



Tropic Topics

March 2008

Mark your Calendar

March

9th – Military Band performs at KWHS

11-13 & 19th FCAT

11th School Board Meeting at MHS

21st No School

25th School Board @ CSHS

**28th End of 3rd Grading Period!
Only 9 weeks left!!**

March 31-April 6 = Spring Break

**Daylight Savings-
March 8th**



Kudos

The TIES annual recognition luncheon was a success again this year! Ms Holland did a great job coordinating all the festivities and awards. We would like to thank the Superintendent and the executive team for attending and our special guests the School Board members, Mr. Griffiths, Mr. Pribramsky, Mr. Mathewson and Mr. Dick also came to support the program.

School psychologists have been doing with David Fappiano, the lead psychologist for our district, and they have been looking at all aspects of the ELL / ESE evaluative process. Closing the achievement gap is one of our superintendent's major directives. Please visit <http://www.monroe.k12.fl.us/EquityADA/Gap.htm> for some excellent teaching strategies.

Maryanne Nickel and Wendy McPherson have just finalized the first district meeting with the University of South Florida regarding the PBS program for Monroe County. The PBS program is a behavioral prong of the Response to Intervention (RtI) process and they have done an enormous amount of work on this project. If you see any of these dedicated folks please be sure to mention how much we appreciate their work!

As FCAT approaches, the Department of Student Services is working extra hard. In order to assist the schools with the challenges of assessment we are using every staff member to help schools. Each of our staff, from the director to the assistants, is pitching in to help our children shine. FCAT is an important snapshot of the student's abilities and together we can support the students to help them do their best!

Please keep reading →

Spotlight is on...

Sharon Day & Marion Dell –Sharon and Marion took the initiative to send our used/broken alpha smarts that needed repair back to Alpha smart for a worthy cause. The products will be repaired and soon will be going to Africa to assist students there.

Dave Fappiano– Dave did a great job on the presentation to principals and staff! Everything we work on together makes the lives of the children a bit easier.

Lori Smyth ESE Grades 3-5 – Teacher

Lori has been a blessing to our 3rd-5th grade Exceptional Education students this school year. She has taken full-time students from struggling readers and mathematicians to confident, successful, inclusion students. Her Pirates of the Caribbean theme has captured her students' interest and sent them on a voyage of learning together. **People In Route to Achieving Terrific Educational Success** is her motto. She works side by side with her paraprofessional, Shannon Woods, to insure a seamless support of the instruction students are receiving in their mainstreamed classrooms. When her last full-time student became mainstreamed into a fifth grade classroom, she knew it was a success when he no longer claimed ownership of the classroom. It was no longer his classroom, but hers. He had found his treasure on the treasure map and with support from Lori and Shannon; the students now hunt for new treasures.

Congratulations to our super staff team! Thank you for making all the difference!!

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Pay it Forward, nominate someone today!

2008 Heartspring Award for Innovation and Creativity in Special Education

Do you think you are someone that is an innovative professional for students with special needs? Do you know someone that gets the job done using creative measures? If so, Heartspring wants you to tell us how you do what you do to get results for children with special needs. New ideas create results that matter and educators who are outstanding innovators are the right applicants for this award. The application process is simple. The format must be creative, take risks and tell us in a unique way how you execute your program to get results. Only the explorers, pioneers, risk-takers and innovators need apply. **Benefits of receiving the Heartspring Award for Innovation and Creativity in Special Education**

- \$1000 unrestricted award
- One of a kind program award sculpture
- Expense paid trip to attend exciting and informative sessions where you will discuss, explore and learn from other innovative educators just like yourself

Application Process Complete the application [**Word**] and mail it, along with supporting documents to:

Heartspring Award for Innovation and Creativity in Special Education

Attention: Heartspring Award
8700 East 29th Street North
Wichita, KS 67226

Applications must be received by April 25, 2008 <http://www.heartspring.org/award/>

**Nomination Criteria for the 2008
You Make a Difference! Award**

Honoring Florida's Educators for their exemplary practices of including
Students with Development Disabilities
Into the general education learning environment

[Nomination Form
\(English\)](#)

[Nomination Form
\(Spanish\)](#)

Nomination Criteria

Each application will be review based on the definition and premise below:

DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY (as defined by the Developmental Disabilities Act):

1. A physical or mental disability that occurred before age 22;
2. Results in significant limitations in three or more of the following areas. Self care, language, learning, mobility, self-direction, capacity for independent living and economic self-sufficiency; and,
3. Reflects a need for services that are of extended or lifelong duration.

INCLUSION - "Inclusion means all individuals-with and without disabilities-live, learn, work, play and participate together in all life experiences. Supports are provided to meet individual needs, and everyone is accepted and regarded as a valued member of society." Inclusion Works!

Nomination Criteria - School Personnel Attitudes and Beliefs

- School personnel belief that all students CAN learn and success and take steps to include students with developmental disabilities with general education students.
- School personnel a committed to and share responsibility for the learning outcomes and inclusion of students with disabilities.
- School personnel are prepared to serve students with disabilities together with other students, and have shared necessary information with students in the classroom.
- School personnel inform families about classroom progress, inclusion and program activities.
- Special education personnel and general education personnel are committed to collaborative practice in general education classrooms and strive for inclusion of students with developmental disabilities in general education classes.
- Services and physical accommodations are made on case by case bases and meet the needs of the students in the classroom to ensure that students with developmental disabilities are included with all other students.
- Services needed by the student are available and accessible (e.g., health, physical, occupational, or speech/language therapy).

You Make a Difference Award

- Accommodations and/or modifications to the physical environment and materials and equipment are made to meet the student's needs (e.g., toys, building and playground facilities, learning materials, instructional strategies, and assistive devices) to ensure that students with developmental disabilities are included with all other students in all activities.

School Support

- The principal/administrator understands the needs of students with developmental disabilities to be included with other students in the school.
- There are enough school personnel in the classroom (teachers, aides, therapists, etc.) to meet the needs of students with developmental disabilities and to ensure that students with developmental disabilities are included in the same classroom as students without disabilities.
- School personnel participate in professional development and follow up activities that assist them in including children with disabilities in general education classrooms (e.g., information on disabilities, instructional methods, awareness and acceptance activities for students, and team building skills).

- The school has appropriate policies and procedures for monitoring individual student progress, including grading and testing, for students with disabilities.

Collaboration

- Special education and general education school personnel meet frequently to discuss the needs of students in order to create a more inclusive classroom.
- General education teachers, special education teachers, and other specialist provide supports to students with developmental disabilities using collaborative models (e.g., co-teaching, support facilitation, teacher assistance teams) to ensure inclusion of students with developmental disabilities in general education classes.

Instructional Methods

- School personnel have the knowledge and skills need to select and adapt curricula and instructional methods according to individual student need to ensure the inclusion of students with developmental disabilities in the general education classes.
- A variety of instruction arrangements are available (e.g., cross-grade grouping, cooperative learning groups, multi-level instruction) that meet the inclusive needs of students with developmental disabilities.
- School personnel foster a cooperative learning environment and promote socialization and inclusion for all students.

Completed nomination applications must be received no later than 5:00 p.m. (Eastern Time) on Wednesday, April 16, 2008.

If you have questions, please contact: Sharon Grey at aplantomeet@earlink.net or (850) 224-6222.

Application web site: <http://www.fddc.org/announcements/YMAD.asp>

The Council for Exceptional Children and the Monroe County School District are proud to announce the candidates for the 2008 Inclusion Teacher of the Year. The county-wide candidates are as follows:

Katie Balazs	Marathon High School
Ruth Bryant	Glynn Archer Elementary
Kim Butler	Poinciana Elementary
Linda Cohen	Stanley Switlik Elementary
Selina Corliss	Plantation Key School
Julie King	Gerald Adams School
Pamela Korbecki	Key Largo School-Elem.
Melanie Tabbert	Key Largo School-Middle
Geri Lennard	Sugarloaf School-Elem.
Sean Lawson	Sugarloaf School-Middle
Julia Parmer	Key West High School
Hope Pierce	Coral Shores High School
Ruth Walker	Horace O' Bryant Middle School
Cally White	Plantation Key School
Kim Willis	Sigsbee School

The district winner will be highlighted in next months Tropic Topic!



Have a great day and never forget, we are tasked with developing the future leaders of the world, how we treat children today is how we can be expected to be treated when we are old!