IN THIS ISSUE:

· Superintendents Soar to New Heights!
· Small Schools P.E. Workshop Provides Fun and Ideas!
· Plan Now to Participate in Florida Conference Summer Trainings!
· Winter Regional Meetings Promote Florida Conference Spirit
· Forest City Adventist School and Orlando Junior Academy Awarded SMART Funds
· What's New on our Wiki and Website?
· While Country Reels, Florida Basks

Superintendents Soar to New Heights!

Vice President Arne Nielsen, along with Superintendents Runnels, Doran, Perez, and Rodriguez recently traveled to Sanford, where they participated in ZoomAir, a suspended ropes course with swaying bridges, tight ropes, and zip lines.
"This was definitely worth the effort!!" said Associate Superintendent Sandra Doran. "It reminded me once again how fortunate I am to be part of this team. Nury checked my tethering and encouraged me to just 'let go' when it was time to sail across the park on the zip lines. We all cheered one another on, trusted each other, and laughed together when the rain started and we emerged from the last zip line, soaked to the skin!"

After the unexpected deluge of rain, the group took a "rain check," planning to return in the future to finish the course, with the 50-foot final zip line awaiting them in the Rain Forest course. Ever faithful to duty, they converged in a restaurant, shaking with cold, drenched from head to toe, and discussed agenda items--determined, as always, to continue to maintain the high standard of the Florida Conference Office of Education.

Watch for more pictures in the gallery of the Florida Conference Office of Education website.
Small Schools P.E. Workshop Provides Fun and Ideas!

Forty of our teachers recently joined together in Kissimmee for an inspirational day of exercise, practical lessons, and engaging activities. Provided by Physical Education Specialist Dr. Debbie Morgan, the day began with a short presentation, followed by a morning of running, laughing, tagging, jumping and throwing. "I haven't had this much fun since I was a kid," one teacher was overheard saying.

After lunch, the students of the Osceola Adventist Christian School arrived, and the fun really began! Applying everything they had learned in the morning, teachers led students from PreK through 8th grade in a round of invigorating games.

"This is exactly what we needed," said Linda Westbrook, who teaches all eight grades. "We have been given so many great ideas; I can't wait to get started!"

Plan Now to Participate in Florida Conference Summer Trainings!

Each summer the Florida Conference Office of Education offers an exciting array of workshops to keep our teachers current in the field. This year will be no exception, reports Frank Runnels, Superintendent. "We are so serious about providing our teachers with the very best that we make these workshops a priority when planning our budget," he says. "Even if we have to cut corners someplace else, we always find a way to give our teachers the highest quality training opportunities."

Trainings begin on May 31 with a two week integrated unit planning session for small school teachers. The brainchild of Associate Superintendent Nury Perez, the event draws in teachers from our one and two-teacher schools who collaborate in planning their yearly units. "We get our entire year planned out in these two weeks," says Prashanth Pilly, 5th - 8th grade teacher at Fort Pierce. "The team effort is what keeps us going as small school teachers in Florida!"

Upper grades teachers who are not teaching in small schools need not dismay. The conference has asked Chris Juhl, teacher and author of integrated literacy units, to join us in training our single, double, and triple grade teachers in grades 5-8 from June 6 - 10. With 24 books to choose from (including the Pathways titles), teachers will have a tailor-made experience, coming away with 4matted lessons which are loaded with relevant activities, differentiation, and subject correlation. "I'm looking forward to sharing the things I've used in my own classroom to get kids motivated and excited about reading and writing," says Chris. Following the week-long training, Juhl has agreed to set up an e-mentoring relationship with participating teachers.

For those teachers who have not had the opportunity to participate in our week-long Responsive Classroom seminar, Associate Superintendent Mayra Rodriguez will offer the popular Level One training during the week of June 13. Concurrently, Associate Superintendent Nury Perez will hold a collaborative training session for kindergarten and pre-kindergarten teachers.

This year, we will also have a high-quality slate of short workshops at the beginning of August. "We have pushed the opening of school back to the second week of August in order to allow us the opportunity to provide additional trainings for our teachers," says Superintendent Frank Runnels. "Buckle your seatbelts, the Florida Conference means business!"

On August 2, all teachers in Grades K-6 will be trained in "DIBELS Next," the new edition of DIBELS which has been completely redone, and will become familiar with the optional computerized math tests also available from the DIBELS Data Management system at no additional cost. Teachers in Grades 4-8 who teach math will receive training in "Hands-on Equations" on August 3, where they will be provided with the tools for making algebra a concrete, relevant experience for students. Early Childhood Teachers will participate in a Southern Union training on August 3, where they will be trained in methods of program evaluation. Finally, we will have our new study group leaders training on August 4.

All August trainings are required for the designated groups of teachers. Those conducted in May and June require advance teacher sign-up. Please contact Alejandra Torres at the conference as soon as possible to reserve your seat.
Winter Regional Meetings Promote Florida Conference Spirit

At our recent regional inservice, teachers from the west coast of Florida were delighted with the performance of "Fire and Ice," Walker Memorial Academy’s Steel Drum Band, led by Leonard Cann. "Each of the host schools in the south, central, and western areas of our conference went to great efforts to provide outstanding worships and make their guests feel comfortable and at home," reports Frank Runnels, Superintendent of Education.

Following the training in Response to Intervention (RtI), Early Childhood, and Teaching Writing, the office received appreciative e-mails from teachers, including the following note from Miami Springs teacher Veronyka Perez:

"I truly enjoyed the writing workshop and have already started implementing a lot of the ideas. Yesterday, I decided to change around my conferencing style with my student writer's workshop and it worked really well! I felt so fulfilled and even more connected with my students. Thank you so much for your ideas."

As a result of her participation in the workshop, Veronyka created four posters for students based on the ABC’s and D of On-Demand Writing. Teachers can access the posters on the literacy page of our wiki, http://www.flconfcurriculum.wikispaces.com

Forest City Adventist School and Orlando Junior Academy Awarded SMART Funds

The Office of Education is proud to report that two more of our schools have successfully submitted applications to the Southern Union Conference to receive money to begin the EDGE School journey. "We recognize the amount of work that the administration and teachers have put forth in order to make this happen," says Vice President Arne Nielsen. "We are anxious to see all of our schools become EDGE Schools and congratulate Mrs. Gonzalez and Ms. Agonbonkhese for their leadership in this direction."

Up to $12,000 in SMART funds (Schools Making a Real Transformation) are provided by the Southern Union to schools who follow the process outlined at www.adventistedge.org. The Florida Conference now has four schools who have received funding. Principals interested in submitting an application, documentation portfolio, and SMART fund deposit should contact their nurturing associate for help.

Photo: L to R: Principals Nicole Agbonkhese and Alipia Gonzalez
What's New on our Wiki and Website?

With the emergence of so many technologies, it is now possible to have access to up-to-the minute news and teacher tools with the click of a mouse. By signing up at our website and wiki, you'll receive emails when new postings appear. Not signed up yet? Here's a short summary of what you'll find on the news page of www.floridaconference.com/education:

- Get Spelling City for FREE!!
- Find out more about the upcoming science and kindergarten programs
- Get NAD-sponsored prices on Webspiration and BrainPOP. (You'll love this new resource for all subjects K-12).
- And don't forget to check www.flconfcurriculum.wikispaces.com for new math resources, free science experiments, direct access to 4MATION software, and a whole host of fun links being used around the conference.

Finally, you'll want to check the general Florida Conference website at www.floridaconference.com, so you don't miss such articles as this one that came in from our school in Miami Springs: http://www.floridaconference.com/news/2011/02/bears-for-africa/

Print this article

While Country Reels, Florida Basks

Check out this photo, snapped by Associate Superintendent Dr. Sandra Doran on her cell phone on a recent trip to North Miami. "Just out of curiosity I pulled up the Internet and checked the weather in the last two places I lived," she says. "One was 22 degrees and snowing; the other was 33 and cloudy. Sometimes we just need to take the time to look around and thank God for what we have!"

Prospective teachers take note! Florida is a great place to work!
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