

# STRAIGHT TALK

By Dixie District School Superintendent – Mark Rains

November, 2011

The holiday season is approaching, and once again I would like to thank you for giving me the opportunity to work with the young people of our community. I enjoy working to improve the educational opportunities for our children.

I write this article with a heavy heart, as our school district lost one of our students recently. Austen Osteen was the victim of a hunting accident. He was a 6<sup>th</sup> grader at Ruth Rains Middle School. We ask for your continued prayers for the Osteen family as they face this very difficult time.



*Supt. Rains works on math skills with a student at OTES.*

Although students had Veterans Day holiday off from Dixie County schools, teachers worked to ensure students knew why. They geared curriculum around the day, and each school provided a banner to be displayed at the November 8<sup>th</sup> School Board Meeting, for the District Veterans Recognition Program.

Congratulations to the Dixie County High School Band for their recent success. They received Superior ratings in several divisions and qualified for state competition. Best wishes to this group of DCHS and RRMS students as they compete at the next level.

Dixie County High School has included additional performing arts in their curriculum this year. We have course offerings in drama, music theory, digital design, and chorus. In addition, the recently formed student generated Art Club has begun displaying artwork throughout the campus.

I would like to encourage all students, staff and parents to work extremely hard these next few months in preparation for the state mandated FCAT test and End of Course Exams. With all of the holiday festivities and the activities going on in our community and schools, it is easy to become distracted from our main goal, which is academic progress.

One of my five goals as Superintendent of Schools is to ensure that all FCAT scores are at or above the state average. I strive to visit classrooms at all schools regularly and have recently met with each principal and the Director of Curriculum to review student data and success strategies for each school.


We are continuing random staff drug testing throughout the district and student testing at DCHS. Hopefully, this serves as a deterrent to the illicit use of drugs. So far this year, we have had no positive results on tests.

I will be talking with faculties at all schools during the next month to discuss issues in the upcoming legislative session, along with district plans for Differentiated Accountability.

“Future Now” will be in our middle school and high school on February 1. This is a group working to impact, encourage, motivate, and inspire young people to have a clear vision and bright hope for their futures. This program for public schools addresses issues about the importance of setting goals and making the right choices in life.

I would like to thank parents, staff and the community for your support of our children. I just completed my third year as Superintendent and I continue to believe that in order to be the best Superintendent possible, I need constant feedback and welcome your input on improving our school system. We have developed a superintendent’s evaluation, which is available on our website at <http://www.dixie.k12.fl.us/>. We also have a Bright Ideas section that will allow you to submit any new idea or comment on current issues in our schools. Both of these forms may be submitted online.

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.

*The way to a child’s mind is through the heart.* 

Mark A. Rains, Superintendent  
Dixie District Schools