

# FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



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April 16, 2007

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** District Superintendents

**FROM:** Dr. Cheri P. Yecke, Chancellor K-12 Education

**SUBJECT:** 2007-2008 ePEP NOW AVAILABLE ON FACTS.ORG

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I am pleased to announce that the new version of the FACTS.org ePersonal Education Planner (ePEP) will be available April 18. The 2007-08 ePEP will include the new graduation requirements and major areas of interest that are effective for this coming fall. The ePEP helps middle and high school students map out coursework based on a college prep curriculum, career prep curriculum, standard high school graduation curriculum, or special diploma. There are several items of importance related to the roll out of the 2007 ePEP: 1) Middle School Career and Academic Advising Workshops; 2) Reporting the Major Areas of Interest; 3) Status of incoming ninth graders with ePEP; and 4) Counselor/Teacher access to ePEPs.

### **Middle School Career and Academic Advising Workshops**

The A++ bill requires that all current sixth graders take a career and education planning course in seventh or eighth grade that will result in the completion of an ePEP in order to be promoted to ninth grade. The Department will be holding Middle School Career and Academic Advising Workshops in June, July and August throughout the state. The workshops are intended to inform middle school teachers, who will be teaching the career and education planning course, about the proposed course curriculums, how to create an ePEP, and career exploration with CHOICES. Registration for the workshops will be required; please go to <http://data.fldoe.org/register/wf-flchoices/default.cfm> for more information.

### **Reporting the Major Areas of Interest**

The Department of Education has been in discussions with an advisory group of Management Information Systems (MIS) directors about the process for reporting major areas of interest. The group recommended that FACTS.org, which is already collecting student's majors and associated courses with the ePEP, pass this information to school districts so they will not have to build a new reporting system.

CHERI PIERSON YECKE, PH.D.  
CHANCELLOR, K-12 PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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**This means the major area of interest that is recorded in a student's ePEP will be used for the official reporting of major areas of interest.** Therefore, in order to meet this proposed reporting requirement, every student who is required to follow the 2007-2008 graduation requirements and have a major area of interest must also have an ePEP and provide accurate information regarding their enrollment in a major. The new proposed reporting process will be discussed at the Florida Association of Management Information Systems (FAMIS) meeting in Ocala on April 16. Please view the FAMIS website at <http://www.santarosa.k12.fl.us/famis> for more information. Reporting will also be discussed at the Department of Education Information Database Workshop on June 19 in Orlando (<http://www.firn.edu/doe/databaseworkshop/>).

**Incoming ninth graders who have an ePEP**

Middle school students who have already created an ePEP using the old high school graduation requirements will automatically be converted to the 2007 ePEP. These students will be notified when they login that their plans have been upgraded to the new 2007 standards and will be given instructions for completing the process of selecting a major area of interest. Current high school students under the old graduation requirements will be unaffected as their graduation requirements did not change.

**Counselor/Teacher Access to ePEP**

A new "ePEP & Evaluations Activity System" is currently being developed. District Guidance Supervisors will be asked to identify and electronically designate district, middle school, and high school personnel who need to view student ePEP activity information in order to perform their jobs. These individuals will be given login IDs to access ePEP Activity Reports. The Activity Reports will include a roster of students, their respective grade levels, diploma type, graduation plan, major area of interest and other variables. Counselors will be able to see student ePEPs and make comments to individuals or to groups of students. Instructions for establishing the logins will be sent to the District Guidance Supervisors in May 2007.

For more information, please contact the FACTS.org Helpdesk at [facts@admin.usf.edu](mailto:facts@admin.usf.edu) or call toll-free (866) 324-2618.

Enclosure

CWG/al

- c: Assistant or Deputy Superintendents for Curriculum
- District Guidance Directors
- District Student Services Directors
- Middle and High School Principals
- Middle and High School Guidance Counselors

## Frequently Asked Questions FACTS.org ePEP

### **1. What is an ePersonal Education Planner (ePEP)?**

An ePEP is a high school course planner that helps middle and high school students set a graduation goal and select coursework from their high school to meet that goal. For instance, students may select college prep, career prep, college & career prep, standard graduation prep, or special diploma. Each of these goals have specific course requirements in order to be eligible for graduation, Bright Futures Scholarship awards, and/or State University System admissions.

### **2. Who is required to have an ePEP?**

Section 1003.4156, Florida Statutes (General requirements for middle grades promotion) requires, beginning with students entering grade six in the 2006-2007 school year, that an ePEP be created as part of a career and education planning course to be completed in seventh or eighth grade. This means the first group of middle school students that must have an ePEP before they are promoted to high school is the 2008-2009 eighth graders.

### **3. Should current seventh and eighth graders have an ePEP even though it's not required?**

Yes. It is strongly recommended that current seventh or eighth graders create an ePEP. Even though these students are not required to complete the career and education planning course for promotion to high school, they are required to have a major area of interest in grade nine. The ePEP is a critical piece for major areas of interest and to how districts will report student enrollment in an area.

### **4. How will students change their major area of interest?**

Students entering grade nine in 2007 and thereafter will select a major area of interest while completing an ePEP. Students must earn four (4) credits in an area for graduation, however, the credits do not all have to be from the same major area of interest. Students may revise major areas of interest each year as part of annual course registration processes and should update their education plan to reflect such revisions. Because the ePEP will be used to officially report the major area of interest, this section must be kept current at all times.

### **5. What constitutes a complete ePEP?**

Section 1007.21, Florida Statutes (Readiness for postsecondary education and the workforce) states:

Subsection (1): “It is the intent of the Legislature that students and parents develop academic achievement and career goals for the student's post-high-school experience during the middle grades. Parents and students are to become partners with school personnel in career exploration and educational decision-making. Clear academic course expectations that emphasize rigorous and relevant coursework shall be made available to all students by allowing both student and parent choice.”

Subsection (2)(a): “Students entering the ninth grade and their parents shall have developed during the middle grades a 4- to 5-year academic and career plan based on postsecondary and career goals....”

Therefore, a complete ePEP developed during the middle grades should reflect a 4- to 5-year high school academic plan. Understanding there are circumstances that may change or alter a student's plan makes it even more important to review and update the ePEP as part of annual course registration processes.

In addition, each ePEP plan must be signed by the student, the student’s parent/guardian, and the student’s guidance counselor or academic advisor. The print tab (above the course area on the ePEP screen) will provide a reformatted print version with the signature lines. Each district should develop a policy for collection and retention of the signed academic plans.

**6. Should an ePEP be completed by the end of the middle school course?**

Yes. Career exploration and the creation of a 4- to 5-year academic plan using the FACTS.org ePEP are outcomes of the middle school career and education planning course. It would be difficult to cover the content separately or spread it over two years. If the course is offered in seventh grade, it is recommended that the school provide a follow-up in the eighth grade to allow students to revisit their ePEP and make updates prior to high school course registration.

**7. Will student course selections from the ePEP be available to download?**

Yes. FACTS.org will make student course selections available for download so course information can be used in local course registration systems or for needs analysis/forecasting, etc. If school districts are interested in aligning high school course registration and the creation of an ePEP, it is recommended that the timing of the course be addressed. More information about course downloads will be shared as the process is developed.

**8. Will students who transfer to a middle or high school from outside a Florida public school (private schools, home education programs, out-of-state, out-of-country) be required to create an ePEP?**

Yes. Students entering grade nine in 2007 and thereafter that are required to have a major area of interest will be required to have an ePEP. Additional technical assistance on transfer students will be forthcoming.

**9. How can I receive training for the ePEP?**

For counselors, teachers, and administrators who would like more hands-on training with the ePEP, there are several options:

- online, on-demand training on FACTS.org;
- Middle School Career and Academic Advising Workshops (professional development designed for teachers of the new middle school career and education planning course; registration required); and
- FACTS.org training staff may be available upon request to do group or district trainings.

Support guides, curriculum materials, training CDs, presentations, etc., will be available throughout the summer. For training information, please visit [www.FACTS.org](http://www.FACTS.org), click on "Counselor and Administrator Access" at the bottom of the homepage, then click on the link for Training Services.

**10. When are the two-day Middle School Career and Academic Advising Workshops?**

The schedule is listed below, seats are limited and registration is required. For more information, please view the registration website at <http://data.fldoe.org/register/wf-flchoices/default.cfm>.

<p><b>Thursday - May 31, 8:30 AM – 4:00 PM</b>  <b>Friday – June 1, 8:30 AM - 12:30 PM</b>          Lively Technical Center          500 North Appleyard Drive, Room 119          Tallahassee, FL 32304</p>	<p><b>Monday – June 18, 8:30 AM – 4:00 PM</b>  <b>Tuesday – June 19, 8:30 AM - 12:30 PM</b>          Kight Center for Emerging Technologies          Indian River Community College          Building “V” – 35th Street          Fort Pierce, FL 34981</p>
<p><b>Monday – June 4, 8:30 AM – 4:00 PM</b>  <b>Tuesday – June 5, 8:30 AM - 12:30 PM</b>          Martin Luther King Jr. Administration Center          5775 Osceola Trail, Board Room          Naples, FL 34109</p>	<p><b>Wednesday – June 20, 8:30 AM – 4:00 PM</b>  <b>Thursday – June 21, 8:30 AM - 12:30 PM</b>          Olympia High School Auditorium          4301 South Apopka-Vineland Road          Orlando, FL 32835</p>

<b>Wednesday – June 6, 8:30 AM – 4:00 PM</b> <b>Thursday – June 7, 8:30 AM - 12:30 PM</b> Children’s Board of Hillsborough County 1002 East Palm Avenue (Ybor City) Tampa, FL 33605	<b>Monday, July 30, 8:30 AM – 4:00 PM</b> <b>Tuesday, July 31, 8:30 AM - 12:30 PM</b> Hyatt Regency Riverfront 225 E. Coastline Drive Jacksonville, FL 32202
<b>Monday – June 11, 8:30 AM – 4:00 PM</b> <b>Tuesday – June 12, 8:30 AM - 12:30 PM</b> Miami Dade College Wolfson Campus, ETCOTA Auditorium Bldg. 7, Room 7128 300 North East Second Avenue Miami, FL 33132	<b>Thursday – August 2, 8:30 AM – 4:00 PM</b> <b>Friday – August 3, 8:30 AM - 12:30 PM</b> J.E. Hall Educational Service Center 30 East Texar Drive, Room 160 Pensacola, FL 32503
<b>Wednesday – June 13, 8:30 AM – 4:00 PM</b> <b>Thursday – June 14, 8:30 AM - 12:30 PM</b> Pompano Beach High School 600 North East 13th Avenue Pompano Beach, FL 33060	

**11. Will middle school teachers and counselors be able to view student activity?**

Yes. A new "ePEP & Evaluations Activity System" is currently being developed. District Guidance Supervisors will be asked to add district, middle school, and high school personnel who need to view student activity information in order to perform their jobs. Instructions for establishing the logins will be released in May 2007.

**12. How will middle school teachers and counselors access the new "ePEP & Evaluations Activity System"?**

After authorized personnel receive their login ID from the District Guidance Supervisor, users should go to [www.FACTS.org](http://www.FACTS.org), click on "Counselor and Administrator Access" at the bottom of the homepage, then click on the link for the Activity System. High school counselors may continue to use the Bright Futures System to access FACTS.org student activity for now.

**13. What information will be available from the new "ePEP & Evaluations Activity System"?**

It is important to emphasize that district and school personnel will have access to personally identifiable student records and must adhere to all standards included in the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA); Protection of Pupil Privacy Acts, Section 1002.22(3)(d), Florida Statutes; and other applicable laws and regulations related to the release of student information. Student information will be viewable by school and grade level. The information includes the student's login information, their planned diploma type, graduation plan, career cluster, major area of interest, and date of last transcript update. Planned courses and completed courses from transcripts are viewable, as well as transcript evaluations (with grades and GPA calculations) for graduation, Bright Futures Scholarship awards, and State University System admission.

**14. The ePEP graduation requirements are based on the minimum State graduation requirements of 24 credits; what if our district/school has additional requirements?**

A method for displaying district/school specific graduation requirements is currently under development. More information on this topic will be forthcoming as the summer progresses. In the meantime, counselors may create a "Counselor Note" with the information and it will appear inside this area of the student's ePEP.

**15. How will major areas of interest be reported? Is ePEP involved?**

The Department of Education has been in discussions with an advisory group of Management Information Systems (MIS) directors about the process for reporting major areas of interest. The group recommended that FACTS.org, which is already collecting student's majors and associated courses with the ePEP, share this information with school districts so they will not have to build a new reporting system. The details are still being developed.

There are two conferences this summer where the major area of interest reporting will be discussed: the Florida Association of Management Information Systems (FAMIS) on April 16 in Ocala (<http://www.santarosa.k12.fl.us/famis/index.htm>); and the DOE Information Database Workshop on June 19 in Orlando (<http://www.firn.edu/doe/databaseworkshop/>). For more information, please visit the organizations' website.