STEM Scholars Program. "It is a win for Florida's economic future."

To access the full report, please click on the following link:

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/03/25/white-house-report-race-top-setting-pace-gains-across-education-system>

“Arts for All” Lending Program

VSA Florida has a statewide lending program for art tools that can be used in any space including classrooms, neighborhoods, and sidewalks. The tools are designed to help participants with limited mobility or a lack of fine motor skills to be able to take part in the creative process of art. There is no cost to borrow the materials (except for disposable materials). For more information including contacts please go to the following webpage:

<http://www.vsafl.org/statewide-programs>

Arts Education for All Students

In a story posted in Education Week, Philadelphia Assistant Superintendent, Dennis Creedon shared his determination to provide arts education to every student. In the article and included video, he shared the impact the arts had upon his life as a dyslexic child, his work in arts integration, and the creation of partnerships to accomplish the goal of providing arts education to every student.

Education Week, *Philadelphia Leader Makes the Case for Arts Education*

<http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2014/03/05/23ltf-creedon.h33.html?cmp=ENL-EU-NEWS1>

Reference publications from the article:

Documents for the dissemination of research on arts integration best practices:

<http://www.paep.net/index.php?/main/programs/Publications>

Focus on the Arts

A recent blog from the U.S. Department of Education highlighted a Boston school that has dramatically improved its mathematics and English proficiency scores since becoming a part of Boston Schools’ Arts Expansion Initiative in 2009. They are also one of the schools that were selected to be a Turnaround Arts initiative school through the President’s Committee on Arts and Humanities in 2012.

For the complete blog visit: <http://www.ed.gov/blog/2014/03/boston-school-turns-around-with-focus-on-the-arts/>

For more information about the Turnaround Arts initiative: <http://turnaroundarts.pcah.gov/>

STEM Education

I. 2014-2015 Assessments

The Invitation to Negotiate was posted for public review in October 2013, and proposals were received in December. An evaluation team reviewed five proposals and narrowed the choice to three groups. Subsequently, a negotiation team unanimously recommended the not-for-profit American Institutes for Research (AIR) to Commissioner Stewart, who announced her selection of AIR on March 17, 2014.

The new statewide assessments will be ELA Assessments for Grades 3-11, Mathematics Assessments for Grades 3-8, an Algebra 1 Assessment, a Geometry Assessment, and an Algebra 2 Assessment. The current FCAT 2.0 Science Grade 5, FCAT 2.0 Science Grade 8, Biology EOC Assessment, Civics EOC Assessment, and US History EOC Assessment will remain.

For more information, including the press release, frequently asked questions, and Commissioner Stewart's messages, visit <http://www.fldoe.org/eduaccsummit.asp>.

II. Mathematics Standards Changes

The State Board of Education approved the proposed standards changes at the February 18, 2014 board meeting. Details can be found at <http://www.fldoe.org/eduaccsummit.asp>. The Rule took effect on March 25th. The course descriptions on CPALMS will be updated before the 2014-2015 school year to reflect these standards, but contact your district supervisor if you are in immediate need.

III. U.S. Department of Education Grant Opportunity

The U.S. Department of Education announced the start of the \$134 million 2014 Investing in Innovation (i3) grant competition on March 14th, 2014 with the release of the program's invitation for pre-applications for the i3 "Development" grants (up to \$3,000,000 each). In its fifth round of competition, the i3 program continues to develop and expand practices that accelerate student achievement and prepare every student to succeed in college and in their careers. The i3 program includes three grant categories: Development, Validation and Scale-up. The Department plans to announce applications for the Validation and Scale-up categories this spring.

The deadline for the pre-application is April 14, 2014. Following the peer review process, the Department will announce a list of the highly rated pre-applications. These pre-applicants will then be invited to apply for the Development competition and given additional time to complete their full application. To learn more about the i3 grant program and the pre-application process, please visit the i3 site:

<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/innovation/index.html>.

IV. STEM TIPS

The University of Florida and the Florida Department of Education are establishing a teacher induction support system with partner school districts that will serve as a model statewide. The features included in this online system of support for new science and math teachers includes online mentoring, professional development, and networking opportunities with their peers.

The goal for *e-Posium* is to provide an online platform for sharing exemplary practices and facilitating discussions regarding innovative strategies, projects, or programs in STEM teacher education.

Registration is now open for the Spring 2014 *e-Posium* Series. You may register and participate in one, two, or all three of the events. Registration link: <http://education.ufl.edu/conference/e-posium-registration/>.

Session 1- February 19, 2014 at 3:30 p.m.-5:00 p.m. (Please click [here](#) for the archived version.)

Guest Speaker, Alyson Mike (Senior Director, Online Professional Development, New Teacher Center), will discuss the revolution of teacher induction and professional support through online mentoring.

Session 2- March 19, 2014 (Please click [here](#) for the archived version.)

e-Posters from teachers and coaches from around the state will be presented in our online Gallery Walk. The link will be posted and shared via email with everyone who registered for the Spring 2014 *e-Posium* Series.

Session 3- April 15, 2014 at 3:30 p.m.-5:00 p.m.

Alyson Mike will participate in a round-table discussion with participants, and one of the highlights will include the sharing of reactions and questions to the e-Posters.

All Fall 2013 STEM TIPS webinars are archived and accessible at education.ufl.edu/stem-tips/. If you encounter any difficulty, please don't hesitate to contact Jason Dean Arnold at jda@coe.ufl.edu.

V. FCTM Grants and Awards

The Florida Council of Teachers of Mathematics (FCTM) has several grants and awards in which members can apply. The deadline for most applications is April 15, 2014.

For additional details:

[Grants and Awards](#)

VI. The Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (PAEMST)

The PAEMST are the nation's highest honors for teachers of mathematics and science (including computer science). Awardees serve as models for their colleagues, inspiration to their communities, and leaders in the improvement of mathematics and science education. Since 1983, more than 4,200 teachers have been recognized for their contributions in the classroom and to their profession. If you know great teachers, nominate them to join this prestigious network of professionals.

Please note that deadlines have been extended.

NOMINATIONS ARE NOW OPEN! The 2014 Awards will honor mathematics and science (including computer science) teachers working in grades K-6. Nominations can be completed at <https://www.paemst.org/nomination/nominate> and will close on **April 15, 2014**.

TEACHERS, APPLY ONLINE! Before logging in, please review the [2013–2014 Application Packet \(Adobe PDF\)](#). Applications must be completed by **May 15, 2014**. Go to https://www.paemst.org/home/welcome_teacher?id= for more information.

VII. A Research Study of Doing Based Learning: Students Learning by Doing in U.S. Public Schools

The Foundation for Technology and Engineering Education (FTEE) - Dugger/Gerrish Endowment, in partnership with the International Technology and Engineering Educators Association (ITEEA) has commissioned a study to determine to what extent students in United States public schools practice "doing" in their elementary, middle, and high school courses. For the purposes of this study, the definition of "doing" is:

A tactile/hands-on process of problem solving starting with human needs and wants that leads to the principles of innovation such as designing, making/building, producing, and evaluating.

This survey is totally voluntary. Teachers are asked to respond to 3 demographic questions and answer *Yes* or *No* to 13 statements dealing with "Doing Based Learning." The survey will not take longer than 5 minutes to complete. There are no correct or incorrect responses, as they are being used to determine what types of activities students are doing in class. A space is provided for optional comments. Your answers will be anonymous and can't be tracked back to you. **Please complete this survey before April 15, 2014** to be eligible for an iPad Mini drawing that will be held no later than April 30, 2014. If you would like to participate in the drawing, follow the prompt at the end of the survey.

Elementary school teachers, find your survey at

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/DoingsProjectElementary>.

Middle school teachers, find your survey at

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/DoingsProjectMiddleSchool>.

High school teachers, find your survey at

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/DoingProjectHighSchool>.

If you have any questions or concerns, please address them to Johnny Moye at jmoye@iteea.org.

VIII. Planetary Lander ‘Egg-Drop’ Competition

Space Florida, in partnership with NASA- Kennedy Space Center, Fla., has announced their 5th Annual Planetary Lander ‘Egg-Drop’ Competition that will be occurring on May 3rd at Palm Bay Magnet High School in Brevard County. This competition is being offered to Florida students by Space Florida and NASA-KSC to help generate student interest in and promote their understanding of aerospace technology, engineering, and mathematics, as well as increase their awareness of organizations that help promote the space industry. Registration is open until April 18, 2014.

Please visit the competition website at <http://spaceflorida.gov/r-d/planetary-lander-egg-drop>. Contact Emma Newsham at enewsham@spaceflorida.gov for more information.

IX. Professional Development (PD)

A. **11th Annual National Training Institute (NTI) on Effective Practices: Addressing Challenging Behavior**

The Florida Center for Inclusive Communities and the Pyramid Consortium are sponsors of this unique and inspiring PD experience to be held on April 23–25, 2014, at the Vinoy Renaissance St. Petersburg Resort and Golf Club in St. Petersburg. The NTI’s format provides an in-depth learning experience built around the pyramid model. The institute brings together experts who skillfully present three-hour workshops offering practical, ready-to-use information on social and emotional development. It is an unparalleled opportunity to increase your skills, build a network of colleagues and become part of a growing professional community who use the pyramid model. For registration information and updated program information, go to <http://nti.cbcs.usf.edu>.

*Remember, we can’t teach students if we don’t understand and have ways to work with their behavior patterns.

B. **Papers on Mathematics Education**

These sets are papers on mathematics education posted by Hung-Hsi Wu, a mathematician from University of California at Berkeley. They are separated into two groups. The first group consists of papers that are directly related to standards, and the second group is related to mathematics education. Within each group, the papers are given a general heading(s) before each title ("General", "Curriculum", "Professional Development"), which gives a rough indication of its content. These papers can be found at <http://math.berkeley.edu/~wu/>.

X. Did You Know...?

A. **Integrated STEM Lessons as Model Eliciting Activities (MEAs)**

CPALMS is integrating STEM into lessons via a Model-Eliciting Activity (MEA) approach. MEAs are open-ended, interdisciplinary, problem-solving activities that reveal students’ thinking about the embedded concepts. MEAs resemble engineering problems because students work in teams to apply their knowledge of science and mathematics to solve open-ended, realistic problems, while considering constraints and tradeoffs and clearly documenting their thought process. MEAs follow a problem-based, student-centered

approach to learning, where students are encouraged to grapple with the problem while the teacher acts as a facilitator.

Although MEAs were originally developed as a research tool in K-12 mathematics education, MEAs have since been used successfully as teaching tools in a range of subject areas and grade levels. Students gain a deeper understanding of the content as specified in the aligned standards and increase their ability to effectively apply their knowledge of the content to solve an open-ended problem. Besides gaining content knowledge, MEAs foster the development of 21st century skills like communication, teamwork, technical analysis, and problem solving. Individual MEAs typically align to standards in multiple subject areas. These resources can be accessed in the [CPALMS MEA Library](#).

Visit mea.cpalms.org for more information.

B. CPALMS Training Programs

With the expansion in resources and tools, providing professional development becomes a must. The CPALMS team is dedicated to spreading the word to make sure every Florida teacher knows about CPALMS, recognizes what it can do to help them, and understands how to use it. In addition to the online tutorials, the team is also available to deliver free on-site and online training that is customized to your needs. Just fill out the form found at <http://www.cpalms.org/CPALMS/pd.aspx#pdrequest>, and they will contact you to get one set up.

Note: Free training programs are only available for Florida's public schools/districts (including charter schools), private schools, and colleges/universities.

C. Mathematics Formative Assessment System (MFAS)

The system includes tasks or problems that teachers can implement with their students and rubrics that help the teacher interpret students' responses. Teachers using MFAS ask students to perform mathematical tasks, explain their reasoning, and justify their solutions. Rubrics for interpreting and evaluating student responses are included so that teachers can differentiate instruction based on students' strategies instead of relying solely on correct or incorrect answers. The objective is to understand student thinking so that teaching can be adapted to improve student achievement of mathematical goals related to the standards. Like all formative assessment, MFAS is a process rather than a test. Research suggests that well-designed and implemented formative assessment is an effective strategy for enhancing student learning. This system is available on [CPALMS](#) to all stakeholders in Florida, including teachers, parents and students, at no cost. Please visit <http://www.cpalms.org/Resource/mfas.aspx> for a list of available and under development components.

D. Task Talks

Illustrative Mathematics has introduced *Task Talks*. They announce a task of the week every Tuesday on their [Facebook](#) and [Google+](#) pages. The following Monday night at 7 p.m. EST, they host a webinar to discuss the task. You can RSVP for the webinar at <http://bit.ly/1dBJ33g> and join on Adobe Connect at: <http://illustrativemathematics.adobeconnect.com/tasktalk/>.

Voting Underway for Sunshine State Young Readers Awards (SSYRA)

SSYRA began in the fall of 1983 and was originally for students in grades 4-8 with only a few districts participating. Over the years it has grown to be a state wide program that now has two categories, grades 3-5 and 6-8, and last year impacted over 300,000 students in the state. SSYRA gives students the chance to read for pleasure and vote for their favorite book. Many schools work with their local elections office to have students use actual voting machines to cast their ballots and use the opportunity to tie in to civics lessons on the democratic process. Voting began on March 24th and will continue through April 25th. All votes need to be reported by midnight April 25, 2014. You must be a member of the Florida Association for Media in Education (FAME) to access voting materials. Information about becoming a FAME member can be found at: <http://www.floridamedia.org/>.

Very soon the lists for SSYRA 2014-15 will be released. Twenty librarians from across the state have spent the last 9 months evaluating the 300 plus books on this year's reading list and met in March to whittle that list down to 15 books for each grade range. Keep checking the FAME [SSYRA](#) webpage for the new lists and more information.

Read Something Great? It's Time to Nominate!

Would you like to suggest future SSYRA titles for consideration? If so, [fill out this updated form](#) with information about the book. All recommendations must be received by June 1, 2014 and will be considered for the 2015-16 list. Please remember titles must:

- Be fiction
- Have an author who lives in North America
- Be appropriate for students from all around Florida in grades 3 to 5 and/or 6 to 8
- Have a copyright date of 2011 or later

Florida's Observance of School Library Month in April 2014

It is time to celebrate and recognize our libraries and their valuable contributions. Each year, our school districts and Florida citizens take time to recognize the programs, services and resources provided by school libraries. This celebratory month provides opportunities across the state to highlight school library contributions to Florida public education.

School library programs prepare students for lifelong learning and enhance their reading enjoyment. Additionally, School Library Month coincides with National Library Week which highlights the resources and contributions of all types of libraries. National Library Week will be observed April 13-19, 2014.

School Library Month began as the American Association of School Librarians' (AASL) celebration of school librarians and their programs. Every April school librarians are encouraged to create activities to help their school and local community celebrate the essential role that strong school library programs play in a student's educational career.

The American Association of School Librarians' 2014 theme is, "Lives change @ your library®" and Jeff Kinney, New York Times bestselling author of the *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* series, has been named the national spokesperson.

“I don't know where I'd be without my school library,” said Kinney. “Our librarians were passionate about putting great books in the hands of kids, and making us into lifelong readers. School libraries introduce kids to whole new worlds and new perspectives and are so important in broadening kids' minds. It's crucial that we support our school libraries, especially in times of tightening budgets. I'm so grateful for the well-stocked libraries and knowledgeable, dedicated school librarians that were a part of my childhood.”

For additional information on School Library Month 2014 visit:

- American Library Association <http://www.ala.org/aasl/slm>
- School Library Month official [Proclamation](#) from Governor Rick Scott
- School Library Month 2014 [Memorandum](#)

April is Alcohol Awareness Month

Substance Use/Abuse focuses on the use and misuse of alcohol, tobacco, marijuana and inhalants, prescription and over-the-counter drugs, other illegal drugs (cocaine, LSD, heroin, methamphetamine, etc.); the classification and effects those substances have on the body; addiction; the health problems associated with drug dependence, including formation of habits and their influence; positive decision-making; and individual responsibility. It also includes effects on family members; family roles; risk behavior reduction; refusal and coping skills; societal and legal issues, including consequences; impact of media messages; and community resources.

Substance Use/Abuse education is required under [Florida State Statute 1003.42 \(2\)\(n\)](#) for K-12 Health Education instruction. Here are a few resources to assist with your delivery and instruction.

Resources

- CDC.gov- <http://www.cdc.gov/Features/AlcoholAwareness/>
- EIN News- <http://world.einnews.com/247pr/381274>
- HealthFinder.gov- <http://healthfinder.gov/NHO/AprilToolkit.aspx>
- kidshealth.org- http://kidshealth.org/teen/drug_alcohol/alcohol/alcohol.html
- National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Inc.- <http://www.ncadd.org/index.php/programs-a-services/alcohol-awareness-month>
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) http://www.samhsa.gov/samhsaNewsletter/Volume_19_Number_2/AprilAlcoholAwarenessMonth.aspx

Alcohol Consumption and Chronic Diseases

- Women are often more vulnerable than men to the long-term effects of alcohol on their health. Over time, drinking too much alcohol can lead to the following:

- **Cancer:** Alcohol consumption increases the risk for breast cancer and cancer of the mouth, throat, esophagus, liver, and colon.
- **Liver Disease:** The risk for cirrhosis and other alcohol-related liver diseases is higher for women than for men.
- **Heart Problems:** Studies have shown that women who drink excessively are at increased risk for damage to the heart muscle than men. Binge drinking can lead to high blood pressure and increase the risk for heart attack and stroke.

How Can I Help Prevent Prescription Drug Abuse?

Informed Families [Lock your Meds](#)- Be Aware. Don't Share

- http://informedfamilies.org/campaigns/lock_your_meds/

2014 Healthy Schools Summer Academy

This professional development opportunity is for teachers of health education and physical education content with special emphasis on other subject area courses with integrated health education benchmarks. School Nurses, English Language Arts and Sciences Teachers are encouraged to attend. [Online registration](#) is \$50.00 per person for the June 9-10 Academy at the University of Florida's Straughn Extension Center.

Bike to School Day is May 7, 2014

Ms. Sarita Taylor, FDOT Safe Routes to School Coordinator will be sending out **Walk to School Day** promos and literature. Please register at www.watkbiketoschool.org to be eligible to receive the free resources. Last year, more than 1,700 schools around the US registered Bike to School Day events on the [official website](#).

April Health Observances

- National Healthy Schools Day- 8th (<http://www.nationalhealthyschoolsday.org/>)
- Global Youth Service Day- 11th – 13th (<http://www.gysd.org/>)
- Healthy Kids Day[®]- 26th (<http://www.ymca.net/healthy-kids-day/>)
- Alcohol Awareness Month- (<http://www.cdc.gov/Features/AlcoholAwareness/>)
- Autism Awareness Month- (<http://www.autism-society.org/get-involved/national-autism-awareness-month/>)
- Child Abuse Prevention Month- (<https://www.childwelfare.gov/preventing/preventionmonth/>)
- Garden Month- (<http://www.nationalgardenmonth.org/>)
- Minority Health Month- (<http://www.floridahealth.gov/healthy-people-and-families/minority-health/minority-health-month.html>)