

## NEW FLORIDA CHARTER SCHOOLS TO RECEIVE \$33 MILLION FEDERAL GRANT

**Orlando, Florida** – On June 12, 2008, U.S. Deputy Secretary of Education Raymond Simon presented a check for more than \$33 million dollars to Florida Education Commissioner Eric J. Smith; Robert Haag, president of the Florida Consortium of Public Charter Schools; Jennifer Porter-Smith, principal of Nap Ford Community School in Orlando; and Jean Miller, acting director, independent education and parental choice.

Awarded to Florida through a competitive application process, the federal funds will be used to help develop new charter schools throughout the state. The state is expected to distribute approximately \$11 million a year for the next three years in start-up and implementation grants to new charter schools.

“Charter schools have been a vital component of Florida’s K-12 public education system for more than eleven years now, and in that period, the movement has grown to serve more than 104,000 students statewide,” explains Robert Haag, president, Florida Consortium of Public Charter Schools. “These funds will help develop more quality education options for families in our state.”

In the past five years, the percentage of students proficient in reading public charter schools has increased at a faster pace than at the traditional public schools. From 2002 to 2006, the achievement gap between non-minority and African-American students decreased from 30% to 23% in Florida charter schools. Hispanic students in the state’s charter schools have almost entirely eliminated the achievement gap between themselves and non-minority students.

Florida Consortium of Public Charter Schools is a non-profit membership association of Florida charter schools that provides advocacy, support, resources, and networking opportunities to new and existing charter schools, parents and students. Founded in 1999 as a 501(c), the organization also works to promote the charter school movement in Florida -- providing focused statewide activities and a seamless system of support that promotes the establishment and operation of high quality charter schools and the success of Florida’s charter school movement at-large.



PICTURED (left to right): U.S. Deputy Secretary of Education Raymond Simon presents a check for more than \$33 million to Robert Haag, president of the Florida Consortium of Public Charter Schools; Jennifer Porter-Smith, principal of Nap Ford Community School in Orlando; and Florida Education Commissioner Dr. Eric J. Smith.