

Teachers Recognized for Pilot Program of “Cities in the Classroom”

by Lynn Tipton

Then-Florida League of Cities President Carmine Priore joined a dozen teachers for lunch on August 6 at the University of Central Florida in Orlando. The teachers were wrapping up their summer programs at the Florida Joint Center for Citizenship. Each teacher served an internship with a municipality over the summer and is now prepared to help launch the “Cities in the Classroom” curriculum within his or her school district. This curriculum was produced by the joint center with assistance from the Florida League of Cities.

The pilot program teachers and their respective “host” cities were:



District	City	Teacher	School
Brevard	Satellite Beach	Larry Finch	DeLaura Middle
Hillsborough	Temple Terrace	Lindsey Plyler	King High
Leon	Tallahassee	Brian Lassiter	Astoria Park Elementary
Leon	Tallahassee	Ron Wetherington	Cobb Middle
Orange	Ocoee	Tammy Johnston	Ocoee Middle
Orange	Windermere	Michael Koller	Gotha Middle
Sarasota	Sarasota	Mary Zigman	Island Village Montessori
Sarasota	Sarasota	Jack Francis	Phoenix Academy
St. Johns	St. Augustine	JC Moretta	R.J. Murray Middle
Volusia	DeLand	Kevin Copes	Southwestern Middle
Volusia	Deltona	Jeanne Hill	Galaxy Middle School

At the luncheon, Priore thanked the cities for hosting the teachers and cited his own “learning curve” for understanding Florida’s local governments. He also thanked the teachers for taking on this new challenge and encouraged them to keep reaching out to the cities around their specific schools as resources.

Several of the teachers shared their city stories. Their comments included the following:

- “I didn’t know this city offered so many services.”
- “I never knew how complex the city’s laws and procedures were.”
- “This program has made me a stronger citizen.”

“This is exactly the message that (former U.S. senator and Florida governor) Bob Graham, (former U.S. representative) Lou Frey and I have been talking about across the state – that we have to create the best teaching tools to engage teachers and students when it comes to the important subject of civics and understanding our governments,” Priore said. “I am so pleased with the commitment of the Joint Center for Citizenship toward this end – and very proud of our cities for joining in the effort.”

Lynn Tipton is director of membership development for the Florida League of Cities.