



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FOR MORE INFORMATION

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FLORIDA SCHOOLS ARE GETTING THEIR STUDENTS READY TO WORK

TALLAHASSEE – Florida Ready to Work marked a successful first year, recognizing the Okaloosa County School District as its Overall Top-Performing Implementation Partner and Top-Performing School District for 2007-08. Florida Ready to Work is a new career readiness credentialing program sponsored by the State of Florida and administered by the Florida Department of Education. The program is being implemented by 500 high schools, regional workforce boards, technical centers, community colleges and community-based organization statewide. More than 50,000 high school students and adult jobseekers are currently enrolled in the program. Other top-performing school districts in the first year were Flagler County, Brevard County, Citrus County, Volusia County and Lee County.

“With the rapidly shifting workforce demands of our state and nation, it is more important than ever that our schools stay focused on providing students the foundational skills to meet the workforce challenges and opportunities ahead,” said Education Commissioner Eric J. Smith.

During the 2007-08 school year, 715 Okaloosa County public school students earned a Florida Ready to Work Credential, more than any other school district and any other program implementation partner in the state. Other school districts that are taking the lead in preparing their students for work include Flagler County with 500, Brevard County with 400, and Citrus, Volusia and Lee counties each with more than 300 students earning the Florida Ready to Work Credential in 2007-08. Starting with the 2008-09 school year, students who earn the Florida Ready to Work Credential will receive a special designation on their high school diploma.

“Florida Ready to Work is an increasingly important workforce and economic development tool for Florida,” said Chris Hart IV, President of Workforce Florida, Inc. “Preparing students to enter today’s knowledge-based workplace is vital to our efforts to create a better-skilled workforce that will help Florida businesses compete in today’s global economy.”

In the first year of the program, more than 7,300 Florida Ready to Work Credentials were earned statewide. The program is proven to help employers reduce hiring time, training costs and turnover, resulting in increased productivity and profitability. Jobseekers who complete the program earn a Credential from the State of Florida that shows employers what they can do, giving the jobseeker a competitive edge when seeking employment. Online Courseware is provided for those who need to build their skills. Participation is free for students, adult jobseekers and employers.

For more information, visit floridareadytowork.com or call toll-free (877) 444-4505.

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