

STRAIGHT TALK

By Dixie District School Superintendent – Mark Rains

October, 2011

October 26th ends our first nine weeks of school. School staff is working hard as we strive for academic excellence with every child in our school system. Students are learning in the classroom and participating in after school extra-curricular activities.

A highlight this month was the completion of a Quality Assurance Review at Dixie County High School. The committee will be recommending that DCHS remain fully accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools for another five years!

FCAT season is in full swing as our teachers and students are working hard to prepare for this state mandated test. We strive to continue academic success for every student. FCAT retakes for high school students were administered last week and the ACT was administered Saturday. We encourage our students to take college placement tests (ACT, SAT, PERT), which determines their preparedness for college.

Over the past few years, the State Legislature and the Department of Education have increased the emphasis on science, technology, engineering, and math in the high school classroom. This has now become known as the STEM initiative. By 2013-14, all districts in the state must have at least one STEM Academy fully operational. The Dixie District School System is currently planning the development of a STEM Academy. We are working with Florida Gateway College, Florida Workforce Development Board, Dixie County School Board, District Administrators, North East Florida Education Consortium, Dixie Education Foundation, and the Department of Education to fulfill this requirement. We also would like input from the local community, local businesses, and regional businesses to help develop and implement this academy. I will be discussing this initiative with community organizations and businesses over the next year as we develop the plan. During the 2012-13 school year, we will be training the appropriate staff in the new teaching techniques and procedures of teaching in an academy setting.

National Fire Prevention Week was October 9-15. Dixie County has many firefighters who volunteer their time to protect this community. They also visit schools regularly to educate our students about fire safety. Volunteer firefighters were recognized during the Dixie County-Trenton football game.

We celebrated National School Lunch Week, October 10-14. I worked alongside the cafeteria staff during lunch at all four schools. The entire food service staff is to be commended for their dedicated service every day to our students.

Last week was National School Bus Safety Week. Safety is my number one concern, so I was eager to join in on this campaign. I rode the entire afternoon route of Bus #27 and enjoyed interacting with the driver and students. Our bus drivers have an awesome responsibility and I appreciate our transportation staff very much.




Supt. Rains welcomes students as they arrive for their bus ride home.

Last Thursday night was Parent-Teacher Conference Night. I would like to thank parents for supporting your child's education. The increase of parent involvement is evident with the number of parents visiting all of our schools to meet with their child's teachers.

I would like to thank everyone who stopped by during my recent visits to the outlying areas of Suwannee, Horseshoe, Steinhatchee, and in my satellite office at Old Town Elementary School. My goal is for these to be more convenient locations for our residents in these communities to meet with the Superintendent of Schools.

In honor of Veterans Day, our schools will be closed November 11th. We invite all Veterans to attend the School Board Meeting on November 8th at 6:00 p.m. (School Board Meeting Facility at 823 SE 349 Highway in Old Town), where we will recognize those who served our country. I would like to personally say "Thank You" to our veterans for the sacrifice you made for our country and if it wasn't for your service, we would not have the freedoms in this land we have today.

For current Dixie District Schools information, visit our website at <http://www.dixie.k12.fl.us>.

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

Mark A. Rains, Superintendent
Dixie District Schools