



Parent Guide

Connecting Parents to Monroe County Public Schools



Helpful Contact Information



Monroe County School Administration
241 Trumbo Rd., Key West, Florida 33040
(305) 293-1400

Visit: www.KeysSchools.com for school calendar & up-to-the-minute district information.

Superintendent of Schools

Randy Acevedo
241 Trumbo Road, Key West, FL 33040
(305) 293-1400 x53323

Coral Shores High School

Principal: Ron Martin
89901 Old Hwy., Tavernier, FL 33070
(305) 853-3222 x56301

Gerald Adams Elementary School

Principal: Frannie Herrin
5855 W. Jr. College Rd., Key West, FL 33040
(305) 293-1609 x51306

Glynn Archer Elementary School

Principal: Connie Adams
1302 White Street, Key West, FL 33040
(305) 293-1601 x64301

Horace O'Bryant Middle School

Principal: Marian Smith
1105 Leon Street, Key West, FL 33040
(305) 296-5628 x65446

Key Largo School

Principal: Annette Martinson
104801 Overseas Hwy., Key Largo, FL 33037
(305) 453-1255 x57455

Key West High School

Principal: John Welsh
2100 Flagler Ave., Key West, FL 33040
(305) 293-1549 x54301

Marathon Middle & High School

Principal: Harry Russell
350 Sombrero Rd., Marathon, FL 33050
(305) 289-2480 x55301

Plantation Key School

Principal: Vanessa Strickland
100 Lake Road, Tavernier, FL 33070
(305) 853-3281 x58450

Poinciana Elementary School

Principal: Amber Bosco
1212 14th Street, Key West, FL 33040
(305) 293-1630 x52303

Sigsbee Elementary

Principal: Connie Adams
Sigsbee Park, Key West, FL 33040
(305) 294-1861 x63301

Stanley Switlik Elementary School

Principal: Barbara Wright
3400 Overseas Hwy, Marathon, FL 33050
(305) 294-2490 x59301

Sugarloaf School

Principal: Theresa Axford
225 Crane Blvd., Sugarloaf Key, FL 33042
(305) 745-3282 x50301

Montessori Elementary Charter School

Executive Administrator: Judi Dunlap
1221 Varela St., Key West, FL 33040
(305) 294-5302

Montessori Island Charter School

Director: Kelly Astin
92295 Old State Rd., Tavernier, FL 33070
(305) 852-3438

Big Pine Neighborhood Charter School

Executive Administrator: Cathy Hoffman
P.O. Box 432131, Big Pine Key, FL 33043
(305) 872-1266



School Board Members

Mr. Steve Primbranski
Chairperson
steve.primbranski@keysschools.com
(305)296-8033

Dr. Debra Walker
Vice-chairperson
debra.walker@keysschools.com
(305) 453-9683

Mr. Duncan Matheson
duncan.matheson@keysschools.com
(305) 664-5269

Mr. Andy Griffiths
andy.griffiths@keysschools.com
(305) 296-2639

Mr. John Dick
john.dick@keysschools.com
(305) 296-2639

For more information:
<http://www.monroe.k12.fl.us/schoolBoard/members.asp>



Florida Parent Self-Assessment Checklist

This checklist is designed to help you, as a parent, determine your level of involvement in promoting a positive education for your child. Please take a few minutes to respond to each of the questions and determine where you stand in contributing to your child's success in school.

At the end you may want to note several areas where you would like to become more involved.

Focus on Attitude

- | | | | | |
|---|-----|--------------------------|----|--------------------------|
| 1. I stress the importance of education & doing one's best in school. | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. I express belief in my child's ability to succeed. | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. I work with my child to set short & long term educational goals. | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. I celebrate my child's educational accomplishments. | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Parents Notes:

During the school,
I would like to
focus more
attention on the
following areas:

Focus on Academics

- | | | | | |
|---|-----|--------------------------|----|--------------------------|
| 1. I support reading with age appropriate home activities. | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. I assure that my child has a consistent time and place to do homework. | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. I assure that my child has access to materials needed to complete assignments. | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. I regularly discuss and ask to see work that my child is doing in school. | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. I attend workshops on helping my child at home. | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Focus on Behavior

- | | | | | |
|--|-----|--------------------------|----|--------------------------|
| 1. I monitor what my child watches on TV. | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. I teach and reinforce positive behaviors such as hard work and respect for self & others. | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. I am aware of and reinforce school behavioral expectations. | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Focus on Building Responsibility

- | | | | | |
|--|-----|--------------------------|----|--------------------------|
| 1. I ensure that my child has a regular routine. | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. I encourage my child to accept responsibility for his/her actions. | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. I ensure that my child is in attendance and on time to school each day. | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. I monitor and promote my child's participation in extracurricular activities. | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Focus on School/Home Connection

- | | | | | |
|---|-----|--------------------------|----|--------------------------|
| 1. I communicate regularly with teachers in person, on the phone, or through writing. | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. I prepare for and attend conferences & other individualized student meetings (I EP, PMP) | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. I attend open house, science fairs, plays, sporting events, or other school activities. | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. I volunteer in the school setting whenever possible. | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |



2007 - 2008 School Calendar



AUGUST:

- Students Report
August 20

SEPTEMBER:

- No School: Labor Day
September 3
- No Students: Professional Day
September 4
- District Early Release
September 26

OCTOBER:

- No School;
October 8
- District Early Release/End of 1st Grading Period
October 24

NOVEMBER:

- No School; Veteran's Day
November 12
- No School; **Unless Hurricane Make Up Day Needed**
November 19 & 20
- No School; Thanksgiving Break
November 21, 22 & 23

DECEMBER:

- District Early Release; December 5
- No School; **Unless Hurricane Make Up Day Needed**
December 21
- No School; Winter Break
December 24 - January 8

JANUARY:

- Student's Return from Winter Break
January 8
- End of 2nd Grading Period
January 18
- No School; Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday
January 21
- No Students Professional Development
January 22

FEBRUARY:

- No School; President's Day
February 18
- District Early Release; February 27

MARCH:

- No School; March 21
- District Early Release/End of 3rd Grading Period
March 28
- Begin Spring Break - March 31

APRIL:

- Student's Return from Spring Break
April 7
- No Students; Professional Day
April 24 & 25

MAY:

- District Early Release, May 21
- No School; Memorial Day-May 26

JUNE:

- Last Day of School for Students-June 11

A current school calendar, including holidays, early dismissal days, and teacher work days can be viewed online at www.KeysSchools.com.
Early dismissal times will be published at individual schools.

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Words You'll Need to Know

Education Dictionary: The goal of this guide is to present, in "parent friendly language," what you need to understand in order for your child to be successful in school. We tried to take all the lingo and jargon out of our explanations, but found it not quite possible. Following, you will find definitions for some of the terms that may be unfamiliar to you but are used in this guide.

Progress Monitoring Plan (PMP):

This is a plan that parents & teachers develop together when a child is having trouble keeping up with the skills required at his grade level. This plan, which is written out and placed in a child's folder, is used to chart and measure progress.

Exceptional Student Education (ESE):

Through this program, students with disabilities receive an education designed through an IEP to meet their specific needs, ESE students seeking a standard diploma are graded on the same scale as other students and take the same tests.

Extracurricular Activities:

These are school sanctioned activities that happen before or after school. Clubs and athletic teams are examples of extracurricular activities.

Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT):

The FCAT is a series of tests given to every Florida public school

student, between the grades of 3 and 10, in March. The purpose of the FCAT is to assess student achievement of the Sunshine State Standards benchmarks in math, reading, writing, and science.



Individual Education Plan (IEP):

This is a plan developed for students with disabilities by a team of parents, educators, and a representative of the school district (staffing specialist). The plan lists accommodations the student will need, as well as academic goals and teaching methods.

Student Progression Plan:

A document detailing federal, state, and local rules concerning attendance, report cards, courses of study, promotion, retention, testing, grading, academic standards, transfers, credits, honors, diplomas, scholarships, and related topics. It is reviewed annually by the school board, and can be viewed at www.keysschools.com.

Retention:

This refers to students who do not move on to the next grade level at the end of the year due to poor academic performance. For instance, a 1st grade student who is unable to do her 1st grade work at the end of the year is retained or kept in 1st grade for another year.

Sunshine State Standards (SSS): In Florida, these standards are what your child is expected to know at each grade level. Teachers are expected to cover this material in class. All report card grades are based on these standards.

"Hot Off the Press"



District Information: Would you like to receive timely, up-to-date information concerning district and/or school events and activities? Subscribe to Newsgroups at: www.keysschools/newsgroups.htm and receive timely information regarding the topics that interest you most.

Channel 78: The Monroe County School District (MCS D) and the Florida Keys Community College (FKCC) provide programming for Comcast channel 78. MCS D programming airs on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays, and Sundays. For a program schedule, visit: www.keysschools.com/ITV/default.htm.

Web Site: Your education connection, www.keysschools.com, the Monroe County School District's website.

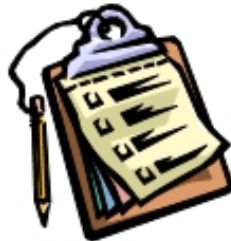
Track Your Student's Progress

Track Your Student's Progress: Unfortunately, parents frequently don't realize their child is having a problem in school until the report card comes home. By getting involved, you can work with your child's teacher to solve problems before they get out of control. Here are three hints busy parents can use to monitor their child's school progress:

1. Set a regular time for school work.

Set a good example. While your child does homework, sit nearby and read, or do work of your own.

2. **Look at tests.** When your child brings home tests and papers, sit down and discuss his or her work. Talk



about the questions that were answered correctly, the ones that were answered incorrectly, and why.

3. **Communicate regularly with your child's teacher.** If your child is floundering, you may want to call once a week to make sure your child has turned in all assignments. Check homework regularly.

Parent Viewer: Most teachers use GradeBook, an electronic system for recording grades and attendance. A component of GradeBook, the Parent Internet Viewer, allows parents to track student progress in school. The High Schools' grades are now available online at : www.keysschools.com. Students know how to access the system. If you need specific instructions, contact your child's teacher.

Report Cards

Grades: The day you receive your child's report card is a good time for you and your child to talk about school progress and set goals for the next grading period. Students receive report cards every nine weeks. In accordance with Monroe County's curriculum philosophy, the following kinds of report cards, specific to the grade level, will be issued:

Kindergarten: Developmental Report Card

Developmental Report Card Grading Scale:

O = Outstanding (The student consistently demonstrates excellent performance.)

S = Successful (The student consistently demonstrates an understanding of the concepts or behaviors.)

P = Progressing (The student continues to progress toward these concepts, but needs more practice.)

N = Not evident (The students has not yet demonstrated knowledge of these concepts.)

Monroe County students in **Grades 1st–12th** will receive grades based on the following scale:

A = 90-100 B = 80-89 C = 70-79 D = 60-69

F = 0-59 I = Incomplete



Grades are based solely on academic achievement measured by the Sunshine State Standards. These standards are developed by the state. The Sunshine State Standards outline what is expected of your child at different grade levels for each subject. For example, by the end of 2nd grade, a student should be able to predict what a passage of writing is about based on its title and illustrations. By graduation, a student should be able to examine a literary work from several critical perspectives. In every subject classroom instruction is based on the Sunshine State Standards and how well students are performing according to those standards. Grades are not based on behavior, attitude, or effort. A student operating below her grade level cannot earn a C or better until her performance matches the grade she is in. If your child receives a D or a F in any subject, this means your child is having serious academic difficulty. Contact your child's teacher as soon as possible to talk about her views on needed improvements and suggestions for ways to improve. Please read your child's report card carefully. If you have questions, call, e-mail or meet with your child's teacher.

Students in an Exceptional Education program progress toward IEP goals and objectives will be reported in accordance with regular reporting of academic progress.

Standardized Testing

Standardized Tests: Throughout your child's school years, he will take dozens of standardized tests. Standardized tests are different than the tests your child's teacher will make for her class because a standardized test is always given the same way, with the same directions, no matter where it is taken. Standardized tests show how your child is doing compared to others and track his progress over time. Your child's teacher has all the test records for your child and uses them to identify a problem that may require additional help or a different way of teaching. Tests also help identify a student's strengths, in order to provide more challenging academic opportunities. Schools use testing results to develop school wide plans for improving academic performance. All testing results are available to parents. Here is a list of the standardized tests given to students in Monroe County:

Kindergarten: Stanford 9 Achievement Test

Subjects Tested: sounds & letters, word reading, math and sentence reading

1st & 2nd Grade: Stanford 9 Achievement Test

Subjects Tested: reading comprehension, math procedures and math problem solving

5th & 7th Grade: Stanford 9 Achievement Test

Subjects Tested: science and social studies

4th, 5th, 8th, & 10th Grade: SSS - FCAT (Sunshine State Standards - Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test)

3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th & 10th Grade: NRT — FCAT (Norm Reference Test — Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test)

The FCAT consists of a number of tests, given to different

grades. These include tests on reading, mathematics, science and writing. For more information on standardized testing and the FCAT, visit: www.keysschools.com.

Tips for Helping your Child do Better on Standardized Tests:

In the months preceding the test:

- Find out when the tests are to be given. Write the date and time on your calendar. Avoid scheduling appointments or trips during these times.
- Ask your child's teacher what you can do at home to review for the test.
- Read, Read, Read. The easiest and best way to prepare your

Right Before the test:

- Make sure your child gets a good night's sleep, & eats breakfast.
- Have your child dress in layers; kids do better if they don't have to think about how hot or cold they are.
- Don't be too anxious, but make sure your child knows that it's important to do her best.

Test day:

- Remind your child to check her answers carefully.

Remember: A test is like a snapshot. It is a one time look at a child's performance. All children have skills & knowledge that tests do not measure. A single score does not tell you everything about your child.

FCAT: What do the Results Mean?

FCAT Results: The FCAT is one of the many standardized tests that your child will take during their school years. The FCAT consists of a number of tests given at different grades. These include tests on reading, mathematics, science, and a test on writing. One part of the reading and mathematics test compares scores of Florida students with those of students around the country. The other FCAT tests measure how well students are meeting the Sunshine State Standards. All testing results are available to parents.

For several sections of the FCAT, student scores are based on a level. Levels are assigned as follows:

Level 5 is the highest level that can be achieved and indicates that

the student can handle very challenging material.

Level 4 shows performance above grade level.

Level 3 indicates that the student is learning as he or she should learn.

Level 2 is a "yellow flag." Students scoring at this level need to work harder and should receive additional help at school and home.

Level 1 is a "red flag." Students performing at this level are performing far below where they should, and are in danger of not being promoted to the next grade level.



A Guide to the "Alphabet Soup" of Test Terms

Standardized Test: A test that has the same set of questions, directions, and scoring regardless of where the test is given.

Criterion Referenced Test: A standardized test that measures students against criteria that is spelled out in advance. The SSS (Sunshine State Standards) part of the FCAT, which tests reading, writing, math, and science is a criterion referenced test.

Norm Referenced Test: A standardized test that compares one student's score to a group of other students as the "norm." These tests are given to a group of students first, & their scores become the standard. Other students scores are measured against that standard. The FCAT includes norm referenced tests in reading comprehension and mathematics problem solving. The SAT & ACT are also norm referenced tests.

Mean Score: This is the average score in a group of scores. All the scores are added together and then divided by the number

of students who took the test.

Grade Equivalent: The estimated grade level represented by a student's score. On a reading test, a score of 5.6 would mean a student was reading at the level of most 5th graders in their 6th month of school.

Percentage Correct Score: This score shows the percentage of questions the students answered correctly. If there were 50 questions, and the student answered 30 correctly, the percentage correct score would be 60 percent.

Percentile Rank or Score: This score shows the percentage of other test takers who scored below the student. If a student scored in the 72nd percentile, he scored better than 72 percent of the students in the norm group.

Raw Score: The number of items answered correctly. If a test has 63 questions, & the student gets 28 items correct, the raw score would be 28.



FCAT Accommodations

FCAT: Some students with disabilities or a 504 may eligible to take the FCAT with accommodations - changes in how the test is given. These changes give a student the opportunity to demonstrate what he or she has learned. Changes in what is tested are not allowed.



Following are some examples of allowable FCAT accommodations:

1. Changes in the way test items are presented (large print, Braille, sign language)
2. Changes in the way a student responds to the test items (signed response, verbal response, mechanical devices)
3. Changes in scheduling of the test (frequent breaks, extended time)

4. Changes in the test setting (taking the test in a small group or alone)
5. Use of assistive devices (adapted calculators in grades 7 and higher; technology, without grammar or spelling checks, for writing assessments)

The IEP or 504 team determines which, if any, accommodation the student needs. The student should use the same accommodation during classroom testing.

Note: some accommodations that children receive in the classroom are not allowed on the FCAT. For example using spell-check during the writing section is not allowed because it interferes with the test's ability to evaluate a student's writing skills.

For more information about accommodations for students with disabilities: <http://www.fl DOE.org/ese/fcatasd.asp>

Moving Up

Student Promotion: Many things must be considered by the teacher before recommending that a student progress from one grade to another. Before recommending your student move from one grade to the next, your child's teacher will consider the following:

1. Progress tests
2. Classroom assignments
3. Daily observations
4. State & district wide standardized assessment (FCAT or STA-9)
5. Mastery of Course Performance Standards
6. District competencies and objectives
7. Report card grades
8. Technology-based performance data (STAR Early Literacy, STAR, CCC, NovaNet, Learning 100, and other objective data, as appropriate or required)

The primary responsibility for determining each student's level of performance and ability to function academically, socially, and emotionally at the next academic level is that of the classroom teacher. A promotion/retention committee may also be involved. All promotions and/or retentions are reviewed by the principal. The promotion/retention decision is made at the end of the school year.

What happens if your child falls behind?: If your child's teacher believes that your child is falling behind, and is in danger of being retained, you will be notified in writing by a letter asking you to sign it and send it back. This letter will ask you to call



and set up a conference at a time that is convenient for you and your child's teacher. At this time, school officials and parents will work together to develop an Progress Monitoring Plan (PMP) that outlines where your child is having trouble and what can be done at home and school to promote academic success. The school's goal is to avoid retention by involving the parent in a plan that will help the child catch up during the school year. Parental support and involvement is essential. Students who are still below grade level at the end of the year may have to repeat their current grade.

Mandatory Retention: The Florida Legislature changed the requirements that students must meet in order to be promoted from one grade to another. These requirements are based on what a student should know at the end of each year. If a student is not learning at the rate he/she should, then the school district must give additional tests to find out how to assist the student. The school and the parents will work together to form an Progress Monitoring Plan to help the student catch up and work at grade level.

In kindergarten through 3rd grade, teachers must pay special attention to how well each child is learning to read. If a teacher suspects a reading problem, then the student will be tested to see how serious the problem is and how to provide the best assistance. For students who are behind in reading, the school must help. If a student does not score at Level 2 or above on the 3rd grade FCAT for reading he/she is considered behind in reading and cannot be promoted to the 4th grade. For more information on 3rd grade promotion/retention, visit:

<http://bsi.fsu.edu/schoolimprove/studentprogression/thirdgradeprog.htm>

Get to Know your Child's Teacher

Children learn best when parents and teachers work together. Parents know their children better than anyone else, and teachers are trained in ways to help all children learn. When parents and teachers work as a team, the results can be amazing!

A successful parent-teacher partnership starts at the beginning of the school year. Here are five things parents can do during the first few weeks of school :



1. **Get to know your child's teacher.** Attend open house, write a note, or make an appointment to talk with the teacher early in the school year.
2. **Share important information about your child with the teacher.** As a parent you know your child better than anyone. The more the teacher knows about your child, the better! Be sure to share your child's medical or health needs with the teacher as well as what

is happening at home that may affect your child's school year.

3. **Find out about class expectations.** Ask about homework, classroom rules and procedures. Ask for a syllabus.
4. **Volunteer!!** Join the parent-teacher organization. Join SAC (School Advisory Council). Volunteer at your child's school. Make a difference.
5. **Make sure your child comes to school on time every day.** Attendance is important; learning builds day by day.

The Monroe County School District prides itself in hiring only the best teachers. Once employed, the Monroe County School District offers all employees professional development and in-service opportunities to extend knowledge and skills. Continued growth is important. Florida requires that educators re-certify every 5 years with 120 in-service points or credit hours from an approved college course of study.

For more information on the district's hiring practices, visit: www.keysschools/training/default.htm.

Kindergarten

Kindergarten: All students entering kindergarten will be evaluated within the first 45 days of the school year to determine whether they are ready to learn. Students who fall below expectations on these early assessments will be given at least one additional test to find out whether they are having problems and how the school can best help.

Some students might perform well on these assessments, but struggle in the regular classroom. If your child's progress report indicates a P, for Progressing but needs support, or an N, for not meeting expectations in the areas of reading or math, you will be contacted by your child's teacher and asked to come in for a conference. Together you and the teacher will develop an Progress Monitoring Plan (PMP) to address your child's needs.

If, by the end of the semester, your child is still having trouble performing at grade level and therefore, might be retained, a parent conference will be requested to discuss your child's progress. During the second semester, parents and school staff will continue to work closely to help the student improve his skills. At the end of the school year, school officials will test your child again and look at his progress to determine if he is ready to move on to 1st grade.

How to Enroll Your Child in School: In order to enter kindergarten, a child must be five on or before September 1st. Enrolling in school for the first time is easy; all you need is a birth certificate, proof of medical examination within one year of the date



your child starts school, and a current utility bill with your name and address for proof of residence. Proof of your child's immunizations is also required. The Florida Certificate of Immunization (Blue Card) may be obtained at the Health Department or by a local doctor. Kindergarten, elementary, middle and high school students should enroll at their appropriate schools.

What Your Child is Learning in Kindergarten:

Following are a few examples.

- Understands that most people work in jobs in which they produce a few special goods or services.
- Knows that in order to learn it is important to observe the same things often and compare them.
- Learns that words are made of different sounds and that letters represent those sounds.
- Counts to 100 out loud and matches objects to numbers to 20.

For more information, ask your child's teacher or visit: www.firn.edu/does/menu/sss.htm

How to Help Your Child do Better in Kindergarten:

- Practice the alphabet by pointing out letters whenever you see them and read alphabet books together.
- Read rhymes to your child. Ask him to name rhyming words (e.g., bat, cat, mat, sat).
- Help him look for patterns (red, white, red, white) in the world around him.
- Help him put items in a story in sequence. Ask your child to tell what came first, second, third, etc. in a story.

1st & 2nd Grades

1st & 2nd Grades: Within the first few weeks of school, your child's progress from the previous year will be received and the teacher will observe your child's current work. If a problem is identified an additional evaluation will be done to find out where the child is having difficulty and what extra help can be given.

Parents of students who are not making progress in basic subjects will be notified and may asked to come in for a conference. At that time, an Progress Monitoring Plan (PMP) will be developed and put into place to address individual needs. There are many things parents and teachers can do to help a child be more successful.

At the end of the first semester, your child's progress will be evaluated. Most 1st graders are doing fine by then. If your child is still having trouble performing at grade level, you may receive a request for another conference and notification that your child may be kept in the same grade at the end of the year. Together you and

your child's teacher will discuss what needs to be done at home and at school to make sure the child is ready for the next grade.

Throughout the rest of the school year, your child will receive extra assistance to help her succeed. During the year, teachers will assess students frequently to keep track of progress and identify areas where



learning problems still exist. Although these notifications and conferences happen at specific times, parents concerned about their children's academic progress should be in close contact with the teachers by telephone, e-mail, or face to face on a more frequent basis.

If by the end of the year, your child has not made enough progress to succeed in the next grade, she will be kept in her current grade for another year. The decision to hold back your child is based on grades, test scores, and whether or not the goals of her PMP were met. A promotion review committee consisting of teachers and administrators, with parent input, will make the decision using all the information gathered throughout the year.

What Your Child is Learning in 1st Grade: Following are a few examples.

- Understands broad categories of time (past, present, future, yesterday, today, tomorrow) and understands calendar time.
- Knows that plants and animals have adaptations that help them survive in the environment.
- Reads and writes numerals of 100 or more.
- Knows simple words by sight and reads familiar stories aloud with expression.

For more information, ask your child's teacher what he or she will be covering or visit: www.firn.edu/does/menu/sss.htm

More Information on 1st & 2nd Grade

How to Help Your Child do Better in 1st Grade:

- Listen to your child read words and books from school. Continue working with rhyming words. Ask your child to repeat the events from the book, in order.
- Point out the letter-sound relationships on labels, boxes, newspapers, magazines and signs. Make a game of it.
- Practice naming coins and counting pennies, nickels, and dimes. Talk about and show examples of adding items and taking away items.



- Knows that the surface of the earth is composed of different types of solid materials (sand, pebbles, rock).
- Develops vocabulary by reading independently and reads aloud easily and with expression.
- Counts and groups objects into hundreds, tens, and ones.

For more information, ask your child's teacher what he or she will be covering or visit: www.firn.edu/dae/menu/sss.htm

How to Help Your Child do Better in 2nd Grade:

What Your Child is Learning in 2nd Grade: Following are a few examples.

- Knows ways in which people have changed the physical environment and the results of these changes.

- Listen to your child read books from school. Help her figure out the meaning of unfamiliar words.
- Practice adding and subtracting numbers with your child.
- Use a ruler, tape measure and yard stick to measure different objects around the house.

3rd Grade

3rd Grade: When students in Florida public schools reach the 3rd grade, they begin to take a test that they will take each year until they graduate. This test, the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) is designed to measure how well your child has learned what he will need to know to succeed in school.

By state law, the FCAT, which is really two tests given the same week, is the most important factor determining whether or not your child will advance to the 4th grade. However, the FCAT is far from the only tool used to measure your child's abilities. At the beginning of the school year, teachers and other officials will study your child's past report cards and test scores. They will also give him another standardized test, if needed.

If any of these indicate that your child is not at grade level in basic skills, you will receive a letter asking you to come in for a conference. At this conference, a plan called a Progress Monitoring Plan (PMP) will be developed to set your child's course for the next school year.

By the end of the 1st semester, if your child is still below grade level, you will receive a request for a conference to discuss your child's progress and the possibility of your child not advancing to the 4th grade. If you have carefully been following your child's progress and communicating regularly with the teacher, you'll already know if there is a serious problem. At the conference, you and the teacher will review your child's performance and make changes to the plan.

If, by the end of the year, your child is not academically ready, he will be kept in the 3rd grade for another year. The decision to hold your child back will be based on grades and test scores, particularly the FCAT.

If FCAT scores are failing but classroom grades are passing, the

school district will automatically "appeal" the FCAT scores by giving other valid, reliable tests. If those tests confirm the FCAT results, the child will be retained. Any retention decisions will be discussed with the parent face to face.

What Your Child is Learning in 3rd Grade: Following are a few examples.



- Understands the influence of geography on history.
- Knows that some source of energy is needed for organisms to stay alive and grow.
- Reads reports, articles, or stories fluently and tells the authors reason for writing.
- Reads, writes and identifies proper fractions.

For more information, ask your child's teacher for a list of all the major concepts your child will be responsible for learning or go to: www.firn.edu/dae/menu/sss.htm

How to Help Your Child do Better in 3rd Grade:

- Stay in close contact with your child's teacher. Ask him to show you your child's math and reading papers and tests compared to other children who are performing at grade level.
- Talk to your child about what he is reading. Ask him what new words mean.
- Encourage your child to write letters to family and friends. Ask him to read the letters to you.
- Go over every graded paper. If your child got a math problem marked wrong, ask him to show you how he now can get the right answer.

4th & 5th Grades

4th & 5th Grades: Within the first few weeks of school, your child's progress from the previous year will be received and the teacher will observe your child's current work. If a problem is identified an additional evaluation will be done to find out where the child is having difficulty and what extra help can be given. Parents of students who are not making progress in basic subjects will be notified and asked to come in for a conference. At that conference, a plan, called a Progress Monitoring Plan (PMP) will be developed to set your child's course for the school year and provide extra help. By the end of the first semester, if your child is still below grade level, you will receive a request for another conference and notification that your child may not advance to the next grade. If you've followed your child's progress carefully and communicated regularly with the teacher, most problems won't be a surprise to you.

Throughout the rest of the school year, your child will receive extra assistance to help her succeed. During the year, teachers will assess students frequently to keep track of progress and identify areas where learning problems still exist. Although these notifications and conferences happen at specific times, parents concerned about their children's academic progress should be in close contact with their child's teachers by telephone, e-mail, or face to face on a more frequent basis.

In 4th and 5th grade, your child takes the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT). Special emphasis is placed on this test. The state says FCAT results must be a major decision in promotion and retention decision in all grades. If by the end of the year, your child has not made enough progress to succeed in the next grade, she will be kept in her current grade for another year. The decision to hold back your child is based on grades, test scores, and whether or not the goals of her PMP were met. A promotion review committee consisting of teachers and administrators, with parent input, will make the decision using all the information gathered throughout the year.

What Your Child is Learning in 4th Grade: Following are a few examples.

- Knows that the planets differ in size, characteristics, and composition and they orbit the sun in our solar system.
- Understands how the process of weathering and erosion constantly change the surface of the earth.
- Reads fluently and understands the difference between ideas

Middle School: At this age, students experience more changes physically, emotionally, socially, and cognitively than at any other time in their life. Recognizing the individual needs of middle level students and the critical choices they must make during this period of early adolescence, the middle school curriculum provides a vehicle for personal growth and development through rich and varied exploratory offerings and experiences.

During each of the middle school years of 6th, 7th, and 8th grade, students will be taking math, language arts, reading, science, and

that are told directly and ideas that are implied.

- Determine equivalent forms of whole numbers to fractions (25/5, 5), fractions to fractions (2/4, 1/2) and fractions to decimals (11/100, .11).

For more information, ask your child's teacher for a complete list of important concepts covered or visit: www.firn.edu/dae/menu/sss.htm

How to Help Your Child do Better in 4th Grade:

- Have your child keep a record of the amount of time he spends watching television in a week. Have him total his time for the week and show you his figures.
 - Encourage your child to keep a journal or a diary.
 - Explore your home with your child and have him identify different energy sources.
 - Observe natural events such as water erosion in an area, a tree that has been damaged by lightening, etc.

What Your Child is Learning in 5th Grade:

Following are a few examples.

- Understands the social, cultural, and political features of Native Americans and their contributions to American history.
- Knows that different materials can be physically combined to produce different substances.
- Reads text and determines the main idea, identifies details and facts and arranges events in sequential order.
- Understands and uses concrete and symbolic representations of whole numbers, fractions, decimals, and percents in real-world situations.

For more information, ask your child's teacher for a complete list of concepts covered or visit: www.firn.edu/dae/menu/sss.htm

How to Help Your Child do Better in 5th Grade:

- If your child wants to go somewhere or do something fun, ask her to persuade you in writing by giving reasons and using convincing language.
- Use calendars or clocks with hands, to have your child figure out how long it will be until an important event occurs. Ask your child to explain how she figured it out.
- Ask your child to develop and implement a plan to recycle resources within your home.

Middle School (6th, 7th, & 8th Grades)

Middle School: At this age, students experience more changes physically, emotionally, socially, and cognitively than at any other time in their life. Recognizing the individual needs of middle level students and the critical choices they must make during this period of early adolescence, the middle school curriculum provides a vehicle for personal growth and development through rich and varied exploratory offerings and experiences.

During each of the middle school years of 6th, 7th, and 8th grade, students will be taking math, language arts, reading, science, and

social studies. In addition, all students who have substantial deficiency in reading are required to take an intensive reading course. Students take physical education and elective courses that may include art, band, chorus, foreign language, and health.

Immunizations: Certain immunizations are required for students depending on what grade they are entering. Watch the newspapers or call the school to find out what is needed. Please make sure your child's immunizations are up to date and that the school has a copy of her record.

More Information on Middle School

What Happens if your Child Falls Behind?: If your child is struggling at his grade level in a particular subject or fails a course, you will receive a letter asking you to come to a conference. At that time an Progress Monitoring Plan (PMP) will be developed that will outline what type of extra help your child needs and how she will get it. The plan will also include what your child will need to be able to do academically in order to be on par with her grade level.

Parents of those students who are still struggling at the end of the first semester will receive a letter notifying them of the possibility that their child may be retained next year. Parents who have been closely following their student's academic progress will already be communicating regularly with teachers and will unlikely be surprised.

How FCAT Affects Promotion /Retention: The promotion/retention decision is made at the end of the year based on a number of factors including grades and scores on standardized tests, particularly the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Tests (FCAT). The FCAT, which is actually two tests, is given in the spring. These tests measure reading and math abilities. A third test, given to eighth graders, focuses on writing skills. Scores on these test will be very important in determining whether or not the student advances to the next grade. In 6th grade, students who pass all their courses could be held back if they fail both portions of the



reading FCAT or both portions of the math FCAT.

The Sunshine State Standards are what is taught in the classroom and are the basis for report card grades. The FCAT tests students on the same standards. Rarely there is a difference between report card grades and FCAT scores. If substantial inconsistency exists, the school district will automatically "appeal" the FCAT scores by giving the student a battery of valid, reliable tests. If those tests confirm the FCAT results, the child will be retained.

8th grade students that do not pass the FCAT are seriously considered for retention and will not move to 9th grade. That's because a student promoted to high school without first mastering middle school basics has no realistic chance to pass the 10th grade FCAT to graduate from high school. If your child is not promoted to high school, you'll have the chance to discuss it face-to-face with school officials.

How to Help Your Child do Better in Middle School:

- Require your child to read something that interests her for 30 minutes a day.
- Provide a place and a time for your child to study everyday.
- Link privileges to performance.
- Poor performance is sometimes caused by poor attendance. If grades or test scores begin to dip, stay in close touch with

High School

High School (9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th grades):

If your child's grade point average falls below 2.5, you will receive a letter notifying you that your child is at risk of not meeting graduation requirements. You will be asked to come in for a conference.

An Progress Monitoring Plan (PMP) will be developed for students whose grades or test scores indicate that they are struggling. This plan will lay out what help is available for your child and goals he needs to meet in order to succeed.

For a high school student, a PMP is a performance contract that requires the student to work harder and achieve more in return for extra help from the school.

If progress is below standard at the end of the semester, you'll receive a letter informing you that your student's performance may not be sufficient for him to pass his course or graduate from high school.

Participants in extra curricular activities must have at least a 2.0 GPA. Some high schools set higher standards for certain activities.

10th Grade FCAT: If your child has been educated in a Florida public school, he/she has probably taken the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) every spring since the 3rd



grade. This test, which is mandated by the state, assumes an even greater importance during your child's high school years.

All students, including ESE students, must pass the reading and math portions of the 10th grade FCAT in order to be eligible to receive a standard high school diploma. Each year the state decides what grade will be "passing. The state determines what the "passing" number will continue to be.

Those who don't pass the 10th grade FCAT the first time will have five more opportunities while in high school or after the completion of the senior year, if necessary. Though the number that constitutes a passing grade may continue to change every year, a student who retakes the test has to get the scores established by the legislature the first time he takes the test.

How to Help Your Child do Better in High School:

- Remember you are still the parent. Require adequate time for sleeping, studying, and reading.
- Link privileges to performance.
- Take time everyday to ask what happened in school, what new concepts were discussed, and what assignments are due.
- Ask to see graded papers.

High School Graduation Requirements

Graduation requirements: Your child needs to meet the following requirements to graduate from a Monroe County Public High School with a **Standard Diploma**:

1. **Number of credits required** — 24 for a 6 period day, 26 for a 7 period day, and 30 for a 8 period day
2. **GPA required** — Students must earn an overall grade point average of 2.0 on a 4.0 scale.
3. **FCAT reading and mathematics passing scores** — Students who took the grade 10 FCAT in the must earn a passing score of on the FCAT in both reading and mathematics.
4. **Subject area credits required** — English (4), Mathematics (4), Science (4), Social Studies (4), Life Management Skills (.5), Physical Education (1), Practical Arts, Exploratory Career Education or Fine Arts Performing (1) , Total Core Requirements = 18.5. The total number of elective credits available depends upon the total credits needed for graduation, If a school were on a 6, 7, or 8 period schedules, the electives available would be 5.5, 7.5, or 11.5.



18 Credit Option: In addition to the general requirements for 4 year high school graduation, students will be offered two accelerated (18 credit) high school

graduation options:

- Completion of a **3-year standard college preparatory program** requiring successful completion of a minimum of 18 academic credits in grade 9 through 12.
- Completion of a **3-year career preparatory program** requiring successful completion of a minimum of 18 academic credits in grade 9 through 12.

Both accelerated diploma options require the following subject area credits: English (4), Mathematics (3), Science (3), Social Science (3), Foreign Language (2), Elective Credits (3). If the student speaks a second language, they can replace foreign language with 2 academic credits.

Total: 18 credits (must have an un-weighted 2.0 GPA and passing scores on the Reading and Mathematics portions of the grade 10 FCAT.)

For more information on high school graduation requirements, contact your school's guidance counselor: www.monroe.k12.fl.us/district/counselors.htm. Monroe County School District Guidance Counselors help students reach their full potential and are actively committed to helping students explore their abilities, strengths, interests, and talents.

For information regarding Special Diploma graduation requirements, see page 17 (Exceptional Student Education).

Dual Enrollment Credit:

Various courses in the curriculum may be offered through the Florida Keys Community College (FKCC). Participation is limited to motivated students with a 3.0 GPA or higher enrolled in grades 9 - 12 who have expressed the desire to pursue postsecondary education. These courses typically are three college credit classes and a student who successfully completes a dual enrollment class receives a .5 (1/2) high school credit. Students must be endorsed by their high school guidance counselor and have parental and school principal permission. Minimum college entrance test scores are required for placement in any dual enrollment class. Parents wishing more information about dual enrollment credit should contact their school's guidance office.

Opportunities for Advanced Students

Opportunities for Advanced Students in Monroe County:



college credits are earned. For more information regarding honors courses, contact your child's high school guidance counselor.

Advanced Placement: (AP) is a program of college-level courses and exams that give students the opportunity to receive advanced placement and/or college credit. For more information regarding Advanced Placement, contact your high school's guidance counselor.

Honors Courses: In high school, honors courses are classes that are more challenging than standard courses. No

to prepare individuals to become responsible citizens who are confident, successful, and able to apply what they learn in the classroom to real world situations. The program will reflect the unique abilities, interests, and talents of each child. Gifted education strives to provide intellectual stimulation through enhancement of reasoning abilities and creative problem solving. The development of higher level cognitive skills such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation will be addressed across the curriculum. The Monroe County Gifted Program recognizes the importance of preparing individuals to deal with diverse populations. For more information regarding the Gifted Program, contact your child's teacher or visit:

<http://www.keysschools.com/ese/curriculum.htm>.

Educational Choices

Public school choices: Parents of public school students have choices for their child's education. These choices may include options such as: charter schools, magnet schools, alternative schools, special programs, advanced placement, dual enrollment, early admissions, and the Florida Virtual School.

McKay Scholarships



John M. McKay Program for Students with Disabilities: Florida's school choice programs ensure that No Child Left Behind by allowing parents to choose the best educational setting—public or private—for their child. The McKay Scholarships for Students with Disabilities to attend private school during. The McKay Scholarships Program also offers parents public school choices. A parent of a special needs child who wished to may choose to transfer the student to another public school. For more information, visit: <http://www.floridaschoolchoice.org/information/mckay/>

School Choice

School Choice: Students may be reassigned to a school outside of their residential zone with the approval of the Superintendent.

A parent must request a choice form from the school serving the student's residential address or the district office and submit it to the school where the reassignment is requested. The principal of the requested school must approve the reassignment request based on available space, and then forward the request to the Deputy Superintendent.

The parent will be notified of the School District's decision. Reassigned students must provide their own transportation to and from school.

For more information regarding school choice, contact the Superintendent's office at (305) 293-1400.

Home Education

Home Education: Home Education is a parent-directed education alternative. Home Education allows the freedom to explore and learn at the pace of the individual student. A Home Education Program, as defined in Section 1002.01(1), F.S., is the "sequentially progressive instruction of a student directed by his or her parent or guardian." The Department of Education provides technical assistance, information and materials on home education to school districts and parents.

For more information regarding home education, contact the Student Services office at (305)293-1400 x53369 or visit the Florida Department of Education's website: www.firn.edu. For toll free parent information, call 1-800-447-1636.

Alternative Education

Alternative Schools: Monroe County offers a variety of alternative education programs for academically at-risk or behaviorally challenged middle and high school students. For more information regarding alternative programs in Monroe County, contact Carol Eisenman at (305) 293-1400 x53388.

PACE: Pace Center for Girls of Monroe County provides an alternative, therapeutic education program for girls 12 - 18 who are at risk of dropping out of school, drug abuse, teen pregnancy, and abuse. For more information for the Lower Keys call (305) 293-1892. For the Upper Keys, call (305) 853-1920.

Florida Virtual School

Florida Virtual School: Florida Virtual School provides free online classes and instruction to all public, private, and home school students in Florida. There are 75 courses at your student's fingertips. All your student needs is the right attitude and access to a computer with Internet access.

There are over 6,900 students currently enrolled in 67 Florida counties. Florida Virtual School students have exceeded both the GPA and AP scores of the average Florida student. Online learning provides students and families the flexibility to learn any time, any place, any path, and any pace. For more information, or to receive a course catalogue, visit: www.flvs.net/florida_services/index_fls.htm.



Resources Available for You and Your Child

Reading



Wendy McPherson — Reading Initiative Program Specialist, (305)293-1400 x53385

“Every child. Every parent. A reader.”

Visit www.justreadfamilies.org for:

- Scholastic’s reading tips for parents
- Recommended reading lists for kindergarten through 12th grade

- Strategies for helping children with learning disabilities become better readers
- Links to kid-friendly web sites for ages 2 and up that develop reading skills through word games, story times, & brainteasers!

TIP: Read aloud to your child. A child whose day includes listening to imaginative stories is more likely to grow up loving books and wanting to read them.

Phone line Story Time—Celebrities and your favorite characters bring your most loved stories to life. A new adventure each month. Call 1-866-246-3272.

FCAT Explorer

FCAT Explorer is a skills and practice reinforcement tool based on Florida’s Sunshine State Standards. Public school students can use the FCAT Explorer free of charge. So, log on to www.fcatexplorer.com, and put FCAT explorer to work for you and your student! If you need technical assistance, please call Information Services at: 293-1400 x53315.

Scholarship & Mentoring Program

Take Stock in Children: More than 40% of Florida’s youth are denied access to their dreams because they live in or near poverty. When a child is selected to participate in Take Stock in Children, a scholarship is purchased through the Florida Prepaid College Program. The scholarship guarantees the child two years of junior or community college tuition, followed by two years of tuition at a state university. Take Stock in Children is not a “free ride.” Students must sign a contract and commit to: good behavior, complete homework assignments, hard work, good attendance, and to remain drug and crime free. In addition students commit to working with a volunteer mentor at school.

The scholarship promises a future; the care and encouragement of the volunteer mentor help the child reach the promise of a future. For more information on Take Stock in Children, contact Jim Hall at (305) 293-1546 or visit:

<http://www.monroe.k12.fl.us/districtInfo/index.asp>



After School Programs

Extracurricular activities: Encourage your child to become involved in life outside of the classroom. Join a club, be on a team, participate! Getting involved with your school is a fun way for your child to try new things and meet new people. There are countless ways for your student to get involved including:

after school programs, playing sports, participating in the arts, competing in academic competitions, and after school day care. Contact your child’s school today to find out what’s happening after school!

Boys & Girls Club: Boys & Girls Club offers a safe after-school place for kids to grow & learn — all while having fun! For more information, visit: www.bgca.org, www.keyskids.org, or call (305) 296-2258.

YMCA: Building strong kids, strong families, & strong communities. For more information, call (305) 295-9622 or visit: www.ymca.net.

Big Brothers/ Big Sisters of Monroe County: Matches children from single parent homes with either a volunteer big brother, volunteer big sister, or volunteer big couple, who serve as mentors/ role models. For more information, call (305) 294-9891.



Homework Hotline

Visit the Homework Hotline at <http://homework.wvpubcast.org>. Students can e-mail homework questions to the experts, and receive answers within a few days.

For a list of more websites offering you and your student homework help, visit: <http://www.monroe.k12.fl.us/students/index.asp>

Adult Education

Adult Education:

The Adult, Vocational, and Community Education Center is committed to preparing students for lifelong learning. Learn to speak English. Improve your computer skills. Get a better job. Earn your high school diploma. Start your own business. Adult Education courses are offered days and evenings in Key West, Marathon and Key Largo. For more information go to www.keysschools.com or call (305) 293-1521 and speak with the registrar. The GED Testing schedule is available online.

Literacy Volunteers of America—Monroe County, Inc.:

One-to-one tutoring in reading, writing, conversational English with basic reading and ESL programs. Also Workplace Literacy and Literacy in Corrections. For more information, call: (305) 294-4352.



Get Involved! Stay Involved!!

Join the Parent's Association

Make a difference in your child's school. Join the parents' association (PTA or PTO). In every school, parents are needed to run fundraisers, organize special events, make other parents feel welcome and support the school in countless ways. If you cannot attend the PTA or PTO meetings, call the president and volunteer in other ways, such as making phone calls, making bake sale items, and helping with events. An active parent association can have a huge impact on improving a school.



Adopt a Classroom

The Monroe County Public School District is proud to announce a partnership with Adopt-A-Classroom. This initiative will harness community support for the district's 616 public school classroom teachers. Adopt-A-Classroom is a non-profit organization that allows individuals or businesses to "adopt" a classroom (or several) and provide moral and financial support to the classroom students and teacher for one school year. Sponsors adopt classrooms at \$500 per classroom. The entire donation goes to the classroom chosen by the donor. With Adopt-A-Classroom funds, teachers will be able to buy resources that create a more engaging and creative classroom curricula.

Adopt a classroom today by visiting www.adoptaclassroom.com or by calling 1-877-444-7666.

Tips for Staying on Top of What's Happening in School

Elementary School:

1. Attend the start of the year open house. Ask the teacher what will be covered for the year.
2. Join the PTO (Parent Teacher Organization).
3. Sign up to be a classroom volunteer.
4. Read the school's newsletter. Visit the school's web site.
5. Empty your child's backpack everyday; find what the school is sending home. Talk to your child; ask questions about school.
6. Attend SAC (School Advisory Council) meetings. This is where parents, teachers, and administrators work to make school improvements and budget decisions.

Middle School/High School:

1. Attend the start of the year open house. Meet your child's teachers. Ask for a syllabus of what will be covered in each class.
2. Ask to see your child's planner—a tool for keeping track of assignments and due dates.
3. Read the school newsletter. Visit the school's web site.
4. Empty your child's backpack frequently. Find what the school is sending home. Talk to your child; ask questions about school.
5. Attend SAC (School Advisory Council) meetings. This is where parents, teachers, and administrators work to make school improvements and budget decisions.

Parenting Classes

Wesley House Family Service: Parents, stop by your Neighborhood Center! Neighborhood Centers are places where families can come together, meet each other, have fun together, learn together, and support each other. Everyone in the neighborhood is welcome and the centers make a special effort to involve young families and families with young children.

On-going classes are provided in each Neighborhood Center location for parents of school-age and teenage children. A therapeutic group session is offered for parents needing intensive therapy. Classes are designed to increase parents' knowledge of child development and the demands of parenting. Parents learn coping strategies to help with the stress associated with caring for children.

For more information in Key West, (305) 292-7150; in Marathon, 305-289-2675; in Tavernier, (305) 853-3521. Visit their website at www.wesleyhouse.org.

ESE Advisory Council

ESE Advisory Council: Join the Exceptional Student Education (ESE) Advisory Council. The mission of the ESE Advisory Council is to advocate for the rights of students with disabilities in Monroe County. Members of the Council serve as advisors to the school board, administration and faculty, and focus on the development and implementation of needed ESE programs. Members of the ESE Advisory Council consist of parents of children with disabilities, educational support personnel and interested community members. For more information, contact Marty Jacquette (ESE Parent Liaison/Transition Specialist) at 305-293-1418.

Be a Mentor

Be a big help; be a mentor: For more information on Governor Jeb Bush's mentoring initiative, call 1-800-825-3786 or visit:

http://www.mentoring.org/take_action/faces_of_mentoring/governor_jeb_bush/

Exceptional Student Education

ESE

ESE (Exceptional Student Education): Students identified requiring special adaptations to the regular school program may qualify for Exceptional Student Education program. Students qualifying for ESE programs shall be admitted through an eligibility staffing (or meeting). We have a rigorous screening process for any student suspected of having an advanced ability (gifted) or disability. Following the screening process, the school will offer an appropriate program for the child. At all times the parent may stop the evaluation or withdraw consent. Only with parental consent is a child placed in ESE program. The parent with the team will create an individualized education plan, or IEP. An IEP is an appropriate program of study for a student with disabilities that lists accommodations the student will need as well as academic goals and teaching methods. If you believe your child has an exceptionality (such as: autism, mental retardation, problems with seeing or hearing, problems with speech & language, emotional disturbance, brain injury, problems with bones or muscles, specific learning disabilities) that keeps them from doing their best in school, you should contact your school service team facilitator.

IDEA 1997: Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) passed in 1997, children ages 3-21 with any disabilities covered under that law are guaranteed "free and appropriate education" in the "least restrictive environment" along with "related

services" required for your child to benefit from their education. Students in the ESE program are entitled to stay in school until they reach the age of 22 or graduate with a standard diploma, whichever comes first.

Your Legal Rights: You have the right to receive copies of your child's school records. You have the right to participate in your child's IEP. For a copy of all the parental rights please visit your school guidance counselor for a copy.



- For more information regarding an ESE eligibility staffing, contact the staffing specialist at your child's school.
- For information regarding questions, accommodations, complaints or appeals regarding services in your child's school, contact your child's principal.
- For information regarding district policies and practices, contact the District ESE office at (305) 293-1400, x53378 or visit: <http://www.keysschools.com/ese/>

Accommodations/Modifications

Accommodations are changes in "how" the information is taught, not the level of difficulty. Many students with disabilities only need a small change to the way they are instructed and tested to be able to participate successfully in a regular classroom.

Modifications are a change in "what" is taught. The alternate content that best meets the child's IEP and does not necessarily reflect the actual grade level. Many students on modified instruction receive functional and social skill instruction.

Types of Accommodations/ Modifications:

General education classes may be modified for exceptional students below are just a few examples:

1. An increase or decrease in instructional time.
2. Variations in instructional methodology.
3. Teacher instruction or student response through special communication systems.
4. Modification of test administration procedures and other evaluation systems to accommodate the student's disabilities.

Assistive Technology

Assistive Technology:

What is assistive technology? The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) defines assistive technology as both devices and services. Devices include any item, piece of equipment, or product system, modified, or customized to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of students with disabilities.

Assistive technology can be as simple as a pencil grip or as complex as a computer.

Assistive technology service is any service that directly assists a student with a disability in the selection, acquisition, or use of an assistive technology device. These services can include: screening and/or assessment of a student, loan

trials with needed equipment, or training and technical assistance for student, family, and school personnel.



How are my child's needs for assistive technology determined?

Each time the IEP is reviewed, the IEP team must consider the child's need for assistive technology. If the child is thought to be in need of assistive technology services, a referral is completed and forwarded to the assistive technology team. Teachers, staffing specialists and therapists will be asked for information that will be helpful during the assessment.

What are areas in which assistive technology can be used for my child? There are a number of areas in which assistive technology can benefit a student with disabilities. These include the following: computer access, assistive listening, visual aides, positioning, mobility, computer based instruction, recreation & leisure, self care, and environmental control.

For more information: on assistive technology, visit:

www.monroe.k12.fl.us/curriculum/ese/assistivetechology/assistivetechology.htm or contact Sharon Day at (305) 293-1418.

ESE Support Staff

Exceptional Student Education:

The Monroe County School District has a team of people committed to helping all children achieve their full potential:

Dr. Lesley Messier - Director of Student Services
(305) 293-1400 x53378, Lesley.Messier@keysschools.com

Catherine Kanag - Compliance Program Specialist
(305) 293-1400 ext 53374, Catherine.kanagy@keysschools.com

Betty Shapiro - ESE Program Specialist
(305) 293-1400 x53375, betty.shapiro@keysschools.com

Sharon Day - Assistive Technology Specialist
(305) 293-1418, Sharon.Day@keysschools.com

Maryanne Nickel - Behavior Specialist
(305) 293-1400 x53365, Maryanne.Nickel@keysschools.com

Linda Welsh - Child Find Specialist (Age 3 - 5)
(305) 293-1646, Linda.Welsh@keysschools.com

Marty Jacquette - ESE Parent Liaison/Transition Specialist
(305) 293-1418, marty.jacquette@keysschools.com

Special Diploma

Diploma Options:

Diploma options are very important decisions for parents. We urge you to contact your school staffing specialist to sit down with you and discuss the specific requirements of every diploma option open to your child.



ESOL: The English for Speakers of Other Languages program is for children who do not speak or write English well. This program helps your child learn English so they can participate in a regular classroom. Your child's school is responsible for placing your child in the correct level of ESOL class. If you believe your child has been placed in the wrong level, contact your child's classroom teacher. For more information on regarding ESOL, contact Eleanor Garcia at (305) 293-1400 x 53364, or visit:

<http://www.monroe.k12.fl.us/students/curriculum.asp>

How Does my Child Apply to College?

Deciding to go to college is a big step. If your child wants to attend a college or university after graduation, it's best to start your research early in your child's high school career. You and your child will want plenty of time to explore what kind of college will be the best match for them, what college entrance exams they will need to take, and what kind of financial aid or scholarships are available.

One of the best places to start learning more about applying to college is through the CAP counselor at your child's high school. CAP (College Assistance Program) is a non-profit organization that works within the high school. The CAP counselor has information on colleges and universities throughout the United States and should be able to help your child select a college, fill out college applications and financial aid forms. If you have additional concerns, you may also want to meet with your child's guidance counselor.

For information regarding Florida colleges, visit: www.facts.org. Admission into Florida's state universities is limited by space availability. Admission decisions are based upon:

- High school graduation
- Grade point average in academic core courses
- Admission test scores - most colleges require applicants to take either the ACT or the SAT. Visit www.collegeboard.com to register online for the SAT.

- Course distribution requirements — students must complete at least 15 units of high school work in the following five core areas (English, 4; Mathematics, 3; Natural Science, 3; Social Science, 3; Foreign Language, 2) plus 4 additional electives.



Talented Twenty

Graduates from Florida public high schools who rank in the top 20% of their class, who have completed the 19 units of core courses (listed above) and submitted an SAT or ACT test score shall be admitted into one of the eleven state universities, although not necessarily the university of the applicant's choice.

Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program

The Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program establishes three lottery-funded scholarships for Florida high school graduates who demonstrate high academic achievement and enroll in eligible Florida public or private postsecondary institutions. For more information, visit: <http://www.floridastudentfinancialaid.org/ssfad/bf/>

Florida Keys Community College

Start here, go anywhere! Florida Keys Community College (FKCC) is a comprehensive community college that responds to the diverse and challenging needs of Monroe County. FKCC's main campus is located in Key West at 5901 College Road. There are satellite centers located in Marathon (900 Sombrero Beach Road, at Marathon High) and in Tavernier (89951 US Highway 1, at Coral Shores High School). For more information, visit: www.fkcc.cc

Parent-Teacher Conferences: Make the Most Out of Them

The Parent-Teacher conference: One of the best ways to find out how your child is doing in school is through a parent-teacher conference. Your child's teacher may request to schedule a conference with you, however if you would like to schedule a conference yourself, call or write your child's teacher to set one up. Teachers are only required to be in their classroom for a short time before or after school, so try to be flexible when scheduling a time. You will need to arrange to come to school for the conference.

Before you attend the conference, spend a few minutes preparing. Talk to your child. Ask your child about things he does and does not like. Ask your child what he thinks the teacher might say. Make a list of questions or concerns you might have. Write them down and bring them to the conference.

Following are some questions you might like to ask:

1. What will my child learn this year in school?
2. How are my child's work habits?
3. Is my child performing at grade level?
4. Does my child qualify for any special programs (Gifted, Exceptional Student Education, ESOL)?



5. Does my child get along well with other students?
6. What can I do at home to help?

At the conference, keep an open mind. Parent - Teacher conferences can bring out all kinds of emotions. You may feel proud if your child is doing well, and you may feel anxious and upset if your child is struggling. Remember that the conference is an opportunity for you to work with the teacher as a team. If the teacher points out areas where your child needs additional help, ask her what her plan is to help your child make these improvements and then ask how you can help at home.

After the conference, follow up. Stay in touch with the teacher. If you think of a question you forgot to ask, write a note or send an e-mail. Talk with your child about the conference. Stress the positive things the teacher discussed and talk about her suggestions for improvement. Begin working with your child right away to carry out the teacher's suggestions for improvements.

Get Involved With Your Child

Family support: Families have a major influence on their children's academic achievement in school and throughout life. When parents talk to their children about school, expect them to do well, help them plan for college or career, and make sure that out of school activities are positive, their children tend to do well in school and in life. Students with involved parents, no matter what their income or background, are more likely to do better in school, stay in school longer, and like school more.

Talk to your child about school: Have dinner together. Ask specific questions such as:

- What was the most important thing you learned today?
- What new assignments did you get?
- What do you think your math teacher will ask on the test? Can I help you study?

Pay attention to what comes home in your child's backpack. Talk to your child about school. Ask questions. Share information about your own day. Let your child know you are proud of what he

or she accomplishes at school.

Read aloud with your child every day: Reading aloud to children of all ages is one of the best ways to help them develop a love of books. It can also be a special time to spend with your kids. Encourage your child to ask about words he or she doesn't understand. Purchase a dictionary to look up difficult words,

Set aside a regular time for homework.

Be available if your child needs help or has questions. Check homework regularly.

A quote to remember:

"100 years from now, it will not matter what kind of car I drove, what kind of house I lived in, how much money I had in my bank account, nor what my clothes looked like. But the world may be a little better because I was important in the life of a child." - Author Unknown

