

## *A message from Superintendent Dan Boyd...*

*Welcome to the new school year! I hope you enjoyed your summer and are looking forward to the upcoming year.*

*As you probably know, Alachua County Public Schools once again earned an “A” grade from the Florida Department of Education. We were one of just 19 districts in the state to earn the top grade—an impressive accomplishment, considering that the grading formula was much tougher this year than last year.*

*I want to congratulate all of you on this achievement. It takes everyone working together to help our students reach their full potential.*

*Of course, we know that we will face new challenges this year, as we do every year. But based on our record of excellence, I’m sure we’re up to those challenges, and I look forward to working with you in 2007-08.*

## **District, union still negotiating on contract, salaries**

Representatives of the School Board and the Alachua County Education Association (ACEA), the union representing both teachers and educational support professionals, are continuing to work toward a new contract and salary schedule for district employees.

The bargaining teams have been meeting over the summer to discuss both salary and contract language. There is no deadline for completing the negotiations.

Last year’s employee salary raises were the biggest in at least three decades, thanks in large part to better-than-average state funding. However, Florida officials are predicting that state revenues will be down by \$1.5 billion, due mainly to the state’s slumping housing market and its overall effect on the economy.

Legislators will be meeting in a special session in mid-September to address the budget crunch, and it’s not yet known how much of an impact the downturn will have on school district budgets.

However, state officials are warning school districts that they could receive significantly less money than they expected.

Each school district is now being required to set aside money from its budget in anticipation of a statewide holdback—that is, the state holding back funds that were originally going to go to the schools. That means there’s less money available for expenditures, including employee raises.

“Here in Alachua County, the state is already requiring that we set aside at least \$3.9 million from our budget in anticipation of the holdback,” said Keith Birkett, assistant superintendent for budget and finance. “Unfortunately, that figure is likely to increase as new revenue figures for the state come in.”

When a salary agreement is reached, employees will have an opportunity to vote on the proposed settlement. It will then go to the School Board for a final vote.

# Ready for School Rally offers employees fun, food, prizes

Alachua County Public School employees are invited to kick off the school year with a bang—or rather, a cheer.

The Alachua County Public Schools Foundation is once again presenting the Ready for School Rally for all employees. The rally offers food, door prizes and a great speaker. This year Dr. Pam Robbins, an award-winning author, will give a motivational presentation with information about brain development, emotional intelligence, leadership and collaboration.

The rally will be held on Wednesday, August 15 at Trinity United Methodist Church at 4000 NW 53<sup>rd</sup> Avenue and will actually include two sessions, one for teachers and administrators, another for educational support professionals.



The program for teachers and administrators will run from 8 to 11 a.m. and will include breakfast and the announcement of the winners of the Foundation for Success grants. The program for educational support personnel will run from 3 to 4:30 p.m. and will begin with an ice cream social.

Employees attending either one of the sessions will be eligible for a wide variety of door prizes, and Robbins' presentations will be tailored to suit each group of employees.

This is the sixth year the Foundation has presented the rally, which this year is being sponsored by the Gainesville Area Chamber of Commerce, Florida Campus Credit Union and Progress Energy.

# Discounts and Deals website for employees expanded

Alachua County Public School employees now have more opportunities to save money, thanks to an expanded Discounts and Deals website.

Nearly 100 new businesses have been added to the website during the summer. This includes a large number of businesses offering discounts through the Gainesville Area Chamber of Commerce member discount program. Because Alachua County Public Schools is a member of the Chamber, district employees are eligible to receive the member discounts.

To access the site, district employees can go to [www.sbac.edu/~wpop/discountsanddeals](http://www.sbac.edu/~wpop/discountsanddeals). It can also be accessed through the Employee Information and Technical Support link on the

district's front page at ([www.sbac.edu](http://www.sbac.edu)). Scroll down below the initial list of businesses for a direct link to the Chamber discount list.

Discounts on both sites are broken down into categories to make it easier for employees to find the goods and services they're interested in. Categories will range from automobiles to financial services to restaurants. More categories and businesses will be added as appropriate.

Businesses interested in sharing information with district employees on the Discounts and Deals page can send their flier to [johnsonj@sbac.edu](mailto:johnsonj@sbac.edu) and specify when they'd like the flier to be posted. The service is free. For more information, call 955-7253, ext. 228