



MARTIN COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Where Learning Has No Boundaries



FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

February 6, 2009

The first round of FCAT testing (Writing) gets underway February 10th-12th for fourth, eighth, and tenth grade students. Additionally, other grades will be participating in writing instruction and non-FCAT assessments that are an important part of the learning process. To help ensure students' success, I encourage parents to have students arrive at school on-time. Being well-rested and having a healthy breakfast are also extremely important each day.

FTE Week

Next week, February 9th-13th, is also Full-Time Equivalency (FTE) Survey Week. During this time period, the district submits enrollment information to the Florida Department of Education. The enrollment count data from the February and October reporting surveys are combined to determine how much FTE funding the district will receive from the state. For this reason, it is **critical**, particularly due to the unprecedented budget cuts the district has faced, that schools make every effort to ensure the accuracy of the enrollment counts and bus-rider counts.

Budget Update

I attended a Leadership Development Conference with the Florida Association of District School Superintendents last week. Among the topics discussed was the potential budget cuts for the upcoming 2009-2010 school year. As you may know, our district's budget has been reduced more than \$10 million dollars since July 1, 2007. Unfortunately, the outlook for future state funding continues to decline. Districts state-wide have been put on notice that the state may cut funding again for each school district. Some educational leaders have forecasted that future cuts could reach 10%, however, we still have no definitive information from the state. Our District staff continues to review all department budgets and expenditures. While the district is committed to maintaining classroom and student programs, absorbing these types of cuts will result in difficult decisions and the prioritizing of district resources.

In addition, there is no indication that the state will waive the upcoming Class Size Reduction (CSR) requirements, which move from school-wide averages to the individual classroom level. District staff is determining compliance requirements and the associated costs, which, for Martin County, may reach nearly \$6.8 million dollars. This figure represents the district's cost, for salaries and benefits, of hiring the necessary additional teachers in grades Pre-K – 12th grade.

I will continue to keep you updated on the status of the budget. While state funding for schools is on an extreme decline, accountability continues to increase. I appreciate the efforts of all employees for continuing to do more— with less.

AFSCME Contract

On Friday, January 23rd, the district settled its 2008-2009 contract with the *American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)*. Both negotiating teams began at 7 A.M. that day and worked collaboratively to reach an agreement. Members of the AFSCME bargaining unit will vote on Wednesday, February 11th on whether to ratify the contract. If it is ratified, the proposed contract will go before the School Board at the February 17th School Board Meeting for approval. As with the contract with the Martin County Education Association, the proposed contract provides for a one-time \$300 bonus for AFSCME employees.

I want to thank each of you for your commitment to the District's vision for the future and for all that you do for the success of our students and schools.

Sincerely,

Nancy Kline
Superintendent
Martin County School District