

Choice Office

No Child Left Behind



Hillsborough County Charter Schools Principal's Council Meets at the Florida Charter School Resource Center

Back Row: KC Williams (Rebirth Academy), George Shaw (Central City Academy), Joanne Shaw (Pepin Academy), Geri Kelly (USF Charter School), David Myers (Eastside Multicultural) & Colleen Galimore (Tampa Bay Academy).

Seated: Cathy Healan (North Tampa Alternative), Cametra Reed (Village of Excellence) & Jeanette Anderson (Rebirth Academy).

The Hillsborough County Charter Schools Principal's Council held their January meeting at the Florida Charter School Resource Center (FCSRC). This Council first began to meet several years ago, on a less formal basis, to share information and support each other's efforts. As the demands of charter school leadership have expanded, the mutual sharing and support of this group has grown into a valued resource for these charter school leaders. Their monthly agenda is diverse, ranging from policy/procedure issues, to teacher-of-the-year awards, to investigating shared packages for employee benefit and insurance programs in order to help reduce costs.

Joanne Nelson, Tampa Bay Academy Charter School, was one of the founding principals of this Council; Geri Kelly, USF Charter School, is the current chairperson for the council. Questions or comments about the Hillsborough County Charter Schools Principal's Council may be addressed to any of the Hillsborough County charter school principals. Their contact information is available at www.floridaschoolchoice.org.

Submitted by the Florida Charter School Resource Center.

Projected Charter School Capital Outlay Funding in Florida for 2003-2004

According to projections by the Florida Department of Education, Florida's charter school population is expected to grow by 25,000 students in 2003-2004. This would bring Florida's total charter school population to 71,152 students.

The cost of providing full capital outlay funding for these students would be \$69,288,207. If these students were funded at the current levels, the total cost would be \$41,829,562.

Cost per student at **current** levels vs. cost per student at **fully funded** levels:

Elementary:	\$526	Elementary:	\$871
Middle:	\$603	Middle:	\$999
High:	\$797	High:	\$1,321

Charter School Federal Facility Legislation Update

In the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*, provisions were passed, but not funded, for enhanced charter school facility funding. These initiatives included:

Incentive matching grants to encourage states to start or expand programs that provide per pupil funding for charter school facilities (on top of general operating revenues), and continuation and expansion of the existing charter facilities demonstration program (see more information below).

President Bush allocated \$100 million in his 2003 budget for charter school facility financing. Congress has yet to act on this proposal, but is expected to after the holiday break.

**Information supplied by the Charter Friends National Network Facilities Financing E-Newsletter, September and December 2002*

Facility Financing Demonstration Grants

Many charter schools have called the Accountability Center looking for facility financing options. The federal government has funded the Charter Schools Facilities Financing

Demonstration Program that has given five entities millions of dollars to assist charter schools.

This program allows these entities to demonstrate innovative credit enhancement strategies that assist charter schools in leveraging private sector and other non-federal capital. The funds will be placed in a reserve account, which will then be used to attract other capital, such as bank loans or bonds, to address the cost of acquiring, constructing or renovating charter schools. The reserve account funds cannot be used for the direct purchase, lease, renovation or construction of school buildings.

Please contact the following groups for more information:

- America's Charter School Corporation (781-849-8420)
- Charter Schools Development Corporation (202-739-9579)
- Low Income Housing Fund (510-893-3811)
- NCB Development Corporation (202-336-7677)
- Raza Development Fund, Inc. (602-417-1402)

**Information supplied by the U.S. Department of Education web site.*

For more information on charter school facilities and other charter school accountability information, please visit our website at <http://csac.fsu.edu> and click on "resources".

Texas Instrument Foundation Offers Various Grants

The Texas Instrument (TI) Foundation awards grants on a competitive basis to various groups with a particular emphasis on education. Grants usually range from \$5,000 to \$10,000, though some schools have been awarded up to \$100,000. There are no specific applications or deadlines, rather applicants are encouraged to submit one or two page proposals which briefly outline the purpose of the organization, population served, amount requested, how the requested funds will be used, how the proposal matches funding interests of the TI Foundation, and a copy of the group's 501 (c) (3) designation.

For more information, visit the Texas Instrument Foundation website at www.ti.com/corp/docs/company/citizen/foundation.

Youths' words ease grown-up concerns

By Emily Minor, Palm Beach Post Columnist

If you are worried about the world -- which sometimes happens when a big nation such as ours heads off to war -- I'm here to reassure you that everything's OK. I know this because of two middle-school students named Travis Moore and Adam Kenneway.

Moore and Kenneway are 13-year-old boys, which means their substantial appetites, unmade beds and video game addictions are the stuff of which good cartoon strips are made. Yet, there they were Wednesday, all gussied up, getting awards from an important guy dressed in a suit handing out business cards.

Moore and Kenneway, who last year were seventh-graders at Roosevelt Middle School, entered a national essay contest -- at the urging of teacher Miguel Benavente. Isn't that what good teachers are paid to do? Urge.

The assignment? Write about someone who inspired you. Both boys chose a parent.

Moore wrote about his mother, Sherry, an epileptic since she was 16 years old. Kenneway wrote about his dad, Norm, who was diagnosed with cancer when his son was 2 years old.

And what these kids wrote was plucked directly from their young, tender hearts. Ask technology coordinator Debbie Williams. She was supposed to be taking pictures with the fancy digital camera, but she was having a little trouble. Tears in her eyes.

From Travis Moore's essay: My mother has endured much. She has inspired our church in a definite way; anyone will testify to that. She has inspired my family to a huge extent, and I know that she will do this forever. My mommy has inspired me and she always will, and I will forever be in debt to her for her gift of compassion to me. She has gone through so much yet she still has a heart for others. Especially me, her son.

Benavente, one of those teachers whose name is always up on the marquee outside school for winning this or that, said he found the contest when he was online looking for different outlets for the kids. The contest, *Sharing the Spirit*, was started by the *V Foundation for Cancer Research* in the name of Jim Valvano, a beloved basketball coach at North Carolina State and former ESPN commentator who died of cancer in 1993.

Valvano's brother Nick said initially they were going to do all the awards by mail. Then he saw what had come from the kids at this one particular school in West Palm Beach.

Fifteen of the 25 finalists were from Roosevelt, and all the entries were so awe-inspiring that Valvano flew down to give Kenneway and Moore their gifts. Kenneway, now at the Palm Beach Maritime Academy, won second place; Moore third place. Each got a Palm Pilot and a signed copy of a recent biography about Coach V.

Everyone was there Wednesday, making a hubbub in the far corner of the school library. Moore's parents. Kenneway's mother, Debbie. Everyone but Norm Kenneway. Adam's dad lost his long struggle with cancer last March, months after his son had sat and thought and written his essay about the one person who had always inspired him. Always. His dad.

He thinks about others' well-being before he thinks about his own. An example of this would be, he will always make sure people will wear a jacket if it is cold outside and give up his own if someone doesn't have one. So if you are feeling bad or depressed, Norman will make you feel better.

The world might not be fair. But it's been passed by great people into awfully good hands.

Reprinted from the Palm Beach Post

Roosevelt Community Middle School offers magnet programs in Pre-Engineering, Environmental Science, Pre-Med and Technology. Public magnet schools provide an alternative to comprehensive high schools. They offer theme-based programs of study, standards-based curriculum, connections between the business and industry and the academic world and highly-trained, motivated faculty.



Five Priorities of the Florida Department of Education

- ✓ Improving student learning and achievement, especially in reading
- ✓ Improving teacher quality and capacity
- ✓ Providing more user-friendly information to parents and citizens
- ✓ Expanding choices and options for quality education in kindergarten through college
- ✓ Creating a responsive, customer-focused Department of Education that is more productive and accessible to educators, parents, students, and the public

2002-2003 Dissemination Grant Awards

top of the educational ladder.

Under the Federal Public Charter Schools Program (PCSP) states may make dissemination subgrants to successful charter schools, on a competitive basis, to assist other schools in adapting the charter school's program or to disseminate information about the charter school. In addition, the Public Charter Schools Program provides funds to states for the purpose of awarding grants to charter schools partnering with local chartering agencies to provide a high quality education for all students.

A charter school may use the Public Charter Schools Federal Grant Program—2002-2003 Dissemination Grant award to assist other schools in adapting the charter school's program (or certain aspects of the charter school's program), or to disseminate information about the charter school, through such activities as:

- Assisting other individuals with the planning and startup of one or more new public schools, including charter schools, that are independent of the assisting charter school and the assisting charter school's developers, and that agree to be held to at least as high a level of accountability as the assisting charter school.
- Developing partnerships with other public schools to serve as mentors, including charter schools, designed to improve student performance in each of the schools participating in the partnership;
- Developing curriculum materials, assessments, and other materials that promote increased student achievement and are based on best practices within the assisting charter school;
- Conducting evaluations and developing materials that document the best practices of the assisting charter school and that are designed to improve student achievement; and
- Developing professional development models which may address governance, personnel issues, finance and accounting, and accreditation methodology. The Public Charter Schools Program (PCSP) is authorized under Title X, Part C of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended by the Charter School Expansion Act of 1998.

The following Florida Charter Schools were awarded 2002-2003 Dissemination Grants.

Alachua Learning Center (Alachua County)

The Alachua Learning Center (ALC) seeks to create a community and family centered learning environment with a low student-staff ratio utilizing performance-based, incremental learning curriculum for elementary and middle school students (K-8). The school brings economically depressed and minority populations, at risk of school failure, to the

Dissemination: The school proposes to disseminate their best practices in curriculum development, FCAT test preparation, building a culture of reading, developing school-wide multidisciplinary learning projects, meal program development, and community outreach through multicultural and service learning fairs.

Einstein Montessori School (Alachua County)

Einstein Montessori School (EMS) is dedicated to creating a rich, individualized learning environment for children who have experienced language-processing disorders affecting their ability to read, write and spell. Building basic reading and language skills, using research-based systems and the most modern technology available, drives the curriculum and instructional model.

Dissemination: The project includes dissemination of the outstanding and nationally recognized literacy program, its highly effective business management strategies, the collaborative teaching techniques, the assessment practices, and the partnership building techniques.

Expressions Learning Arts Academy (Alachua County)

Expressions Learning Arts Academy (E.L.A.A.) utilizes the skills acquired in artistic modalities to refine cognitive ability and promote the acquisition of self-discipline. E.L.A.A. promotes academic achievement by incorporating the arts into the basic curriculum driven by Sunshine State Standards.

Dissemination: The school proposes to disseminate best practices in curriculum development; FCAT preparation; preparing for accreditation by SACS; teaching strategies for greatest individual achievement; strategies for introducing the arts, music, drama and dance into the curriculum; charter school development, management, and financing; and establishing outreach to the business, and educational communities.

Central Charter School (Broward County)

Central Charter School provides an enriched innovative educational program focusing on reading, writing, mathematics, and language arts for 'at-risk' students.

Dissemination: The Florida Charter Schools Mentor Project assists fledgling charter schools in school management and accountability. CCS and its partner schools will assist their "buddy" schools by building on their successful past experience of mentoring charter schools, allowing them to become successful and viable education entities.

Somerset Charter School (Broward County)

Somerset Charter School strives toward a multi-age learning environment that allows students to learn and progress at their own pace; small class sizes to offer students more individualized instruction; and a parental obligation to ensure that parents actively participate in his/her child's education.

Dissemination: This project disseminates The *Florida Power Standards Project*, a method of developing a standards-based curriculum and student assessment system.

Smart School (Broward County)

Smart School strives to improve academic performance, self-esteem, and social responsibility of all students by empowering and connecting them to broader curriculums and communities through computer/communication technology.

Dissemination: The Smart School Teacher Retention and Leadership Development Plan identifies teachers with at least three years experience and provides opportunities to develop their leadership skills. A Professional Development Committee of teachers identify instructional needs of the faculty and make recommendations to the administration for all professional in-services throughout the school year.

Eastside Multicultural Community School (Hillsborough County)

Eastside Multicultural Community School provides an interactive learning environment that upholds the Florida Sunshine State Standards, a multicultural perspective, character development, critical thinking, and technological skills. The school infuses multicultural material from Native American, Hispanic, Asian, Caribbean, and other cultures into the curriculum.

Dissemination: The school uses Talents Unlimited and the Florida Institute for Peace Education and Research (Talents/FIPER) professional development methodologies to train teacher teams to develop strategies on how to teach state standards using a multicultural curriculum.

Whispering Winds Charter School (Levy County)

Whispering Winds Charter School, the first charter school rural North Central Florida (Levy, Gilchrist, and Dixie Counties), provides an individualized approach to education for students at risk in their current educational setting. The school also strives to promote a family-oriented atmosphere, innovative teaching methods, and a positive approach to discipline in order to ensure continued academic and social growth for all the students.

Dissemination: The dissemination project focuses on four elements within its educational program that

staff feel have been exemplary: creative learning in the primary grades, educating students with disabilities in an inclusionary environment, parental involvement, and positive classroom management.

Liberty City Charter School (Dade County)

The Liberty City Charter School strives to develop well-rounded students and citizens who are inquisitive, thoughtful, devoted, concerned for the welfare of others and who are intrinsically motivated to learn. A specific goal of LCCS has been to horizontally and vertically align its curriculum to develop a seamless and streamlined focus of instruction and assessment.

Dissemination: LCCS proposes to continue conducting training for operators and teachers of Florida public charter schools. The focus of this training includes syllabus development and standards alignment, measurable instructional objectives development, horizontal and vertical integration of curriculum, and developing varied, reliable, authentic classroom assessments.

Mater Academy Charter School (Dade County)

Mater Academy provides a loving, caring, and supportive educational environment that furthers a philosophy of respect and high expectations for all students, parents, teachers, and staff. Mater Academy's multiage program focuses on organizing groups by ability rather than by age.

Dissemination: Disseminated materials include instructional materials, innovative teaching strategies and examples, and assessment techniques. Practices are disseminated among the schools by means of a series of workshops and seminars as well as group and individual meetings, site visits, e-mail, teleconferences, and parent web site postings.

Ryder Elementary Charter School (Dade County)

The Ryder Elementary Charter School (RECS) believes that all children can develop as intellectual learners, function as good citizens, learn as individuals in our society, and develop as actual or potential workers in the community. RECS has successfully implemented the MicroSociety program for the past three years. Students gain skills by creating products, marketing, banking and using everyday math skills to solve problems. The MicroSociety program also allows for multiple age grouping for ventures facilitating learning from peers.

Dissemination: This unique program will be implemented at Northeast Academy, a charter school located in North Miami Beach, Florida. The Micro coordinator and certified trainer from Ryder will train the faculty at Northeast Academy.