

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2010

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**EDUCATION COMMISSIONER MEETS WITH BUSINESS LEADERS ABOUT
CLOSING FLORIDA'S TALENT GAP**

~ Receives \$150,000 donation from the AT&T Foundation that will directly benefit students and teachers ~

ORLANDO – Florida Education Commissioner Dr. Eric J. Smith today joined State University System Chancellor Frank Brogan and Florida Education Foundation Chairman Alan Levy at the Future of Florida Forum in Orlando for a discussion on closing the talent gap among students as they prepare for meaningful careers. During the Forum, AT&T Foundation President Marshall Criser presented a \$150,000 check to Commissioner Smith and Chairman Levy to create professional development workshops that will help Career and Technical Education (CTE) teachers integrate academics into their CTE courses. The funds will also be used to help academic teachers learn how their curriculum will be applied in those courses.

“The students and teachers of Florida are the real beneficiaries today,” said Commissioner Smith. “Not only were our conversations about closing the talent gap fruitful, but through the continued generosity and support displayed by business leaders like AT&T, we are sure to succeed in developing the talented workforce that will benefit the future of our state.”

Through the professional development workshops, teachers will learn about applied instruction that emphasizes the rigor and relevance of mathematics and science, leading to significant enhancements for CTE programs across the state. Florida currently offers nearly 1,300 CTE courses. The courses are offered in all 67 school districts, all 28 State Colleges, and at 44 technical centers throughout the state.

“Every business in the Sunshine State has a vested interest in making sure our students are prepared for the challenging demands of the working world and AT&T will continue to do all it can to further this goal,” said Criser. “The AT&T Foundation is thrilled to partner with the Department of Education in order to develop the best possible education for Florida’s future workers.”

“We are very proud of our continued partnership with the AT&T Foundation,” said Florida Education Foundation Chairman Alan Levy. “They are forward thinkers and always on the cutting edge of innovation for the students of Florida.”

To learn more about the administration of Career and Technical Education courses administered by the Department’s Division of Career and Adult Education, visit www.fldoe.org/workforce.

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