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# TALLAHASSEE DEMOCRAT

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# Stores ready for tax-free holiday



Gavin Wiggins does a jig for his mother, Kristine Wiggins, after their shopping spree at Target was done. Stores, including Walmart and Target, were stocking their shelves Thursday in preparation for the three-day tax-free holiday for back-to-school items, which starts today. MIKE EWEN/DEMOCRAT

## Three-day event for back-to-school shoppers begins today

By Arek Sarkissian II  
 Florida Capital Bureau  
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This morning's start to Florida's back-to-school tax holiday put Tallahassee mother Mandy Stark into battle mode.

Stark said she's a veteran of the three-day event — stores will be mobbed, the temptation to spend more will linger and store supplies will dwindle.

In defense, Stark constructed an iron-clad shopping list to get her fifth-grader ready for school while reaping savings during the duty-free days.

"I would really like to be prepared as far in advance as possible," Stark said, adding of the tax holiday, "Luckily it comes at the beginning of August so we can prepare."

Through Sunday, the 6-percent state tax and any other local levies have been lifted on clothing priced up to \$75 and school supplies up to \$15. In Leon County, that's 7.5 percent off.

See TAX-FREE » 2A

### EXEMPTED ITEMS

Eligible back-to-school items will be tax-free until Sunday. The exemption includes items up to \$75 and school supplies up to \$15.

» Exempted up to \$75: Clothing, footwear, backpacks, fanny packs and diaper bags.

» Exempted up to \$15: Pens, pencils, erasers, crayons, notebooks, notebook filler paper, legal pads, binders, lunch boxes, construction paper, markers, folders, poster board, composition books, poster paper, scissors, cellophane tape, glue or paste, rulers, computer disks, protractors, compasses and calculators.

Source: Florida Legislature



### ONLINE:

» Discuss back-to-school shopping strategies at [www.TLHMoms.com](http://www.TLHMoms.com).

### COMING UP:

» School Zone special section: Your guide to the 2012-2013 school year. Publishes Aug. 12.

### ERNESTO'S PATH

Highlighted in red is the projected path of Tropical Storm Ernesto. It is predicted to make its way into the Gulf.



# Tropical Storm Ernesto on move

Storm expected to blow through Caribbean and into the Gulf

By Jeff Burlew  
 Senior government editor  
 @JeffBurlew on Twitter

Tropical Storm Ernesto is expected to make its way through the Caribbean Sea over the next few days, possibly arriving in the Gulf of Mexico by the middle of next week as a hurricane.

It's too early, however, to predict exactly where the storm will go.

"It's so far out that it really is anybody's guess," said Don Harrigan, meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Tallahassee. "But some of the computer models keep it in the southern part of the Gulf," potentially impacting Texas or Mexico.

Ernesto was moving quickly to the west near 22 mph Thursday and packing top sustained winds near 50 mph, according to the National Hurricane Center in Miami. It was expected to move overnight near the Windward Islands and continue heading west away from land before reaching the western Caribbean perhaps Tuesday.

Ernesto, the season's fifth named storm, is expected to reach hurricane strength perhaps by Monday afternoon, the Hurricane Center said.

"It looks like an upper-level low will move out

See STORM » 2A

### INSIDE THE DEMOCRAT

## FSU FOOTBALL TICKET SALES GOING STRONG, PAGE 1C



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