



Draper Notes

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FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

PRESS OFFICE

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COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION HONORS FLORIDA FIRST RESPONDERS

TALLAHASSEE, Fla., January 5, 2015 – As Florida First Responder Appreciation Week kicks off, Commissioner of Education Pam Stewart today commended Florida first responders for their bravery and sacrifice every day. There are more than 125,800 total first responders currently serving in Florida, which includes law enforcement, fire fighters, paramedics and emergency medical responders. Last week, Governor Rick Scott proclaimed the week of Jan. 5 – 9 Florida First Responder Appreciation Week.

“These selfless men and women are the first to be there for us and our communities, often times in the face of danger,” said Commissioner Stewart. “We owe them our gratitude and admiration for their service in these critical roles.”

As the week gets underway, Commissioner Stewart urges K-12 school teachers and principals, college presidents and all parents and families to send encouragement and gestures of gratitude to their local first responders. There are a number of ways student and families can be involved and show support during this week: cards or letters of appreciation; poems or songs that express gratitude; individual drawings of a first responder helping someone; class posters or other art projects that can be displayed in schools and/or given to local first responders.

The education and preparation first responders receive is crucial to the emergency situations that these men and women are often faced with. “I think it is important that our society realizes what

first responders do for them and the training that it takes to achieve entry-level positions,” said Bill Bierbaum, Director of Certificate Programs with Tallahassee Community College’s Florida Public Safety Institute. “When you’re running away from an emergency, first responders are the ones running toward it.”

Keeping the importance of these first responder roles in mind, Commissioner Stewart has asked superintendents and college presidents to help students and their communities celebrate Governor Scott’s call to action regarding the newly proclaimed Florida First Responder Week. For additional ideas on what you and your student(s) can do to show appreciation for a first responder visit the Florida Department of Education’s Pinterest page at <http://www.pinterest.com/floridadoe/thank-our-first-responders/>.

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