

# FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



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## MEMORANDUM

**To:** District School Superintendents

**From:** Jim Warford

**Date:** December 1, 2003

**Subject:** **HIGH SCHOOL REFORM AND RESOURCES FOR MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL COUNSELORS**

Recently, Commissioner Jim Horne attended the US Department of Education High School Leadership Summit in Washington, DC. The purpose of this summit was to increase the visibility of the challenges facing America's high schools and discuss steps needed to tackle these challenges. The summit used the framework of the No Child Left Behind Act to initiate and promote a national dialogue related to transforming high schools and creating seamless transitions into and through postsecondary education. Speakers and resource materials focused on four themes:

- Setting high expectations and accountability for results
- Creating options and engaging students
- Fostering world-quality teaching and school leadership
- Making smooth transitions into postsecondary education, training, and careers

JIM WARFORD  
*K-12 Chancellor*

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The summit provided key research findings, inspirational examples of school change, and new relationships with fellow educators, government officials, and education policymakers. Many important reforms are currently underway throughout the nation. This meeting was a first step in identifying the issues and proposing promising solutions. The US Department of Education will continue this effort by facilitating future workshops, conference calls, newsletters, and publications to build links around key research and policy issues - all focusing on youth achievement and high school improvement.

At the summit, Secretary Rod Paige announced two new websites that will greatly enhance your academic advisement program in your middle and high schools. I encourage all middle and high school counselors to review these sites and share this information with their students and parents.

The Career Voyages website ([www.careervoyages.gov](http://www.careervoyages.gov)) provides a wealth of information and guided support in determining the best career path for a student. It clearly delineates among the careers requiring postsecondary education and those that do not require formal education beyond high school graduation. You may access Florida-specific information related to emerging trends in "hot careers" and pertinent salary information. The site also includes a link for parents designed to facilitate the planning process merging high school requirements with professional expectations in a particular career and video tours for students with an on-line interest inventory.

The Federal Student Aid website ([www.studentaid.ed.gov](http://www.studentaid.ed.gov)) provides information to school counselors, students, and parents to guide them through the application process for financial assistance. A reader may access information based on a student's age (ranging from elementary school through graduate school) and links are written with a developmentally appropriate style and focus.

I recommend middle school and high school counselors to encourage students and parents to visit the Florida Academic Counseling and Tracking for Students website ([www.FACTS.org](http://www.FACTS.org)). This website provides information on Florida postsecondary institutions, career guidance, occupations, resources for planning high school courses, and personal high school academic evaluations. We will share additional resources regarding school reform as it is developed. This is an exciting opportunity to plan for a more promising future for our middle and high school students and graduates.

JW:mjbo

cc: Student Services Directors  
Guidance Supervisors  
High School Principals  
Middle School Principals  
High School Counselors  
Middle School Counselors  
ESE Directors

**JIM WARFORD**  
*K - 12 Chancellor*