

Contact Us!

Okaloosa County Education
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COME JOIN US AS A LOBBYIST FOR EDUCATION!

There will not be a more important time than the upcoming legislative session for teachers' voices to be heard! Please consider becoming a lobbyist for education! OCEA and FEA will provide training and TDE for you to lobby in Tallahassee.

FEA requires all lobbyists to attend training. Our lobbyist training will be held on Thursday, January 17, 5:30 at the OCEA office. Remember, experienced lobbyists are also required to attend the training. Please contact the office if you are interested!

Accurate information will enable us to get information to you more efficiently. If you have any questions, please call Diane or Mary at 678-5940 or email us at gulfcoast@floridaea.org. Thanks for your help!!

Membership Matters

Between the dates of December 1 and January 15, 2008, OCEA members who recruit new members are eligible to enter a drawing for a \$250 Visa card!

That's right; for each new member you sign up, your name will be placed in the drawing pool. So, the more new members you recruit, the greater your chances are of winning. Is someone sitting on the fence at your school? Use your powers of persuasion!

Carol Barlow, Membership Chair

From the Executive Director

MAP in 08-09?

All instructional personnel will participate in a vote after the first of the year to determine if we should negotiate a Merit Award Program (MAP) for the 2008-09 school year.

(For our new members not familiar with MAP, please download the Q&A from the Florida Dept of Education below).

Okaloosa teachers voted not to participate in MAP for the 07-08 school year, nor it's ill-conceived and short-lived predecessor, STAR (Special Teachers Are Rewarded). However, we submitted a "placeholder" to the DOE to allow us time to decide if we want to participate in 2008-09.

Briefly, the Merit Award Program is funded through legislation specifically designed for MAP. A district's participation in MAP is not required. Bonuses may be 5 to 10 percent of the district's average teacher salary which would have to be negotiated. Approximately 25% of Okaloosa teachers would receive the MAP award if the bonus was negotiated at 5%.

A "MAP teacher assessment" would have to be negotiated with at least 60% of the teacher's score based on student performance

OCEA Executive Board

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and/or learning gains. All of which would have to be negotiated, but could include FCAT scores, end of course exams, and other assessments that measure student performance or learning gains. A teacher's evaluation would be up to 40% of their score. Again, all would have to be negotiated.

For the 2007-08 school year, 12 out of 67 districts submitted a Merit Award Program to the DOE. Of the 12, six were recently returned to the districts for re-writes. They have until January 31, 2008 to resubmit. The rules for MAP have not changed, nor do we expect them to change for 2008-09.

When you vote, please remember if we participate in MAP, about 25% of our teachers will receive the bonus. Also, since it is a bonus, there is no retirement paid on a MAP award. The funds allocated for MAP may be used only for MAP, nothing else.

Please watch for your BR's posting of the date, time and place of your vote at your school. The results of your school's vote must be turned into the OCEA office by January 17, 2008.

[Merit Award Program \(Adobe PDF file\)](#)

MERIT AWARD PARTICIPATION BY DISTRICT

Please remember to vote at your school to determine if we should participate and negotiate a Merit Award Program for 2008-09.

I hope you, your family and friends have a great holiday season!

[Greg Butler, Executive Director](#)

Calendar Meeting Scheduled

It's hard to believe, but it is already time to start looking at the 2008-2009 school calendar. Bill Avery, Director of Information Services, has scheduled the first calendar committee meeting for Wednesday, December 19th, at 5 p.m. at the Bay Area Office. This committee meeting will be the first of three that will be held throughout the county. The other two will be scheduled for January and February. During this first meeting Mr. Avery will have a copy of our current calendar rolled over to reflect the 2008-2009 dates. That proposal would put our 2008 start date as Monday, August 18th, the earliest possible date based on current legislation. The committee will also have blank calendars to consider other options. In addition, the committee will entertain questions and comments from anyone in attendance. Please be aware that the early release program, mandated in the elementary schools, is a Superintendent option, and is not a responsibility of the calendar committee. [Please click here](#) to respond to a three-question

survey. You can also email specific concerns or suggestions to me.

Karen Peek, Chairperson
Calendar Committee

Guest Column

End-of-Course Exams

End-of-Course exams were developed for a number of reasons; two reasons stand out as the most compelling and warrant a description of the rationale.

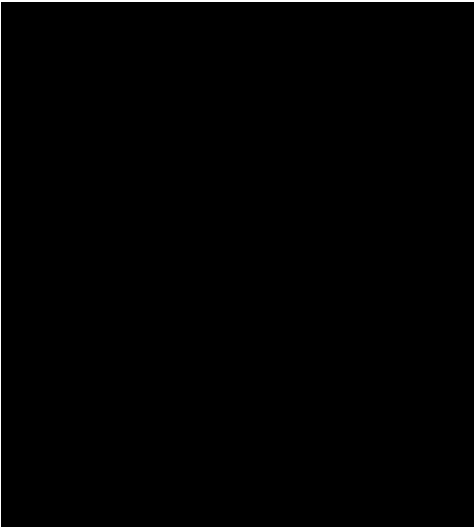
The most compelling reason for development and administration of end-of-course exams was in anticipation of, and in response to, state-wide end-of-course exams. In fact, it is no longer a matter of “if”, but “when”. Two options were available for consideration. One: Wait for the state to supply a test for our teachers to administer, based on sample tests and questions provided by other districts. Two: Develop our own end-of-course exams, based on OCSD instructional priorities, and share our exams with the state for inclusion in the state EOC clearing house. In order to have a voice in what was expected of our teachers, Okaloosa County selected the second option.

Administration of district-developed end-of-course exams provides opportunities for students to develop the learning skills and habits needed to prepare for a cumulative type of assessment. In addition, teachers are afforded the opportunity to identify the scheduling and level of review needed to prepare students for success on a cumulative type of assessment. Through this process, teachers who may have needed to “tweak” their instructional programs and/or gather needed resources for a more thorough coverage of the course content have been able to do so in advance of state mandated exams. It is expected that state-wide end-of-course exams will be both extensive and rigorous.

Equally important, end-of-course exams were developed to build consistency across the district in regard to both instruction and assessment. Certainly, there will be some differences in instruction based on the student clientele of the school. Yet, there should be a core component that reflects the integrity of the course and represents the heart of instruction, based on the Sunshine State Standards and the course description. There should be absolutely no variance in that core component, and students should be guaranteed that instructional component, no matter which school is attended. Keep in mind that the end-of-course exam is one test that is administered in the second semester of school; it is expected that other exams which are pertinent to the

The Okaloosa County Education Association is the exclusive bargaining agent for all teachers of the Okaloosa County School District. OCEA bargains the master contract for all teachers (instructional personnel), but we do not enforce the provisions of the contract for non-members.

OCEA has a policy that restricts its officers, staff, building reps, and other employees from providing services for non-members or for those who join after experiencing a job-related problem. As a result, we are unable to provide professional protection for non-members.



students and/or the course will be administered and weighted as appropriate. A positive result of the exam development process has been the opportunity for teachers of the same course, at different schools, to discuss and resolve course implementation.

A Technical Assistance Paper was developed and distributed to schools earlier this year. That document provides clarification of additional aspects regarding end-of-course exams and exam process.

Guyla Hendricks, Chief Officer
OCSD Quality Assurance