

# TEACHERS, SCHOOLS, AND SOCIETY IN FLORIDA

## Table of Contents

### **Part I: An Overview of Education in Florida xxvii**

*Florida School District Map* xxvii

*Students in Florida* xxviii

*Teachers in Florida* xxx

*Teachers Salaries* xxxi

(Evelyn Torrey, Florida Atlantic University)

*Anticipated Teacher Need in Florida* xxxiii

(Evelyn Torrey, Florida Atlantic University)

### **Part II: Becoming a Teacher in Florida xxxvii**

*Certification Requirements to Teach in Florida* xxxvii

*Florida Teacher Certificate Examinations (FTCE)* xxxvii

*Professional Educator Competencies and Skills* xxxviii

*Florida Educator Accomplished Practices (FEAPs)* xl

*Interviewing for a Teaching Position: Q and A* xli

(Lynne A. Hammann)

### **Part III: The State of Education in Florida xliii**

*Parents as Valued Partners in Children's Education* xliii

(Darlene DeMarie, University of South Florida)

*Accountability in Florida* xlv

*Charter Schools: One Floridian Response to School Reform* xlv

(Cheri Landry, University of Florida)

*Student Attendance in Florida* xlviii

(Evelyn Torrey, Florida Atlantic University)

*Retentions, Graduates, Diplomas, and Dropouts* xlviii

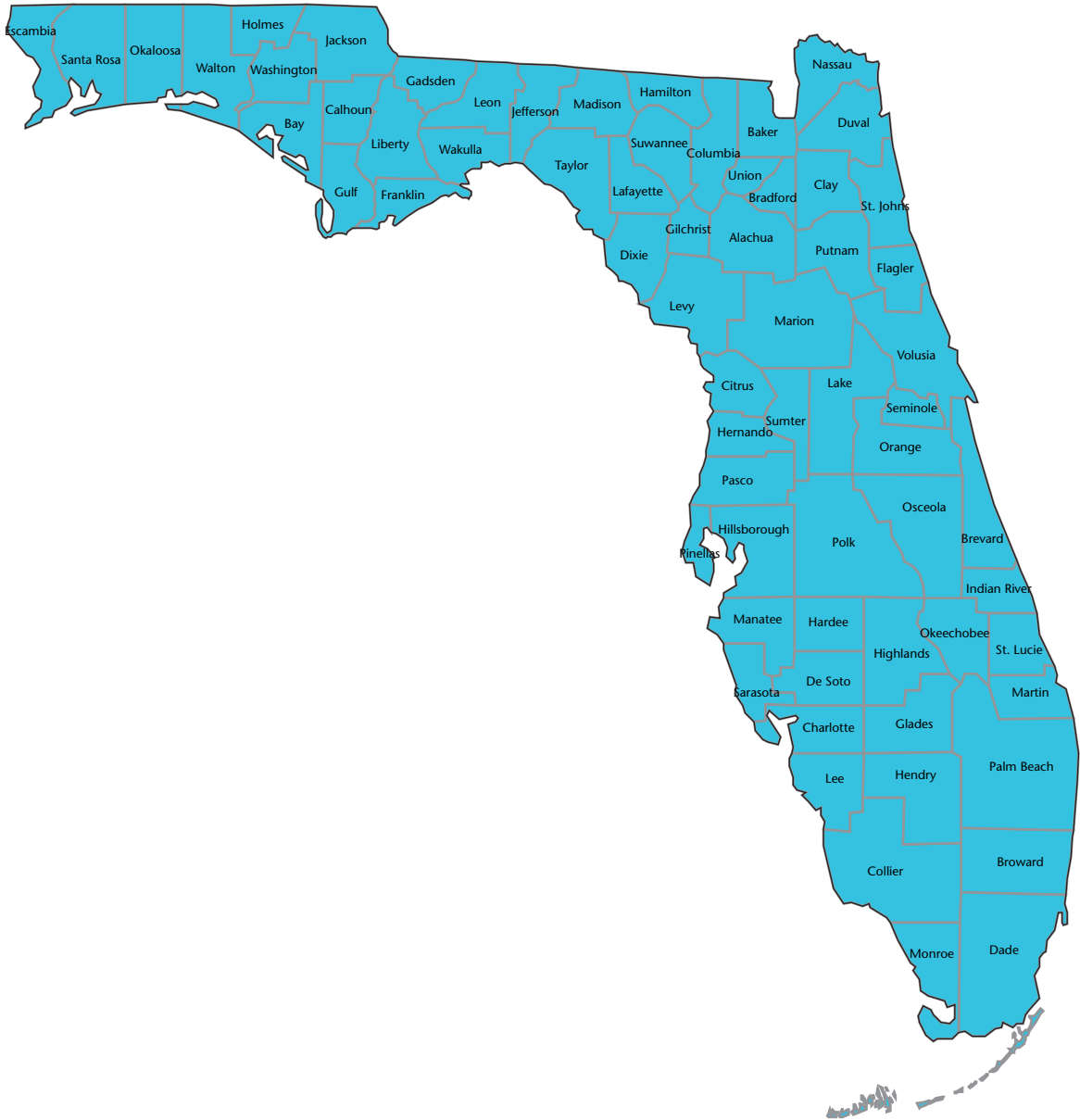
(Evelyn Torrey, Florida Atlantic University)

### **Part IV: Web Resources for Florida's Future Teachers li**



# PART I: An Overview of Education in Florida

## Florida School District Map



Source: Florida Department of Education, [www.firn.edu/doe/eias/flmove/eias.htm](http://www.firn.edu/doe/eias/flmove/eias.htm)

## Students in Florida

### STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS

Grade Level	Racial/Ethnic Distribution by Grade						Total
	White Non-Hispanic	Black Non-Hispanic	Hispanic	Asian/Pacific Islander	American Indian/Alaskan Native	Multiracial	
PK	18,139	17,139	11,771	624	112	1,749	49,534
KG	89,380	45,332	45,155	3,552	658	7,940	192,017
01	92,437	45,117	45,424	3,979	573	7,353	194,883
02	91,210	43,298	43,550	3,864	580	6,682	189,184
03	98,610	52,504	48,960	4,056	624	6,469	211,223
04	91,949	39,446	38,389	3,665	515	5,339	179,303
05	98,819	47,808	43,908	3,824	617	5,159	200,135
06	102,621	51,092	44,482	3,897	599	4,711	207,402
07	105,573	50,994	45,372	4,057	634	3,899	210,529
08	105,940	48,887	44,324	4,128	580	2,831	206,690
09	125,944	66,282	53,608	4,989	730	3,157	254,710
10	101,700	44,025	39,579	4,351	569	2,226	192,450
11	90,109	36,939	32,173	4,174	466	1,848	165,709
12	80,397	31,701	27,360	3,808	408	1,329	145,003
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,292,828</b>	<b>620,564</b>	<b>564,055</b>	<b>52,968</b>	<b>7,665</b>	<b>60,692</b>	<b>2,589,772</b>

### Racial/Ethnic Distribution by Exceptional Education Program

Educable Mentally Handicapped	9,336	15,099	3,857	178	46	314	28,830
Trainable Mentally Handicapped	3,736	3,191	1,751	138	21	123	8,960
Orthopedically Impaired	2,757	1,001	902	65	14	61	4,800
Speech Impaired	37,659	9,583	6,324	750	179	1,589	56,084
Language Impaired	13,607	12,819	7,978	602	91	1,043	36,140
Deaf/Hard of Hearing	1,900	953	912	65	11	79	3,920
Visually Impaired	763	283	241	26	5	18	1,336
Emotionally Handicapped	15,058	11,698	3,137	78	84	630	30,685
Specific Learning Disabled	95,092	44,390	38,031	1,053	594	2,854	182,014
Gifted	73,140	11,502	21,861	4,786	347	3,366	115,002
Hospital/Homebound	1,899	631	412	29	13	42	3,026
Profoundly Mentally Handicapped	1,232	942	670	49	5	38	2,936
Dual Sensory Impaired	34	14	12	3	1	2	66
Autistic	3,694	1,466	1,627	203	22	223	7,235
Severely Emotionally Disturbed	2,810	2,854	1,019	16	18	113	6,830
Traumatic Brain Injured	293	162	102	2	0	13	572
Developmentally Delayed	5,814	3,564	2,594	162	32	472	12,638
Established Conditions	57	27	28	0	0	3	115
Other Health Impaired	7,965	2,313	1,881	84	41	260	12,544
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>276,846</b>	<b>122,492</b>	<b>93,339</b>	<b>8,289</b>	<b>1,524</b>	<b>11,243</b>	<b>513,733</b>

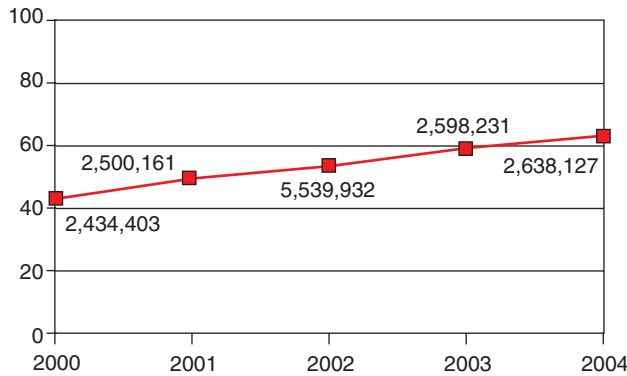
Source: Profiles of Florida School Districts 2003–2004, Florida Department of Education

## A Growing and Diverse Student Population

### Student Membership

The student population in Florida has grown steadily during the past decade. When compared to the fall 2000 membership, the fall 2004 membership shows a cumulative increase of 8.4 percent.

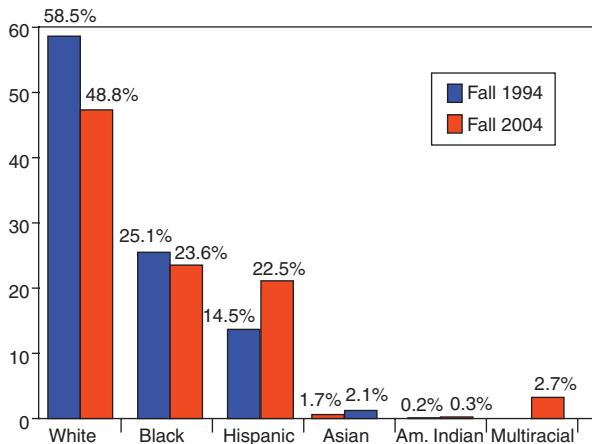
**Student Population Fall 2000 to Fall 2004**



### Racial/Ethnic Composition of Students

Florida's public school population is ethnically and culturally diverse. In recent years, the Hispanic student population has experienced the greatest proportional growth among ethnic groups, as shown below (Note: the Multiracial category was added in 1997-98).

**Percentage of Total Student Population By Race Fall 1994 & Fall 2004**



## Growing Number of Students with Additional Needs

### Special Needs Populations

- *Limited English Proficient (LEP) Students*

Florida has experienced increasing growth in the number of students from a non-English-speaking background who may have initial difficulty understanding and communicating in English. Programs are available to help these students learn and communicate in their school setting.

1998 population = 150,098  
2004 population = 215,797

- *Students Eligible for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch*

Florida's growing numbers of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch may be a reflection of the economic status of the students' home communities.

1998 population = 1,019,815  
2004 population = 1,214,362

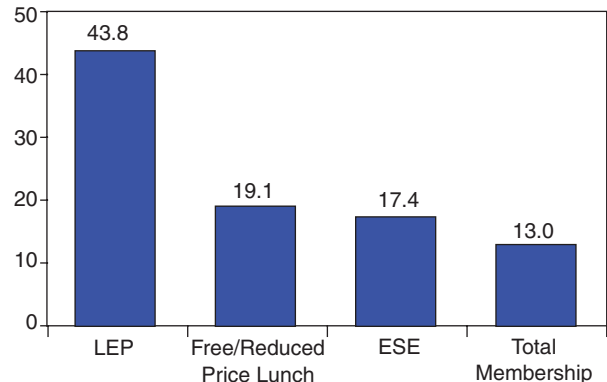
- *Exceptional Students Education (ESE) Enrollment*

ESE program enrollment has also increased steadily in the 1990s. ESE programs cover a broad range of exceptionalities, applying primarily to students with disabilities.

1998 population = 440,846  
2004 population = 517,536

In recent years, growth in each of these special populations has exceeded growth in the total student memberships, as shown below.

**Percent Increase in Student Population Fall 1998 to Fall 2004**



Data source: Florida Department of Education, Education Information and Accountability Services (EIAS), selected publications—*Statistical Briefs* (multiple series), *Profiles of Florida School Districts*, *Student and Staff Data*, DOE Automated Information Data Base reports.

## Teachers in Florida

### STAFF CHARACTERISTICS

Category	Racial/Ethnic Distribution					Total	Male	Female
	White Non-Hispanic	Black Non-Hispanic	Hispanic	Asian/ Pacific Islander	American Indian/ Alaskan Native			
<b>Total Administrative Staff</b>	<b>7,252</b>	<b>1,925</b>	<b>786</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>10,019</b>	<b>4,233</b>	<b>5,786</b>
District Level	2,210	335	132	10	7	2,694	1,267	1,427
School Level	5,042	1,590	654	22	17	7,325	2,966	4,359
<b>Total Instruction Staff</b>	<b>124,655</b>	<b>23,518</b>	<b>15,779</b>	<b>1,203</b>	<b>452</b>	<b>165,607</b>	<b>36,325</b>	<b>129,282</b>
<b>Total Classroom Teachers</b>	<b>111,696</b>	<b>20,946</b>	<b>14,023</b>	<b>1,122</b>	<b>411</b>	<b>148,198</b>	<b>32,980</b>	<b>115,218</b>
Elementary	46,503	8,403	6,314	395	144	61,759	6,236	55,523
Secondary	42,717	8,251	4,386	449	179	55,982	21,634	34,348
Exceptional Education	18,806	3,200	2,132	210	70	24,418	3,575	20,843
Others	3,670	1,092	1,191	68	18	6,039	1,535	4,504
<b>Total Other Instruction</b>	<b>12,959</b>	<b>2,572</b>	<b>1,756</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>17,409</b>	<b>3,345</b>	<b>14,064</b>
<b>Total Support Staff</b>	<b>66,913</b>	<b>34,095</b>	<b>17,648</b>	<b>1,153</b>	<b>341</b>	<b>120,150</b>	<b>31,508</b>	<b>88,642</b>
Professional	5,952	1,142	736	87	16	7,933	2,960	4,973
Non-Professional	60,961	32,953	16,912	1,066	325	112,217	28,548	83,669
<b>Total Full-Time Staff</b>	<b>198,820</b>	<b>59,538</b>	<b>34,213</b>	<b>2,388</b>	<b>817</b>	<b>295,776</b>	<b>72,066</b>	<b>223,710</b>

Source: Profiles of Florida School Districts 2003–2004, Florida Department of Education

### Teachers by Degree Level, Statewide 2002–03 through 2004–05

Degree Level	2002–03		2003–04		2004–05	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Bachelor's	92,944	60.46	98,485	61.14	104,651	61.21
Master's	54,665	35.56	56,401	35.01	59,863	35.01
Specialist	4,296	2.79	4,237	2.63	4,375	2.56
Doctorate	1,825	1.19	1,968	1.22	2,095	1.23
All Degrees	153,730	100.00	161,091	100.00	170,984	100.00

Source: Florida Department of Education, Statistical Brief, series 2005-23B, June 2005

## Teacher Salaries

by Evelyn Torrey  
Florida Atlantic University

Teacher salaries are influenced by the number of new teachers, the turnover rate, the number of years they have been in the workforce, the degree level, and wage scale adjustments. Additional differences may be due to the total number of teachers in the district, and whether teachers are being paid from an in-field or out-of-field contract. Table 1 shows the average teacher salary from 1998–99 through 2004–05.

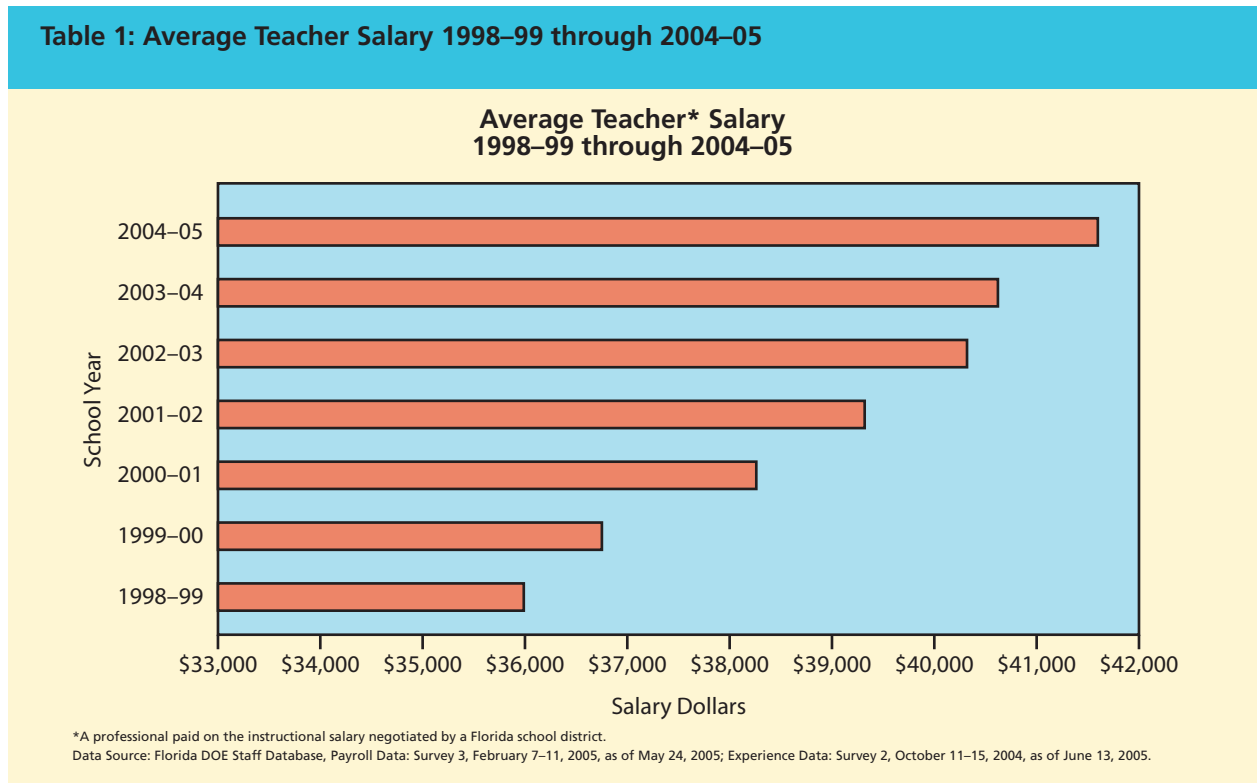
Salaries vary by districts. The lowest salaries in 2004–05 (less than \$34,000) were paid in Union, Lafayette, and Gadsden counties, while some of the highest salaries (over \$43,000) were in Dade, Sarasota, Collier, Broward, Palm Beach, and Monroe counties.

For teachers with bachelor’s degrees, the minimum was \$25,589 in Holmes County and the maximum was \$63,254 in Broward.<sup>1</sup> Table 2 lists the minimum/maximum salaries for teachers by degree levels by county.

Across the state, half the households had less than \$40,000 income in 2002, and less than 20% earned more than \$80,000. Per capita income in Florida is generally slightly less than the national average. Housing costs have had considerable increases and will definitely be a factor in considering how your teaching salary will compare to your personal budget.

<sup>1</sup>Teacher Salary, Experience, and Degree Level, 2004–05, EIAS, Series 2005-23B, June 2005.

**Table 1: Average Teacher Salary 1998–99 through 2004–05**



Source: Florida Department of Education Statistical Brief, Series 2005-23B, June 2005

**Table 2: Minimum/Maximum Teacher\* Salaries by Degree Level, 2004–2005**

District Number/Name	Bachelor's		Master's		Specialist		Doctorate	
	Minimum	Maximum	Minimum	Maximum	Minimum	Maximum	Minimum	Maximum
01 ALACHUA	27,625	45,325	29,225	49,400	30,425	52,500	31,425	55,875
02 BAKER	28,400	48,050	30,600	50,250	31,505	51,155	32,460	52,110
03 BAY	28,080	48,086	30,309	50,669	32,000	52,388	33,665	54,109
04 BRADFORD	26,654	47,645	29,154	50,145	29,854	50,845	30,654	51,645
05 BREVARD	30,500	50,235	32,985	52,720	34,190	53,925	35,410	55,145
06 BROWARD	34,000	63,254	37,000	66,254	39,500	68,754	40,700	69,954
07 CALHOUN	27,680	42,390	29,480	44,190	30,530	45,240	31,555	46,265
08 CHARLOTTE	30,600	50,000	34,150	53,550	36,150	55,550	37,750	57,150
09 CITRUS	29,600	46,125	31,600	48,125	32,600	49,125	33,600	50,125
10 CLAY	30,500	52,000	32,200	53,700	32,900	54,400	33,500	55,000
11 COLLIER	31,948	55,146	34,018	60,602	35,518	62,602	36,518	65,602
12 COLUMBIA	27,500	48,050	30,300	50,850	31,450	52,000	32,650	53,200
13 DADE	33,275	61,325	36,275	64,325	38,275	66,325	40,275	68,325
14 DESOTO	29,831	40,158	32,064	42,950	32,761	43,649	34,159	44,486
15 DIXIE	29,000	45,320	31,300	47,620	31,800	48,120	32,000	48,320
16 DUVAL	31,000	54,226	32,000	57,246	33,380	58,592	34,671	60,489
17 ESCAMBIA	27,252	45,639	28,952	48,139	29,852	48,739	30,552	49,239
18 FLAGLER	33,129	51,203	35,879	54,177	37,379	55,800	38,629	57,152
19 FRANKLIN	26,000	40,134	28,815	44,872	30,336	47,241	31,859	49,613
20 GADSDEN	26,547	40,427	27,697	41,577	28,197	42,077	28,797	42,677
21 GILCHRIST	27,399	43,290	29,299	45,190	29,709	45,600	30,279	46,170
22 GLADES	30,000	48,300	31,500	50,715	33,500	53,935	33,500	53,935
23 GULF	28,076	44,936	29,877	47,162	31,077	48,433	32,254	49,703
24 HAMILTON	27,675	43,311	30,175	45,811	31,175	46,811	31,675	47,311
25 HARDEE	29,000	46,612	30,972	49,782	31,262	50,248	31,523	50,667
26 HENDRY	30,200	47,160	32,140	49,100	33,050	50,000	34,860	51,810
27 HERNANDO	29,400	45,800	31,600	48,000	32,700	49,100	33,300	49,700
28 HIGHLANDS	30,000	47,100	31,900	49,000	32,100	49,200	33,400	50,500
29 HILLSBOROUGH	31,000	51,544	33,912	54,456	35,370	55,914	36,825	57,369
30 HOLMES	25,589	41,164	27,711	43,286	28,760	44,334	29,820	45,395
31 INDIAN RIVER	31,150	49,450	33,969	52,269	34,883	53,183	35,807	54,107
32 JACKSON	27,320	42,121	29,840	44,041	32,360	47,161	33,935	48,736
33 JEFFERSON	26,500	45,200	27,800	46,500	28,650	47,750	28,650	47,750
34 LAFAYETTE	28,237	42,825	30,437	45,025	31,537	46,125	32,197	46,785
35 LAKE	31,110	49,075	33,460	51,425	34,410	52,375	35,410	52,375
36 LEE	30,473	51,233	32,973	53,733	34,473	55,233	35,473	56,233
37 LEON	29,000	51,730	30,000	53,818	31,000	55,596	32,000	57,023
38 LEVY	28,333	44,167	30,869	46,702	31,510	47,343	32,151	47,984
39 LIBERTY	27,595	42,719	30,144	45,268	31,534	46,658	31,882	47,006
40 MADISON	28,000	45,758	29,911	49,247	30,571	50,410	30,571	50,410
41 MANATEE	32,000	52,016	33,059	55,893	35,518	60,581	37,977	63,582
42 MARION	29,000	46,000	30,700	48,700	32,400	51,950	34,100	54,100
43 MARTIN	31,675	51,259	33,570	54,335	35,590	57,595	37,605	60,855
44 MONROE	35,921	59,923	37,431	65,329	38,246	66,976	38,710	68,447
45 NASSAU	30,000	49,100	32,200	51,300	32,400	51,500	33,000	52,100
46 OKALOOSA	27,762	51,645	29,011	53,969	30,388	56,532	31,908	59,360
47 OKEECHOBEE	30,000	48,050	31,600	49,650	32,420	50,470	32,420	50,470
48 ORANGE	32,266	52,396	34,516	54,646	35,716	55,846	36,816	56,946
49 OSCEOLA	31,600	50,500	34,000	52,900	35,275	54,175	36,450	55,350
50 PALM BEACH	33,494	60,000	35,994	62,500	36,894	63,400	38,494	65,000
51 PASCO	31,550	51,500	34,100	54,050	35,800	55,750	36,800	56,750
52 PINELLAS	31,100	51,400	33,250	53,550	34,450	54,750	35,600	55,900
53 POLK	30,582	47,374	32,642	49,434	33,287	50,079	33,587	50,379
54 PUTNAM	31,021	47,376	32,856	51,352	33,856	52,352	34,756	53,252
55 ST. JOHNS	31,350	48,550	33,900	51,300	34,900	52,300	35,900	53,500
56 ST. LUCIE	31,058	52,920	34,013	55,818	36,162	58,076	37,129	59,092
57 SANTA ROSA	27,855	51,274	30,083	53,502	31,198	54,616	32,312	55,730
58 SARASOTA	31,518	42,591	34,149	53,273	36,486	59,474	38,045	62,013
59 SEMINOLE	30,000	51,810	33,700	55,510	36,700	58,510	39,700	61,510
60 SUMTER	30,104	48,220	32,099	50,270	33,097	51,294	33,097	51,294
61 SUWANNEE	29,431	49,003	31,631	51,203	32,131	51,703	32,831	52,403
62 TAYLOR	27,995	47,549	31,084	52,957	34,517	56,256	37,114	58,635
63 UNION	25,804	45,239	28,219	47,655	29,427	48,862	30,635	50,070
64 VOLUSIA	29,790	51,735	32,429	54,989	33,677	55,621	34,973	58,156
65 WAKULLA	28,500	45,750	30,700	47,950	31,200	48,450	31,700	48,950
66 WALTON	28,000	53,040	29,400	54,440	30,900	55,940	32,500	57,540
67 WASHINGTON	26,592	44,606	29,287	47,579	30,634	48,324	31,986	49,068
<b>STATE AVERAGE</b>	<b>29,569</b>	<b>48,493</b>	<b>31,763</b>	<b>51,292</b>	<b>33,007</b>	<b>52,773</b>	<b>34,067</b>	<b>54,013</b>

Source: Florida Department of Education Statistical Brief, Series 2005-238, June 2005

## Anticipated Teacher Need in Florida

by Evelyn Torrey  
Florida Atlantic University

The state Department of Education Office of Evaluation and Reporting publishes the projected number of Florida Public School Teachers by school district and by subject field. The 2004 report anticipates a 20% increase in the number of teachers needed by 2008, and a 26% overall increase by 2013.<sup>i</sup> Projected vacancies to be filled across the state are:<sup>ii</sup>

<b>2006–2007</b>	29,604
<b>2007–2008</b>	20,436
<b>2008–2009</b>	19,690
<b>2009–2010</b>	19,918
<b>2010–2011</b>	20,078

Each year, 20,000 to 30,000 classroom teacher positions will need to be filled across the state. For example, the 21,313 teachers needed in 2004–05 included 13,692 to replace teachers who retired, resigned, or were terminated; 3,297 to cover enrollment growth, and 4,324 needed for class size reduction. Some of those vacancies will be filled by teachers returning to the classroom or relocating from another system or community. The teaching force is currently 161,000, but by 2020, there will be nearly 217,000 teachers in Florida.

Baby boomers with 30 years of experience began to retire as early as 1999, but the highest number is expected to retire between 2006 and 2016. In Florida, teacher retirements peak at 61 years of age. In 2003, there were more than 4,000 teachers in Florida born in each of the years from 1947 to 1955 and 3,400 or more from 1956 to 1962. Nearly all of these will retire before 2020.<sup>iii</sup>

<sup>i</sup>Projected Number of Teachers Needed Through 2020–2021, Florida Public Schools, November 2004, Office of Evaluation and Reporting, Florida Department of Education, page 1

<sup>ii</sup>Projected Number of Teachers Needed, pages 2 and 7

<sup>iii</sup>Projected Number of Teachers Needed, pages 8 and 9

Currently, nearly two out of three teachers are leaving before retiring; reasons include taking teaching jobs elsewhere, staying at home with their families, returning to school, or leaving education for other fields.<sup>iv</sup> More than 12% of young teachers have been leaving the classroom after one year; 30% leave after three years, and 40% after 5 years.<sup>v</sup> Non-minority teachers are more likely to leave than young minority teachers.<sup>vi</sup> About 14% of Florida’s teachers step out of the classroom for a period of time but then return.<sup>vii</sup> About 1% of Florida’s teachers transfer between districts each year; 1/3 of these are under 30 years old and are seeking permanent positions or moving because they prefer one area of the state over another.<sup>viii</sup> In Florida, 16% of teacher terminations each year are due to dismissal, death, expired contracts that were not renewed, and staff reduction.<sup>ix</sup>

A national study released in August 2005 reported that 40% of today’s teachers plan to stop teaching within five years, and 50% of high school teachers plan to be out of teaching by 2010, primarily due to retirement; 42% of the nation’s teachers are over the age of 50.<sup>x</sup>

Projections by subject field are influenced by the mandated reductions in class size in core curricula classes, impacting elementary and academic subjects such as language arts, math, science, and social studies.<sup>xi</sup> Table 3 includes projections for teachers needed in the core content areas and Table 4 presents areas where teacher shortages are expected.

Each year, approximately 6,000 teacher candidates graduate from approved teacher education programs in Florida’s 10 public universities and 20 private institutions. More than 25% graduate from Florida’s

<sup>iv</sup>Projected Number of Teachers Needed, page 2

<sup>v</sup>Florida Teacher Retention, 1992–2002, Office of Policy Research and Improvement, Florida Department of Education, March 2003, page 2

<sup>vi</sup>Florida Teacher Retention, page 3

<sup>vii</sup>Florida Teacher Retention, page 2

<sup>viii</sup>Florida Teacher Retention, page 4

<sup>ix</sup>Projected Number of Teachers Needed, page 2

<sup>x</sup>Associated Press, August 18, 2005

<sup>xi</sup>Projected Number of Teachers Needed, page 3

**Table 3: Anticipated Classroom Teacher Positions in Florida<sup>xii</sup>**

Program	Teachers, Fall 2003	Projected, 2008–09	Projected 2013–14
Elementary	50,507	67,354	71,002
Reading	4,068	5,339	5,758
English/Language Arts	11,061	14,157	15,894
Math	9,545	12,233	13,714
Science	8,050	10,295	11,568
Social Studies	7,921	10,120	11,382
ESOL	5,339	7,062	7,538
ESE	24,260	26,778	29,235
<b>Total Instructional</b>	<b>165,311</b>	<b>202,891</b>	<b>220,762</b>

<sup>xii</sup>Projected Number of Teachers Needed, page 11

**Table 4: Projected Number of Teacher Positions to Be Filled Critical Teacher Shortage Areas<sup>xiii</sup>**

Subject Fields	Projected Number of Teachers 2005–06	Number Needed — 2006–07			
		2 To Replace Teachers Leaving or Retiring	3 Provide for Enrollment Growth	4 Class Size Adjustment by School Targets	5 Total Positions to Be Filled (Sum Cols 2–4)
Math	10,507	1,039	147	1,122	2,308
Science	8,834	874	121	943	1,938
Reading	4,505	356	95	485	936
Foreign Languages	2,602	257	39	278	574
ESOL	5,966	325	132	643	1,100
Industrial Arts/Tech. Educ	810	64	12	0	76
Exceptional Student Education	15,429	1,984	305	0	2,289
Speech Impaired	2,816	251	65	0	316
Hearing Impaired	394	43	10	0	53
Visually Impaired	228	11	5	0	16
Autistic	511	66	9	0	75
Profoundly Mentally Handi.	389	21	7	0	28
Severely Emotionally Disturbed	936	69	17	0	86
Gifted	2,776	151	57	0	208
PreK Handicapped	704	77	0	0	77
School Psychologist	1,277	77	26	0	103

<sup>xiii</sup>Critical Teacher Shortage Areas 2005–2006, Florida Department of Education, [www.firn.edu/doe/evaluation/pdf/crit1200.pdf](http://www.firn.edu/doe/evaluation/pdf/crit1200.pdf)

private colleges and universities.<sup>xiv</sup> Of those 6,000, about 10% are already teaching at graduation, and nearly 60% will be teaching in Florida public schools the fall after they graduate.<sup>xv</sup>

About 69% of program graduates are white, 12% are African American, and 16% are Hispanic.<sup>xvi</sup> The percentage of minority students admitted to state university teacher education programs has been increasing. In 1999–2000, 22.8% of the students were minorities.<sup>xvii</sup> African-American teacher education graduates comprised 90% of those graduating from

historically black institutions (FAMU, Bethune-Cookman College, Edward Waters College, and Florida Memorial College) and 12% of the graduates from 16 other private colleges and universities.<sup>xviii</sup> Two-thirds of Hispanic graduates of teacher education programs are from state universities; 38% graduate from FIU; others graduate from private schools including Barry University, Nova-Southeastern, and the University of Miami.<sup>xix</sup> However, since 1991, there has been a downward trend in attracting teacher candidates from all racial-ethnic groups.<sup>xx</sup> In 1976, 20% of state bachelor degrees were awarded in education; by 2000, only 12.6% were in education.<sup>xxi</sup>

---

<sup>xiv</sup>Florida Department of Education, Evaluating and Reporting, Executive Summary

<sup>xv</sup>Florida Teaching Trends, Office of Policy Research and Improvement, December 2003, Florida Department of Education

<sup>xvi</sup>Florida Teaching Trends, page 5

<sup>xvii</sup>Florida Teaching Trends, page 15

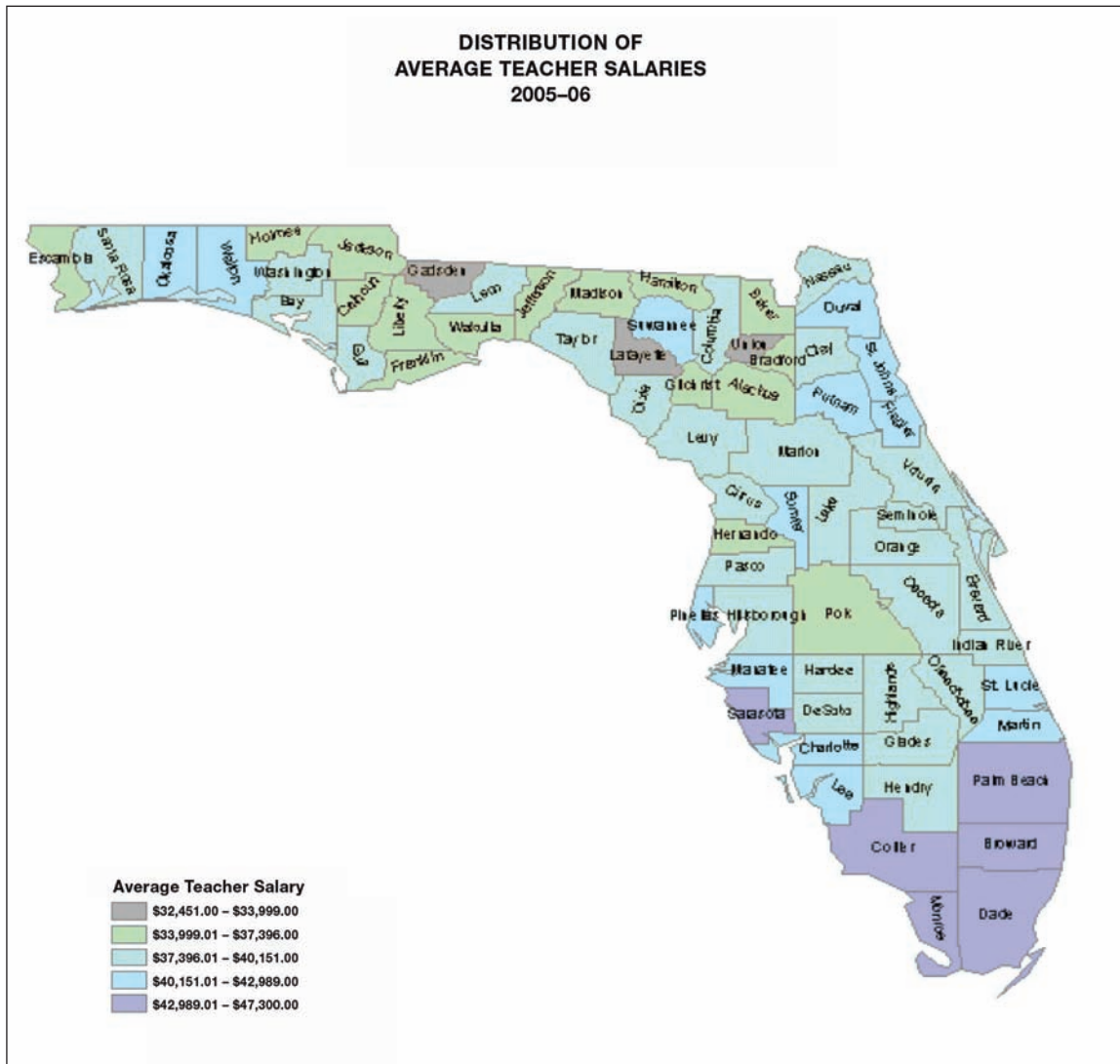
---

<sup>xviii</sup>Florida Teaching Trends, page 6

<sup>xix</sup>Florida Teaching Trends, page 8

<sup>xx</sup>Florida Teaching Trends, page 6

<sup>xxi</sup>Florida Teaching Trends, Appendix, Table 11, page 6



Source: Florida Department of Education, <http://www.firn.edu/doe/eias/flmove/eias.htm>

## PART II: Becoming a Teacher in Florida

### Certification Requirements to Teach in Florida

The State of Florida offers two different certifications: **Professional** (which is valid for five school years and is renewable) and **Temporary** (which is valid for three school years and is not renewable).

In order to obtain a **Professional Teaching Certificate** in the state of Florida, you must:

1. Hold at least a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university state-approved teacher preparation program.
2. Pass all three portions of the Florida Teacher Certification Examination (FTCE): Subject Area Knowledge, General Knowledge, and Professional Preparation and Education Competence.
3. Be fingerprinted (a condition of employment in a Florida public schools).

In order to obtain a **Temporary Teaching Certificate** in the state of Florida, you must:

1. Hold at least a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university.
2. Demonstrate Mastery of Subject Area Knowledge on the Florida Teacher Certification Examination (FTCE), or meet Subject Specialization with a 2.5 GPA for a requested subject. This certification is valid for three years, which allows you time to complete the certification requirements while teaching full time. The Bureau of Educator Certification will provide you with official information about which test(s) to take to complete requirements for the Professional Certificate.
3. Complete an out-of-state Approved Teacher Education Program. Florida accepts approved teacher preparation programs from other states for initial certification, provided that the program area is also a subject in which Florida offers certification, and the training was completed at the same degree level required in Florida for that subject.

4. The Florida Temporary Certificate is issued after the individual is employed in a Florida school and his/her fingerprints have been cleared.

For more information, visit the Florida Department of Education website at [www.fldoe.org/edcert/cert\\_types.asp](http://www.fldoe.org/edcert/cert_types.asp).

### Florida Teacher Certificate Examinations (FTCE)

The purpose of these assessments is to help identify prospective teachers who have demonstrated the level of professional knowledge and skills judged to be important for Florida educators.

Anyone interested in teaching in Florida must pass the Florida Teacher Certificate Examinations (FTCE) in three areas:

1. *Professional Education (Test PEd)*: This test measures your knowledge and skills in the principles and methods of instruction and professional practices. The test consists of approximately 120 multiple-choice questions.
2. *Subject Area Exam (Test SAE)*: If you are applying for a Professional Certificate or if you want to add a subject area to your Professional Certificate, you must pass a subject area exam in the field(s) in which you seek certification. These exams measure your knowledge in a specific subject area, and usually consist of multiple-choice questions; however, English 6–12, Middle Grades English 5–9, French K–12, German K–12, and Spanish K–12 also require an essay, Spanish K–12 and French K–12 are administered in a language lab, German K–12 requires an interview, and Speech 6–12 has a videotaped portion.
3. *General Knowledge Test (GK)*: This is a basic skills achievement test containing four subjects: Mathematics (multiple-choice), Reading (passage-based multiple-choice), English Language Skills (multiple-choice), and Essay.

For more information, visit the Florida Department of Education website at [www.firn.edu/doe/sas/ftcehome.htm](http://www.firn.edu/doe/sas/ftcehome.htm).

## Professional Educator Competencies and Skills

The Florida Teacher Certificate Exam is composed of three tests: Professional Education, General Knowledge, and Subject Area Exams. Requirements for meeting the Professional Education Exam include:

### 1 Knowledge of various types of assessment strategies that can be used to determine student levels and needs (Assessment)

1. Identify appropriate methods, strategies, and evaluation instruments for assessing student levels, needs, performance, and learning.
2. Identify and sequence learning activities that support study skills and test-taking strategies.

### 2 Knowledge of effective communication with students, parents, faculty, other professionals, and the public, including those whose home language is not English (Communications)

1. Identify appropriate techniques for leading class discussions (e.g., listening, identifying relevant information, probing, drawing inferences, summarizing student comments, and redirecting).
2. Identify ways to correct student errors (e.g., modeling, providing an explanation or additional information, or asking additional questions).
3. Identify nonverbal communication strategies that promote student action and performance.
4. Choose effective communication techniques for conveying high expectations for student learning.

### 3 Knowledge of strategies for continuous improvement in professional practices for self and school (Continuous Improvement)

1. Identify professional development experiences that will enhance teacher performance and improve student achievement.
2. Identify ways for using data from learning environments as a basis for exploring and reflecting upon teaching practices.

### 4 Knowledge of strategies, materials, and technologies that will promote and enhance critical and creative thinking skills (Critical Thinking)

1. Identify a variety of instructional strategies, materials, and technologies that foster critical thinking.
2. Identify a variety of instructional strategies, materials, and technologies that foster creative thinking.

### 5 Knowledge of cultural, linguistic, and learning style differences and how these differences affect classroom practice and student learning (Diversity)

1. Identify instructional and interpersonal skills and classroom practices that encourage innovation and create a positive learning climate for all students.
2. Select materials and strategies that encourage learning about diverse cultural groups.

### 6 Knowledge of the Code of Ethics and Principles of Professional Conduct of the Education Profession in Florida (Ethics)

1. Apply the Code of Ethics and Principles of Professional Conduct to realistic professional and personal situations.
2. Identify statutory grounds and procedures for disciplinary action, the penalties that can be imposed by the Educational Practices Commission against a certificate holder, and the appeals process available to the individual.

### 7 Knowledge of how to apply human development and learning theories that support the intellectual, personal, and social development of all students (Human Development and Learning)

1. Identify patterns of physical, social, and academic development of students.
2. Identify motivational strategies and factors that encourage students to be achievement and goal oriented.
3. Identify activities to accommodate different learning needs, developmental levels, and experiential backgrounds.

4. Apply knowledge of learning theories to classroom practices.
  5. Identify characteristics of, and intervention strategies for, students with disabilities.
- 8 Knowledge of subject matter incorporating reading strategies and literacy as they apply across the curriculum to increase learning (Subject Matter)**
1. Identify appropriate corrective strategies for determining when reading comprehension is preventing the mastery of subject material.
  2. Identify references, materials, and technologies appropriate to the subject and the learner's abilities.
  3. Identify strategies that encourage multidisciplinary studies.
- 9 Knowledge of strategies to create and sustain a safe, efficient, supportive learning environment (Learning Environment)**
1. Evaluate the appropriateness of the physical environment for facilitating student learning and promoting safety.
  2. Identify a repertoire of techniques for establishing smooth, efficient, and well-paced routines.
  3. Identify strategies to involve students in establishing rules and standards for behavior.
  4. Identify emergency procedures for student and campus safety.
- 10 Knowledge of how to plan and conduct lessons in a variety of learning environments that lead to student outcomes consistent with State and district standards (Planning)**
1. Determine instructional long-term goals and short-term objectives appropriate to student needs.
  2. Identify activities that support the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to be learned in a given subject area.
  3. Identify materials based on instructional objectives and student learning needs and performance levels.
- 11 Knowledge of collaborative strategies for working with various education professionals, parents, and other appropriate participants in the continual improvement of educational experiences of students (Role of the Teacher)**
1. Identify student behavior indicating possible emotional distress, substance abuse, abuse or neglect, and suicidal tendencies.
  2. Identify school and community resources and collaborative procedures to meet the intellectual, personal, and social needs of all students.
  3. Identify the rights, legal responsibilities, and procedures for reporting incidences of abuse or neglect or other signs of distress.
  4. Apply knowledge of the contents of, and the procedures for, maintaining permanent student records.
  5. Identify the role of teachers on collaborative teams (e.g., IEP, 504, AIP, and child study).
- 12 Knowledge of strategies for the implementation of technology in the teaching and learning process (Technology)**
1. Identify appropriate software to prepare materials, deliver instruction, assess student achievement, and manage classroom tasks.
  2. Identify appropriate classroom procedures for student use of available technology.
  3. Identify policies and procedures for the safe and ethical use of the Internet, networks, and other electronic media.
  4. Identify strategies for instructing students in the use of search techniques, the evaluation of data collected, and the preparation of presentations.
- 13 Knowledge of the history of education and its philosophical and sociological foundations (Foundations of Education)**
1. Apply historical, philosophical, and sociological perspectives to contemporary issues in American education.
  2. Identify contemporary philosophical views on education that influence teaching.

#### **14 Knowledge of specific approaches, methods, and strategies appropriate for students with limited English proficiency (ESOL)**

1. Identify characteristics of first and second language acquisition.
2. Identify ESOL approaches, methods, and strategies (e.g., materials, adaptation, alternative assessment, and strategy documentation) appropriate for instruction.
3. Identify and apply cognitive approaches, multisensory ESOL strategies, and instructional practices that build upon student's abilities and promote self-worth.

Source: Florida Department of Education ([www.firn.edu/doe/sas/ftce/pdf/ftcomp00.pdf](http://www.firn.edu/doe/sas/ftce/pdf/ftcomp00.pdf))

### **Florida Educator Accomplished Practices**

Established in late 1996 by the State Board of Education, the 12 Florida Educator Accomplished Practices are now viewed by the Florida Department of Education (DOE) as the main basis for assessing teacher performance at the *preprofessional*, *professional*, and *accomplished* educator levels. Florida Educator Accomplished Practices are ways of determining how effectively a teacher can achieve the goals set out by the Florida Department of Education for its students.

In general, the Florida Department of Education wants to be sure that teachers can plan and design instruction that is appropriate for the specified curriculum; that they exhibit appropriate knowledge of the subject matter being taught; that they can communicate well with their students, as well as with parents and colleagues; that they can promote creative thinking skills; that they understand the needs of students with different backgrounds; that they support the intellectual, personal, and social development of all students; that they instill a positive atmosphere for learning; that they have strategies for implementing technology in the teaching and learning process; that they have knowledge of teaching students with limited English proficiency; that they are continuing their own professional development; and that they fulfill the legal and ethical requirements of their professional roles.

For more information, visit the Florida Department of Education website at [www.firn.edu/doe/dpe/publications/accomplished4-99.pdf](http://www.firn.edu/doe/dpe/publications/accomplished4-99.pdf).

#### **Accomplished Practice #1: Assessment**

*Accomplished:* Uses assessment strategies (traditional and alternative) to assist the continuous development of the learner.

#### **Accomplished Practice #2: Communication**

*Accomplished:* Uses effective communication techniques with students and all other stakeholders.

#### **Accomplished Practice #3: Continuous Improvement**

*Accomplished:* Engages in continuous professional quality improvement for self and school.

#### **Accomplished Practice #4: Critical Thinking**

*Accomplished:* Uses appropriate techniques and strategies which promote and enhance critical, creative, and evaluative thinking capabilities in students.

#### **Accomplished Practice #5: Diversity**

*Accomplished:* Uses teaching and learning strategies that reflect each student's culture, learning styles, special needs, and socioeconomic background.

#### **Accomplished Practice #6: Ethics**

*Accomplished:* Adheres to the Code of Ethics and Principles of Professional Conduct of the Education Profession in Florida.

#### **Accomplished Practice #7: Human Development and Learning**

*Accomplished:* Uses an understanding of learning and human development to provide a positive learning environment which supports the intellectual, personal and social development of all students.

#### **Accomplished Practice #8: Knowledge of Subject Matter**

*Accomplished:* Demonstrates knowledge and understanding of the subject matter.

#### **Accomplished Practice #9: Learning Environments**

*Accomplished:* Creates and maintains positive learning environments in which students are actively engaged in learning, social interaction, cooperative learning, and self-motivation.

**Accomplished Practice #10: Planning**

*Accomplished:* Plans, implements, and evaluates effective instruction in a variety of learning environments.

**Accomplished Practice #11: Role of the Teacher**

*Accomplished:* Works with various educational professionals, parents, and other stakeholders in the continuous improvements of the educational experiences of students.

**Accomplished Practice #12: Technology**

*Accomplished:* Uses appropriate technology in teaching and learning processes.

---

Source: Florida Education Standards Commission

## Interviewing for a Teaching Position: Q&A

by Lynne A. Hammann

**How should I prepare?**

- Review professional program knowledge from your courses. Be sure to refresh your knowledge of (a) student characteristics and learning needs; (b) diverse students, special learning needs, inclusion, giftedness; (c) professional organization standards; (d) state standards for your area.
- Bring a professional portfolio, if you have one, with a table of contents, and section dividers, clearly labeled with your name, address, etc. Have representative samples available, including examples of student learning (papers, a website, class newspaper) as well as samples of your own professional knowledge.
- If you have an electronic portfolio (e.g., LiveText), bring a document containing your name, contact information, Visitor's Pass information, and brief directions on accessing the portfolio. Also bring hard copy samples.
- Learn about the district—size, administrators, educational policies, schools, test scores, money resources. Access district websites; get information from district offices; ask friends and colleagues.
- Learn what the district policies and concerns are about such “hot topics” as NCLB, diversity, technology, and continuing professional development.
- Apply for fingerprint clearance.

**What questions might I be asked?**

- What is your philosophy of education?
- How do you use technology in your classroom?
- Describe your experience/approach to collaboration.
- How do you assess students?
- Describe a lesson in \_\_\_\_\_ (daily/weekly).
- What is the role of effort (and/or motivation) in your classroom?
- What grade(s) do you want to teach and why? *Refer to developmental characteristics of future learners, for example, “Eleventh-graders are beginning to discover who they are and construct their identities. They’re in Erikson’s Identity formation stage. In American literature, they have opportunities to ....”*
- What makes your qualifications special? *Prepare a short list of strengths, including content knowledge (refer to student teaching, other experiences) that you can state in a matter-of-fact way with examples.*
- What experience do you have with inclusion? *Cite specific examples from courses, field experiences, tutoring, student teaching, work experiences, volunteer organizations*
- How would you include students with special learning needs in your class (or a lesson)? For example, if you had a child who had ADHD or Asperberger’s Syndrome, explain how you would construct your lesson to meet his/her learning needs. *Refer to your educational psychology classes, your methods classes, and diversity classes.*
- Describe your approach to classroom management. *Refer to methods classes and/or educational psychology classes. Include learners’ developmental needs/characteristics. Have classroom management plan.*
- What clubs or organizations would you volunteer for? *Make sure you know what the school has available and explain why/how you are qualified for them.*
- How will you communicate with parents? *Use examples from field experiences, tutoring, student teaching, work experiences, and other organizations*

(such as church or scouts). Explain that you have some plans for your classroom, such as a Family Reading or Math or Science) night, or a class newsletter, emails, etc.

**How can I find out what else I might be asked?**

Talk to other teachers in the district/school.

**What if I get a question I don't know the answer to?**

It's ok to say, "That's an interesting question...let me reflect for a few moments..." and then answer professionally. You may need to "think on your feet" (as in a classroom) and say, "I'd have to give this some more thought, but I could say at this point..."

**How should I dress?**

Dress neatly, in clean clothes, with minimal (if any) cologne/after-shave. Dress professionally, even if school's teachers dress casually. Show interviewers your professional self—you are there to teach and guide children and be a role model for them.

- Women: professional dress, pant suit with blouse or blazer and dress pants, pale nail polish (if any) and conservative make up; no cleavage, nothing see-through, nothing too short

- Men: suit with dress shirt and tie, or dress pants with shirt and tie, blazer. Avoid displaying tattoos, multiple piercings, visible skin between pants/skirt and top. Wear professional shoes.

**What questions should I prepare?**

Refer to what you know about the district and ask for more information about a current topic (professional development opportunities, technology training opportunities, technology use, IEP procedures).

**How can I feel more confident?**

Anticipate possible questions. Ask a friend or teacher to do a mock interview. If you have an opportunity, record yourself and study it.

**What should I do after the interview?**

Shake hands. Thank interviewers for the opportunity to meet. Send a short professional letter within a day or two thanking district/interviewers for the opportunity to interview and restating a few positive points about the district. In the letter, say you're looking forward to hearing from them about the position.

## PART III: The State of Education in Florida

### Parents as Valued Partners in Children's Education

by Darlene DeMarie  
University of South Florida

"We partner with parents" is a common statement made by school personnel. But, what does it mean to partner with parents? If you ask school personnel to tell you how they partner with parents, you will get many different responses. In this article, ways to create partnerships with parents are described.

Research findings show that partnering with parents is critically important for children's school success (Epstein, 1991). In one study, family involvement during the fall was directly related to young children's classroom learning, receptive vocabulary, and classroom behavior in the late spring (Fantuzzo, McWayne, Perry, & Childs, 2004). Positive outcomes can be expected from linking home and school.

Partnering with parents means more than offering parents the opportunity to come to school for an open house, conducting parent conferences, or inviting parents' participation at PTA meetings. Some parents work two jobs and can never attend any of these events. You also cannot simply say that parents are important partners in their child's education. You have to show parents that they are valued by your actions.

Consider whether your school environment welcomes all parents. According to the April 25, 2006 issue of the *Tampa Tribune* newspaper, Hillsborough County School District has 188,742 students who spoke 100 different languages. One quarter of them are of Hispanic origin and 3% are Asian. Although this type of diversity is common in many school districts across the state of Florida, it is not uncommon to see school web sites, signs at schools, and newsletters that are written only in English.

Ask yourself, "Will a parent feel comfortable and know where to go when entering this school?" Many parents have not had good past experiences at schools. A parent may have been a student who struggled to learn, or a parents' only contact with

school may have been when there was a problem with a child. Many schools have such sterile environments that even those parents who enjoyed school may feel uncomfortable when entering the building.

Remember that parents may not consider it their role or responsibility to come to school or contact the teacher. By not contacting the teacher, some parents may actually be showing respect for the teacher's professionalism (Quezada, Diaz, & Sanchez, 2003). In one study (see Chrispeels & Rivers, 2001), Latino parents indicated that their responsibilities were to provide those things that were needed at home (i.e., food, clothing, and shelter) and to socialize their children with regard to family responsibilities. Reading to their children and expecting good grades at school were not perceived responsibilities. However, when parents were taught these new roles, they responded to them. You cannot blame parents for things they do not know. You can help them to learn the roles you want them to take on behalf of their children's education.

If you work with high school students, help them to learn about higher education options and accessing scholarships and awards. Research on successful Latina/o college students (Zalaquett, 2005) revealed that 83% of them did not receive sufficient adult guidance in making educational choices. As students from lower socioeconomic families are often first-generation college students, their parents may not know how to help them in this regard. Never underestimate a student's ability simply because he or she comes from a family with lower socioeconomic status.

Here are some specific suggestions to make all parents feel welcomed and valued:

- Telephone parents early in the school year to become acquainted with them. By calling when everything is going well, or even before the school year starts, you will weaken the expectation that teachers only call with bad news.
- Recruit volunteers who are bilingual to serve as English translators for other parents who do not

speak English. Create a brochure welcoming all parents with explanations in multiple languages, accompanied by bilingual volunteers' phone numbers.

- Create a parent bulletin board by the main entrance of the school. Put all important information (e.g., school schedule, school holidays, and photographs of each staff member) on this board and put new announcements in a designated place. Keep books of the minutes of PTA meetings, School Advisory Council meetings, or any other parent groups and make sure they are accessible and visible.
- Send home photographs of what children are doing at school. DeMarie and Ethridge (2006) found that children provided more details about a day at school when they had photographs, and that this practice could enhance family involvement.
- Create books about what the children are learning in your classroom. Include pages at the end of each book, so parents can write a message back to the class. This creates a dialogue of learning that crosses the home/school boundary.
- Teach parents how they can help their child to learn at home. For example, a child can learn about measurement in the context of cooking (Delgado-Gattan, 1991).
- Establish a volunteer network. Parents are not the only ones you can ask to come to the school. The siblings of children you teach may need volunteer hours to graduate from high school or to get a Bright Futures Scholarship (Florida's merit scholarships for tuition to Florida colleges). At the end of the year, have a recognition breakfast to thank all of the volunteers for their work each year. Appreciation goes a long way!
- Don't assume that every parent can help with homework. Ask parents with good math skills to be on call for the other parents. (Naturally, you must verify that they really have the math skills needed to provide assistance.)
- Instead of condemning parents who do not come to meetings, reward those who do come with drawings for prizes or other incentives. If a child's

parent cannot attend school functions, perhaps a grandparent or aunt or uncle can.

Nothing is more important than making parents feel like they are valued partners. Continuously ask yourself if you are demonstrating parents' importance in the educational process. Sometimes we say one thing, while our actions indicate otherwise. Strive to make your school an inviting place that conveys that all parents really are valued as partners in their children's education.

## References

- Chrispeels, J.H., & Rivers, E. (2001). Engaging Latino families for student success: How parent education can reshape parents' sense of place in the education of their children. *Peabody Journal of Education*, 76, 119-169.
- Delgado-Gattan, C. (1991). Involving parents in the schools: A process of empowerment. *American Journal of Education*, 20-46.
- DeMarie, D., & Ethridge, E. A. (2006). Children's images of preschool: The power of photography *Young Children*, 61(1), 101-104.
- Epstein, J.L. (1991). Effects on students achievement of teachers' practices of parent involvement. In S.B. Silvern (Ed.), *Advances in Reading/Language Research*, (Vol. 5, pp. 261-276). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.
- Fantuzzo, J., McWayne, C., Perry, M.A., & Childs, S. (2004). Multiple dimensions of family involvement and their relations to behavioral and learning competencies for urban, low-income children. *School Psychology Review*, 33, 467-480.
- Henderson, A.T., & Berla, N. (1996). A new generation of evidence: The family is critical to student achievement. Washington, D.C.: Center for Law and Education.
- Quezada, R.L., Diaz, D.M., & Sanchez, M. (2003). Involving Latino. *Leadership*, 32-38.
- Zalaquett, C.P. (2005). Study of successful Latina/o students. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education*, 5, 35-47.

## Accountability in Florida

The Division of Accountability, Research and Measurement of the Florida Department of Education set as its mission to provide educational data and leadership to support high standards, continually improve achievement, and facilitate student opportunities throughout Florida's K–12 education system. There are a variety of systems in place for Florida students and educators to help determine that schools are meeting the standards set up for them by the Federal government and the Florida Department of Education. Some of these systems are:

- *The Sunshine State Standards.* These are standards that demonstrate what Florida students should know and be able to do from kindergarten through high school. Approved by the State Board of Education in 1996 to provide expectations for student achievement in Florida, these standards were written in seven subject areas, each divided into four separate grade clusters (PreK–2, 3–5, 6–8, and 9–12). This format was chosen to provide flexibility to school districts in designing curriculum based on local needs. However, the subject areas of language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies, the Sunshine State Standards have been expanded to include Grade Level Expectations. These Grade Level Expectations are the basis for state assessments at each grade 3–10 in language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies.
- *Florida Comprehensive Assessment Tests (FCATs).* These tests indicate how much a child has learned and also show how well each school's instructional program is functioning. The FCAT is made up of two kinds of tests: a criterion-referenced test (CRT), which measures how well students are meeting the *Sunshine State Standards* in reading, writing, mathematics, and science, and a norm-referenced test (NRT), which allows educators and parents to compare Florida student performance on reading and mathematics with the performance of students nationwide.
- *A+ Plan for Education.* Several years ago, it was announced that Florida's high school graduation rate was 52%, that 50% of Florida's fourth graders were not able to read at the fourth grade level,

and more than one-third of Florida's ninth graders had a D or F average. In 1999, the state of Florida instituted the A+ Plan for Education with the fundamental premise that every child can learn and no child should be left behind. The Plan has three major goals: addressing accountability and improving student learning, raising standards and improving training for educators, and improving school safety and reducing truancy.

- *The No Child Left Behind Act.* To recognize and reward successful schools, the U.S. Secretary of Education has established the No Child Left Behind—Blue Ribbon Schools Program to honor those elementary and secondary schools in the United States that make significant progress in closing the achievement gap or whose students achieve at very high levels. The program recognizes and presents as models elementary and secondary schools that meet either of two assessment criteria:

Schools that have at least 40 percent of their students from disadvantaged backgrounds and dramatically improve student performance to a high level on state assessments.

Schools that are in the top 10 percent of schools in the state as measured by state tests.

For more information, visit the official website of the State of Florida at [www.myflorida.com/myflorida/government/governorinitiatives/aplusplan/planeducation.html](http://www.myflorida.com/myflorida/government/governorinitiatives/aplusplan/planeducation.html).

## Charter Schools: One Floridian Response to School Reform

by **Cheri Landry**  
**University of Florida**

The organizational structure of the public school system has been blamed for the poor performance of American students, especially minority and poor (Chubb & Moe, 1990). As a result, state and national legislation has been passed highlighting school choice as the preferred method of school reform. Charter schools have evolved as a political alternative between the much contested voucher systems and public school choice (Johnson, 2005).

Johnson (2005) defines charter schools as publicly funded, non-sectarian schools that operate under a contract from their local school board or other public authority. In Florida a charter school may be created by converting an existing public school or by creating a new school. Charter schools were approved as part of the state program of public education by the 1996 Florida Legislature (Section 228.056, Florida Statutes).

According to Florida Statutes, Section 228.056 the purposes of the charter school are to:

1. Improve student learning
2. Increase learning opportunities for all students, with special emphasis on expanding learning experiences for students who are identified as academically low achieving
3. Encourage the use of different and innovative learning methods
4. Increase choice of learning opportunities for students
5. Establish a new form of accountability for schools
6. Require measurement of learning outcomes and create innovative measurement tools
7. Make the school the unit for improvement

The advantages of charter schools are many. They create educational choice for parents and children, and professional opportunities for teachers providing them freedom to innovate. They emphasize performance and standards. Charter schools tend to be small, ranging in Florida from 10–1,000+ students. This offers increased individual attention for students. Charter schools have greater flexibility in curriculum, hiring, salaries/benefits, and school philosophy.

In Florida in 1995–96, five schools were chartered serving approximately 301 students. As of January 2005, there were 446 schools serving 53,350 students. It has been necessary to close 31 schools for reasons such as financial mismanagement, lack of proper facilities, or failure to meet student performance standards as stated in the charter (Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice, 2004).

Applications for school charters must be approved and reviewed by the school district where they will operate. Private schools, church schools,

and parents of home-schooled students are not eligible to start a charter school. Charter laws allow school boards and state universities to serve as sponsors for charter schools although school boards served as the original sponsors. Florida ranked third in the nation in the number of charters in 2003–04. Thirty-nine school districts have charter schools while most of the districts without them are small and rural districts.

Charter schools are required to determine baseline student academic standards and detail how the students' academic achievement will be evaluated and compared. Many charter schools administer pre-tests in math, science, language arts, and writing.

Charter schools are required to participate in the statewide assessment program and comply with Florida's School Accountability Plan (A+ plan) which assigns grades to schools based on student performance. Norm referenced and criterion tests must be used to measure academic progress for all public schools.

The Florida System of School Improvement and Accountability Administrative code (6A-1.09981) requires schools with at least 30 eligible students with valid FCAT (Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test) scores in reading and in math for both the current and previous years to be assigned a performance grade. Charter schools have not fared particularly well in this system. In 2003–04 86% of charter school received a passing grade, while 99% of traditional schools were passing (Senate Education Committee, 2005).

As long as the student population is larger than ten students, a school will receive an Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) designation as required by the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (Office of Elementary & Secondary Education, 2003). In 2003–04 charter schools in Florida had AYP passing rate of 27%, while traditional schools' passing rate was 21%.

Florida charter schools have emphasized at risk and socio-economically disadvantaged students. Many students who choose to attend charter schools have been struggling in traditional schools and are already behind academically. These students frequently move back to traditional schools in a few years and are replaced by new students who have also not been successful in traditional schools. Students who have been retained in traditional public schools are more likely to transfer to charter schools. Due to the popu-

lation which is served by charter schools, there are many who believe that charter school performance should be measured by a value-added method which measures the educational gains per student per year. The annual learning gain for charter school students meet or exceed those in traditional public schools (Senate Education Committee, 2005).

Charter schools are allowed to set eligibility standards and capacity limits as long as the standards do not discriminate against qualified students and are not in violation of state law (Charter School Law, 2001).

The funding of charter schools is determined in the same manner as other Florida public schools, receiving funds based on the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) students enrolled (Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability, 2000). School Infrastructure Thrift (SIT) Awards can be access to purchased property, carry out construction or renovations, or to make lease payments. After two years charter schools are eligible to receive Public Education Capital Outlay (PECO) and Service Trust Fund. School districts are permitted to retain five percent of the FTE (up to 500 students) for administrative costs (Charter School Law, 2001).

Inadequate startup funds and resource limitations affect most new charter schools. They often face opposition from teacher unions, state education agencies, and local boards that fear the charters will divert funds needed for traditional schools. In fact, most charter school opponents worry that charter schools will take tax dollars from schools to finance an unproven educational reform (Rado, 1996).

Charter schools face many challenges such as market pressure to perform. If student achievement does not meet the standards set in the charter and by the state, student may seek their education elsewhere and charter may be revoked. Class size requirements create problems by requiring schools to hire more teachers creating not only budget but also space issues. Charter schools often cannot compete with salaries and benefits offered by local school districts. Access to capital outlay funds also creates difficulties in improving and maintaining facilities (Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice, 2004).

Stanford University education professor, Michael Kirst, who has studied charter schools, states that it is too early to judge them. He asserts that charter schools have not been in existence for long enough and do not serve a large enough portion of the population to be able to assess their long-term effect (Kingsbury, 2004). Maybe only time will tell if charter schools are an appropriate response to school reform.

## References

- Charter School Law, FL Stat. 228.056 (1996)
- Charter School Law, FL Stat. 228.0561 (2001)
- Chubb, J. & Moe, T. (1990). *Politics, markets, and America's schools*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution.
- Hadderman, M. (1998) Charter schools. ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management. Eugene, OR. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED422600)
- Johnson, J. (2005). A question of balance: Autonomy and accountability in Florida public schools. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Florida, Gainesville.
- Kingsbury, K. (August, 2004). Charter schools remain subject of debate. CNN. Retrieved September 13, 2005, from <http://www.cnn.com/2004/EDUCATION/08/13/b2s.charters>
- Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice. (2004). 2002–2003 annual accountability report. Tallahassee: Florida Department of Education.
- Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability. (April, 2000). Program review: Charter schools need improved academic accountability and financial management (Report No. 99-48). Tallahassee: Author.
- Rado, D. (1996, April 17). House passes charter school legislation. *The St. Petersburg Times*, p. 1B.
- Senate Education Committee. (January, 2005). Florida's charter schools 2003–2004. Tallahassee: Florida Department of Education.

## Student Attendance in Florida

by Evelyn Torrey  
Florida Atlantic University

### Student Attendance

School attendance is an issue you will be asked to address as a Florida teacher. Chronic student absenteeism is often associated with academic underachievement and increased risk of dropping out of school.<sup>i</sup> About 10% of Florida's students are absent 21 or more days during a school year<sup>ii</sup>. Asian and Hispanic students have the best attendance records for elementary schools, but by middle and high school, Black and Hispanic students have the highest rates of chronic absences. American Indians have the highest absence rates in elementary and middle school levels<sup>iii</sup>. Students eligible for free- or reduced-price meals are absent more than their more affluent peers<sup>iv</sup>. While LEP students (English language learners) generally have better attendance records than students overall, ESE students (students with special needs) have chronic absenteeism rates of 10.6% at the elementary level, 18.7% at the middle school level, and 23.3% at the high school level.<sup>v</sup>

### Challenges Facing You as a Florida Teacher: Questions to Consider

- A Palm Beach County high school teacher has documented the relationship between school attendance and his ability to help them improve their language arts skills sufficiently to pass the FCAT. If your lowest-performing students are frequently absent, how will you be able to help them improve their academic skills and test performance?
- If the average attendance rate is 90% but the required No Child Left Behind adequate yearly progress (AYP) provision mandates that 95% of all students get tested, what can you as a teacher do to

encourage better attendance and completion of high stakes testing?

- If you are a teacher of students with special needs, what does the significantly higher absentee rate of your ESE students mean for the AYP scores for the school's ESE students?
- If you are teaching in a high school where chronic absentee rates are 20% for students eligible for free or reduced price lunch, how can you get 95% of your students to attend and participate in mandated testing?

## Retentions, Graduates, Diplomas, and Dropouts

by Evelyn Torrey  
Florida Atlantic University

In 2003–04, 201,274 students were not promoted to the next grade in Florida; 241,639 received out-of-school suspensions, 266,196 received in-school suspensions; corporal punishment was administered to 9,472 students, and 983 students were expelled.<sup>i</sup> Students who do not read effectively at the end of grade four and other students who fall below performance standards must receive remediation (summer school or intensive intervention in the next grade during the following year) or be retained within an intensive program that is different from the previous year's program.

In 2003–04, 43,334 students dropped out (high school dropout rate, 2.9%), reflecting a steady decline since the dropout rate of 5.4% in 1998–99. These students are often older than the expected age for their grade and usually have low grade point averages.<sup>ii</sup>

The high school graduation rate was 71.6%.<sup>iii</sup> The state projects that the percentage of increase in graduates over the next five years will be highest in Liberty, Osceola, Flagler, Sumter, Lee, Walton, and Sarasota counties. The largest increases in the number of graduates are projected for Hillsborough, Broward, Palm Beach, Osceola, Lee, Orange, and Pasco Counties.<sup>iv</sup>

<sup>i</sup>"Student Absenteeism by Grade Level, Socioeconomic Status, and Race," Florida Information Notes Series 2002-11F, February 2002

<sup>ii</sup>Florida Information Notes Series 2004-13F, March 2004

<sup>iii</sup>Florida Information Notes Series 2004-13E, March 2004

<sup>iv</sup>Florida Information Notes Series 2004-13F, March 2004

<sup>v</sup>Florida Information Notes Series 2004-13F, March 2004

<sup>i</sup>Profiles of Florida School Districts, 2003–04, Florida Department of Education, page 150

<sup>ii</sup>Profiles of Florida School Districts, 2003–04, Extended Edition, page 150

<sup>iii</sup>Profiles of Florida School Districts, 2003–04, page 150

<sup>iv</sup>Projected Florida High School Graduates, 2004–05 through 2020–21, Office of Evaluation and Reporting, Florida Department of Education, January 2005

**Florida High School Completers (67 county school districts), 2003–2004<sup>vii</sup>**

	Standard Diploma	%	Special Diploma	%	Certificate of Completion	%	Special Certificate of Completion	%	Total	% Special
All Graduates	124,716	90.1	6,089	4.40	7,552	5.45	131	0.09	138,488	9.94
Whites	73,383	94.3	2,831	3.64	1,530	1.97	62	0.08	77,806	5.68
African Americans	23,439	78.8	2,280	7.77	3,594	12.24	43	0.15	29,356	20.16
Hispanics	22,814	88.0	883	3.41	2,199	8.48	24	0.09	25,920	11.98

Since 1976, the percentage of graduates who are Hispanic has increased from 5 to 18%. The percentage of graduates who are African American has consistently been 18–20%. The percentage of graduates who are White has dropped from 75 to 59%, while graduates classified as “Other” have risen from 0.3 to 4%.<sup>v</sup> In 2003–04, standard diplomas were received by 59,547 males (47.6%) and 65,459 females (52.4%) statewide.<sup>vi</sup>

The percentage of students receiving standard diplomas has been decreasing overall since 1991, but has decreased significantly more for African American students and somewhat more for Hispanic students than for white students; this trend is projected to continue to drop to 86.7% by 2020–21.<sup>viii</sup> This might be due to:

- a) higher standards for students receiving standard diplomas;
- b) decreases in the dropout rate;

- c) recent federal requirements that students with handicapping conditions who have not yet completed high school be provided educational services through age 21.

Compare these explanations to the discussion in your text on pages 246–247.

- As a prospective teacher, what are your thoughts about graduation, diplomas, and dropouts?
- Can you think of any other factors influencing the decreasing percentage of standard diploma graduates?
- How would you recommend school districts try to reverse that trend, or should they?
- Note that 20% of African American and 12% of Hispanic graduates are not getting standard diplomas, compared to 5.7% of White graduates. How would you explain this to a concerned community group? How does this impact the students themselves? What does it suggest about equity in Florida? What suggestions would you offer to your school district?
- Is this “just” a high school issue, or is it a reflection of educational experiences from children’s earliest years?
- How might these factors influence the way you handle diversity in your classroom?

<sup>v</sup>Florida Public High School Students Receiving Standard Diplomas, 1977–2004, Accountability, Research and Measurement, January 2005, Florida Department of Education

<sup>vi</sup>ibid.

<sup>vii</sup>Projected Florida High School Graduates, 2004–05 through 2020–21, Office of Evaluation and Reporting, January 2005, Florida Department of Education

<sup>viii</sup>ibid.



## PART IV: Web Resources for Florida's Future Teachers

### Certification and Teaching Careers

#### Florida Teacher Certification Examinations (FTCE)

<http://fln.education.net/ftcehome.htm>

This Florida Department of Education site offers complete information about Florida Teacher Certification Examinations, including test descriptions, exam dates and locations, registration and fee information, testing requirements, preparation guides, and FTCE competencies and skills.

#### Florida Educator Certification

<http://www.fldoe.org/edcert>

At this site, you can request materials, apply for out-of-state certification, renew or amend a certification, and find steps to certification for all teacher candidates.

### Resources for New Teachers

#### Start with Success

<http://s93106072.onlinehome.us/teacher/default.htm>

This resource for new teachers in Florida provides information on assessment, classroom management, communicating with families, motivation, and more.

### Professional Associations

#### Florida Association of Science Teachers

<http://www.fastscience.org>

The Florida Association of Science Teachers site includes news and information on professional development, legislation, membership, events, and conferences.

#### Florida Technology Education Association

<http://www.ftea.com>

This site includes news, links, and information on FTEA membership, conferences, workshops, awards, and grants.

#### Florida Association for Computers in Education

<http://www.facenet.org>

This association provides information and addresses urgent issues in instructional technology in Florida. Their site includes links and information on membership and conferences.

#### Florida Association of Elementary and Middle School Principals

<http://www.fasa.net/faemsp/index.html>

FAEMSP provides leadership development support for elementary and middle school principals in the state of Florida. Their site includes news and information on membership, conferences, and awards.

#### Florida Association of School Administrators

<http://www.fasa.net>

FASA is an association for administrators, district superintendents, principals, and supervisors in Florida public schools. Their website offers news and information on membership, awards, conferences, committees, and publications, as well as legislative updates.

#### Florida Art Education Association

<http://www.faea.org>

The FAEA website includes information on membership, conferences, publications, and legislation.

#### Florida State Music Teachers Association

<http://www.fmta.org>

The FMTA site offers a newsletter, links, and information on membership, upcoming events, and legislation.

### Professional Development

#### Florida League of Teachers

<http://fln.education.net/profdev/league.htm>

This Florida Department of Education program focuses on promoting school improvement through professional development and training.

## Accountability

### Florida School Grades

<http://schoolgrades.fldoe.org>

This site provides Florida Department of Education searchable reports on individual schools' No Child Left Behind yearly progress.

### Florida Department of Education No Child Left Behind Site

<http://www.fldoe.org/NCLB>

The Florida Department of Education NCLB site includes fact sheets, reports, and information about the implementation of NCLB in Florida schools.

## State Standards

### Sunshine State Standards

<http://www.firn.edu/doe/curric/prek12/frame2.htm>

This site provides background information, links, subject area contacts, and information on the current review of Florida's Sunshine State Standards.

### InTech2000 Forum's Web Link Library

<http://intech2000.miamisci.org/>

This site houses a vast array of links to web resources and suggested classroom activities, organized by grade level and subject area, to help teachers meet Florida's Sunshine State Standards.

## Curriculum Planning

### Interdisciplinary Curriculum Planning Tool

<http://www.firn.edu/doe/curric/prek12/ecpt.htm>

This Florida Department of Education site provides downloadable Curriculum Planning Tools for elementary and secondary educators. The site also includes manuals and related information.

## Assessment and Testing

### Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT)

<http://www.firn.edu/doe/sas/fcat.htm>

This site contains information for students and parents, educators, and the general public about the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test. The site includes sample tests, scores, and reports.

### Florida Writing Assessment Program—Florida Writes!

<http://www.firn.edu/doe/sas/fwaphome.htm>

This site includes information on the Florida Writing Assessment Program, including descriptions of assessments, rubrics, scoring, and results.

### High School Competency Test (HSCT)

<http://www.firn.edu/doe/sas/hscthome.htm>

This site provides criteria, reports, and results for the Florida High School Competency Test.

## Educational Technology

### Florida Center for Instructional Technology at the University of South Florida

<http://fcit.coedu.usf.edu>

The FCIT provides leadership, instructional materials, and support to help K-20 educational institutions integrate technology. Their site offers information about workshops and professional development opportunities and includes FCIT publications, educator's guides, and assessment tools.

## Legislative Issues

### Florida Education Legislative Liaisons

<http://www.fell.ws>

The Florida Education Legislative Liaisons seek to impact legislation and disseminate legislative information related to education in the state of Florida. The site includes news, links, and information.

### 2006 Florida Statutes

[http://www.leg.state.fl.us/statutes/index.cfm?App\\_mode=Display\\_Statute&Search\\_String=&URL=Ch1003/Sec42.HTM](http://www.leg.state.fl.us/statutes/index.cfm?App_mode=Display_Statute&Search_String=&URL=Ch1003/Sec42.HTM)

The full text of 2006 Statute 1003.42 can be found here.

## Exceptional Students

### Teaching Resources for Florida Exceptional Student Education

<http://www.cpt.fsu.edu/ese/>

This resource site includes information on lesson design, modifications, standards, performance objectives, strategies, and legislation, and covers curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

### **The Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services**

<http://www.firn.edu/doe/commhome/>

This bureau of the Florida Department of Education coordinates services and administers programs for exceptional students. Their site includes news, a meeting calendar, publications, descriptions of services, contact information, and extensive links.

## **Multicultural Education**

### **Florida Department of Education: Academic Achievement through Language Acquisition**

<http://www.firn.edu/doe/aala/>

The Office of Academic Achievement through Language Acquisition (AALA) works with school districts to provide understandable instruction to all students in the state of Florida in accordance with the State Board of Education Consent Decree. The site includes the text of the decree, extensive Florida Comprehensive English Language Learning Assessment (CELLA) training and testing materials and publications, descriptions of the office's services and related documents and publications, statistical data, in-service and training materials, and more.

### **The Holocaust Memorial Resource and Education Center of Florida: Educator Resources**

<http://www.holocaustedu.org/education/index.htm>

This section of the Holocaust Memorial Resource and Education Center's site includes information about meeting the requirements of the Holocaust Education Mandate; program outlines and teacher guides for museum field trips; content listings for the center's elementary, middle, and high school teaching trunks; a description of the center's prejudice reduction education programs; and a registration form for the center's annual Teachers' Institute.

### **LEAH**

<http://www.nextgenerations.org/whowhat.htm>

LEAH provides funding for teacher education and training, programming and curriculum development, and educational resources, and helps schools and teachers implement the Holocaust Education Mandate. The site provides links, grant applications, con-

tact information, and is the web home of Next Generations, a group of children and grandchildren of Holocaust survivors who work to educate people today about the Holocaust.

### **Using Children's Literature to Link Mathematics and Social Studies: A Multicultural Exploration with Bread**

<http://fcit.usf.edu/math/resource/articles/bread.htm>

This article, written by a professor and an education student at The University of South Florida, outlines a unit in which children's books that share bread as a theme are used to connect math and social studies while exploring different cultural relationships with bread. The article addresses Florida State standards, describes three activities, and lists print and technology resources.

### **The American Folklife Center: A Teacher's Guide to Folklife Resources in Florida**

[http://www.loc.gov/folklife/teachers/country\\_list.php?countryID=41](http://www.loc.gov/folklife/teachers/country_list.php?countryID=41)

This site lists publications for a variety of folklife subjects relevant to the state of Florida. Listings include publisher information and web links.

### **The Florida Memory Project: Online Classroom**

<http://www.floridamemory.com/OnlineClassroom/>

The Florida Memory Project's Online Classroom offers a wealth of resources for teaching about Florida's diverse folk history in grades 4-12. Materials include lesson plans keyed to state standards, photographic writing prompts, links, and audiovisual resources.

## **Florida Employment Resources**

### **Florida's Official Teacher Recruiting Website**

<http://www.teachinflorida.org>

At this site, you can search for jobs, post your resume, and find information about certification, teacher salaries, job fairs, state standards, individual Florida schools and districts, statistical data, and more. The site also offers lesson plans, professional development information, and information for career changers.

### **Employment opportunities site for Miami-Dade County Public Schools**

<http://jobs.dadeschools.net>

This site lists teaching, non-instructional, and administrative job opportunities in the Miami-Dade County Public Schools. The site includes information on benefits, certification, employment standards, salaries, and more.

### **Duval County Public Schools Employment Opportunities**

<http://www.educationcentral.org/employ/>

This site includes information on recruitment, certification, and substitute teaching and lists job openings for Duval Country Public Schools (Jacksonville area).

### **School District of Hillsborough County Division of Human Resources**

<http://apps.sdhc.k12.fl.us/hrdiv/>

At this site, you can access information on certification, salaries, benefits, and tenure, and can search job listings in the School District of Hillsborough County (Tampa area).

### **Pinellas County Schools Human Resources**

<http://www.pinellas.k12.fl.us/hr/jobs.html>

This site offers information on hiring guidelines, certification, compensation, benefits, and salaries and lists job openings in the Pinellas County Schools (St. Petersburg area).

### **Leon County Schools: Personnel Services**

<http://www.leon.k12.fl.us/Public/Person/Index.htm>

This site provides information on teaching jobs in Leon County (Tallahassee area).

### **Orange County Public Schools Teacher Recruitment**

<http://www.ocps.k12.fl.us/personnel.rhtml>

This site offers information on certification, pay schedules, and high-need areas and lists instructional vacancies in Orange County Public Schools (Orlando area).

### **District Contact Information for all Florida Districts and Schools**

[http://www.fldoe.org/schoolmap/flash/district\\_list.asp](http://www.fldoe.org/schoolmap/flash/district_list.asp)

From this site, you can search individual district web-sites for job postings.

### **Southern Teachers**

<http://www.southernteachers.com>

Southernteachers.com lists teaching positions in the South, especially at private and independent institutions.

## **National Employment Resources**

### **Teachers Support Network**

<http://www.teacherssupportnetwork.com/>

At this site, you can search for jobs by level, subject area, and state.

### **EDinformatics**

<http://www.edinformatics.com/education/employment.htm>

This site provides links to sites listing jobs in different specializations and areas around the country.

### **EducationAmerica.net**

<http://www.educationamerica.net>

At this site, you can search for teaching, administrative, and support jobs by state or region. The site also includes information on state certification, teacher salaries, and resume writing.

### **National Teacher Recruitment Clearinghouse**

<http://www.recruitingteachers.org/channels/clearinghouse/>

This clearinghouse site offers numerous resources for job seekers, including information for new and current teachers, career changers, paraprofessionals, and college students, as well as a job bank and licensing information.

### **National Educators Employment Network**

[http://www.teachersatwork.com/find\\_job.cfm](http://www.teachersatwork.com/find_job.cfm)

At this site, you can search for jobs by subject area.

### **Teachers.Net Job Center**

<http://jobs.teachers.net/Teachers/SearchJobs/tabid/63/Default.aspx>

At Teachers.Net you can search jobs by position type, grade level, key word, and location.

### **TeachersOnline.com**

<http://67.104.186.98/teachers>

The TeachersOnline.com nationwide teacher recruitment site allows you to search jobs by keyword, level, state, position type, and salary requirements.