

# the review

A Publication for Members of the Florida Consortium of Public Charter Schools

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Issue 1

## New "Raise Your Grade" Program

Are you happy with your school's grade?

If you answered "no," consider enrolling your school in FCPCS' new Raise Your Grade program.

The Raise Your Grade program can give your school the tools to boost student achievement and improve school operations. It is designed to help both 1) schools that are struggling and 2) schools that just want to move to the next level of academic achievement.

**"The Raise Your Grade team gave us great quality feedback!"**

*Tracy Hay, Principal, Wayman Academy of the Arts, Jacksonville*

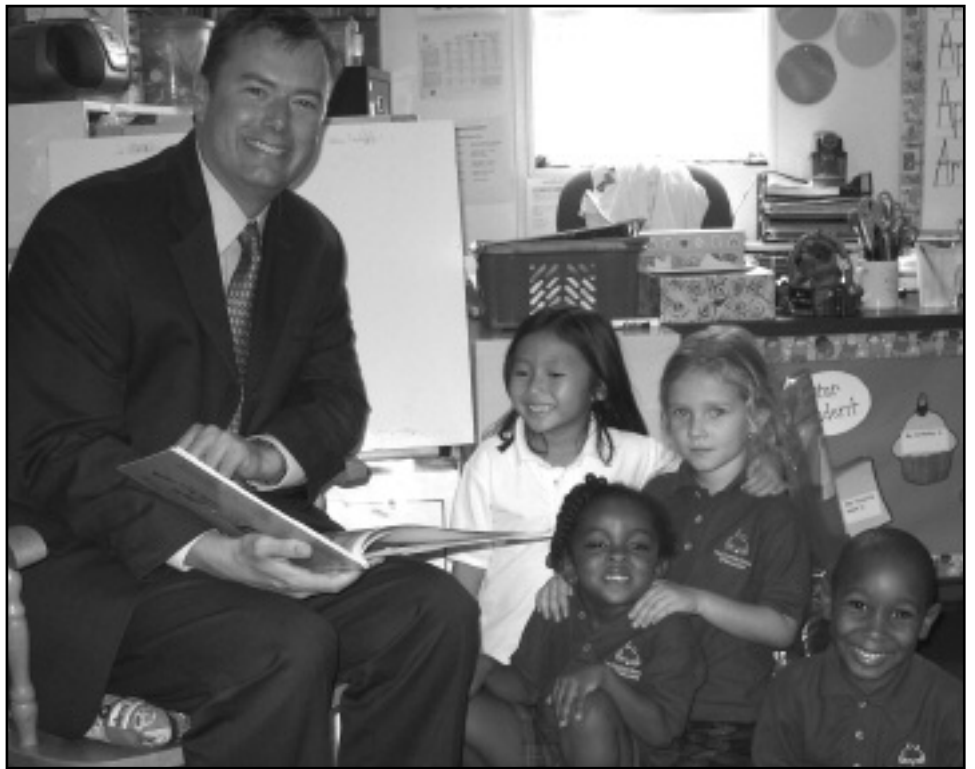
Raise Your Grade is a sound investment. If your school can demonstrate sustained or significantly improved student performance, it is eligible to receive \$100 per student through the state's School Recognition Program.

Dr. Ruth Jacoby, FCPCS' Director of Leadership Development, heads the Raise Your Grade program with the assistance of a team of veteran administrators and charter school operators.

For more information on the Raise Your Grade program, contact Jean Krier, Director of Membership Services, at 850-222-9595 or [j.krier@floridacharterschools.org](mailto:j.krier@floridacharterschools.org).

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## Michael Kooi Named New Executive Director of FCPCS



*Mike Kooi meets students at the Charter School of Excellence*

After an extensive search, FCPCS has named Michael Kooi (pronounced "Koy") as its new executive director. Kooi most recently served as Staff Director and Policy Chief of the Florida House of Representatives. Based in Tallahassee, Kooi will work on various legislative and policy issues for the Consortium.

"I'm excited about meeting as many members as I can and continuing the good work of the Consortium," Kooi says. "I look forward to using the relationships that I've developed at the DOE and legislature to benefit our schools."

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FLORIDA CONSORTIUM  
of PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS

*Supporting. Inspiring. Uniting. Improving Education.*

# The President's Corner

We are pleased to announce the appointment of Michael Kooi as FCPCS' new Executive Director. Mike is the former Staff Director and Policy Chief of the Florida House of Representatives, and before that, the Assistant General Counsel for the Florida Department of Education. He comes to us armed with a vast knowledge of charter school law and state government.

Mike is ready and eager to work on behalf of the FCPCS membership. Please extend a warm welcome to him.

This issue of The Review contains even more good news for charter schools. In these pages, you'll find stories on three exciting programs that FCPCS has created for its members:

- **We have long dreamed of creating the ultimate professional development program for charter schools.** Now it's here: FCPCS' Training and Professional Development Program brings the best

trainers and topics directly to your school. This program was designed specifically for charter school personnel and is based on the experience of our state-wide Leadership Charter School Conferences. Read more about the program on page 3.

- **Sometimes, charter schools with the very best intentions run into difficulties.** The new Raise Your Grade program offers a helping hand to member schools that have received grades of "D" and "F." This is a unique opportunity for charter schools to receive comprehensive assistance from their own. You will find more on the program on the cover and page 3.
- **One of the great challenges of our three-year strategic plan was to define exactly what a "high quality" charter school is.** Thanks to the dedicated volunteers who serve on our Committee on Quality, FCPCS now has its own Quality Standards for Florida Charter Schools. We believe that these standards can serve as a roadmap for every charter

school operator who wants to offer the best education possible for its students. Learn about the Quality Standards on page 6.

We are grateful to the FCPCS Board of Directors, Advisory Committees, staff and consultants for their hard work in bringing these programs to fruition.

Expect even more from FCPCS in the coming months. Watch for email announcements of our redesigned website (same address but with a new look and many more resources) and the latest news on the Florida Schools of Excellence, the Merit Award Plan, legislative updates, regional training conferences and other important information for charter schools.

We wish all of you, including our newest members, a successful school year! Remember that we are always here for you.



Robert Haag  
President

## Coming Soon!

### FCPCS' New Website

FCPCS' totally redesigned website will feature new and expanded resources for members and visitors, and dozens of easy-to-use features. Watch for fax and email announcements of the new website launch date.

### Newly Renovated My Education Marketplace

The online mall is undergoing major renovations to make shopping for charter school products and services easier for you. New vendors have moved in and are already offering great prices and services for FCPCS member schools. The current My Education Marketplace will remain open until renovations are complete.

### The FCPCS Legal Defense Fund

FCPCS is pleased to announce that it has been awarded \$350,000 to establish a revolving legal defense fund for our member schools. Member schools will be able to apply for loans to cover their legal costs. FCPCS is now in the process of setting up the procedures for the Fund with assistance from the Colorado League of Charter Schools. Stay tuned for the program's official inauguration.

## Merit Award Plan Alert

FCPCS has developed a new Merit Award Program (MAP) for member charter schools that rewards teachers and administrators who have contributed significantly to the academic improvement of their students. FCPCS will submit the new plan on October 1 to the Florida Department of Education for approval. FCPCS will notify its member schools through email if and when the MAP is approved.

The Florida Legislature approved the MAP in 2007 to take the place of the STAR Plan, which was implemented in the 2006-07 school year. The new MAP provides funding to school districts and charter schools to reward

instructional personnel and school-based administrators for outstanding performance linked to increased student achievement. Charter schools should read the new plan carefully to note the changes in the new program.

If the MAP submitted by FCPCS is approved, member schools can choose to: 1) adopt the FCPCS plan at their schools; 2) adopt their district sponsor's plan; 3) develop their own plan; or 4) not participate at all in the program.

FCPCS member schools should watch their email for upcoming announcements on the status of the FCPCS plan and for instructions on what they need to do to participate.

# FCPCS Launches Training and Professional Development Program for Charter School Personnel



*Are you frustrated when your teachers have to wait in line to attend district-sponsored trainings?  
Are you spending too much on out-of-state workshops?*

FCPCS' new Training and Professional Development Program makes it easy for charter schools to offer high quality training in effective practices to teachers, administrators and board members.

The Training and Professional Development Program allows charter schools to design a customized training agenda to be delivered at their own school site. Charter schools may also join together to host a training session in their area. Participants can apply for in-service credits from their districts for attending training sessions.

All workshops are designed for charter school administrators, teachers and governing board members and are reasonably priced. FCPCS members receive discounts on all trainings. The program is directed by Dr. Ruth Jacoby, Director of Leadership Development, veteran charter school administrator, trainer and conference organizer.

## Some of Topics Offered through the Training and Professional Development Program\*

- **Training for Effective Charter School Governing Boards:** What every charter school board member needs to know
- **Teaching the Essential Sunshine State Standards:** Learn to identify and teach the POWER STANDARDS
- **The 3-Minute Classroom Walkthrough:** Get out of the office and into the classroom to improve instruction
- **The Art of Effective Communication:** Become a POWER communicator
- **The Three R's: Recruitment, Retention and Reward:** How to attract and keep the best teachers

*\*The full menu of workshops and information on costs are available on the FCPCS website at [www.floridacharterschools.org](http://www.floridacharterschools.org) (click on the red "Training and Professional Development" button) or by calling Jean Krier, Director of Membership Services, at 850-222-9595.*

## Michael Kooi

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Before coming to the Consortium, Kooi worked as a liaison with stakeholders, lobbyists and constituents on behalf of the Speaker and committee chairpersons and dealt with a variety of K-12 education issues.

Kooi is no stranger to the Florida charter school movement. As Assistant General Counsel for the Florida Department of Education, he provided legal advice and policy input in the areas of private and public school choice, charter schools, federal and state accountability standards, exceptional student education, and English for speakers of other languages.

## Raise Your Grade

*Continued from pg. 1*

### How Raise Your Grade Works

**Step 1:** The Raise Your Grade program starts with a visit to the school by the Raise Your Grade team. The team conducts a thorough review of all aspects of school operations, governance and compliance.

**Step 2:** After the review, the team provides a detailed checklist of strengths and areas in need of improvement, along with a step-by-step action plan. The on-site visit and initial assessment are provided at no cost to your school, except for reimbursement of travel costs for the team members.

**Step 3:** The school can then choose to enter into a contract with FCPCS and the Raise Your Grade team for customized "turn-around services." These services can include:

- Board training
- Professional development for faculty
- Mentoring for the principal
- Recommendations for curriculum improvement
- Classroom observations
- Recommendations for improving school climate

**Step 4:** The Raise Your Grade team works with the school continuously throughout the year and makes frequent reports on progress to the school's board.

# Charter Schools are Top Performers in the State, Districts

*Numerous charter schools distinguished themselves as being among the top FCAT-performing schools in their districts and in the state (See charts below). Approximately 86 percent of public charter schools tested were rated as high performing schools in 2007, scoring an “A,” “B” or “C” in the state grading system.*

## Top 10 performing charter schools in the state

1. Charter School of Excellence (Broward)
2. OWC Collegiate High School (Okaloosa)
3. Bay Haven Charter Academy (Bay)
4. Chancellor Charter School – Weston (Broward)
5. St. Petersburg Collegiate High School (Pinellas)
6. Mater Academy East Charter School, (Miami-Dade)
7. Oakwood Academy (Brevard)
8. Micanopy Area Cooperative School (Alachua)
9. Villages Charter Middle School (Sumter)
10. Liza Jackson Preparatory School (Okaloosa)

## Charter schools that ranked #1 in their district

1. Apalachicola Bay Charter School (Franklin)
2. Bay Haven Charter Academy (Bay)
3. Charter School of Excellence (Broward)
4. Day Spring Academy (Pasco)
5. OWC Collegiate High School (Okaloosa)
6. Pensacola Beach Charter School (Escambia)
7. Seaside Neighborhood School (Walton)
8. Villages Charter Middle School (Sumter)

## Charter schools that ranked among the top ten performing schools in their districts

1. Academie Da Vinci Charter School (Pinellas)
2. Academy at the Farm (Pasco)
3. Alachua Learning Center (Alachua)
4. Bay Haven Charter Middle (Bay)
5. Chancellor Charter/Weston (Broward)
6. Countryside Montessori Academy (Pasco)
7. Crossroad Academy (Gadsden)
8. Gulf Coast Academy of Science and Technology (Hernando)

9. Liza Jackson Preparatory School (Okaloosa)
10. Martin Luther King Academy (Alachua)
11. Mater Academy East Charter (Miami-Dade)
12. McKeel Elementary Academy (Polk)
13. Micanopy Area Cooperative (Alachua)
14. Montessori Island Charter School (Monroe)
15. North County Charter School (Indian River)
16. Renaissance Elementary Charter (Miami-Dade)
17. Ridgeview Global Studies Academy (Polk)
18. Round Lake Elementary School (Lake)
19. Spring Creek Elementary School (Lake)
20. St. Petersburg Collegiate High School (Pinellas)
21. The Children’s Reading Center (Putman)
22. The Reading Edge Academy (Volusia)
23. The School of Arts & Sciences (Leon)
24. Villages Charter Elementary School and The Villages Charter High (Sumter)
25. Whispering Winds Charter School (Levy)

## Charter schools that earned an “A” for the first time\*

1. Academy for Positive Learning (Palm Beach)
2. Aspira South Youth Leadership (Miami-Dade)
3. Broward Community Charter West (Broward)
4. Charter School of Boynton Beach (Palm Beach)
5. Chancellor Charter School at Lantana (Palm Beach)
6. Christa McAulliffe Elementary (Lee)
7. Countryside Montessori Academy (Pasco)
8. Gateway Charter High School (Lee)
9. Oasis Elementary (Lee)
10. Lakeside Academy (Palm Beach)
11. Legacy Charter School (Orange)
12. Martin Luther King Academy (Alachua)
13. North County Charter School (Indian River)

## Four Florida Charter Schools Recognized as among the Best in the Country

Four charter schools from Florida were among 53 nationwide that were honored in May by the Center for Education Reform (CER) as among the best charter schools in the country. Academy at the Farm in Dade City, Downtown Academy of Technology and Arts in Fort Lauderdale, Pembroke Pines Charter Elementary & Middle and Pembroke Pines High School were all recognized by CER.

The honorees were chosen from the nation’s nearly 4,000 charter schools. Various criteria were used to evaluate the schools including achievement, improvements over time, percentage of at-risk students served, innovation, accountability, graduation rates, parental involvement and general success.

14. Oakwood Academy (Brevard)
15. Pinecrest Academy – South Campus (Miami-Dade)
16. Somerset Academy Charter High School (Miami-Dade)
17. South McKeel Elementary Academy (Polk)
18. The Children’s Reading Center (Putnam)
19. Western Academy Charter School (Palm Beach)
20. Walton Academy (Hillsborough)

\* A total of 97 charter schools earned an “A” this year

## FCPCS congratulates all of these schools for their achievements!

**Thinking about starting the SACS accreditation process? FCPCS can help you get started.**

**Call 1-850-222-9595 to learn more.**

# FCPCS Scholarships Awarded to Charter School Graduates

Three 2007 graduates of Florida charter high schools were the first to receive scholarships through FCPCS' new College Scholarship program. Cash awards of \$1,500 each were given to Tiffany Marie Walker, graduate of Indian River Charter High School in Vero Beach, and Renata James and Charmaine Grace Limposo, graduates of Somerset Academy High School in Pembroke Pines.

FCPCS began the program to recognize and assist college-bound charter high school graduates with distinguished academic records and demonstrated financial need. Only graduates of FCPCS member high

schools are eligible to apply. Students must use their scholarship funds towards college-related expenses.

The new scholarship program was announced to FCPCS member high schools in May 2007. The three recipients were selected by the Board of Directors in late July.

The 2008 scholarship program will begin accepting applications in early 2008. Interested candidates may contact Jean Krier, Director of Membership Services, at 850-222-9595 or [j.krier@floridacharterschools.org](mailto:j.krier@floridacharterschools.org).

**“It’s funny the way things happen because two days prior to receiving the scholarship in the mail, I was praying to God asking him to please help me find a way to pay for the rest of my tuition and my college books.”**

*Renata James, Scholarship Recipient*

## PROFILES OF SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS



**Renata James** earned a 4.0 GPA before her graduation from Somerset Academy Charter High School in Pembroke Pines. She is enrolled at Florida International University and hopes to enter the field of Human Resources.



**Charmaine Grace Limposo** is studying to become a pharmacist at University of Florida, Gainesville. She plans to pursue a Doctorate in Pharmacy so that she can work with pharmaceutical companies to create new medicines. “I want to be the one that makes a difference in someone’s life,” she states. Charmaine also graduated from Somerset Academy Charter High School with a 4.0 GPA.



**Tiffany Marie Walker** is a pre-med major at Stetson University this year who aspires to become a pediatrician. She graduated from Indian River Charter High School with a 3.86 GPA. She is “a proud graduate of Indian River Charter High School, and am passionate about the effectiveness of charter school education.”

# FCPCS Unveils Quality Standards for Florida Charter Schools



*Between January and April of this year, a committee of five charter school operators from around the state met together to answer the question, “What makes a high quality charter school?”*

The group came up with the new FCPCS “Quality Standards for Florida Charter Schools.” The standards are in the form of “quality statements” that a charter school can choose to adopt as its own. FCPCS is urging every one of its charter school members to use the quality statements as a guide to improving operations, leadership and governance.

The quality standards consist of four general statements covering the areas of student academic achievement, effective leadership, continuous focus on increasing quality and responsible governance and fiscal

responsibility. Within each statement are a number of specific characteristics of high quality charter school related to that area.

The FCPCS Quality Standards are aligned with those of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI), the regional accreditation agency for Florida charter schools.

The six individuals who created the quality standards are member of the Committee on Quality, a volunteer advisory committee to the FCPCS Board of Directors. The definition of quality standards for Florida charter schools is part of FCPCS’ three-year strategic plan.

For more information and a copy of the complete “FCPCS Quality Statements for Florida Charter Schools,” please call or email Jean Krier, Director of Membership Services, at [j.krier@floridacharterschools.org](mailto:j.krier@floridacharterschools.org) or 850-222-9595.

## Overview of the FCPCS Quality Statements for Florida Charter Schools

### **QUALITY STATEMENT 1: Student Academic Achievement**

Our charter school prioritizes student learning through a sound design for its educational program and high expectations for all students.

### **QUALITY STATEMENT 2: Effective Leadership**

The leaders of our charter school are stewards of the charter’s mission and vision and carry out their duties in a professional, responsible and ethical manner. Our school leaders are focused on fulfilling the school’s mission and achieving success for all students.

### **QUALITY STATEMENT 3: Continuous Focus on Increasing Quality**

Our charter school engages in a process of continuous self-improvement to increase the effectiveness of its educational program. Our school and its governing board regularly assess and evaluate student learning based on stated goals and use this information to make improvements.

### **QUALITY STATEMENT 4: Responsible Governance and Fiscal Accountability**

Our charter school’s governing board establishes and implements board-level policies and governance practices that are focused on student achievement and viable long-term school operations. It fulfills its fiduciary responsibility for public funds and maintains publicly accountable fiscal records.

# Meet the FCPCS Advisory Committees

Five advisory committees to the FCPCS Board of Directors are helping to shape FCPCS' programs and policies. Twenty-six representatives from FCPCS member schools and charter management companies have volunteered to serve on the committees, which advise the Board on issues related to advocacy, charter school quality, professional development and academic improvement, and insurance.

The committees meet regularly by phone and in person to tackle important issues facing the FCPCS membership. Each committee elected its own chair, who automatically became a member of the FCPCS Board of Directors with a one-year term.

FCPCS salutes the committee members for contributing their time and talent to improve FCPCS' membership services.

## How You Can Become Involved

Additional volunteers are always needed to serve on these and on new committees that may be formed in the future. If you would like to serve on one of FCPCS' Advisory Committees, please contact Jean Krier, Director of Membership Services, at 850-222-9595 or [j.krier@floridacharterschools.org](mailto:j.krier@floridacharterschools.org).

## FCPCS ADVISORY COMMITTEES

### COMMITTEE ON ADVOCACY AND OUTREACH

Focus: Legislative platform, outreach to membership on advocacy issues

**Dr. Tim Kitts, Chair\***

Bay Haven Charter Academy

**Sean Raymond, Vice Chair**

Indian River Charter High School

**Fred Damianos\***

Imagine Schools

**Mark Griffin\***

Wayman Academy of the Arts

**Jonathan Hage\***

Charter Schools USA

**Alicia Rodriguez-Bower**

Leona Group Florida

**Fernando Zulueta\***

Academica Corporation

### COMMITTEE ON INSURANCE

Focus: Identifying appropriate and beneficial insurance programs for FCPCS' Insurance Package

**Katrina Wilson Davis Chair\***

The Liberty City Charter School

**David Cash**

Charter Schools USA

**Fred Damianos\***

Imagine Schools

**Mark Griffin\***

Wayman Academy of the Arts

**Robert Haag\***

Florida Consortium of Public Charter Schools

**Kelly Mallon Linaje**

Academica

**Crystal Yoakum\***

Hope Charter School

**Fernando Zulueta\***

Academica Corporation

### COMMITTEE ON MEMBERSHIP

Focus: Membership policies and benefits

**Curt Miller, Chair\***

Literacy Leadership Technology Academy

**Lisa Castro**

Charter School of Excellence

**Donald Hungerford**

Apalachicola Bay Charter School

**Jean Krier, Staff**

Florida Consortium of Charter Schools

**Vickie Marble\***

The Student Leadership Academy

**Jonathan Sternberg**

Indian River Charter High School

### COMMITTEE ON PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND ACADEMIC IMPROVEMENT

Focus: Raise Your Grade Program, Training and Professional Development Program

**Devarn Flowers\***

Pembroke Pines Charter Elementary School

**Dr. Ruth Jacoby, Staff**

Florida Consortium of Public Charter Schools

**Terry Maus, Chair\***

Educational & Technology Consultants

**Tiffany Ward**

Kissimmee Charter Academy

**Dee Wolfe-Sullivan\***

Byrneville Elementary School, Inc.

### COMMITTEE ON QUALITY

Focus: FCPCS Quality Standards

**Ron Renna, Chair\***

Charter Schools Consultant Services

**Cynthia Aversa\***

Indian River Charter School

**David Calvo**

Mater East Academy Middle School

**John P. Drag, Jr.**

Broward Community Charter School

**Crystal Yoakum\***

Hope Charter School

\* FCPCS Board Members

# In Memoriam Dr. Carlo Rodriguez and Dr. Clinton Wright

*In the span of a few months, the charter school community has lost two very special colleagues and friends, Dr. Carlo Rodriguez and Dr. Clinton Wright.*



**Dr. Carlo Rodriguez**

Dr. Carlo Rodriguez was a great friend to charter schools and a passionate advocate for children. His smile and positive energy made an impression on all who met him.

In January 2007, he became Executive Director of the Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice at the Florida Department of Education. Prior to that, he served as Miami-Dade County Public Schools' Administrative Director of Charter School Operations. In both positions, he campaigned tirelessly for the charter schools under his care.

Carlo spent nearly 20 years as an educator who both taught and advocated for children with disabilities and linguistic differences. As a rookie teacher in 1992, Carlo was named Sallie Mae's Beginning Teacher of the Year. Once he left the classroom, he continued to fight for a parent's right to make choices in their child's education.



**Dr. Clinton Wright**

As the superintendent of the Lake Wales Charter Schools, Dr. Clinton Wright led the state's only charter school district. He worked hard to improve education options for families in his community and throughout the state.

Clinton's career began in 1974 as a young teacher at Kathleen Junior High where he was known for his upbeat nature and "you can do it" pep talks. Within a few years, he became principal of the school, leading with an enthusiasm, love and bigger-than-life charisma that became his trademark.

Throughout his years of public service, Clinton continued to focus on children and their right to a quality education. A passionate leader who truly cared about people, he helped to change the state's education landscape for the better.

We will miss our two dear friends.

## Mark Your Calendars



**October 19, 2007**  
**FCPCS' Strategies for Success Regional Conference for charter schools, Pinellas Preparatory Academy, Largo, FL**

For more information, email [j.krier@floridacharterschools.org](mailto:j.krier@floridacharterschools.org) or call 850-222-9595.



**October 2-5, 2007**  
**K-12 Conference and Innovation Fair, Caribe Royale, Orlando, FL**

More information at [www.fldoe.org](http://www.fldoe.org).



**October 10-12, 2007**  
**Arizona Charter Schools Conference, Glendale, AZ**

Information at [www.azcharters.org](http://www.azcharters.org)



**October 22 - 23, 2007**  
**National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA), Savannah, GA.**

Information at [www.qualitycharters.org](http://www.qualitycharters.org)



**December 8 - 10, 2007**  
**SACS CASI Annual Conference, Orlando, FL**

Information at [www.sacscasi.org/region/events/index.html](http://www.sacscasi.org/region/events/index.html)



**January 22-25, 2008**  
**FETC (Florida Educational Technology Conference), Orlando, FL**

Information at [www.fetc.org](http://www.fetc.org)



**Early February 2008**  
**Georgia Charter Schools Conference, Atlanta, GA**

Information to follow on [www.gacharters.org](http://www.gacharters.org).



**March 4-7, 2008**  
**California Charter Schools Conference, Sacramento, CA**

More information at [www.charterconference.org](http://www.charterconference.org).



**June 9-10, 2008**  
**SACS CASI Florida Summer Training Conference, Orlando, FL**

Information to follow at [www.sacscasi.org/florida](http://www.sacscasi.org/florida).



**June 21 - 25, 2008**  
**National Charter Schools Conference, New Orleans, LA**

Information to follow at [www.nationalcharterconference.org](http://www.nationalcharterconference.org).

We welcome your comments on the articles appearing in *The Review*. Please email them with your name and school name to: Amy McClellan, Editor, at [ajmcclellan@earthlink.net](mailto:ajmcclellan@earthlink.net).