

Open letter from Superintendent of Schools Mark Rains:

I would like to thank the entire community for your support and encouragement during this crucial time of year concerning state mandated FCAT and SAT 10 testing. Our staff and students have worked extremely hard to prepare and perform!

Every Spring as the end of school approaches, we are always concerned with the safety of our students who are involved in prom, graduation and other end of year events. I am proud to say that our school will be offering an online virtual Drivers Education course to eligible high school students this summer. Traffic accidents claim more lives of our teen population than any other accidents and hopefully we can help curb this trend through this driver education program. With another massive state cutback looming, this is a commitment that the Superintendent and School Board are making because of our sincere concern for the safety and welfare of our students.

Another safety issue that we have been dealing with over the past several years is the sudden increase in prescription drug use and abuse. While illegal drugs and alcohol have been a battle in our society and schools for many years, most recently the prescription drug issue has become a serious concern.

The Florida Department of Education has a website that you can access that is very informative concerning safety data in the public school systems in Florida. You can visit <http://www.fl.org/safeschools/sesir.asp> and compare data statewide involving our public schools. I am proud to say that according to the data on this website, our schools in Dixie County are overall very safe involving crimes on our campuses. However, when it comes to the safety of our students we are always searching for ways to improve.

Starting at the state level, I am asking each one of you to contact your legislator and encourage them to support Senate Bill 818/House Bill 7095. I have personally spoken with Governor Rick Scott about this issue and the importance it has for the protection of our young people. This is a bill concerning a statewide monitoring program dealing with prescription drugs. At the local school district level, we welcome your input concerning this issue at our School Superintendent's **Community Drug Advisory Committee Meeting on April 18, 5:00-6:30 p.m. in the School Board meeting facility in Old Town.** Dixie District Schools has developed anti-drug strategies that have been implemented at all schools. This list is available on the district website. If you do not have access to the internet, please call my office at 498-6131 and we will mail you these strategies. We always welcome your suggestions on how to improve.

Please visit our website at [www.dixie.k12.fl.us](http://www.dixie.k12.fl.us) for additional information concerning our policies and procedures. I look forward to working with you on this very important matter. Thank you for the opportunity to be your Superintendent of Schools.

“The Way to a Child’s Mind is through the Heart”

Mark A. Rains, Superintendent  
Dixie District Schools