

On Monday, more than 172,000 students headed back to school in Orange County. Welcome to the new school year. The return to class beckons another enlightening year of learning, but with it comes a taxing and sometimes overwhelming load of homework, projects, tests and of course, the FCAT.

The new school year is a great time for parents to become excited about and engaged in their children's learning. Research consistently shows that when parents are involved in their children's learning, it positively influences their educational outcomes. Parents: the start of another academic year is your invitation to become more involved in schoolwork – providing encouragement, arranging for sufficient study time and monitoring homework. If you accept this invitation, the Orange County Library System can help you score high marks this back-to-school season.

The back-to-school tool box is chock full at Orange County libraries with a rich array of resources to help students, parents and teachers. Homework Help @OCLS offers live, interactive assistance from qualified tutors for students in grades 4 through 12. This service, available in English and Spanish, is free from home with a library card. Tutoring is offered in math, science, social studies and language arts. FCAT Explorer has tutorials for the FCAT in English or Spanish, and the LearnATest database provides access to numerous other standardized tests.

Multiple resources on the library system's Web site point you to research paper help. You'll find a biography resource center, a literature resource center and science online. There are also dozens of links to further sources for help and information for parents who home school their children.

While abundant resources are available virtually, the library's 15 locations offer free computer access as well as a generous collection of Sunshine State books and Accelerated Reader titles available for check out. Whether you visit the library online or in person, make it a frequent stop on your academic journey. The Orange County Library System is here to help you access the skills, insights and imagination to succeed, so please add "OCLS" to the equation this school year and you'll be well on your way to academic achievement.

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