



## Supporting a Brighter Future for Florida's Students

I hope each one of you had a restful spring break. Although it is an exciting time to be an educator, the many changes Florida has implemented during the past few years to improve student outcomes can sometimes seem extensive.

Last week we announced that the American Institutes for Research (AIR) was selected to develop Florida's [new statewide assessments](#) for the next school year. I chose AIR because I believe that it is the best option for Florida's students.

I've met with countless Florida educators who have asked that our new tests provide a more authentic assessment of our students' grasp of the Florida Standards. Just as you are employing interactive activities to boost student learning in your classrooms, I believe we need an assessment that allows students to write and respond in non-traditional methods.

This test will focus less on finding the right answer and more on demonstrating higher order thinking skills. You have my commitment that students, educators and parents will be able to preview samples of new question types by taking practice tests that will be made available for anyone interested in reviewing them.

We have already received several questions from Florida educators regarding specific aspects of the assessment, and I encourage you to continue to email us your questions. You are the best advocate for your students, and I am grateful for your tremendous efforts to prepare your students for success, both inside and outside the classroom.

Thank you for all you do!

Sincerely,

Pam Stewart  
Commissioner of Education

### Teacher Opportunities

#### WANTED: Just for Teachers Newsletter Writers

We hope you enjoy our monthly Just for Teachers newsletter. However, we have a few ideas on how to make it better and we need your help.

The Office of Communications and External Affairs is looking for Florida educators who are interested in writing blogs and/or articles for our teacher audience.

If you are interested, please send an email to [JustforTeachers@fldoe.org](mailto:JustforTeachers@fldoe.org) and let us know how you would like to participate.

#### Tuition Waiver for Classroom Teachers

In 2010, the Florida Legislature authorized colleges and universities to waive tuition and associated matriculation fees for classroom teachers.

Florida College System institutions and state universities may waive up to six credit hours per term for teachers employed full-time by a school district, including public charter school teachers. Qualified teachers may only enroll in undergraduate courses in mathematics, science or special education.

All undergraduate courses with levels one through four in a discipline with an approved prefix shall be eligible for the waiver on a space-available basis. The Course Prefix Listing Approved for the Teacher Waiver may be found at <http://www.fldoe.org/articulation>.

Please contact your institution of choice for specific enrollment information. A list of Florida College System institutions may be found at <http://www.fldoe.org/fcs/> and a list of state universities system institutions may be found at <http://www.flbog.edu/aboutsus/universities/>.

#### STEM Tips Take Over Social Media

To encourage students to explore STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) courses, the department is posting daily STEM literacy tips for students.

If you would like to send in your STEM tip, please send an email to [JustforTeachers@fldoe.org](mailto:JustforTeachers@fldoe.org).

### Resources

#### Women's History Month Resources



In 1987, President Ronald Reagan issued the first Presidential Proclamation recognizing March as Women's History Month.

For Florida resources on this special designation to share with your students, visit [Women's History Month at the State Library and Archives of Florida](#).

### Accomplishments

#### Sunshine State Scholars and the Educators Who Support Them

Florida's highest-achieving science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) students from each school district attended the 2014 Sunshine State Scholars program last month in Orlando.

Congratulations to the following teachers who have helped these future STEM leaders.

Virginia Christensen – Alachua,  
Patricia Sands - Baker  
Paul Durden - Bay  
Clanton Scaff - Bradford  
Annie Nery - Brevard  
Annette Traverso - Broward  
Brandon Boswell - Broward  
Amanda McGhee - Calhoun  
Joseph & Lillian Dewitt - Charlotte  
Darrick Buettner - Citrus  
Jennifer Butler - Clay

Here is one example: "Investigate multiple sources. After a lecture that is interesting or confusing, seek out further information at home. You can easily supplement your understanding with a couple of searches."

You can read each daily tip on the department's Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/educationfl](http://www.facebook.com/educationfl).

### Florida Missing Children's Day Statewide Essay Contest

Have you heard about the Florida Missing Children's Day statewide student essay contest for fifth grade students? Each school will be responsible for selecting one winner and that student's essay will be submitted to the Missing Endangered Persons Information Clearinghouse.

The statewide winner will read his or her essay during the Florida Missing Children's Day ceremony in Tallahassee on September 8, 2014, and will receive a trophy, a \$100 cash award, and a Universal Studios VIP package.

The 2014 essay contest theme is "Think Before You Click: Staying Safe on the Internet and Social Media" and should encourage students to research personal safety and think about what they can do to minimize risk in their daily lives. Visit <http://www.fmcdf.org/contests/> for essay contest guidelines. Each school's winning essay must be submitted by May 9, 2014.

### App Keeps College Information at Your Fingertips

Do you have students looking at postsecondary options? If so, then tell them and their parents about the Florida College System mobile app.

"We want students, their families and members of our communities to have quick and easy access to important information about the 28 colleges in our system," said FCS Chancellor Randy Hanna. "The mobile app is a great resource for anyone seeking information about our colleges, locations, program offerings and outcomes."

The FCS mobile app's features currently include:

- Interactive Google maps of all main campuses, branch campuses and instructional sites;
- Links to all 28 colleges;
- Press releases, event information and news updates;
- Connections to the system's social media tools;
- College academic calendars; and
- Fast facts and links to key publications.

The free FCS app is available now for Android devices through the Google Play Store and iPhone and iPad through the Apple App Store.

Want to stay up to date with education news in Florida? Then "like" the Florida Department of Education on Facebook and "follow" on Twitter.



Gary Allen - Collier  
Celena Crews - Columbia  
Paul Kynerd - Dade  
Dr. Teresita Lemus - Dade  
Jayne Arrington - DeSoto  
Carol Petrone - Dixie  
John Fails - Duval  
Edith Bidwell - Escambia  
Steven Byrd - FAMU DRS  
David Kelly - FAU Lab School  
Wendy Vidor - Flagler  
Heidi Montgomery - Franklin  
Melanie Hester - FSU Lab School  
Daisy Bush - Gadsden  
Kaye Rolling - Gilchrist  
Nicole Davis - Glades  
Karen Turner - Gulf  
Heidi Bemis - Hamilton  
Susan Barton - Hardee  
Dustin Ledford - Hendry  
Chandelle Reese - Hernando  
LuAnne Hawk - Highlands  
Jackie Eisenhauer - Hillsborough  
Jeremy Lynch - Hillsborough  
Sheila Bailey - Holmes  
Heather Holden - Indian River  
Willie Saffo - Jefferson  
Lisa Hancock - Lafayette  
Lisa Lee - Lake  
Dana Isaac - Lee  
Stephanie Pierce - Lee  
Randal Stowers - Leon  
Pam Plemmons - Levy  
Monica Dyke - Madison  
Patricia Zalo - Manatee  
Jerry Meyerson - Marion  
Giova Short - Martin  
Carrollyn Cox - Monroe  
Kelly Burnette - Nassau  
Devon Stewart - Okaloosa  
Wendy Reister - Okeechobee  
Daniel Bertossa - Orange  
Roger Johnston - Osceola  
Vishala Maharaj - Palm Beach  
Russell Williams - Palm Beach  
Michelle Hock - Pasco  
Bob Lynch - Pinellas  
Joey Serra - Pinellas  
Joan Simmons - Pinellas  
Susan Kearns - Polk  
James Heuslein - Polk  
Karen Clark - Putnam  
Stephanie Duffy - Santa Rosa  
Martha Ackroyd - Sarasota  
Amber Morgan - Seminole  
Clark Johnston - St. Johns  
Stacy Sommer - St. Lucie  
Sherri Hampton - Sumter  
Cindy Wiggins - Suwannee  
David Woods - Taylor  
Ann Marie Heller - UF Lab School  
Rena Allen - Union  
David Shreeve - Virtual School  
Anne Cooney - Volusia  
Haley High - Wakulla  
Melissa DiCesare - Walton  
Pam Cates - Washington

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*Thank you for your commitment to Florida's K-12 students.*