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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.

(Advertisement)

SAT® Scores Stable as Record Numbers Take Test

A record number of students in the class of 2008 took the SAT this year, with a higher percentage of first-generation students than last year and a high rate of minority student participation, the College Board announced today. This year's average scores mirror those of last year, indicating that student performance held steady despite the

increase in the number of test-takers.

The number of SAT takers rose to more than 1.5 million (1,518,859), an 8 percent increase from five years ago and a 29.5 percent increase from 10 years ago. The SAT continues to be the nation's most widely taken standardized college admissions test. Combined with high school grades, the SAT is also the best predictor of college success.

Average scores for the class of 2008 remained stable at 502 for critical reading, 515 for mathematics and 494 for writing.

SAT Takers in the Class of 2008

- This year's class is the most diverse class on record with historic increases in the number of Hispanic, African American and Asian American students taking the test.
- Minority SAT takers comprised 40 percent of all test-takers, up from 33 percent 10 years ago.
- The number of first-generation students has increased over the last decade and from last year. In the class of 2008, 36 percent were first-generation students, compared to 35 percent in the class of 2007.
- Females have narrowed the performance gap with males in critical reading, closing the gap to 4 points, compared with 7 points a decade ago, and females continue to outperform males on the writing section — by 13 points this year.
- A record number of students in the class of 2008 received fee waivers, with 221,962 students qualifying for and receiving them. This indicates an increase in the number of traditionally underserved students preparing for college success.
- The writing section of the SAT is the most predictive section of the test among all racial and ethnic minority groups.
- The inclusion of the writing section has also contributed to an increased emphasis on writing in the classroom.

Trends in Participation

Minority SAT takers have experienced substantial growth in participation during the last decade. Hispanics have expanded the most rapidly, more than doubling in number. Growth among Asian Americans and African Americans reached 61 percent and 52 percent, respectively.

Female students continue to form a majority of test-takers among all ethnic groups. Female students made up 57 percent of Hispanic and 57 percent of African American SAT takers in 2008. More than half of the Asian American (51 percent) and white test-takers (53 percent) were women.

Low-income students' participation has also remained steady. These students are

increasingly taking advantage of the College Board's fee-waiver program, which granted \$22 million in fee waivers and free services to qualifying students in 2008. About one out of every seven students in the 2008 cohort who took the SAT this year received free registration for up to two SAT tests and two SAT Subject Tests™, four free flexible score reports, and discounted SAT Readiness Program™ materials.

The Florida Report is available here:

http://professionals.collegeboard.com/profdownload/Florida_CBS_08.pdf

Orange County Schools

Orange County's local employment base has diversified moderately, with increases in the business and professional services, health care, and education fields. This has somewhat reduced the county's susceptibility to downturns in the tourism industry related to the presence of Walt Disney World, the county's largest employer. The 2007 unemployment rate rose slightly, to 3.8%, and the June 2008 rate increased to 5.3% from 3.9% in the prior year, signaling some weakness in the economy. Income levels are slightly below state and national figures, reflecting the large proportion of lower paying service sector jobs that cater to the tourism market. Growth in the county taxable assessed value (TAV), upon which the district's tax rate is based, has averaged 10.3% annually since fiscal 2000. Fiscal 2009 TAV growth was a more modest, but still quite healthy, 5.1% (preliminary figure), which includes the effects of Florida's Amendment One.

The school board's financial operations are sound. Fiscal 2007 ended with a \$20.7 million general fund surplus, bringing the unreserved general fund balance to 10.6% of spending (\$135.9 million), a strong level for a Florida school district rated by Fitch. Fitch believes the school board's reserve levels position it well to manage revenue pressures associated with a softening economy, reflected in weak area sales tax data, and state funding reductions led by the broader housing market downturn. State funding cuts totaled approximately \$22 million in fiscal 2008; however, preliminary fiscal year-end results indicate break-even financial operations. Further state aid reductions in fiscal 2009 totaled about \$33 million. During the fiscal 2009 budget process, officials prudently prepared approximately \$70 million of district wide spending cuts in anticipation of revenue declines.

The school board's overall debt levels are moderate, at \$3,637 per capita, or 3.4% of TAV. Excluding approximately \$2.6 billion of overlapping debt of the county and underlying municipalities, much of it for the county's convention center supported by tourism-generated taxes, direct debt ratios are low, at \$1,201 per capita or 1.1% of TAV. Debt amortization is below average, with approximately one-third of principal retiring within 10 years; increased COP payments in future fiscal years could increase

leverage on the capital outlay millage. However, the school board's debt burden should remain manageable, due to its practice of extensive pay-as-you-go funding of capital projects. The fiscal years 2009?2013 CIP identifies approximately \$1.6 billion of capital investments, about a third of which will go to new school construction. Approximately 31% of the capital projects are funded with additional COP proceeds. Slowing economic growth is reflected in declining impact fee revenues, which may hinder growth-related capital plans. However, modestly declining enrollment figures complement this trend. The school board does not plan to prefund its moderate \$132.8 million other post-employment benefit liability through the use of a trust.

Historic Landmark Project by the School Board of Broward County, Florida

Northside Elementary School to Preserve Historic Landmark Designation with New Design

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla.--(BUSINESS WIRE) (<http://www.businesswire.com/>)-- Cubellis, an international architectural, interior design and engineering firm with offices in Fort Lauderdale and Naples, has again been selected by the School Board of Broward County as the Professional Architectural Consultants for the completion of Northside Elementary School's master plan.

Built in 1927, Northside Elementary School is the only original elementary school built in the city of Fort Lauderdale that remains in operation, and as such is designated as a Historic Landmark. Cubellis worked closely in preliminary planning with the School Board of Broward County and the City of Fort Lauderdale Planning & Zoning and Historic Preservation Boards to protect the integrity and beauty of the original campus, while incorporating a two-story, six-classroom addition directly onto the historic building. The \$13.6 million L-shape addition will enable a new secondary courtyard to be created, continuing the open exterior corridor system of the older building and re-creating the Spanish revival style typical of the 1920's architecture in southern Florida.

A New Design for a Historic Landmark

Cubellis' new design, sensitive to the history of the building and the space limitations of the tight, urban site, includes the expansion of Building #8 by 13,154 gross sq. ft. to include, six intermediate classrooms, a skills development lab, administrative spaces, a resource room, custodial spaces, and student and staff restrooms. Additionally, the planned demolition of Building #3, at 7,940 gross sq. ft., will make room for the construction of a new classroom building of approximately 6,400 gross sq. ft. to include four primary classrooms, storage, student restrooms, and custodial spaces. This phase of the work also includes HVAC and fire alarm systems upgrades, and the remodeling of Building #1, at 20,000 gross sq. ft., to include the single point of entry.

The Northside Elementary School award follows other successful Cubellis projects for

the School Board of Broward County, including the recently awarded Colbert Elementary School and Fort Lauderdale High School projects, AC Perry Elementary School, Harbordale Elementary School, Deerfield Beach High School, and Pompano Beach Middle School.

Broward County Public Schools is the nation's sixth largest public school system and the largest fully accredited district with nearly 260,000 students in more than 280 schools and education centers. For more information about Broward County Public Schools, visit the District Web site at www.browardschools.com