



THE PASCO SCHOOLS' EDUCATOR

Volume 2
Issue 3
Winter 2007

A Quarterly Report from the Office of the Superintendent

Thought for the Day

"The joy that you give to others is the joy that comes back to you."
-John Greenleaf Whittier

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The EDUCATOR is a quarterly newsletter from the Superintendent.

Dear Staff,

As we work together to prepare our students for a global economy, we all recognize that, "Effective instruction in 21st-century literacies takes an integrated approach, helping students understand how to access, evaluate, synthesize, and contribute to information." (NCTE Policy Research Brief)

Many of you have heard me say literacy is a priority in Pasco County schools. This year we began our school year with the Summer Literacy Institute to establish a foundation for what really matters when designing and implementing research-based literacy programs. It is my hope that each of us left empowered with a sense that the teacher is the single most influential factor in students' literacy development.

Professional development in content area reading and developing a print-rich environment further supports our teachers' efforts to make the difference in children's learning. District administrators from many departments have been visiting schools to identify methods by which we are building skill acquisition through engaging, motivating, text-based instruction.

Often, I visit schools to determine whether students have engaging textbooks and whether they have the ability to read them. As Dr. Allington reminded us at the Summer Literacy Institute, "Kids can't learn from texts they can't read." Therefore, it is imperative we make every effort to provide a variety of texts at appropriate instructional levels to help our students access the content we want them to learn. Research has established a significant relationship between the volume students read and achievement.

Under Florida Statute, school districts are required to implement a K-12 Comprehensive Research-Based Reading Plan annually. The Florida Department of Education's framework for the plan outlines the instructional strategies for an engaging reading lesson. Further, the strategies prompt educators to "incorporate reading and literacy instruction into subject areas to extend and build discussions of texts in order to deepen understanding" throughout all grade levels. Increasing the volume of reading and appropriateness of texts are recurring themes in our K-12 Reading Plan.

I am committed to working toward the successful implementation of our plan for reading, and I assure you our district team will support each of you as we work together to prepare our students for the literacy demands of the 21st century.

Thank you for your efforts to build a strong foundation for student success. I feel fortunate to work alongside a team of such dedicated professionals.

May you and your family enjoy good health and a wonderful holiday season!

Warmest regards,

Heather Fiorentino

Florida Department of Education "Conclusions from FCAT Reading Lessons Learned"

"...[S]tudents who were **successful** were able to:

- Make connections and draw correct conclusions;
- Determine the main idea of a text;
- Interpret implicit information (i.e., identify the author's purpose and understand the content of a quotation); and
- Locate relevant details to support their conclusions.

Across grades, students who were **unsuccessful** have the greatest difficulty with:

- Developing an overall understanding of the meaning of the text;
- Focusing on textual information rather than relying on prior knowledge;
- Carefully reading the entire text;
- Understanding the purpose of the text;
- Using text features to understand text;
- Carefully discriminating answer choices and discarding extraneous details;
- Varying conclusions by returning to the text;
- Finding and understanding causal relationships; and
- Carefully reading test questions completely to ensure all parts were

Good News

- Congratulations to Marchman Technical Center (MTEC) for earning national accreditation from the Council on Occupational Education. This accomplishment is a trademark of integrity for the programs and is a testament to the dedication and hard work of the students and staff at MTEC.
- Congratulations to the Purchasing Department for earning the Annual Achievement of Excellence in Procurement Award for the 3rd consecutive year from the National Purchasing Institute.
- Congratulations to Pasco's 35 newest National Board Certified Teachers. Pasco now has 135 teachers with this national credential.