



Thursday, February 17, 2005

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PRESS RELEASE

August 4, 2004

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State Fire Marshal Gallagher, Commissioner Horne Applaud Orange County Public Schools ***School district selected to participate in national Safe and Secure Schools Project***

TALLAHASSEE — Florida's Chief Financial Officer and State Fire Marshal Tom Gallagher joined Education Commissioner Jim Horne today to congratulate Orange County Public Schools for being selected to participate in the Safe and Secure Schools Project by the National Association of State Fire Marshals.

"Developing a safe learning environment for our children must be a top priority," Commissioner Horne said. "When students feel safe in school they can focus their attention on education. Orange County has shown the needed commitment to safety and security, developing an atmosphere that fosters learning."

As one of only 20 school districts nationwide to participate in the program, Orange County Public Schools will test and refine analytical tools that could help schools assess, prioritize and then manage potential fire and safety risks that exist, at some level, in all school buildings. Orange County Public Schools has 158,000 students and 9,000 teachers.

"When parents drop their children off at school," Gallagher said, "they should be comfortable knowing they are being left in the hands of staff that care about them and their safety. The Orange County school district has taken great steps to ensure its schools are safe and in compliance with fire safety codes."

The Florida Department of Education (DOE) continues its efforts to develop safer learning environments. Through the K-20 Education Safety Partnership, DOE puts a focus on maintaining safety and security on all Florida's school campuses. Assured of their safety, teachers, school administrators and students can continue putting individual instruction and student achievement at the forefront of a quality education.

The State Fire Marshal's Office this fall will release its second annual report summarizing the findings of school fire code inspections reported by Florida's school districts.

For more information please visit www.fldoe.org. To see last year's school inspection summary report, visit <http://www.fldfs.com/sfm/>.

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