

**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**  
**K-20 Summary of Hurricane Recovery Efforts**  
**January 27, 2005**

**The Department's Role in Emergency Management and Recovery Efforts**

- Commissioner Winn (appointed days after first hurricane) recognized the importance of staying connected with school districts, community colleges, universities, and private partners - established a Response Team.
- Team staffed and coordinated efforts with the State EOC to provide priority/support for any educational entity seeking assistance through the state's tracking and emergency response system - first time for priority status for restoration of power for schools.
- The team created and implemented the first-ever, model communication response system which provided and coordinated emergency information for 67 school districts, 28 community colleges, 11 state universities, over 1,500 private and charter schools, and all DOE staff members.
- Established 24/7 coverage in Turlington Building with backup system – accessed by hotline, e-mail and website.
- Created buddy system – each school district assigned a DOE contact. Provided a one-stop, point-of-contact resource for superintendents.
- District contact provided information that was aggregated by DOE – became the basis for state level briefing and allowed prioritizing of district issues, identification of available resources.
- Response effort included dispatching on-the-ground teams of impact-assessment experts; to address specialized needs - securing emergency **diesel fuel**; assisting in relief efforts; addressing **mold/mildew cleanup**; **disposal of spoiled food**; and coordinating assessments of hundreds of millions of dollars in **structural damage**.
  - Commissioner
  - Chancellors
  - Facilities staff
  - Transportation staff
- Response efforts focused on recovery so that **reopening of schools** could occur as soon as possible.
- DOE coordinated the collection of donations of cash, school supplies, textbooks, and equipment for districts with need.

- Through the use of conference calls with superintendents, Commissioner provided guidance to address districts concerns regarding waivers for minimum school term, FCAT testing, report submissions, and alternate student membership surveys.
- Result was the reopening of schools within an expeditious timeframe. This facilitated the recovery of students and the community.

