

**Florida Education News**  
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**Queue, Inc. Appoints New Sales Reps For Florida**

**Queue, Inc. has appointed Brake Media (Jeff Brake, 407.687.4822) as its independent sales representative for Florida. Queue publishes test prep workbooks in reading comprehension and math for grades 2-8 based on the Sunshine State Standards as well as a wide variety of workbooks in language arts, reading comprehension, math and science ideal for test prep. These outstanding workbooks are available for preview.**

**Contact your sales rep or call 1-800-232-2224. You may also go to <http://www.qworkbooks.com/FL/FL.html> for descriptions and to order.**

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## 2008 FCAT Reading, Math and Science Results Indicate Gains In Student Learning

More of Florida students are performing at or above grade level (Achievement Level 3 and above) in reading and mathematics compared to all test years since 2001, according to the 2008 Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) results released today. Additionally, more students in grades 5, 8, and 11 are performing at or above grade level in science compared with previous years. The results also indicate that African-American and Hispanic students have narrowed the achievement gap with white students in both reading and mathematics.

“Florida’s students are to be commended for their hard work and steady progress in reading, math and science,” Governor Charlie Crist said. “We are grateful to the teachers of our students, as well as the parents, who reinforce each day the importance of continued learning and strong skills.”

“Academic achievement in Florida continues to rise and these results are a clear indication of the high quality of education our students are receiving,” said Education Commissioner Eric J. Smith. “I’m particularly pleased with the results we are seeing in math and reading and the focus our schools have maintained on these important subjects. The hard work of our teachers and endless learning capacity of our students impresses me daily.”

Overall, 60 percent of students in grades 3 through 10 are reading at or above grade level compared to 58 percent in 2007. Sixty-six (66) percent of Florida students are demonstrating mathematics skills at or above grade level compared to 63 percent last year. Highlights of this year’s results include:

- **Elementary School** (Grades 3 – 5 reading and mathematics, and grade 5 science)
- Seventy (70) percent of elementary school students are reading at or above grade level, the same percentage as last year and up 16 percentage points since 2001.
- Seventy (70) percent of elementary school students are demonstrating mathematics skills at or above grade level, up two percentage points from last year and 18 points since 2001.
- Forty-three (43) percent of fifth grade students are achieving in science at or above grade level, up one percentage point from last year and 15 points since 2003.

**Middle School** (Grades 6 – 8 reading and mathematics, and grade 8 science)

- Sixty-one (61) percent of middle school students are reading at or above grade level, up three percentage points from last year and 13 points since 2001.
- Sixty (60) percent of middle school students are demonstrating mathematics skills at or above grade level, up two percentage points from last year and 13 points since 2001.
- Forty (40) percent of eighth grade students are achieving in science at or above grade level, up two percentage points from last year and 12 points since 2003.

**High School** (Grades 9 and 10 reading and mathematics, and grade 11 science)

- Forty-two (42) percent of high school students are reading at or above grade level, up four percentage points from last year and 10 points since 2001.
- Sixty-seven (67) percent of high school students are demonstrating mathematics skills at or above grade level, up four percentage points from last year and 15 points since 2001.
- Thirty-eight (38) percent of eleventh grade students are achieving in science at or above grade level, up one percentage point from last year and five percentage points since 2003.
- **Additional highlights include:**
- Hispanic students narrowed the achievement gap with white students by seven percentage points since 2001 in both reading and mathematics.
- African-American students narrowed the achievement gap with white students by three percentage points in reading and seven percentage points in mathematics since 2001.

Parents may view their students' scores via the FCAT Parent Network

(<http://www.fcatparentnetwork.com/>) using the secure login and password provided by their school. School districts and schools can access electronic copies of their reports today. Printed reports, including individual student reports, school reports, district and state reports, have been delivered to school districts.

To view the 2008 Reading, Mathematics and Science FCAT fact sheet, visit

<http://fcat.fldoe.org/mediapacket/2008/pdf/2008FCAT3-11FactSheet.pdf>. To view school, district and state FCAT reports, visit <http://fcat.fldoe.org/fcinfopg.asp>.

## **Record Number of Florida Schools Earn High Grades**

Florida has more schools earning “A’s” and “B’s” than ever before. Of the 2,889 schools graded this year, nearly three quarters (2,125) are considered to be high performing (receiving either an “A” or “B” grade). Additionally, the number of schools considered to be low performing decreased significantly compared to last year.

Of Florida's 2,889 graded public schools earning "A" through "F" grades this year:

- 1,583 earned an "A" (55 percent), an increase of 100 schools compared to last year.
- 542 earned a "B" (19 percent), an increase of 73 schools compared to last year.
- 565 earned a "C" (20 percent), a decrease of 22 schools compared to last year.
- 154 earned a "D" (5 percent), a decrease of 62 schools compared to last year.
- 45 earned an "F" (2 percent), a decrease of 38 schools compared to last year.

### **School Performance Rises with Higher Expectations**

Florida continues to raise its school performance expectations to ensure students are prepared for the rigor of postsecondary education and the workforce. In 2007, the expectations were raised for the fourth time since the inception of school grades. This year’s results confirm historical trends that indicate schools respond with improved performance when expectations are raised. The number of low performing schools (receiving an “F” grade) declined to 45 this year, down from 83 in 2007. Of last year’s 83 “F” graded schools, five improved to an “A,” seven improved to a “B,” 33 improved to a “C” and 20 improved to a “D.”

### **School Recognition Program Remains Incentive for Improvement**

The Florida School Recognition Program rewards schools that have sustained high student performance or demonstrated substantial improvement in student performance. Schools that receive an “A,” or improve at least one performance grade from the previous year, are eligible to earn an additional \$85 per student. The School Recognition Program has had a positive effect on schools maintaining and improving grades. In 2008, 1,203 schools maintained their “A,” 32 newly opened schools earned an “A,” 348 schools improved to an “A” and 350 schools improved to a grade other than an “A.” For Florida's struggling schools, the Assistance Plus program provides funding,

resources and support to address areas of weakness. Additionally, failing schools receive school improvement facilitators, reading coaches, technical assistance and assessments to monitor student progress.

### **Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)**

Required as a part of the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, AYP measurements target the performance and participation of various student subgroups on statewide assessments based on race or ethnicity, socioeconomic status, disability, and English proficiency. While the majority of public schools are measured for AYP, only Title I schools (schools that receive federal funding for low-income students) face increasing levels of corrective action for failing to meet AYP two or more years in a row. These actions remain the same for each school regardless of the percentage of AYP criteria met or their performance on state accountability requirements. This year, 1,104 Florida Title I schools did not make AYP.

Florida was recently selected to participate in the federal Differentiated Accountability pilot program which provides more flexibility for Title I schools in the type of corrective actions they need to implement. Through the program, Title I schools that consecutively fail to make AYP will be placed into three main improvement levels based on the school's letter grade, percentage of AYP requirements met, and the number of years it has not made AYP. For more information regarding Florida's participation in the Differentiated Accountability pilot program, visit

**[http://www.fldoe.org/news/2008/2008\\_07\\_02.asp](http://www.fldoe.org/news/2008/2008_07_02.asp).**

Parents will receive a school report card that provides a comprehensive look at their child's school, with results under state and federal standards, as well as information on spending at the school level. To view the 2008 School Grades and AYP fact sheet, visit **<http://schoolgrades.fldoe.org/pdf/0708/factsheet.pdf>**. To view school grades and AYP results, visit **<http://schoolgrades.fldoe.org>**.

## **Florida Department of Education Launches New Program to Help Schools In Need of Improvement**

The Florida Department of Education (DOE) has launched a federal pilot program that grants flexibility in the targeted assistance provided to schools in need of improvement. Targeted support services will include school improvement planning, professional development and curriculum alignment. Florida's participation in the pilot program gives the department flexibility in determining the level of its involvement in each school's improvement efforts.

The federal Differentiated Accountability pilot program will provide 1,081 Florida schools with focused levels of support based on the school's grade and the percentage of federal Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) requirements it has missed for two or more consecutive years.

To identify the appropriate level of support needed, the 1,081 schools were placed into five improvement categories based on their state-assigned letter grade, percentage of AYP requirements met, and the number of years they have failed to achieve AYP. Although the majority of the schools that will receive support through the program are Title I schools (schools that receive federal funding for low-income students), the program will also assist non-Title I schools that received a state grade of "D" or "F."

Support services provided to schools beginning during the 2008-09 school year will vary depending on the amount of improvement needed, with schools needing the most improvement receiving the most intensive support services. Support will be focused on nine primary areas of improvement that include school-wide planning, leadership development, teacher training, curriculum, school choice, tutoring, and monitoring progress. Thirteen schools will face the most intensive actions such as restructuring or closure.

To maximize the effectiveness of the support given to these schools, DOE will establish five regional offices located in specific geographical areas of the state. A regional leader will oversee and provide services that will enhance the overall school improvement efforts in the region. The regional team will also include experts in primary and secondary curriculums who will assist in the development and evaluation of district and school improvement plans and monitor the implementation of interventions.

To view the list of schools visit  
[http://www.fldoe.org/news/2008/2008\\_07\\_29/2008DAList.xls](http://www.fldoe.org/news/2008/2008_07_29/2008DAList.xls) (Excel). To view the list of schools, including detailed information regarding the support services for each

improvement category, visit  
[http://www.fldoe.org/news/2008/2008\\_07\\_29/diffaccountimplem.pdf](http://www.fldoe.org/news/2008/2008_07_29/diffaccountimplem.pdf)

## **2009 Teacher of the Year**

The 2009 Teacher of the Year is Jean Lamar, a teacher from Callahan Middle School in Nassau County.

Lamar will serve for one year as the Christa McAuliffe Ambassador for education, visiting schools throughout the state to spread the word about educational opportunities and challenges in Florida. She will receive a cash prize of \$10,000.

Each of the other four finalists —Kevin Holland, Pace High School, Santa Rosa County; Danny Whittenton, Kathleen High School, Polk County; Jennifer Bohn, Evans High School, Orange County; and Jeanne Wright, Cypress Creek Elementary School, Volusia County—will receive a \$5,000 check and a \$500 Macy's gift card. Macy's also presented \$1,000 to each of the finalists' respective schools to be used toward educational programs.

For more information about the Florida Department of Education/Macy's Teacher of the Year, visit <http://www.fldoe.org/profdev/yeartch.asp>.

## **Orange County School District Revamps Before and After School Offerings with Innovative Programs from KLC School Partnerships**

The Orange County School District, the eleventh largest district in the country with 129 elementary schools, has selected KLC School Partnerships, a division of Knowledge Learning Corporation, as an approved school-age child care provider. KLC School Partnerships will work with the Orange County school district to enhance program offerings that enable schools to meet the unique needs of Orange County students both before and after school.

With a high-performing, dedicated team, KLC School Partnerships' appropriately named program, *Champions*, is aligned to Orange County's goals in supporting intense focus on student achievement and a safe learning environment. The program provides an engaging atmosphere, with a focus on education through activity choices including literacy, character-building, health/fitness, homework help and tutoring.

"*Champions* is pleased to provide Orange County Schools with an enriching and academic program that will help students meet their education goals," said Cathy Brown, Director of Partnership Development, KLC School Partnerships. "Our first priority will be to work with schools to identify their needs through the assessment of student performance and curriculum issues. In turn, this will help us to provide appropriate solutions to each participating school."

KLC School Partnerships has begun outreach to Orange County Schools to offer the *Champions* program as a before- and after-school solution. Since the program was made available to school administrators across the county, Apopka Elementary, Endeavor Elementary, Arbor Ridge Elementary, Killarney Elementary, Lawton Chiles Elementary, and Palmetto Elementary have signed on with the *Champions* program and will offer their students after school recreational and enrichment activities as well as tutoring to students in need of skill enhancement.

KLC School Partnerships provides a variety of educational offerings including, online tutoring, before- and after-school programs, after school tutoring and homework help, and science camps, all of which are customized to meet the unique needs of each individual school district and its students. As school administrators continue to tackle the challenges of limited resources, KLC School Partnerships is an ideal solution to provide supplemental education service. The school does not take on the cost of development or delivery of programs; instead the school district enhances its resources as KLC School Partnerships invests in equipment and supplies.

## **Volusia County Schools Video-On-Demand and Digital Media Management**

Volusia County Schools (VCS), awarded a 3-year content license agreement to Library Video Company's (LVC) SAFARI Montage system to equip all of its 76 school sites with SAFARI Montage WAN Manager, the award-winning, WAN-based, Video-On-Demand and digital media management enterprise system.

"One of our goals is to bring our students the very best educational experiences possible. Inspired teaching and learning will be enhanced through SAFARI Montage's Video-On-Demand system. With outstanding educational video content, ITV video

streaming, teleconferencing and media management capabilities, we believe this suite of products will provide us with exciting opportunities to significantly improve our instructional delivery activities for students and staff. We have been building the infrastructure to support these capabilities, and these products are almost perfectly aligned with our vision of delivering and managing video throughout the district. We're excited to be bringing our students and staff this new-age digital resource that will help them to succeed in school and beyond," said Bill Tindall, Executive Director of Technology.

VCS has selected the SAFARI Montage system to support their curricular needs through a suite of products, including SAFARI Montage CreationStation, Selective Video Streaming and SAFARI Montage Live! With all of these products, the nearly 65,000 VCS students will have access to the finest educational content available, including Schlessinger Media, PBS, The History Channel, National Geographic and more. VCS will also be able to easily upload and manage their own video content through CreationStation.

### **About Volusia County Schools**

Volusia County, Florida, is located along the central east coast of Florida, with Daytona Beach and the International Speedway being perhaps the most universally known landmarks. The district serves 16 municipalities and surrounding unincorporated areas spread across a land mass of 1,200 square miles. Superintendent Dr. Margaret A. Smith leads a progressive and high performing school system that is often recognized as a leader at the state and national level.

This district has long enjoyed a reputation for the equitable distribution and utilization of technology in all schools and classrooms. This historical commitment to technology by the community and School Board is exemplified by the district being one of the first large systems to provide network capabilities to all schools and classrooms in the early 1990s. For the 2007-2008 school year, the Volusia District earned an "A" grade in Florida's educational accountability grading system and is traditionally rated as one of the highest performing districts in the state. [www.volusia.k12.fl.us/](http://www.volusia.k12.fl.us/)

### **Polk County Schools**

Historically known for its citrus and phosphate mining industries, Polk County's economy continues to grow and diversify. The county is increasingly attractive as a light manufacturing and distribution center, given its location between the rapidly growing Tampa and Orlando areas and good transportation links; county residents derive roughly twice the state's average earnings from these two sectors. Per capita income is below average, equal to approximately 85% and 84% of state and national averages, respectively.

The district's financial operations are sound. A substantial \$14.9 million general fund surplus at the close of fiscal 2007 boosted the unreserved general fund balance to \$40.6 million, or 6.1% of expenditures, transfers out, and other uses. The unreserved fund balance grew 50% over the fiscal 2006 level; strong growth in local source revenues and conservative expenditure estimates drove the gain. Considerable enrollment growth has led to double-digit increases in spending in each of fiscal years 2006-2008, but the district's sound financial management has kept financial operations

positive. Conservative budgeting for fiscal year 2008 allowed the district to end with a projected surplus, despite having to reduce expenditures by \$33 million related to state funding reductions and student enrollment.

The district's fiscal years 2008–2012 capital improvement plan (CIP) totals \$466 million, substantially less than the FY 2007 – 2011 \$801 million CIP. District officials revised the plan in response to the decline in enrollment growth as well reductions in sales tax revenues, impact fee revenues and uncertainty about state and local funding sources. The district is able to delay many projects as a result of the decline in enrollment. Overall debt levels are moderate at \$1,399 per capita and 2.3% of taxable assessed value (TAV).