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Sent time: Thursday, October 27, 2011 7:25:31 PM
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Subject: Fw: 10/27/11 Education Round-Up

FYI.... Have a great evening!

Sincerely,

Kevin Smith,

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Sent from my BlackBerry Wireless Handheld

From: Higgins, Deborah
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2011 11:02 AM
Subject: 10/27/11 Education Round-Up

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



[Manatee County teachers submit grades to new computer system](#)

(Bradenton Herald © 10/27/2011)

By ANGELINE TAYLOR ataylor@bradenton.com MANATEE – No complaints surfaced from elementary school teachers Wednesday regarding the district's new FOCUS computer software system, district and teachers union officials said. Elementary school teachers were asked to submit grades for report cards into the new system Wednesday afternoon – two days after they were told to "log out of FOCUS immedi...

[Senator steps in over voting law, teacher's plight](#)

(Daytona Beach Journal © 10/27/2011)

ORLANDO – Jill Ciccirelli's students got a real-life civics lesson Wednesday when U.S. Sen. Bill Nelson quizzed them on the state law their teacher violated in helping them register to vote. Predictably, the New Smyrna Beach High School students aren't fans of the law. Nelson, who sent a letter to Gov. Rick Scott this week asking that he make repealing or amending the law a priority, likes...

[Common Core Found to Rank With Respected Standards](#)

(Education Week © 10/27/2011)

The common-core standards in English/language arts and mathematics are generally aligned to the leading state standards, international standards, and university standards at the high-school-exit level, but are more rigorous in some content areas, says a report released Wednesday. Researchers at the Educational Policy Improvement Center, or EPIC, a Eugene, Ore.-based research organization, compa...

[It's been a struggle for GHS' homecoming king](#)

(Gainesville Sun © 10/27/2011)

By Jackie Alexander Staff writer Published: Wednesday, October 26, 2011 at 5:40 p.m. When 18-year-old Jesse Walters walks onto Citizens Field in his all-white tuxedo with purple vest Friday night, he won't be the kid who constantly raises his hand in class or falls down the stairs at Gainesville High. He'll be GHS' homecoming king. High school has been a struggle, Jesse said. Th...

[Florida tuition ranks 45th, three up from last year](#)

(Gainesville Sun © 10/27/2011)

Florida still has some of the lowest public university tuition in the nation, but it's quickly losing its claim of being ranked near the bottom. State tuition is still well below the national average/Board of Governors graphic The average cost of state university tuition and fees in Florida ranked 45th nationally in 2010-11, three spots higher than the previous year, in the College Board&#...

[Analysis: College costs shift to families](#)

(Gainesville Sun © 10/27/2011)

It was a transformation that was, by historical standards, remarkably swift: The decade of the 2000s saw a fundamental shift in how Americans answer the question "Who will pay for college?" The bill at public universities is higher than ever, and students and their families are footing a greater share of it. Realizing higher education would be esse...

[UF dentistry school scales back expansion, will team with FAMU, UCF](#)

(Gainesville Sun © 10/27/2011)

The University of Florida is scaling back plans to expand its dental school and working with two universities that had planned to create new dental schools. Florida A&M University is dropping its proposal for a new dental school, instead proposing to help recruit minority students to the UF College of Dentistry. The University of Central Florida i...

[Fresen cleared on ethics complaint](#)

(Miami Herald © 10/27/2011)

The state Commission on Ethics has announced it found no probable cause for a complaint accusing Rep. Erik Fresen, R-Miami, of violating state voting conflict law. A Tallahassee woman filed the complaint in April after Fresen, 35, voted for a charter schools reform bill. Fresen's sister and brother-in-law work for Academica, which operates 12 charter schools in Florida. Trish Thompson, whose...

[Broward superintendent speaks about new job](#)

(Miami-WSVN (FOX) © 10/27/2011)

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. (WSVN) – Broward County's new superintendent is talking about his plans on getting students on the road to a better future as the district's new leader. Broward Schools Superintendent Robert Runcie seems comfortable, laid back and mellow as he takes on the new job as Broward County's new superintendent, and spoke exclusively to 7 News Wednesday morning. Rep...

[Vacant Edison trustee seat to be appointed by Gov. Scott, could determine Walker's fate](#)

(Naples Daily News © 10/27/2011)

A ninth board member would have ended a deadlocked vote among Edison State College Trustees to discuss President a.inline_topic: hover { background-color: #EAEAEA; } Kenneth Walker's continued employment. The ninth appointment to a vacant seat on Edison's board is in the hands of a.inline_topic: hover { background-color: #EAEAEA; } Gov. Rick Scott. The terms of three other sitting trustees ar...

[The Wrong Fix for No Child Left Behind](#)

(New York Times © 10/27/2011)

The revised No Child Left Behind Act that passed out of the Senate education committee last week goes too far in relaxing state accountability and federal oversight of student achievement. The business community, civil rights groups and advocates of disabled children are rightly worried that the rewrite of the law would particularly hurt underprivileged children. The bill's main sponsors — Sen...

[Screen Time Higher Than Ever for Children](#)

(New York Times © 10/27/2011)

By TAMAR LEWIN Jaden Lender, 3, sings along softly with the "Five Little Monkeys" app on the family iPad, and waggles his index finger along with the monkey doctor at the warning, "No more monkeys jumping on the bed!" He likes crushing the ants in "Ant Smasher," and improving his swing in the golf app. But he is no app addict: when the one featuring Grover from Sesame Street does not work right,...

[Foes of standardized tests for students have it all wrong](#)

(New York Daily News © 10/27/2011)

BY Miral Sattar Wednesday, October 26th 2011, 4:00 AM Martin Shields/Getty Related News Violence rises in Pakistan as gunmen kill 25 in 24-hour period Assassination sparks revenge killings, leaving 45 dead in Pakistan Pakistan airport stops passenger with circuits, batteries in shoes Two bomb attacks on Shiite worshippers in Pakistan leave dozens dead Pakistan bombing kills 25 at S...

[City changes zoning to attract charter school](#)

(NW FL Daily News © 10/27/2011)

October 26, 2011 4:30 PM Katie Tammen Daily News VALPARAISO — City officials want their elementary school on Edge Avenue back. Two years ago, the Okaloosa County School Board partially closed Valparaiso Elementary School and moved most of its students to neighboring Lewis School. This year, all the students were moved to Lewis School and the future of the former elementary school remains in...

[Class Size Shuffle's No Dance For School Districts](#)

(Orlando-WESH (NBC) © 10/27/2011)

In Orange County, schedules are being shuffled to meet the new rules. New teachers have been hired at dozens of schools across the county....

[Obama speeds student debt relief](#)

(Palm Beach Post © 10/27/2011)

Updated: 10:02 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 26, 2011 Posted: 9:58 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 26, 2011 When Adriana Vazquez began studying to become a pharmacist, the job placement rate was close to 100 percent. "I thought there would be opportunity on every corner, literally. There's a Walgreens next to a CVS next to a Walgreens," said Vaz...

[School officials urge return of forms for military children](#)

(Panama City News Herald © 10/27/2011)

PANAMA CITY — Parents of Bay District Schools students affiliated with the military are urged to complete and return the Federal Impact Survey form by Friday. The forms were distributed to students at school and should be returned to the student's school. The survey is for "federally connected" students who live on military installations and whose parents are exempt from p...

[Obama offers student-loan relief to millions of college graduates](#)

(South Florida Sun-Sentinel © 10/27/2011)

The White House on Wednesday announced two changes designed to make it easier for cash-strapped college graduates to pay their student loans. Starting in January, the U.S. Department of Education will offer an estimated 6 million borrowers — more than 243,000 from Florida — a chance to consolidate their federal loans and cut interest rates by as much as one-half percent. The educat...

[School Board to interview all four interim superintendent candidates](#)

(South Florida Sun-Sentinel © 10/27/2011)

The Palm Beach County School Board should be ready to select an interim superintendent in one week. On Wednesday, the board agreed to give all four qualified candidates an opportunity to interview for the job, rather than considering only two or three finalists. Board members need to choose a temporary chief executive since Superintendent Bill Malone is stepping down within the next month due to...

[Jury awards \\$800,000 to family of dead high school baseball player](#)

(St. Petersburg Times © 10/27/2011)

TAMPA — A Hillsborough jury has awarded more than \$800,000 to the family of an Alonzo High School baseball player who died during a preseason workout nearly seven years ago. Matthew M. Miulli, then 17, had a pre-existing heart condition but was cleared to participate in conditioning workouts. He collapsed after running a mile on the high school track and was declared dead at the Town & ...

[Education leaders focus on STEM at summit in Tampa](#)

(St. Petersburg Times © 10/27/2011)

TAMPA — Furniture was struggling. Textiles were foundering. Even in the 1960s, the tobacco industry was facing a decline. So state leaders in North Carolina pulled together to create the now- envied Research Triangle. Today "it's time for Florida to grow up," said university system chancellor Frank Brogan. It's time, he told business leaders and educators Wednesday, "to make a commitment t...

[Budget cuts stretch P.E. instructors at some Pasco schools](#)

(St. Petersburg Times © 10/27/2011)

WESLEY CHAPEL — Fifth- grader Noah Hauser loves his physical education classes, whether riding the stationary bicycle in the school fitness center or pushing himself on a monthly 2-mile challenge run. It doesn't bother him a bit if it's just his class participating, or if 80-some kids from four classes are out in the field together. "It's still fun to play," said Noah, 10. "We always do f...

[Without funding, YouthBuild GED and job skills program in peril](#)

(St. Petersburg Times © 10/27/2011)

TAMPA In his early 20s with no high school diploma, Gino Voltere was languishing at North Boulevard Homes, a public housing complex south of downtown. He wanted to move away from the hopelessness and corner drug deals, a place where he, too, had been pinched for a drug-selling charge in 2005. The last place he thought he'd find a ticket out would be on the same streets — and from a drug deale...

[At STEM summit, a call for Florida to raise its competitive bar](#)

(St. Petersburg Times © 10/27/2011)

TAMPA One nagging theme emerged at Wednesday's summit meeting dedicated to improving Florida's students and work force for 21st century technology jobs. Yes, we're making headway encouraging schools and businesses to support students pursuing educations in science, technology, engineering and math — better known as STEM. But so far, it's not enough to build a first-string economy in a g...

[USF reviews USF Poly plans, says they are overly optimistic](#)

(St. Petersburg Times © 10/27/2011)

TAMPA — The University of South Florida Polytechnic's plan to become the state's next public university may include overly optimistic enrollment projections and fall short detailing how it will pay for the split. Those are among two dozen concerns outlined by the senior staff of USF's academic affairs after they reviewed a version of the 50-plus-page plan at the request of the Florida Board...

[Founder of failed school now wants to open charter](#)

(Tampa Bay Online © 10/27/2011)

TAMPA — The founder of a private school in Lutz who moved to Wisconsin owing millions to creditors has another plan for a new school in Hillsborough County. This time, Wendy Alexander wants to use \$1.6 million a year in taxpayer money to operate a public charter school called the Academy for Accelerated Learning, serving students in kindergarten through fifth grade. Parents who ...

[Pasco officials: Reject charter school applicants](#)

(Tampa Bay Online © 10/27/2011)

LAND O' LAKES — Superintendent Heather Fiorentino and her staff are recommending that the Pasco County School Board reject applications from two charter schools that want to open next year. Freedom Academy Elementary and the Center for Independence Pasco Community Campus both fell short of meeting the minimum approval standards set by state law, the superintendent's staff sa...

[School district moves to fire teacher](#)

(Tampa Bay Online © 10/27/2011)

SEBRING - The Highlands County School District is recommending the firing of a middle school special education teacher who faced a previous disciplinary action from the state, resulting in a two-year suspension from teaching. Hill-Gustaf Middle School teacher Michael David Smith was suspended with pay effective Oct. 11 and then suspended without pay on Oct. 20. Human Resources Director Viviann...

[Tougher FCAT Scoring in the Works](#)

(West Orlando News © 10/27/2011)

Education Commissioner Gerard Robinson said Wednesday he will recommend new "cut" scores that will be used to determine a student's score on the FCAT 2.0 and new Algebra 1 end-of-course assessment. These scores will be used to determine whether a student's score is labeled at a Level One (the lowest) all the way up to Level Five (the highest). The new scores will be rec...

[DOE unveils new passing scores for tougher FCAT](#)

(WFSU Newsroom © 10/27/2011)

The state of Florida is upgrading its standardized tests and rolling out new end-course exams. Lynn Hatter reports the Department of Education has defined what the passing scores for the new exams will be. The new scores reflect a completely new grading scale that can't be compared to previous years. It's a different scale, a different test and brand new standards. Department of Education Commis...

[17 Duval Teachers Could Be Cut Soon](#)

(WJXT Channel 4 Duval County © 10/27/2011)

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. – In about a week, more than a dozen Duval County school teachers could be without a job. All that's left between them and possible layoffs is a vote by the Duval County School Board. The school district says it's looking to make a reduction in force because of a budget crunch. Currently, 17 teachers are in danger of losing their jobs. The district would save about \$1 million...

[New state law allows some teachers to be fired without cause](#)

(WWSB ABC Sarasota County © 10/27/2011)

BRADENTON, FL - A new state law allows some teachers to be fired without cause. That law is part of the Teacher Merit-Pay Bill, which also eliminated tenure and extended teacher's probationary period from 97 days to one full year. And according to the Manatee Education Association, a year's probation is too much for any teacher and gives the district an easy way out. Officials with the Mana...

[Land O' Lakes High School Ranks Among The Country's Best](#)

(Land O Lakes Patch.com © 10/26/2011)

Land O' Lakes High School has yet again ranked among the top schools in the country when it comes to test scores, graduation rate and academic excellence. It ranked 49th in the state and 255th in the country on this year's Washington Post High School Challenge. The challenge was previously sponsored by Newsweek Magazine, but transitioned to the Post recently. "We rate schools based ...

[UCF weighs options as West Virginia jumps from Big East to Big 12](#)

(Orlando Sentinel © 10/26/2011)

West Virginia is joining the Big 12, the Big East is still trying to survive and UCF is waiting for an invitation to an automatic qualifying Bowl Championship Series conference. And a new plan has surfaced that could, if approved, give UCF both the intense rivalries it seeks and a BCS automatic bid without having to leave its current home — Conference USA. Welcome to the ebbs and f...

[Judge to consider lawsuit about Florida retirement contributions](#)

(Orlando Sentinel © 10/26/2011)

TALLAHASSEE A judge is hearing arguments over a new state law that requires public employees to contribute 3 percent of their pay to retirement. The hearing on Wednesday is expected to just be the first step on a path leading to the Florida Supreme Court. The Florida Education Association and othe...

[TCoast schools: Bessey Creek El's Team Green was named a finalist in the Florida Green School Awards](#)

(Palm Beach Post © 10/26/2011)

BESSEY CREEK ELEMENTARY BCE Team Green was named a finalist in the Florida Green School Awards sponsored by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection. The team has implemented recycling initiatives at the school, which have reduced trash consumption one-third. Members have raised more than \$400 for the

school through efforts to recycle juice pouches and chip bags in partnership with Terr...

[16,000 students predicted at independent USF Poly](#)

(Tampa Tribune © 10/26/2011)

TAMPA – USF Polytechnic officials say they plan to create a stand-alone university that in 15 years will have 16,000 students in dozens of applied science programs on a campus with NCAA sports teams and dorms for 1,300. For the first several years it won't cost the state any extra money, they say. Polytechnic released the first detailed look this week at its plan to break away f...

[Bob Graham: Let Board of Governors decide on USF Poly](#)

(Winter Haven News Chief © 10/26/2011)

LAKELAND – After following the ongoing push to make the University of South Florida Polytechnic Florida's 12th state university, former Gov. Bob Graham said Monday politics has no place in the university decision-making process. Graham said the current battle over whether to create a university in Lakeland that is independent of USF has devolved in...

Happy Friday Eve!

Deborah Please see the two articles below.



Tallahassee Democrat

Unions' attorneys argue lawmakers, Scott 'got greedy'

12:54 AM, Oct. 27, 2011

By Bill Cotterell Florida Capital Bureau

Attorneys for public-employee unions argued Wednesday that Gov. Rick Scott and state legislators "got greedy" by making long-serving public employees pay 3 percent of their salaries into the Florida Retirement System.

But an attorney for the state countered that the state can change retirement-benefits rules just like it can alter other spending priorities in each year's budget. Circuit Judge Jackie Fulford listened to five hours of arguments, even stepped down from the bench to discuss figures on a big-screen projection chart, and seemed skeptical of the state's position.

In addition to getting a refund of the 3 percent pension fee paid since July 1 by more than 500,000 state, county and city employees in the Florida Retirement System, the legal challenge seeks to reinstate an annual 3 percent cost-of-living increase in pensions.

Attorney Ron Meyer, representing the Florida Education Association, said there would be no problem if legislators had limited the 3 percent to employees hired after June 30. Some other changes, like raising retirement ages and minimum length of service requirements, were made to apply only to new hires.

"But instead of doing just that, they got greedy and came back after money that had been contractually and constitutionally promised to current employees," said Meyer.

He cited a statute that says, "As of July 1, 1974, the rights of members of the retirement system established by this chapter are declared to be of a contractual nature, entered into between the members and the state, and such rights shall be legally enforceable as valid contract rights and shall not be abridged in any way."

For nearly 40 years, the FRS had been non-contributory, with government employers paying the full assessments for employee pensions. The Legislature earlier this year approved a 3-percent mandatory contribution for all FRS members.

Meyer and Hal Johnson of the Florida Police Benevolent Association argued that the required contributions violate three parts of the state Constitution — the prohibition of impairment of contracts, the right of collective bargaining and the article forbidding taking of property without compensation.

But Attorney Doug Hinson, representing the state, said it was not as if the state was going back through the decades and applying the 3 percent to all previous earnings of public employees. He said the charge only applies to salaries paid beginning July 1 of this year — to new hires as well as to public employees already working.

If public employees quit June 30, Hinson said, they would never have had the 3 percent deducted. And those still working will only have it taken from current earnings, he said, so it is not an "impairment of contract" prohibited by the Florida Constitution.

"It does not take away one dime from what employees earned through June 30, 2011," said Hinson. Similarly, he said, retirees will still get the cost-of-living bumps for every year of service prior to this fiscal year.

He also said the 1974 Legislature, which made the FRS non-contributory, could not bind the 2011 session and all future sessions to stick by that arrangement. Attorneys for the state also said lawmakers can adjust benefits year to year in the budget.

Johnson said "the state seems to belittle the cost" of the payroll deduction on workers. Many public-employee unions lobbied against it in the legislative session, calling it a form of income tax on government workers.

"I don't know how a mandatory deduction can be a benefit," said Johnson. "But they classify it as a benefit."

Deborah Hogan, a Health Department nurse for 15 years, sat through the hearing and said "I'm kind of hopeful" that Fulford will rule against the pension levy.

"If you look at the salaries that they quoted up there on the chart," she said. "Three percent from those amounts is significant for a lot of our people. Nurses in my department make about 7 percent less than nurses in the private sector, and 3 percent is a pay cut for us."

Greg Blackman, head of the Florida Government Supervisors Association, said the retirement contribution is unfair to public workers.

"This is just another hit for our people's wages and benefits," said Blackman, a rail traffic controller for the Miami-Dade transit system.

Tallahassee Democrat

New FSU initiative supports veterans

12:43 AM, Oct. 27, 2011

By Doug Blackburn Democrat senior writer

Jared Lyon and Raoul Perez might want to consider careers as lobbyists.

The two Florida State University students, members of the FSU chapter of the Collegiate Veterans Association, met last year with President Eric Barron to make the case that the university can do more — and better — to support veterans, whose graduation rates pale in comparison to other students.

Barron listened, and agreed. The result: a multi-part initiative by FSU, announced Wednesday, to support veterans. It includes a proposal for an impressive new facility on Jefferson Street, an FSU Veterans Center that also will be home to FSU's ROTC program and its growing World War II Museum.

"I'm hoping that with these bold steps we can be one of the most veteran-friendly universities in the country, a model for the rest of the nation," Barron said during a press conference at the Turnbull Conference Center.

FSU will also launch an annual Student Veterans Film Festival on Nov. 11, Veterans Day, which will feature the Southeast debut of the Sundance Festival winning movie "Hell and Back Again."

Proceeds from the screening will go toward the Veterans Center, to be located on Jefferson Street off Landis Green with an estimated price tag between \$15 and \$20 million.

Lyon, now FSU chapter president of the Collegiate Veterans Association, praised Barron for being open to the students' concerns. There are 350-400 veterans among FSU's 40,000 student body, with 65 or so active in the chapter.

"It's almost overwhelming, the amount of support we've received," said Lyon, a 29-year-old senior and Navy veteran.

Until the new facility is built, FSU's student veterans will have a home on the second floor of Pearl Tyner House, located on West Tennessee Street in front of the Alumni Association headquarters.

The university also has established a Veterans Center Advisory Board and is about to name a director for the center. The eight-member board includes two veterans: Lyon and retired Marine Gen. Michael Sheridan, a 1956 FSU graduate.

Adam Goldstein, associate dean of student affairs, has been chairman of the board.

"We need society's support to help our veterans get through college," he said. "These initiatives help crystallize our support."