

# the review

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

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Issue 1

## Charter Schools Still Recovering from Four Hurricanes

Charley, Frances, Ivan and Jeanne. One after another, they blew into Florida over a period of six short weeks, wreaking havoc in the lives of millions of residents. Charter schools were no exception. As the hurricanes raked over seven counties, many charter schools lay in their paths. Five months later, some schools in the most battered areas are still rebuilding.

Hurricane Ivan ripped into Escambia County in the upper panhandle on September 16 with 130 mph winds and killer tornadoes. Stan Callender, CEO of Escambia Charter School in Gonzales, had evacuated to Atlanta. When he returned, he found that part of the roof of his main building was missing and the aluminum "skin" on four of his school's nine modular units had been peeled off by the wind. His school buses were also damaged. Callender faced another challenge at home: two large oak trees had fallen through his roof, leaving part of his home in shambles.

Callender set about putting his high school for at-risk students back together. He called his insurance company and began repairs. He moved into the two undamaged rooms of his home. Classes were rescheduled and moved into alternate rooms. Escambia Charter

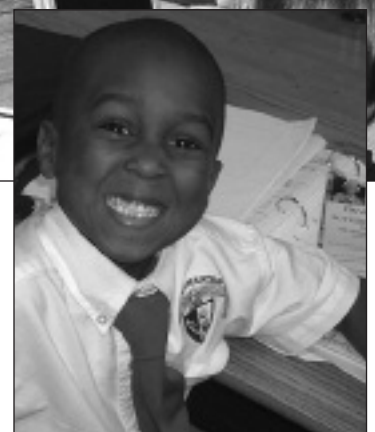
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## FDOE: Charter School Students Make Greater Gains than Peers in Regular Public Schools



*A report by the Florida Department of Education indicates that over time, students make greater academic gains while attending Florida charter schools than those students enrolled in traditional public schools.*

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# From the President's Corner

Dear Charter School Friends,

Florida charter schools are under scrutiny. This year, the Florida Legislature is formally reviewing charter schools, as required by the charter school statutes. As part of this process, legislators will be reading reports on charter school operations prepared by the Charter School Review Panel and OPPA-GA (Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability). We are optimistic that the review process will 1) make legislators more aware of the benefits and needs of Florida charter schools and 2) result in better oversight of charter school operations.

The FCCS Board of Directors has also developed a 2005 Legislative Platform to present a clear picture of charter school needs to our legislators. We are calling on all FCCS members to support the inclusion of these items in the charter school statutes. The three focus points of the legislative platform are:

1. Allow qualified teacher and parent professionals who serve as teacher associates to be included in the student-to-staff ratio of class size reduction requirements.

2. Allow organizations other than school districts to serve as charter school sponsors. These organizations might include universities, two-year colleges, and non-profit organizations.
3. Strengthen the penalty for school districts that do not distribute capital outlay funds in a timely manner.

I encourage you to make your voice heard in Tallahassee in support of this platform. Bring your parents and board members to Tallahassee on April 14, 2005 for our Breakfast with the Legislators and "Walk the Halls" to put a real face on charter schools.

Feel free to contact FCCS with your comments and concerns, or contact the FCCS Board representative in your region, listed in the box below.

If we present a unified voice to our state representatives in Tallahassee, our legislators will listen.

Best regards,



Robert Haag  
President

## Charter School Students Make Greater Gains than Peers in Regular Public Schools

*Continued from pg. 1*

The *Florida Charter Schools 2002-2003 Annual Accountability Report*, released by the Florida Department of Education and the Florida Charter School Resource Center in August 2004, provides data to show that while students entering charter schools for the first time tend to lag behind their counterparts in traditional public schools, they catch up and then often out-perform their peers in traditional public schools.<sup>1</sup>

The authors compared developmental scale scores in reading and math to show that baseline scores for charter school students were significantly lower than similar stu-

dents attending regular public schools. After a period of four to nine years, the charter school students performed on par or above their public school peers. Two sub-groups of students made especially notable gains: Gifted students attending charter schools showed an average of 20+ in learning gains in developmental reading scale scores and students with disabilities showed an average 13+ point gain in developmental math scale scores.

The report attributes the lower baseline scores of charter school students to that fact that parents are most likely to transfer their child to a charter school if the child is not performing well in a regular public school setting. Students who are retained are also more likely to be transferred to a charter

school. "When these struggling students arrive at a charter school, they pose serious instructional challenges," the authors write, "As a result, the average scores for charter school students often lag behind the average scores of traditional public school students."

The *2002-2003 Annual Accountability Report* presents information on overall Florida charter school performance through the 2002-03 academic year. The entire report can be downloaded at [http://www.fldoe.org/meetings/2004\\_08\\_16/Charter\\_Pres.pdf](http://www.fldoe.org/meetings/2004_08_16/Charter_Pres.pdf).

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<sup>1</sup> *Florida Charter Schools 2002-2003 Annual Accountability Report*, Florida Department of Education, Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice, 2004.

## Charter Schools Still Recovering from Four Hurricanes

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School re-opened 26 days after the storm, along with the rest of the county's schools. But Callender is watching his budget anxiously. His students, many of whom live in an impoverished area struck hard by tornadoes, have not all returned. "What really hurt was our low FTE count," Callender says, "Our enrollment is normally 140 but our FTE count was 104. Enrollment is slowly increasing but we have lost the equivalent of an entire teacher's salary."

Further south in Pensacola, **Capstone Academy**, a new charter school for disabled pre-schoolers "only" lost 500-600 square feet of roof, one gable and several trees. Principal Charles Thomas feels that his new charter school was very lucky compared with what others in Pensacola experienced. "I've lived in this area for 58 years and this is the worst devastation I've ever seen."

A few unfortunate schools had to reckon with two or three storms, with barely time to clean up after one before the next one hit. Three storms passed through Polk County: Charles, Frances and Jeanne. **S.T.A.R.**

**Charter High School** in Polk City, a last-chance high school for unwed teen mothers, lost a large outdoor shade structure and even worse, many of its students. "Our physical damage wasn't horrible," Principal Chantel Griffin reports, "but we really got slammed in our FTE count." Students affected by the hurricanes are still slowly coming back to school. Many stayed at out of school to deal with contractors and rebuild or repair their homes. Some are still living in FEMA trailers. Griffin hopes to see all of her students back soon but knows that she may have lost some of them permanently.

Carolyn Flanagan, Principal of **Rays of Hope Charter School** in Sanford, Seminole County, has seen a similar impact on her at-risk middle school students. Some had their homes destroyed. "It was like starting over three times," after Charley, Ivan and Jeanne, "The hardest thing is getting them back into the groove." Rays of Hope suffered damage to a roof and lost three of its air conditioning units, but Flanagan considers her school very fortunate. "Our school is located in an old shopping center that has a lot of space between the roof and ceiling. It could have been disastrous."

Many charter schools have to pay out-of-pocket for hurricane repairs, either because damage was not covered by insurance or their deductibles were higher than the cost of repairs.

### Four Corners

**Charter School** in Davenport, Osceola County, may have to cover \$50,000 in repairs for eight air conditioner units destroyed by Hurricane Jeanne. In Orange City, **Princeton House Charter School** had to spend \$15,000 for cranes to remove huge, uprooted oak trees that were felled by Hurricane Charley. Since the trees did not fall on any buildings, insurance will not cover this expense.

A one-two punch by Hurricanes Frances and Jeanne destroyed two playgrounds, 25-year-old trees, outdoor fencing and extensive landscaping and at **Chancellor Charter School at Lantana** in Palm Beach County. "Since the deductible was higher than the damage, these repairs are coming out of our budget," Principal Susan Onori says. The school itself, housed the former office of the *National Enquirer* magazine, was unharmed.

In spite of the damage their schools sustained, the principals interviewed for this story preferred to look on the bright side. "We were lucky," "It could have been worse," "Now we have a lot of practice getting ready," they said. However, Florida's "luck" in being hit by four major hurricanes in one season may become a regular occurrence. Weather experts predict that a long period of active tropical storms has just begun. With that in mind, every Florida charter school operator needs to start making plans for the next Charley or Jeanne.



## How to Survive a Major Hurricane (or Two or Three): Advice from Charter School Operators

Charter school operators learned that even the best preparation could not protect them from the physical and social impact of a major hurricane. However, they did offer this advice for next hurricane season:

### BEFORE hurricane season:

- Make sure your insurance coverage is up-to-date.
- Check your roof for possible leaks and make necessary repairs.
- Install waterproof guards at the bottom of doors.
- If your campus has large trees, have them trimmed professionally (not "hat-racked") to allow the wind to pass through them.
- Reinforce supports in your fencing
- Develop a phone tree that enables you to communicate quickly with all of your families.

### During a hurricane watch or warning:

- Back up your computers and cover them with plastic.
- Put all important school files in waterproof containers or safe.
- Before the storm hits, make sure your parents know where to find information on when the school re-opens (such as "follow instructions for the district public schools").
- Start preparations early, such as making computer back-ups, moving equipment indoors, collecting important files, etc. Remember that your staff will need to time to take care of their own homes.
- If your school sustains major damage, don't panic. Know that in time, you will be able to make repairs and start again.

## Ask Dr. Ruth



### What Do I Do When a Parent Contests a Child's Grade?

A parent drops into your room after report cards are distributed and challenges how you determined her child's grade in social studies. She shows you all the test scores and letter grades her child has received, and she calculates that the grade should be a "B" not the "C" you gave. She knows the child is working hard and doesn't understand the discrepancy. What should you do?

**Tip:** Ask the parent to schedule a conference to discuss the issue. At the meeting, you want to be able to document how you have determined a grade or a score.

Rubrics are the best answer for this because they demonstrate what comprises your grading system, such as test scores, level of effort, homework completion, written and oral reports, and class participation. Inform the parent that you generally give students another opportunity with sufficient time to complete the project. The idea is not to have a child fail, but to succeed. Also, show the parent your grade book (only showing that particular child's grades). It may indicate that the child missed one of the assignments which would have been averaged into her grade. Share the work in the child's portfolio with the parent. Make sure to include all rubric grades just in case one paper may not have made it home for her to see.

**Key:** Keep accurate and complete records. Make sure all papers in the portfolio are dated so you can demonstrate progress or areas of concern. Never hold a conference on the spot. Give yourself time to prepare.

Dr. Ruth Jacoby is co-founder of Somerset Academy Charter Schools in Broward County. She is co-author of the School Talk! Success Series of books, *Teacher Talk!*, *Parent Talk!*, *School Board Talk!*, and *Principal Talk!* Information on these books is available at 1-877-741-8116 and on the web at [www.school-talk.com](http://www.school-talk.com).

## Face Off Over Charter Schools: Harvard vs. the American Federation of Teachers

*Two organizations have released studies that present opposite views on the benefits of charter schools.*

The first study published by the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) compares NAEP test scores from fourth and eighth graders attending charter school and traditional public schools. It shows that charter school students scored lower on the NAEP in both reading and math than students in similar public schools. The AFT also claims that these figures were deliberately suppressed by the U.S. Department of Education.<sup>1</sup>

The AFT report unleashed a short media blitz on the subject of charter schools. Talk shows on television and radio featured heated debates on the value of charter schools between charter school supporters and opponents.

In August and December, Caroline M. Hoxby of Harvard's Department of Economics and the National Bureau of Economic Research published two reports

that show that charter schools have a positive overall impact on student achievement. Hoxby presents evidence that charter school students show higher proficiency in state assessments in both reading and math as compared with students attending neighboring public schools that the charter school student would have attended.<sup>2</sup>

Hoxby criticizes the AFT study, noting that it looked at the test scores of only three percent of all charter school students. For instance, the scores from only four Connecticut charter school students, 14 from the District of Columbia and 23 from New York were included in the NAEP analysis. In comparison, Hoxby's study includes data from 99% of charter school students in the fourth grade (and in a few states, fifth grade) who took state assessments, a much more "meaningful" comparison.

In her study, Hoxby presents evidence that Florida charter school fourth grade students were 4.5% more proficient in FCAT reading assessments and 2.8% more proficient in the 2003 FCAT math assessments

than their counterparts in nearby public schools. However, these figures exclude charter schools that target primarily at-risk students. Hoxby argues that traditional public elementary schools are simply not comparable to charter schools that serve predominantly at-risk students.

The Harvard study illustrates that Florida charter schools in operation for six or more years produce even higher student proficiency rates on the FCAT. In the reading assessment, Florida fourth graders at more established charter schools are shown to be 11.5% more proficient, and in math, 15.3% more proficient. Hoxby also makes the case that charter schools receiving at least 40 percent of the funding given to regular public schools have higher students achievement rates than charter schools receiving a smaller proportion of funding.

1 *Charter School Achievement on the 2003 National Assessment of Educational Progress*, E Howard Nelson, Bella Rosenberg, Nancy Van Meter, American Federation of Teachers, August 2004.

2 *A Straightforward Comparison of Charter Schools and Regular Public Schools in the United States*, Caroline M. Hoxby, Harvard University and National Bureau of Economic Research, September 2004.

*Achievement in Charter Schools and Regular Public Schools in the United States: Understanding the Differences*, Caroline M. Hoxby, Harvard University and National Bureau of Economic Research, December 2004.

# Preferred Partner in Focus MaaSa Technologies

*With each issue of The Review, we are presenting one of our Preferred Partners, companies that have passed FCCS' 10-point Quality Checklist.*

We developed the Preferred Partners program to help charter schools identify companies of quality that understand their operations. You can find information on all of the Preferred Partners, as well as special offers available to FCCS members, on the My Education Marketplace page of our website, [www.floridacharterschools.org](http://www.floridacharterschools.org).

**In this issue, we are featuring the topic of charter school technology and communications as offered through MaaSa Technologies.**

MaaSa Technologies (formerly Phones Etc. Systems Integration) designs, builds, and manages data and voice networks. Located in Tampa, Florida, the company serves business and non-profit clients throughout the country. MaaSa Technologies recently joined the FCCS My Education Marketplace as a Preferred Partner.

MaaSa Technologies offers charter solutions for improving communications and Internet access among teachers and staff, and between the school and its families. The company also provides videoconferencing systems that allow a school to access distance learning opportunities for its students and teachers. Leasing solutions and financing are among the options that make these services accessible to any charter school budget.

"They created our technology infrastructure from ground zero," says Michele Pineda, Chief Financial Officer of the Tampa Bay Workforce Alliance, "It's easy to brag about them because they have provided excellent services and are very professional." Tampa Bay Workforce Alliance hired MaaSa Technologies three years ago to create and maintain an integrated technology and communications system. Pineda has been pleased with the range and quality of services that the company provides.

Before contracting with MaaSa Technologies, Tampa Bay Workforce had an antiquated

phone system, no computer network, no common email exchange and used different service providers. To reach any of the organization's five locations, staff had to dial a separate phone number.

MaaSa Technologies created a comprehensive technology plan that links the computers and phone systems of all five of the Tampa Bay Workforce Alliance's locations. It set up a network for the organization's 160 computers, installed a "very fast" T-1 line to transmit both data and phone communications, and set up a common email exchange. "Instead of dialing to reach a center, we just hit an extension button," Pineda explains.

Since Tampa Bay Alliance exchanges sensitive data with the state, such as social security numbers and employee information, it needs a solid infrastructure to insure that these transmissions are secure. The security system installed by MaaSa Technologies includes a battery-powered backup system and surge protectors for lightning storms and power outages, and anti-virus and anti-ad ware software that automatically scans each individual computer on a regular basis.

Pineda says that MaaSa Technologies fills the role of a "Chief Information Officer," a staff position that the Tampa Bay Alliance could never afford. The company makes recommendations for hardware purchases and other technology vendors and has helped the organization write policies and procedures for employees regarding the use of technology in the office.

With a faster telecommunications system and good technical support, Pineda believes that MaaSa Technologies has saved them money over time. "We're getting a good bang for our buck."

MaaSa Technologies can assist charter schools in developing a technology plan that meets their particular needs in the areas of telecommunications, data and network systems, video conferencing, and more. Please call or email Marlina McClure at MaaSa Technologies at 1-877-935-9506, [mmcclure@phonesetcinc.com](mailto:mmcclure@phonesetcinc.com), for more information and to schedule a free technology survey of your charter school.

## New SACS Accreditation Status for Charter Schools

Charter schools are now grouped with independent private schools by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, the primary accreditation organization for schools in Florida. The Association has also changed its name. It is now called the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI).

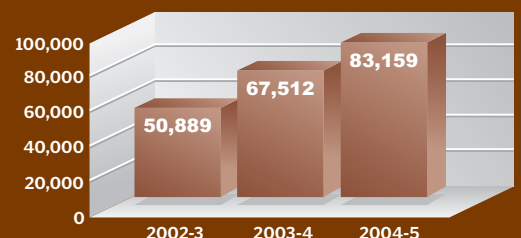
Charter schools will now follow the accreditation standards for "Nonpublic and Special Purpose Schools." Previously, charter schools seeking accreditation followed the same standards as other public schools. SACS CASI has created a new Council on Nonpublic and Special Purpose Schools to review the standards and protocols for nonpublic and special purpose schools (which include charter schools) and approve candidacy and continued accreditation of these schools. More information is available on the SACS CASI website at [www.sacs.org](http://www.sacs.org) or by calling (800) 248-7701.

## Snapshot of Florida's Charter Schools

Total number of schools: .....	301
New schools opening this year: .....	53
Student enrollment: .....	83,159
Increase from last year: .....	16,547
Number of counties with charter schools: .....	41 out of 67

**Counties with the most charter schools:**  
Miami-Dade - 37, Palm Beach - 36,  
Broward - 25, Polk - 24, Hillsborough - 21

### Growth in Florida Charter School Enrollment



# A Closer Look at Florida's Charter Schools: School of the Arts and Sciences

*Being singled out by the U.S. Department of Education as one of the best charter schools in the nation was a special honor for the School of the Arts and Sciences in Tallahassee (SAS).*

The school, a K-8 charter school in Tallahassee, was chosen “after an exhaustive search” for the U.S. Department of Education’s publication, *Innovations in Education: Successful Charter Schools* for its innovative multi-grade program, dynamic school community, and record of high student achievement.<sup>1</sup>

Principal and Debo Powers, who has been the school leader since before SAS opened in 1999, says that one of the benefits of being selected for the study is that she got to spend time with principals from the other seven “model” schools at the National Charter Schools Conference last summer. “It was fascinating to see how different these schools are and how important it is to offer a great variety of options for different types of kids.”

## **No Grades and No Report Cards**

Compared to some of the model charter schools, SAS is relatively unstructured. SAS students attend multi-age classrooms that span two to three grade levels. They learn through a variety of hands-on, interdisciplinary activities. Arts and sciences are the focus of the curriculum and the vehicle through which much of the curriculum is studied. SAS students in all grades study Spanish, music, drama and art and have daily lessons in hands-on science.

Instead of report cards with grades, teachers track student academic progress through portfolios and standards-based checklists. The portfolios contain work selected by students that shows progress towards meeting the state standards.

The school’s multi-age, hands-on, interdisciplinary program has proven to be successful with a wide variety of students. The school serves a diverse student body of 230 with



approximately 20% of its students enrolled in free and reduced lunch program and 22% classified as “special needs.” The school’s lottery admission system insures that the student body includes a total spectrum of learners, from struggling students to high achievers.

SAS students tend to perform very well on the FCAT, often outpacing other public schools in the district. In particular, the average SAS student in the sixth, seventh and eighth grade outperforms the average public school student by a wide margin in both reading and math.

## **A Focus on Peaceful Behavior**

SAS places great emphasis on creating a “climate of respect” throughout the school. Maintaining this climate “is something that we have to work on constantly,” Powers says, “It can’t be a one-time effort.” One of the basic rules of the school is “no put downs.” Powers believes that an atmosphere of respect gives students added self-confidence since they know that they will not be ridiculed by their classmates.

Every teacher and student receives training in conflict resolution through The Peace

Education’s “Peace Works” program. Students serve as peer mediators when problems between students arise. Recently, SAS peer mediators visited Florida State University Law School’s Medication Day to learn how to be effective peer mediators for their school. Teachers are also expected to model respectful behavior. When disagreements arise between teachers, they are encouraged to work them out directly instead of involving others.

## **Empowering Teachers**

While many charter schools are finding it difficult to retain good teachers, SAS has been successful in keeping its talented faculty. Last year, only one teacher left the school.

This can be partly attributed to Powers’ style of leadership, which is based on years of experience as a high school teacher, trainer and consultant. She encourages a collegial atmosphere where teachers openly

<sup>1</sup> *Innovations in Education: Successful Charter Schools*, U.S. Department of Education, Office of Innovation and Improvement, June 2004. Available for free at [www.edpubs.org](http://www.edpubs.org).

An excerpt from *Innovations in Education: Successful Charter Schools*, published by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Innovation and Improvement:

All charter schools are someone's creation. A visionary or, more likely, a group of people sees a need or opportunity and decides to start a school. To be effective, a charter school begins with a mission and stays mission-driven. Everyone associated with the school knows what it stands for and believes in its vision. Each school engages parents as real, not nominal, partners. Each school fosters a culture that is highly collegial and focused on continued improvement. And each effective charter school has a strong accountability system, not just to please its authorizers but also its 'clients,' the parents.

exchange ideas and work together to improve student achievement. SAS teachers regularly seek professional development opportunities and participate in study groups at school.

SAS teachers were the instigators and architects of a new grade structure implemented at the school this year. SAS originally had three multi-grade sections, K-1-2, 3-4-5 and 6-7-8. As the school grew in enrollment, teachers noticed that they were teaching a much wider range of students, from "super-gifted to those with super-special needs." They realized that they were not able to meet the needs of the students at the upper and lower levels in the current multi-grade configuration.

The teachers met together and developed a formal proposal to change the multi-grade structure to K-1, 2-3, 4-5 and 6-8. They presented their proposal to the SAS Board of Directors, which approved the change. The new grade structure is now in place and working well.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> The teachers' proposal can be viewed on the SAS website, [www.artsandsciences.leon.k12.fl.us](http://www.artsandsciences.leon.k12.fl.us).

### Spreading the Word

Powers would like to use the recognition her school has received from the U.S. DOE to help spread best practices to other schools. "We don't want to create a wonderful educational environment for just our 230 children. Our goal is bigger. We want to help develop and share ideas with other schools."

The school welcomes visitors and observers who want to see how the innovative curriculum works in the classroom. Every Monday since 1999, SAS offers a school tour, including a private session with Powers and visits to all the classrooms.

Someone has shown up for the tour every Monday except for one. "We've had educators, government leaders, prospective parents, and people training to be teachers," Powers says.

She also hopes that the school's new celebrity will attract the attention of key state legislators who happen to be in the neighborhood during the legislative session. "They often don't know about the things we charter schools struggle with that they could fix – so easily." Powers plans to distribute copies of the U.S. DOE book to state legislators with an invitation to come and visit SAS and see a charter school in action.

## What Has: FCCS Done for Me Lately?

### *What exactly does your membership to the Florida Consortium of Charter Schools mean for you and your charter school?*

Here are a few examples of what FCCS has done for its members in the last year:

#### **1. FCCS knows how to fight on behalf of individual charter schools to help solve problems.**

- Several schools called us to report that their school district was withholding their capital outlay dollars and was not planning on paying them. Our staff and lobbyist made several calls to the school district. The very next day, a district staff member delivered the checks to the schools.
- A high school serving at-risk teens was facing closure after receiving its second "F" More than 500 students were going to be displaced. The district superintendent called us for advice. FCCS offered to

help by reorganizing the school's governing board and helping to appoint six new members. The superintendent recently agreed to allow the school to be "reconstituted," which will make it the first school in the state to undergo this process. FCCS has been asked to help the school with its reconstitution.

- A charter school with financial and operational problems was threatened with closure and asked for help from FCCS. Our regional consultants conducted a thorough review of the school and made recommendations for restructuring. We worked in collaboration with the school district to help the school with its problems. The school opened this year under new leadership.
- Many charter schools are having difficulty obtaining their class size reduction funds from their school districts. FCCS is working now to make sure these funds are distributed properly to charter schools.

#### **2. FCCS is your voice in Tallahassee.**

Every year, FCCS presents a charter school

platform to the state legislature and works with lobbyists to make favorable changes to Florida charter school law. FCCS holds an annual "Walk the Halls in Tallahassee" rally to give individual charter school operators a chance to meet with legislators.

**3. FCCS now makes it easy for charter schools to save money and time.** FCCS' *My Education Marketplace* is an online shopping mall offering special discounts and services just for Florida charter schools. Every vendor featured on the Marketplace undergoes a 10-point quality check to assure that they are "charter school friendly." Visit the Marketplace at [www.floridacharterschools.org](http://www.floridacharterschools.org).

**4. FCCS members receive a steady stream of the latest news and developments affecting Florida charter schools** through its weekly online newsletter and through this quarterly newsletter.

We are here for YOU. We are always working to improve our services to better meet your needs. If you have a problem or concern, please call us at 954-463-9595.

# FCCS Welcomes 53 New Florida Charter Schools

A record number of 53 new charter schools opened in 16 counties in the fall of 2004, including the first charter schools located in Flagler and Martin Counties. The total number of charter schools operating in Florida is now 301. The counties with the largest number of new charter schools are Polk (10), Miami-Dade (9) and Palm Beach (9).

The roster of new schools include start ups, conversion schools and possibly the first “charter school within a regular public school.” Haines City Literacy Learning Academy is a separate charter school physically located within Haines City High School in Polk County. Polk

County is also the location of the most new conversion charter schools to open this year. The community of Lake Wales in Polk County has converted five public schools to charter schools in an effort to improve the quality of education available to its residents.

## FCCS welcomes the following new charter schools and wishes them a successful first year:

<b>Broward</b>				
Broward Community Charter School	Coral Springs	K-5	Jay P. Drag, Principal	954-341-0082
Downtown Academy of Technology and Arts	Ft. Lauderdale	6-8	Jim DiSebastian, Principal	954-767-0403
Hollywood Academy of Arts & Science	Hollywood	K-5	Leslie Brown, Principal	954-925-6404
Touchdowns4Life Charter School	Tamarac	6-8	Lori Bitar, Principal	954-726-8785
<b>Duval</b>				
Florida SIA Tech Jacksonville, Inc.	Jacksonville	9-12	Maureen Mikels, Principal	904-360-8200, Ext. 8284
Sojourner Truth High School of Humanities & Technology	Jacksonville	9-10	Leslie Harris and Chantel White, Co-Principals	904-448-5151
<b>Escambia</b>				
Capstone Academy	Pensacola	PK	Charles Thomas, Principal	850-455-7754
<b>Flagler</b>				
Cornerstone Elementary	Bunnell	K-5	Carla Taylor, Principal	386-586-7500
Summit Academy	Bunnell	6-8	Neal McCoppin, Principal	386-586-7500
<b>Franklin</b>				
Apalachicola Bay Charter Middle School	Apalachicola	6	Don Hungerford, Principal	850-653-1222
<b>Hillsborough</b>				
Walton Academy for the Performing Arts	Tampa	K-3	Bruce Nelson, Principal	813-231-9272
<b>Lake</b>				
Altoona School, Inc.	Altoona	K-3	Tom Bock, Principal	352-669-3444
Lake Technical Center	Eustis	11-12	Terry Miller, Principal	352-589-2250
Rivendell Academy	Altoona	6-12	Melanie Fletcher, Principal	352-669-1631
<b>Lee</b>				
Cape Coral Charter	North Ft. Myers	K-6	Beth Hanlon	239-995-0904
Gateway Charter High School	Ft. Myers	9-11	Dr. Jennifer Putnam Cheals	239-768-3350
Lee Charter Academy	Ft. Myers	K-6	Dr. Shirley Chapman	239-332-1067
<b>Martin</b>				
Advanced Learning Center	Stuart	11-12	Dr. Steven Montes	772-419-5754
The Hope Center	Jensen Beach	PK-2	Adam Miller	772-334-3288
<b>Miami-Dade</b>				
Academy of Arts & Minds Charter High School	Coconut Grove	9	Mr. Thomas Shaw, Director	305-448-1100
Balere Language Academy	Miami	K-8	Ms. Rocka Malik, Director	305-232-9797
Miami Community Charter School	Florida City	K-5	Ms. Jila Rezaie	305-245-2552
School for Integrated Academics and Technologies (SIA Tech)	Miami	9-12	Ms. Marjorie Lopez, Principal	305-258-9477
Miami Children's Museum Charter School	Miami	K-1	Ms. Maria Mangeotti Greer, Principal	305-324-4667
International Studies Charter High School	Miami	9-12	Ms. Ana Alvarez-Arinos, Principal	305-860-2126
Somerset Academy	Miami	K-5	Ms. Suzette Ruiz, Principal	305-270-8740
Somerset Academy Charter Middle	Miami	6	Ms. Irene Gomez, Principal	305-591-0020
Somerset Academy Charter High School	Miami	9-12	Ms. Diana Morales, Principal	305-597-9950
<b>Orange</b>				
Workforce Advantage Academy, Inc.	Orlando	11	Ms. Belinda M. Jones, Principal	407-898-7228
<b>Osceola</b>				
Bellalago Charter Academy	Kissimmee	K-6	Dr. Cecille Diez, Principal	407-933-1690
<b>Palm Beach</b>				
Academy for International Studies Charter School	N. Palm Beach	6	Melba Hardy, Principal	561-776-1130
Academy for Positive Learning Charter School	Lake Worth	K-8	Renatta Adan-Espinoza, Principal	561-585-6104
DayStar Academy of Excellence	Boynton Beach	K-6	Janice La Forte, Principal	561-369-2323
Good Schools for All Leadership Academy	Delray Beach	K-5	Valarie Thompson, Principal	561-278-3533
Guided Path Academy	Boynton Beach	K-5	Evelyn Francis, Principal	561-738-6589
Gulfstream Goodwill Career Academy	Boca Raton	9-12	Lois Layman, Director	561-635-2377
Inlet Grove Community High School, Inc.	Riviera Beach	9-12	Emma Banks, Principal	561-881-4602
Potentials South Charter School	Riviera Beach	PK-5	Rosie Portera, Principal	561-395-2012
South Tech Charter High School	Boynton Beach	9-12, Adult	James R. Kidd, Principal	561-369-7004
<b>Pinellas</b>				
Plato Academy Charter School	Clearwater	K-5	Katina Wilson, Principal	727-793-2400
St. Petersburg College Collegiate High School	St. Petersburg	10-12	Linda Benware, Principal	727-341-4610
<b>Polk</b>				
Berkley Accelerated Middle School	Auburndale	6	Jill Bolende, Principal	863-968-0904
Dale R. Fair Babson Park Elementary	Babson Park	K-5	Ken Henson, Principal	863-678-4664
Haines City Literacy Learning Academy	Haines City	9-12	Deborah Elmore, Principal	863-421-3281
Hillcrest Elementary	Lake Wales	PK-5	Beverly Lynne, Principal	863-678-4215
Janie Howard Wilson Elementary	Lake Wales	PK-5	Linda Ray, Principal	863-678-4211
Lake Wales High School	Lake Wales	9-12	Clark Berry, Principal	863-678-4222
Lakeland Montessori Schoolhouse, Inc.	Lakeland	PK-5	Josie R. Zinninger, Principal	863-413-0003
Oaks Middle Academy	Bartow	6-7	Elspeth Belflower, Principal	863-533-5539
Polk Community College Collegiate High School	Winter Haven	11-12	John Small, Dean	863-669-2322
Polk Avenue Elementary	Lake Wales	PK-5	Donna Dunson, Principal	863-678-4244
<b>Sarasota</b>				
Sarasota Suncoast Academy	Sarasota	K-2	Steven A. Crump, Principal	941-342-4966
The Student Leadership Academy	Venice	6-7	Vickie Marble, Principal	941-485-5551

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 [a.mcclellan@floridacharterschools.org](mailto:a.mcclellan@floridacharterschools.org).