

# FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



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March 17, 2003

Dear Ninth-Grade Students (and Parents):

You probably already know the choices you make now can affect your life after graduation—whether it's going to college or vocational school, getting scholarships, or even starting a career. That's why it is important to set goals and keep track of your educational progress. To help, the Department of Education created Florida Academic Counseling and Tracking for Students—**FACTS.org**, Florida's official statewide student advising web site.

With **FACTS.org**, you can plan your high school courses, check your eligibility status for Bright Futures Scholarships and state university admissions, view your course history and grades, use career guidance programs, search for degrees offered in Florida, and apply for college admissions and financial aid. The enclosed brochure covers this exciting web site and its services in more detail.

You should be aware that high school courses you select play a big role in qualifying for graduation and entering college. The minimum graduation requirements are not enough. To prepare for college admissions, the Department of Education recommends taking the Florida Core Curriculum:

**Math:** 3 to 4 years. This includes at least Algebra I, Geometry and Algebra II. If you haven't taken Algebra yet, do it next year.

**Foreign language:** 2 to 4 years of the same language.

**English:** 4 years. Consider taking Advanced Placement or Dual Enrollment classes in your junior or senior year.

**Science:** 3 to 4 years. This usually includes Biology, Chemistry and Physics.

**Social Science:** 3 to 4 years.

Give careful consideration to electives selection, too. Take electives that you really like, develop a talent, or build a new one. Whether it's band, carpentry, computers, drama, or ROTC that you like—do it. Stick with one thing for three or four years. You'll impress colleges and employers.

Remember to take the Florida Core Curriculum and use **FACTS.org** to track your educational progress. Go to **www.facts.org** and log on for your High School Academic Evaluations and see how you are doing. If you have questions about planning your high school career or what you want to do after high school, talk to your high school guidance counselor. Keep up the good work!

Sincerely,

Jim Horne

A handwritten signature of Jim Horne in black ink.