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Press Release

SUMTER SCHOOL DISTRICT RECEIVES \$1.3 MILLION IN FEDERAL GRANT FUNDING

The Sumter Schools Received Congressional Notification of a \$1.3 Million Grant to Expand Advanced Placement Programs

October 10, 2011: The Sumter County School Board has been awarded the 3-year Advanced Placement Incentive Grant in the amount of 1.3 million dollars to implement "Project Screen IN." School Superintendent Rick Shirley said, "Sumter is one of only a few districts in Florida to be awarded this highly competitive national grant. This award is indicative of the great staff that works so hard on behalf of our students and community. In a tough economic time, this grant provides a tremendous opportunity to better prepare many of our students for college and career opportunities."

Sumter County Schools, in partnership with the College Board, will begin developing a district-wide culture of college readiness by supporting and preparing all students for the rigors of advanced coursework that will ultimately lead to success in college and career choices. Shirley said, "Students may choose many paths once leaving the K-12 system; however, Sumter students will not have their choices limited due to lack of access, preparation, or support." Due to the grant eligibility criteria targeting low income students, this program will serve South Sumter Middle, South Sumter High and Wildwood Middle High School students. A research-based rigorous curriculum, as well as an extensive support system will improve access to, and participation of students in advanced placement courses.

With increased numbers of eligible students taking advanced placement tests successfully, more opportunities for earning college credit will be available. The extra resources provided by the grant will help guide decisions impacting course offerings, testing, and guidance encouraging students to take challenging Virtual and Advanced Placement courses. Although low income and minority students are part of the target group, the expanded offerings and services will be available for all

students, grades 6-10. It will provide preparation, course offerings, and support for middle school students as they prepare for entrance into the high schools.

Within the scope of the project, the district will provide professional development on pre-Advanced Placement strategies at all levels with a particular focus on science, math, and English. Multiple support activities will include after-school tutorial and enrichment programming, summer “bridge” institutes, parental involvement events, student incentives, technology tools and learning communities for professional development and coaching. The project enhances the district’s strategic plan to increase academic rigor providing a more comprehensive K-12 college readiness culture in Sumter County Schools.