

# STRAIGHT TALK

By Dixie District School Superintendent – Mark Rains

August, 2011

Welcome to the 2011-2012 school year. I am very proud of our students, parents, and staff for the successes of this past year! Our school district has been recognized as an "A" school district by the Florida Department of Education. As we begin this year, everyone is very busy working to achieve even higher standards for all of our students! We believe this will be another successful year for our students and together we can have a huge impact on the lives of our young people.

The Dixie District Schools Back To School Guide is available at local businesses, at all schools, and on the district website. These Guides contain valuable information that will be useful throughout the school year.

During the past week, I have met with the staff at all schools and will be visiting meetings of local groups and organizations to share my goals as Superintendent of Schools with all stakeholders. My goals are:

1. Keep our children safe and secure.
2. Hire and retain only instructional staff who we believe are the best available.
3. All FCAT scores at or above the state average.
4. Establish and/or maintain positive relationships among all stakeholders.
5. Acquire special facilities funding for a new high school in Dixie County.

My top priority is the safety and security of our students. I would like to remind motorists to take extra traffic precautions as students head back to school. We have 2,071 students traveling to Dixie County public schools each day. Please watch for our fleet of twenty-four buses as they are on the roads early every morning. Keep an eye out for children riding their bicycles or walking to school. Teen drivers, avoid speeding and distractions (texting, talking on cell phone, eating, adjusting the radio) while driving.

I continue to meet with the Superintendent's District Drug Advisory Committee to address the drug situation in our community. Our next meeting is September 12<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m. in the School Board Meeting Facility, 823 SE 349 Highway in Old Town. This group supports the upcoming Reality Tour, with the first program on September 8<sup>th</sup>, 6:00 p.m. in the Prince B. Oliver Vocational School, located behind Dixie County High School.

Dixie District Schools will continue to implement the random student drug testing at Dixie County High School and random drug testing of all faculty and staff from throughout our school district. Participation in school sponsored interscholastic extra-curricular activities and permission to drive to school and park on campus is a privilege. In order for students to be afforded the privilege, they are required to submit a notarized consent form to the front office at DCHS. Consent forms are available on the district website. The tests are evaluated by an approved laboratory and a contracted company sends their staff to administer the drug screenings. We believe every child is entitled to a drug free environment for education. We are seeking to counteract the effects of peer pressure by providing additional reasons for students to avoid the use of drugs and alcohol.

For current Dixie District Schools information, visit our website at <http://www.dixie.k12.fl.us>. We welcome your suggestions in making this a user friendly website for students, parents, and the community.

Mark A. Rains, Superintendent  
Dixie District Schools



*Dixie District Schools begins the 2011-12 school year as an "A" school district.*