



Just for Teachers

News from the Florida Department of Education

March 2012

Communication from Commissioner Robinson...

Florida's ESEA Flexibility Waiver Approved

Many of you may have read in the news recently about Florida's No Child Left Behind (NCLB) flexibility waiver being approved. I want to take a quick moment to explain why this is important, and the potential benefit to our state.

- Currently, we have "A" and "B" state-graded schools that are labeled as struggling according to federal requirements. This is confusing for parents and spreads too many mixed messages in our communities.
- Florida set a high standard for those federal requirements early on, while other states set lower standards that give the appearance of better performance.
- Existing federal requirements are very narrow and do not account for many different facets of the work of our schools.
- These same requirements do not account for the learning growth of every student.

Florida has been ahead of the curve on this issue, working with our federal partners to establish a school improvement program several years ago that bridged both state and federal accountability requirements. A federal waiver would allow us to further enhance this program to account for the issues above, and allow us to bring clarity to the performance of our schools. I hope you follow this issue closely in the coming months as the benefits to our students will be immeasurable.

Learn more about Florida's ESEA Flexibility Waiver approval at the following links:

http://www.fldoe.org/news/2012/2012_02_09.asp and www.fldoe.org/esea



Teacher Talk March Episode

K-12 Civics Education

On this episode we take a look at the Top 5 issues teachers face during computer based testing events

Visit <http://www.fldoe.org/JustForTeachers/tta.asp> to view past episodes!



The Florida Department of Education has a video series called Education 360 which provides quick snapshots about important education reform efforts currently underway in the Sunshine State. View them all at <http://www.fldoe.org/ARRA/RacetoptheTop.asp> or on YouTube at <http://www.youtube.com/educationfl>.

Curriculum Corner



Florida Teacher Community

A one-stop communication venue where you can join subject and grade level forums and groups, host live chats, catch up on DOE social media, and find loads of free classroom resources – all for FREE! All Florida teachers on our Just for Teachers List-Serve will receive an invitation to the FL Teacher Community on March 1st, so check your email! In addition, all of the resources listed on the Apps page are available to all educators at <http://www.novachi.com/b/>. If you do not receive an invitation to be part of the FL Teacher Community, send an email request to justforteachers@fldoe.org.

SendHub

SendHub is a new mobile messaging system that will allow teachers to have easier, more effective communications with their students and parents. The system is free for teachers. The beauty of the system is that teachers will not have to give out their personal cell numbers to students/parents, but instead, can get a free SendHub number that can be used for texting and/or voice communication.

Teachers get to keep their private numbers private, but still can communicate through text -- which is the primary way students communicate. Find out more at <http://sendhub.com/>.

Xpedition

Journey to the Roof of Africa from your own classroom

From February 15 to March 3, 2012, students are invited to become virtual, online participants in Busch Gardens Tampa Bay's first Xpedition to Mt. Kilimanjaro. An expedition party comprised of Busch Gardens Zoo Team Members will scale the largest mountain on the African continent. Their purpose is to witness the area's rich array of biodiversity firsthand and explore the development of a once-in-a lifetime summer experience for future Busch Gardens Adventure Campers. The team will also take you on safari across the Serengeti in the search for the "Big Five" – buffalo, elephant, leopard, the black-maned lion and the rare, endangered black rhinoceros. So grab your virtual hiking boots and embark on this remarkable journey along with them online!

To Follow the Adventure, check out the <http://www.xpeditiononline.com/> at xpeditiononline.com. If you have a Question for one of the Team Members while on the Climb or on Safari E-Mail us at questions@xpeditiononline.com.



While surrounded by this rough and rugged landscape, the Busch Gardens team will share their experiences through daily blogs.

Students will have the opportunity to pose questions to the Xpedition members about Mt. Kilimanjaro as well as the many rare and amazing animals on the Serengeti Plain.

Teacher Treasures

Stacy Fabrega won our January giveaway:

"For 26 years I have had the privilege to spend my day in the company of young people who refer to me as 'Teacher.' My teaching career started in Salt Lake City where I taught junior high English and reading. Upon moving to Tallahassee I accepted a position at a private school whose student body was comprised entirely of students with identified learning differences. In 2000, I made the switch to high school and have never looked back. My years at Leon have been incredibly satisfying both personally and professionally. In 2008 I had the honor of being named teacher of the year and went on to be a county finalist. My ultimate goal is to help produce young people who are not only good students but also good people".



Our February Giveaway for a \$100.00 **OlinStar.com** gift certificate was won by **Alice Ramirez** who teaches at Cheney Elementary School.

Our March Giveaway will be for a set of four Wet-n-Wild tickets.

With such a variety of offerings, we will clear all entry forms on the day of the drawings. Our submission form will reopen on the first of each month. Enter today at <http://www.fldoe.org/JustForTeachers/>.

Education News

Museum of Florida History in Tallahassee

Forever Changed: *La Florida*, 1513–1821

A new permanent exhibit that commemorates the 500th anniversary of the landing of Juan Ponce de León on Florida shores in 1513. The exhibit traces the presence of Native Peoples of Florida, the age of exploration, and the meeting of these very different cultures in a large exhibition that will both fascinate and educate. See a recreated ship, a native hut, original artifacts, beautiful graphics, interactive components, and much more. View plans for the continuing story that will include forts, missions, and the colonization of the area that would eventually become Florida.

Admission and parking are free! Call 850.245.6400 for more information.

Summer 2012 Professional Development at Florida State University

Science teachers in grades 4-12 interested in summer professional development should consider participating in an outstanding Research Experiences for Teachers program (RET) run through Florida State University.

The opportunity involves working at the National High Magnetic Field Lab (NHMFL). The NHMFL is home to the world's most powerful magnet. Teachers work alongside world renowned scientists using state of the art technology and materials.

Teachers participate in scientific inquiry related to magnet technology and translate these experiences into classroom teaching strategies.

Housing, Travel and Stipends are provided for both programs.

Application and information can be found below: <http://www.magnet.fsu.edu/education/ret/>

C-SPAN

C-Span has a free resource for teachers to use in the classroom <http://www.c-spanclassroom.org>. They also offer a video library containing over 170,000 hours of shareable video that has aired on C-SPAN since 1987. The video library website is <http://www.c-spanvideo.org/videoLibrary>.

Volusia County Teachers selected for SOFIA

Submitted by: John Clark, Deltona High School

Twenty-six educators from the United States have been selected for research flights aboard SOFIA, NASA's Stratospheric Observatory for Infrared Astronomy. As participants in the Airborne Astronomy Ambassadors program, the educators will partner with professional astronomers using SOFIA for scientific observations in 2012 and 2013. Among the chosen educators are two from Florida; Mike Cimino (Heritage Middle School) and John Clark (Deltona High School), both from Deltona. Learn more at

<http://www.sofia.usra.edu/Edu/programs/ambassadors/ambassadors.html>



Florida Missing Children's Day Statewide Essay Contest Deadline - April 20, 2012

The Department of Education recognizes that schools impart valuable safety lessons to students every day. To reinforce the message of personal safety, the Missing Endangered Persons Information Clearinghouse is sponsoring the 2012 Florida Missing Children's Day. This ceremony promotes awareness of missing children and recognizes citizens who work hard to bring children home safely. This year's ceremony will be held on Monday, September 10, 2012, at the Florida Capitol in Tallahassee.

To create awareness among the children of Florida, an essay contest will be held in conjunction with Florida Missing Children's Day. We encourage all fifth grade students to participate in this contest. Each school will be responsible for selecting one winner. The chosen essays will be submitted to the Missing Endangered Persons Information Clearinghouse. One essay will be selected as the statewide winner. The statewide winner will read his or her essay during the Missing Children's Day ceremony in Tallahassee on September 10, 2012, and will receive a trophy, a \$100 cash award, and a Universal Studios Very Important Person package.

Please visit www.fmcd.org for essay contest guidelines. Each school's winning essay must be submitted by April 20, 2012, to

Florida Department of Law Enforcement
Missing Endangered Persons Information Clearinghouse
ATTN: Essay Contest Coordinator
Post Office Box 1489
Tallahassee, Florida 32302-1489

The essay entry may also be faxed to (850) 410-8744 or e-mailed to fmcd@fdle.state.fl.us. If you have any questions, please call Ms. Patricia Rutherford at (850) 410-8598.

2nd Annual NAESP National Children's Book Award Contest.

The contest discovers, publishes and launches two aspiring writer's careers.

NAESP's endorsement to its 30,000 national membership (plus hundreds of thousands of teachers and students) with Charlesbridge's (a top national publisher from Boston) publishing of the top winners, is an incredible opportunity for children's authors. The two winners will be one children's picture book and one children's chapter book.

You can enter at the NAESP website: <http://www.naesp.org/naesp-foundation/national-childrens-book-year-contest>

Department of Education Bureau Spotlight

Research shows that schools are one of the safest places for children to be. The Office of Safe Schools (OSS) works to maintain and enhance this research by providing leadership on current and vital school safety issues. The fundamental goal of the OSS is to help schools foster safe and nurturing learning environments that directly and indirectly facilitate student achievement.

School Climate

Though recent headlines have brought bullying, suicides, drugs and violence to the forefront of public consciousness, school-based professionals have been addressing these challenges for decades. A key finding from years of research on preventing youth substance use and violence is that students who have a sense of connectedness to their schools are more likely to have positive health outcomes. “Safe and Supportive Schools” foster school connectedness by taking a comprehensive approach to measuring and improving school climate.

To foster positive school climate, student engagement, safety and the school environment is consistently addressed at every level—from the classroom to the lunchroom. The benefits of positive school climate reach far beyond students’ social and emotional wellness. When students feel safe, supported and are equipped with social tools, high academic expectations are met with the students’ personal motivation, which ultimately lead to positive academic outcomes.



Bullying

In 2008, Florida enacted anti-bullying legislation mandating that Florida school districts create their own state-certified, anti-bullying, anti-harassment policies. Now, every district in Florida has a system in place for identifying and responding to bullying issues.

Bullying behaviors are distinct in that they are systematic and chronic, they can be physical and/or emotional, they are increasingly carried out via electronic devices and they often create an intolerable environment for the victim. Cyber-bullying is perhaps one of the biggest challenges facing schools today as bullying activities that occur during non-school hours, spill over into the school environment.

A collaborative effort by several federal agencies, the website <http://www.stopbullying.gov/>, is packed with information, including: (1) strategies for preventing bullying; (2) interrupting bullying behaviors when first detected; (3) handling bullying among children with disabilities and special needs; (4) handling bullying among children with perceived or differences in sexual orientation.

A safe school has several components: extensive campus safety measures, drug and violence prevention initiatives, and perhaps most importantly, a school climate that promotes caring relationships. For additional resources on these and other topics such as: teen dating violence, gang prevention, zero tolerance or child abuse prevention, visit <http://www.fldoe.org/safeschools/>.