



## Weekly Memo

### Events Coming Soon

#### **Working With the Experts: Visually Impaired (VI) — Braille and Orientation & Mobility Extravaganza**

The Florida Instructional Materials Center for the Visually Impaired (FIMC-VI) is offering *Working with the Experts: VI — Braille and Orientation & Mobility Extravaganza* in Tampa on **April 2 and 3, 2025**. The event will include a variety of presenters and sessions that will focus on what tools, curriculum, and procedures exist to successfully support student growth at all ability levels. To learn more and to register, visit the [FIMC-VI Working with the Experts Spring 2025](#) website. For questions, contact Tiffany Conrad at [tconrad@fimcvi.org](mailto:tconrad@fimcvi.org).

### Action Items

#### **Celebrate Literacy Week, Florida! 2025**

The Florida Department of Education (FDOE) has issued a memorandum regarding the 17th annual statewide [Celebrate Literacy Week, Florida! 2025](#) events, scheduled from **January 27 to 31, 2025**; and Building Literacy Constructing the Foundation for Success—attachment A, [Little Excavator](#); and attachment B, [Dig Dig Digging](#).

#### **Learning Ally Update**

Learning Ally is encouraging you to [Celebrate Literacy Week, Florida!](#) by “Building Literacy” and “Constructing the Foundation for Success” through reading grade-level material and encouraging students to gain points for the Great Reading Games (GRG) competition, which began on January 6, 2025. Visit the [January Newsletter](#) for suggested titles on GRG and the no-cost [Spotlight on Dyslexia \(SPOD\) Dive Deeper sessions with Dr. Terrie Noland](#). These SPOD sessions will be held on **January 29 and 30, and February 5, 2025**. For questions, contact your Learning Ally state contract manager, Dr. Martaluz Pozo, at [mpoz@learningally.org](mailto:mpoz@learningally.org).

## Informational Items

### **2024-25 and 2025-26 Statewide Assessment Schedules, 2026-27 Preliminary Schedule Release and Uniform Assessment Calendar Updates**

FDOE has issued a memorandum to announce updates to the [2024-25 and 2025-26 Statewide Assessment Schedules and the release of the 2026-27 preliminary Statewide Assessment Schedule](#), as well as to provide information about the 2025-26 and 2026-27 uniform assessment calendars.

## New BEESS Team Members

### **Dispute Resolution and Monitoring (DRM) Unit**

BEESS would like to welcome Alicia Jackson to DRM as a new investigator. Ms. Jackson is originally from Fort Lauderdale, but moved to Tallahassee for school, where she graduated from Florida State University with a bachelor's degree in criminology. Ms. Jackson plans to attend law school to eventually pursue a career in prosecution. Her hobbies consist of reading and crocheting. She looks forward to working with BEESS in her new capacity.

BEESS would also like to welcome Chay Gray to DRM as a program specialist. Ms. Gray holds a bachelor's degree in psychology and is passionate about human development and relations. She follows an optimistic and altruistic approach to living her life and takes every chance to be better. She is looking forward to working with BEESS in her new capacity.

## Tip of the Week

### **Get to Know Family, Build Rapport Before Evaluation**

Before an initial evaluation, the evaluator should meet with the student and the parents to answer questions and set expectations. This will help develop a relationship with the family before requesting private, sensitive information, such as medical records. ([Special Ed Connection®](#))

**Alice Schmitges**  
**Bureau Chief**



For more information, contact  
850-245-0475