



Extra Special Edition

Calhoun County's Exceptional Student Education Newsletter

A NEWSLETTER DESIGNED TO ASSIST FAMILIES IN MEETING THE NEEDS OF
EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN AND TO ENHANCE PARTNERSHIPS WITH SCHOOLS



This newsletter can now be found on your child's school website or the district website under "School Newsletters." If you would like a paper copy sent to you, please contact Alicia Goodman at 850-674-8169 or email at alicia.goodman@calhounflschools.org.

School Web Sites:

www.calhounflschools.org
www.althaschool.org
www.blountstownelementary.org
www.blountstownhigh.org
www.blountstownmiddle.org
www.carrschool.org

WINTER 2011

**ESE
PARENT
SURVEY**

www.esesurvey.com

Feb. 1—June 30,
2011

It's that time again!



Please be reminded that you can access the parent survey beginning **February 1, 2011**. The most efficient way to complete the survey is by using a computer, and going online to www.esesurvey.com. If you do not have a computer at home, feel free to go to your child's school and complete the survey there. Our district will have opportunities for you to do the survey at your child's school in the next few months at special events. If you prefer to complete a paper survey, instead of on the computer, contact the ESE Director—Staci Williams (850) 674-8734 ext. 229 or ESE Parent Liaison—Alicia Goodman (850)-674-8169 to get a paper version of the survey. It is very important that you complete the parent survey so that we will know how we are doing to promote parental satisfaction with programs and services for students with disabilities. If you have more than one child receiving special services, please fill out one for each child. Remember to hit the submit button upon completing the survey. Also, if an item on the survey does not apply to your child, please leave that item blank.

Florida's Assessment Time

It's that time of the year again. The cool weather and frosty wind brings with it the start of student assessment here in Florida. Most parents have heard of the very important FCAT (Florida Comprehensive Achievement Test) that almost all students in the state of Florida take during the late Winter and early Spring. The FCAT gives students an opportunity to show the learning that they have achieved over the past year. It is also a time for each school to evaluate how well they have instructed students in the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards. For years this testing and reporting of student's learning has given students, parents, and educators valuable information about academic progress and helps guide future efforts in the classroom. All Florida students participate in the state's assessment and accountability system. A few years ago the state of Florida developed a new assessment called the Florida Alternate Assessment. The Florida Alternate Assessment is designed for students whose participation in the general statewide assessment (FCAT) is not appropriate even with accommodations. It is the official measure for a small group of students working on access points standards. These students with significant disabilities now have a system that provides the same type of information on achievement that the FCAT provides. The academic successes and needs of these students are reported to their parents and teachers so that they can prosper like all students across the state. The Florida Alternate Assessment starts in Mid-January and is just the start of a very busy assessment season.



The statewide assessment program is changing due to Senate Bill 4 which passed this past Legislative session. Beginning with the current 2010-2011 school year, students working towards a standard diploma will be required to take the Algebra 1 End of Course (EOC) Examination, (if they are enrolled in Algebra 1) since there will no longer be the grade 9 FCAT Math test. The student's IEP will specify any allowable accommodations in instruction and testing. In certain cases, an IEP team may meet and decide that the EOC results may be waived for purposes of awarding credit for the course.

FCAT Writing

Grades 4, 8 & 10

March 1-3, 2011

Stanford 10:

Grade 2

March 14-18, 2011

FCAT Reading, Math & Science

Grades 3 – 11

April 11 – 22, 2011

FCAT Retakes

Repeating Tenth Graders, Juniors, and Seniors

March 30– April 6, 2011

Alternate Assessment

Special Diploma Students Grades 3 – 10

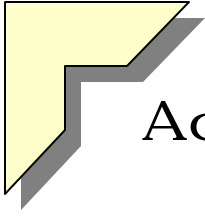
January 10 – February 17, 2011

End-Of-Course Exams

9th Grade Algebra 1 Students

May 9 – 13, 2011

In 2011-2012, there will not be a Grade 10 FCAT Math required for graduation purposes, but 10th graders will be required to take an End of Course (EOC) Exam and the FCAT 2.0 Reading test.



FCAT and Accommodations



Following are some examples of allowable FCAT accommodations:

1. Changes in the way test items are presented (large print, Braille, sign language)
2. Changes in the way a student responds to the test items (signed response, verbal response, mechanical devices)
3. Changes in scheduling of the test (frequent breaks, extended time)
4. Changes in the test setting (taking the test in a small group or alone)
5. Use of assistive devices (adapted calculators in grades 7 and higher; technology, without grammar or spelling checks, for writing assessments)

The IEP team determines which accommodations, if any, the student needs. In order for a student to use accommodations during FCAT or End of Course Exams, they must routinely use the same accommodations in the classroom.

Note: Some accommodations that children receive in the classroom are not allowed on the FCAT. For example, using spell-check during the writing section is not allowed because it interferes with the test's ability to evaluate a student's writing skills.

In the months preceding the test:

- ? Find out when the tests are to be given. Write the date and time on your calendar. Avoid scheduling appointments or trips during these times.
- ? Ask your child's teacher what you can do at home to review for the test.

Read, Read, Read!!!

The easiest and best way to prepare your child for doing well on tests is to encourage him/her to read.

Right before the test:

Make sure your child gets a good night's sleep and eats breakfast. Have your child dress in layers; kids do better if they don't have to think about how hot or cold they are. Don't be too anxious, but make sure your child knows that it's important to do his/her absolute best.

Test day:

Remind your child to check his/her answers carefully. Remind them to fill in all blanks.

Most Importantly ...

**** Remind them that you love them no matter what and that you just want them to give it their best!**





AMC Theatres and the Autism Society have teamed up to bring families affected by autism and other disabilities a special opportunity to enjoy their favorite films in a safe and accepting environment on a monthly basis with the “Sensory Friendly Films” program.

In order to provide a more accepting and comfortable setting for this unique audience, the movie auditoriums will have their lights brought up and the sound turned down, families will be able to bring in their own gluten-free, casein-free snacks, and no

previews or advertisements will be shown before the movie. Additionally, audience members are welcome to get up and dance, walk, shout or sing—in other words, AMC’s “Silence is Golden” policy will not be enforced unless the safety of the audience is questioned. AMC Theatres in Tallahassee, Florida is participating in this program. For more information, please call 850-386-7873, or check their website at www.amcentertainment.com.



The 13th Annual Family Café will be held at the Disney Coronado Springs Resort on June 3-5, 2011. The Annual Family Café is a statewide event designed to meet the informational and networking needs of individuals with disabilities or special health care needs and their families. The annual event provides a truly unique environment, where Floridians can attend educational breakout sessions relevant to their specific needs, interact with government policy makers, network with other families and learn about the wide range of services available to them. Registration online begins 2/14/11 at www.familycafe.net.

Parenting

Special Needs
This online magazine is a fresh and effective vehicle that fills a need and provides vital information that reaches the



special needs community. This is a FREE, bi-monthly, online publication. It cover all ages and stages of guiding children/ individuals with special needs.
