

**From:** Smith, Kevin  
**Sent time:** Monday, October 31, 2011 12:37:56 PM  
**To:** Cari Miller (Cari@excelined.org) <Cari@excelined.org>; Lee, Laurie; Colle, Hope; Tart, Suzanne; Walt Griffin <walt\_griffin@scps.k12.fl.us>; Evan Lefsky <elefsky@cfl.rr.com>  
**Subject:** FW: 10/29/11 through 10/31/11 Education Round-Up

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FYI – have a great afternoon!

Sincerely,

Kevin Smith,  
Educational Policy Analyst,  
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**From:** Higgins, Deborah  
**Sent:** Monday, October 31, 2011 10:38 AM  
**Subject:** 10/29/11 through 10/31/11 Education Round-Up

## DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



[Fla. teacher may be fined under new election law](#)  
(Associated Press © 10/31/2011)

TALLAHASSEE — A Florida Panhandle teacher who registered students to vote but turned in their applications late may be fined for violating the state's new election law, which has drawn fire from critics who say it will suppress voting. Secretary of State Kurt Browning asked Attorney General Pam Bondi to investigate and seek applicable fines in a letter Thursday. Browning wrote that electi...

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[Transparency in school district budget process](#)  
(Bradenton Herald © 10/31/2011)

This year, the Manatee County school district and board embark on a new strategy for the development of a budget, one that comes with a strong pledge of transparency. We're optimistic but will be closely watching the proceedings, which begin Monday with the first school board workshop. For the past three years, the district has employed a community-based budget committee to provide recommendati...

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### [Cut board members' pay](#)

(Citrus County Chronicle © 10/31/2011)

The Citrus County Chronicle reported on Oct. 27 that the Board of Education is considering raising our county sales tax to get more money for education. Here is an alternate method which may preclude us from a tax increase. I have always been a supporter of public education. I was an elected school board member in Passaic County, New Jersey back in the 1960s. I know in New Jersey and New...

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### [Flagler magnet school gets high marks](#)

(Daytona Beach News-Journal © 10/31/2011)

PALM COAST – Ellie Hansen and her Phoenix Academy classmates know their school is a little different. "It's not like any regular school," Ellie said. "We're like family. If you're hurt, someone is always there for you." The small magnet program with just 72 students is now in its second year and students and staff say it's been a success. Housed in the district's old administration building, ...

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### [Clock Ticking on Senate Bill to Overhaul NCLB](#)

(Education Week © 10/31/2011)

Legislation may be derailed by competing priorities By Alyson Klein Leaders of the Senate education committee still aim to push a bipartisan revision of the much-criticized No Child Left Behind Act through Congress by year's end, in time to stave off the Obama administration's move to offer states waivers of parts of the nearly decade-old law. That appears to be a tall order, given th...

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### [Professional Learning Networks Taking Off](#)

(Education Week © 10/31/2011)

Professional learning networks take an organic, grassroots approach By Robin L. Flanigan Face-to-face interaction has its benefits, but busy educators who want to ask advice, offer opinions, and engage in deep discussions with colleagues are increasingly turning to professional learning networks—online communities that allow the sharing of lesson plans, teaching strategies, and student work...

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### [School Board promises more scrutiny of charters](#)

(FL Keysnet © 10/31/2011)

By DAVID GOODHUE dgoodhue@keysreporter.com Posted - Saturday, October 29, 2011 11:01 AM EDT Keys School board members this week approved another charter school application, but not before they vowed to look harder at future applications because of a recent shakeup at a Key West charter high school. The Monroe County School Board on Tuesday gave the go-ahead to San Diego, Calif.-b...

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### [Waivers spell likely end for tutoring program](#)

(Florida Times-Union © 10/31/2011)

MINNEAPOLIS — Dozens of states intend to apply for waivers that would free their schools from a federal requirement that they set aside hundreds of millions of dollars a year for after-school tutoring, a program many researchers say has been ineffective. The 2002 No Child Left Behind law requires school districts that repeatedly fail to meet its benchmarks to set aside ...

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### [SFCC seeks grants to start bioenergy program](#)

(Highlands Today © 10/31/2011)

AVON PARK - With ethanol production poised to bring jobs and a major economic impact to Highlands County, South Florida Community College is partnering with biofuels companies to create a bioenergy education program. SFCC hopes to secure grant funding to create an educational program that will prepare individuals to enter the field of advanced biofuels production. Two 20-credit-hour associate in s...

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#### [Essential skill](#)

(Highlands Today © 10/31/2011)

From drawings and flash cards to computers and the Internet, Fred Wild Elementary School paraprofessional Pilar Eriksen goes low-tech and high-tech to teach her students something essential to learning in the U.S. — the English language. As teachers at the elementary level work with about 18 to 22 students in a class, the bilingual Eriksen is helping 60 students in 11 classrooms each day, an...

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#### [Essential skill](#)

(Highlands Today © 10/31/2011)

By MARC VALERO | Highlands Today Published: October 30, 2011 SEBRING - From drawings and flash cards to computers and the Internet, Fred Wild Elementary School paraprofessional Pilar Eriksen goes low-tech and high-tech to teach her students something essential to learning in the U.S. — the English language. As teachers at the elementary level work with about 18 to 22 students in a class,...

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#### [CFDC to Vote on Issue at Special Meeting Today](#)

(Lakeland Ledger © 10/31/2011)

LAKELAND | Much has been said about the possible split of the University of South Florida Polytechnic from USF, but the largest, most diverse local airing of the much-debated issue will take place this morning. At 10 a.m. in Auburndale, the Central Florida Development Council Inc. will hold a special meeting – called so its 50 voting board members and other interested parties can hear from both...

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#### [Miami-Dade school district makes midterms, finals optional for students](#)

(Miami Herald © 10/31/2011)

A long line of tests stand between students and summer — baseline exams, interim tests, FCAT and end-of-course state exams, to name a few. Many Miami-Dade students can scratch some tests off the list. No more midterms or finals for students in grades 6 through 12. The longtime staples have been quietly eliminated by the Miami-Dade public schools and the school board. Approved at the October m...

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#### [Edison State crisis? College's reputation at stake as leaders' reputations tarnish](#)

(Naples Daily News © 10/31/2011)

FORT MYERS — When controversy first flared at Edison State College in March, longtime donor and former faculty member Kevin Lavrack took a red pen to his trust agreement. The college wouldn't inherit a dime of his \$1 million estate. Not until those at the top proved they could handle his money, and that of other Foundation donors, responsibly. "I stated I'd like to have them back on my lis...

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#### [A timeline of Edison State College and recent controversies](#)

(Naples Daily News © 10/31/2011)

By KRISTINE GILL, BRITTANY SHAMMAS Saturday, October 29, 2011 1962: Edison Junior College opens 1964: Edison Junior College graduates its first class of 67 students 1972: Edison Junior College changes its name to Edison Community College to reflect a more comprehensive mission 1992: Kenneth Walker becomes third president of the college 1997: Charlotte campus opens on 204-acre s...

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[Three new charter schools may open doors in Collier next year - PHOTOS](#)

(Naples Daily News © 10/31/2011)

NAPLES — The number of charter schools in Collier County could double next year, pending final contract agreements with the district's School Board. The district recently approved applications for three new charter schools — Florida High School for Accelerated Learning, Gulf Coast Charter Academy South and iGeneration Empowerment Academy of Collier County. "Every applicant is trying to fill...

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[Loosen feds' grip on schools](#)

(NW FL Daily News © 10/31/2011)

This newspaper has opposed the No Child Left Behind Act since it became law 10 years ago. In the guise of improving school standards in kindergarten through 12th grade, it greatly expanded federal control over schools, usurping state and local authority. Congress now is working to revamp NCLB. According to The Associated Press, a bipartisan agreement has been worked out between leaders of the S...

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[It's a long, dangerous walk to school for many students](#)

(Orlando Sentinel © 10/31/2011)

CLERMONT — Before sunrise, 15-year-old Tabitha Freeman wraps herself in a reflective vest and tucks a flashlight in her backpack loaded with books. It's 6:05 a.m. and pitch-black when the teen begins her nearly two-mile daily trek to school. A shooting star breaks the dark sky, but almost no streetlights brighten her way. Her trek to South Lake High School takes her down a scary Co...

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[Bias against true Floridians](#)

(Palm Beach Post © 10/31/2011)

Updated: 11:29 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 30, 2011 Posted: 8:20 p.m. Friday, Oct. 28, 2011 If you want to hear another tale of how stupid government rules can ruin lives, consider the case of 18-year-old Cassandra Romero. The Delray Beach teen, born and raised in the U.S., has lived in Palm Beach County nearly all of her life and graduated from an area high school. But when she went to enroll at Pa...

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[West Boynton neighborhoods seek charter middle, high schools](#)

(Palm Beach Post © 10/31/2011)

Posted: 5:13 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 30, 2011 A group of parents unhappy with the public middle school and high school options in unincorporated western Boynton Beach are close to getting a charter school in their area. The school board this month approved two applications from Pembroke Pines-based Somerset Academies to open the Somerset Academy Canyons charter middle and high schools. The distr...

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[Academic magnet programs unleash high school sports 'free agency'](#)

(Palm Beach Post © 10/31/2011)

This is the first of a three-part series. By Matt Porter, Jeff Greer and Charles Elmore Palm Beach Post Staff Writers Updated: 12:01 a.m. Monday, Oct. 31, 2011 Posted: 11:47 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 29, 2011 The high school playing fields of Palm Beach County are not equal. Lax oversight of school transfers, including through magnet programs and a little-known principal's choice opt...

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### [Escambia schools foundation gets the word out](#)

(Pensacola News Journal © 10/31/2011)

The Escambia County Public Schools Foundation has a new leader. Gulf Breeze native Jennifer Passeretti, 30, is the new executive director of the foundation, a nonprofit committed to enhancing the quality of public education in county schools. For 25 years, volunteer President Earl Lee steered the foundation in putting more than \$9 million into schools, through initiatives such as the Take Stock ...

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### [UPDATE: North Port principal broke the law, police say](#)

(Sarasota Herald-Tribune © 10/31/2011)

SARASOTA COUNTY - After a nearly five-month investigation, North Port police said Friday that the hypnosis performed by North Port High School Principal George Kenney violated criminal health care laws. But the potential crimes — unlicensed practice of health care and unlawful practice of hypnosis — are so unusual the department has as...

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### [A race to reform pensions](#)

(Sarasota Herald-Tribune © 10/31/2011)

President Barack Obama has proposed that the federal government provide \$35 billion to assist state budgets. It's a fine idea -- provided there's a stick. Many states have been hit hard by fast-rising retirement costs for public-sector employees, forcing those states to divert money from services such as education and public safety. Vice President J...

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### [Cursive writing: Lost art or useless skill?](#)

(South Florida Sun-Sentinel © 10/31/2011)

When asked for their John Hancock, future generations might print it in block letters or scrawl some scribbles across the page. But odds are, they won't sign their name in cursive. They might not even be able to read it. Cursive, with its graceful loops and perfectly joined letters, seems soon to join the typewriter, VCR player and flip-phone as relics of a past age. Keyboarding skills, not curs...

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### [School district spokeswoman dies](#)

(St. Augustine Record © 10/31/2011)

By MARCIA LANE Copyright 2011 . All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed. October 31, 2011 - 12:19am School district spokeswoman dies marcia.lane@staugustine.com Margie Davidson, the longtime spokeswoman for the St. Johns County school district, died Friday night in her sleep after a year-long battle with cancer. Davidson, 63, had a talent...

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### [Florida shortchanges its universities](#)

(St. Petersburg Times © 10/31/2011)

At least credit former U.S. Sen. George LeMieux for being half-right: Tuition at Florida's public universities is too low. But so is the state's direct support. The hard fact that no one in Tallahassee's majority party seems willing to acknowledge is that the state, not just students, must invest more in higher education if Florida's universities are ever going to rank among the nation's best...

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### [A weekend interview with former Florida education commissioner Eric J. Smith](#)

(St. Petersburg Times/The Grade Book Blog © 10/31/2011)

Eric J. Smith left Tallahassee quietly and without public comment, amid speculation that he had been forced out by newly elected Gov. Rick Scott. In the months since, he has kept a low profile, consulting and speaking to education groups. Smith agreed to speak with the Gradebook about the job he did, the work he left behind and his future. As for why he left, well, not so much. He spoke with repor...

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#### [Student loans can be too much of a good thing](#)

(Tampa Bay Online © 10/31/2011)

One of the great things about America, President Barack Obama told students at the University of Colorado, is that no matter how humble your roots, you still have a shot at a great education. He also told students that his goal is to "make college more affordable." Alas, the president's prescription for making higher education affordable seems likely to yield the same results as his plan for cur...

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#### [More choosing charter schools; is it right for you?](#)

(Tampa Tribune © 10/31/2011)

TAMPA – More Florida parents are putting their children in charter schools, pushing the state to the forefront of the national charter school movement. Enrollment in Hillsborough County charter schools has grown from 1,275 a decade ago to about 9,300 today, and this year, the school board faces a record number of charter school applications — 27. So how do you know if...

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#### [Senate Takes on Juvenile Justice Reforms](#)

(WCTV-TV © 10/31/2011)

Some of the same accountability measures that were introduced in public K-12 schools over the last decade are coming to the state's juvenile justice facilities. Reporter: Lilly Rockwell, The News Service of Florida Story 6 Comments Font Size: THE CAPITAL, TALLAHASSEE – October 29, 2011 Some of the same accountability measures that were introduced in public K-12 schools over the la...

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#### [Edison State crisis? College's reputation at stake as leaders' reputations tarnish](#)

(Naples Daily News © 10/30/2011)

FORT MYERS — When controversy first flared at a.inline\_topic:hover { background-color: #EAEAEA; } Edison State College in March, longtime donor and former faculty member Kevin Lavrack took a red pen to his trust agreement. The college wouldn't inherit a dime of his \$1 million estate. Not until those at the top proved they could handle his money, and that of other Foundation donors, responsibly...

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#### [New CF president arrives facing high expectations](#)

(Ocala Star Banner © 10/30/2011)

Isa Adney didn't know what to expect in 2006 when she attended a president's dinner at Seminole Community College and was seated beside Jim Henningsen, who was then the vice president of student success. Henningsen started chatting with Adney, then a 19-year-old sophomore honors student, eager to learn about how students felt about the school, whi...

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#### [It's a long, dangerous walk to school for many](#)

(Orlando Sentinel © 10/30/2011)

CLERMONT — Before sunrise, 15-year-old Tabitha Freeman wraps herself in a reflective vest and tucks a flashlight in her backpack loaded with books. It's 6:05 a.m. and pitch-black when the teen begins her nearly two-mile daily trek to school. A shooting star breaks the dark sky, but almost no streetlights brighten her way. Her trek to South Lake High School takes her down a scary County Roa...

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[Lift school standards but don't cut funding](#)

(Orlando Sentinel © 10/30/2011)

Florida has made extensive changes to boost academic rigor in public schools and buff its national reputation, but benchmarks such as the National Assessment of Education Progress show that Florida's still eating the dust of pacesetters like Massachusetts. So state officials are wise to propose raising the bar for passing the state's overhauled Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test, or FCAT 2.0. ...

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[More parents choosing charter schools for innovative education](#)

(Tampa Bay Online © 10/30/2011)

TAMPA – More Florida parents are putting their children in charter schools, pushing the state to the forefront of the national charter school movement. Enrollment in Hillsborough County charter schools has grown from 1,275 a decade ago to about 9,300 today, and this year, the school board faces a record number of charter school applications — 27. So how do you know if a ch...

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[Polk Charter Schools Dispute Their Share of Public Funding](#)

(Lakeland Ledger © 10/29/2011)

BARTOW | Polk County charter schools want a judge to step in and resolve a dispute over whether they are getting their share of federal money from the Polk County School District. Facts "We have gone above and beyond charter law in providing services to our charter schools. For this to go on at the public's expense seems to be unconscionable." WES BRIDGES,...

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[The 'true' cost of college just a mouse click away](#)

(Miami Herald © 10/29/2011)

Students checking out colleges this fall shouldn't rule out any options based on price alone. The tuition and fees that schools publish online are often far more than what families end up paying. The problem is that the true cost of attendance — after subtracting federal, state and school grants — isn't always clear until students receive financial aid award letters. Bu...

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[No guarantees of success when returning for a degree](#)

(Palm Beach Post © 10/29/2011)

Jeanne Tholl lost her supermarket job when Albertsons closed its Florida stores, so the 47-year-old did what many frustrated job seekers have done in recent years - she went back to school. Tholl, of Lake Worth, enrolled in a licensed massage therapist course at the MedVance Institute. Tholl said the school's recruiters told her that massage therapists routinely earn \$60 an hour, a big inc...

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[In-state tuition bias against true Floridians](#)

(Palm Beach Post © 10/29/2011)

If you want to hear another tale of how stupid government rules can ruin lives, consider the case of 18-year-old Cassandra Romero. The Delray Beach teen, born and raised in the U.S., has lived in Palm Beach County nearly all of her life and graduated from an area high school. But when she went to enroll at Palm Beach State College, she was told she didn't qualify for in-state tuition. Why? Because...

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### [Students have to cut words](#)

(Sarasota Herald-Tribune © 10/29/2011)

Penn Weinberger had grown attached to his college admissions essay. The topic – coping with a brother's attention deficit disorder – was important to him. The characters had dimension. The meaning, as his teachers at Hunter College High School in New York had long advised him, was shown, not told. The only problem with Penn's writing was the math:...

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### [State, union clash in court over "no-aid" repeal](#)

(WFSU Newsroom © 10/29/2011)

A lawsuit led by the Florida Education Association is aimed at getting Amendment 7 kicked off the 2012 ballot. The amendment would take away the no-aid provision that blocks the state from funding religious organizations. Lynn Hatter reports Lawyers for the teachers union argue the ballot title and summary are misleading, but the state's attorneys disagree. In a small Leon County courtroom lawyer...

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### [Commissioner Recommends Tougher FCAT Scoring](#)

(Tallahassee-WCTV (CBS) © 10/28/2011)

Tallahassee, Florida - October 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 th...

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Have a fun-filled day! Please see the articles below.

*Deborah*



**Tallahassee Democrat**

**Employers honored for commitment to workers with disabilities**

**By Elizabeth M. Mack Democrat staff writer**

**October 27, 2011**

Kathie Riley, owner of My Best Friend's Kitchen in Panama City, says she is often asked why she employs individuals with disabilities. The answer is simple.

"I say, God wants us to help people who are less fortunate," she said. "It gives them hope. And they are truly the best — they show up on time, they have great attitudes and they love being there. And that's what's most important."

As a small business owner, Riley has employed four people with disabilities

since her business opened in 2007 and is also an active participant in Disability Mentoring Day each October. And that's just a couple of contributions, among others.



Thursday morning, Riley's business along with eight other employers from around the state were recognized for going the extra mile to recruit individuals with disabilities at the Disability Employment Awareness Celebration, part of Disability Employment Awareness Month. About 100 people attended the event, held in the city commission chambers at City Hall.

"Each year in October we highlight the contributions made by those with disabilities," said Bill Palmer, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation director. "And we can't help people with disabilities find work

without employers willing to see what they are truly capable of and hire them."

During the event, the employers honored were presented with the Florida Exceptional Employer Award.

"If anybody has any hesitation with hiring those with disabilities, I suggest they come talk to us because we've enjoyed our experience," said Lisa Vickers, executive director of the Florida Department of Revenue, the honoree in Tallahassee. "They inspire us, they make us want to work harder and be better people."

DOR was nominated by the Division of Blind Services, which has a working partnership with the state agency to provide an on-the-job training program. Sixteen people have benefited from this program. On top of that, the agency has made 48 different accommodations for its employees with disabilities.

Florida has an estimated 5.7 million people living with disabilities, said Mike Hansen, director of the Agency for Persons with Disabilities. Of those, 50 percent are employed.

People like Daniel Jordan, 25. Jordan has worked at the Westminster Oaks Retirement Community for two and a half years. He's the only employee there with Down syndrome, he said. "I like to show what people with Down syndrome can do," Jordan added.

And the other employees at his job make him feel welcome and help him out when needed. But most importantly, he wants people to know he loves his job.

"I really enjoy putting a smile on the residents' faces at Westminster Oaks," he said.

It's stories like Jordan's that are cause for celebration, according to the hosts of Thursday's event — the Agency for Persons with Disabilities, the Division of Blind Services and Division of Vocational Rehabilitation.

#### **Tallahassee Democrat**

#### **Lincoln science teacher is a finalist for national award**

**By Ashley Ames Democrat staff writer**

**October 28, 2011**

Stephen Fannin, a science teacher at Lincoln High School and a Leon County educator for 30 years, gets excited about moles.

Not the furry creatures that live underground. The chemical unit of measurement.

In fact, it's one of his favorite topics to teach.

"I just enjoy the mental challenge of getting students to like science," he said. "It's something new every year, new challenges every year."

Fannin was notified over the summer that he had been selected as a science state finalist for the Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching, one of three science finalists and three math finalists in Florida.

The award, according to the PAEMST website, recognizes teachers who develop and use a high-quality teaching method that enhances student learning. The winners, who will be announced at a later date, receive \$10,000 from the National

Science Foundation. The final decision is determined by the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy.

The last teacher from Tallahassee to receive the national award was Elizabeth Perdue from Fairview Middle School in 1994.

Allen Burch, principal of Lincoln High, said Fannin does a great job, not just at the school but countywide. Fannin — who was nominated for the award by a fellow teacher — initiated a professional-development lesson-review program at Lincoln and has been a teacher leader in the county, Burch said.

"He has really dedicated himself to education," he said. "He's really become a lifelong learner."

Fannin, who was recognized over the weekend by the Florida Association of Science Teachers and again Thursday afternoon at a faculty conference, said he was honored by the designation. Even if he

doesn't get the award, he said he feels like he has "made it."

"I am pretty happy that I have gotten this far," he said. "I feel like that is an accomplishment."

#### **Tallahassee Democrat**

#### **Training leads to career opportunity for draftsman**

**11:57 PM, Oct. 29, 2011**

FORT MYERS — Melvin Jordan III looks like your average college student or young professional, and that's the way he prefers it.

In fact his boss, Ted Sottong, vice president of Architecture Inc., was surprised to learn that Jordan has a disability; he hired him because he was the best candidate for the job, and that's how it should be.

When Jordan, who has attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, first met Vocational Rehabilitation counselor Lynn Engle, he was floundering at Edison State College. He was having problems concentrating and his schoolwork was suffering. They discussed different career options to build on his strengths and interests. Engle suggested that he try something different and helped him enroll at High Tech Central, where he discovered his passion for drafting and design and flourished.

One of his teachers, Gary Christiano, knew the owners of Architecture Inc. and asked if they would be interested in hiring Jordan, but they turned him down. Christiano wouldn't give up and suggested that they give VR's On-the-Job Training Program a try to see if Jordan would be a good fit for the company.

On-the-Job Training is a VR program that gives customers the opportunity to work at an actual job site and gain real-life experience. VR pays the employee's salary during OJT, along with reasonable training costs and any accommodations needed.

They agreed, and after 11 months of training, Jordan was hired full time as a drafter. He has done so well that as he became interested in project management, the company has allowed him to get more involved in the process. "We've actually started working with him on running some projects and getting more involved with clients and engineers," Sottong says.

He is quick to compliment Jordan for his enthusiasm, maturity and curiosity about the business. "He is looking at it from where he is now, where he thinks he should be, and where he wants to go," Sottong says. "He's asking a lot of questions, just trying to figure out what his future is going to look like. It's just great to be around people like that."

(Page 2 of 2)

After earning his certification in drafting and design from High Tech Central, Jordan is now back at Edison State College working on his AA degree in drafting and design technology, while still working at Architecture Inc. Jordan wants to stay with the company that feels like family to him. "They make you feel comfortable, and they're open to new ideas, whatever they might be," he says. "They're real open-minded and are really great people to work for."

Jordan appreciates everything that VR and Engle have done for him. "Lynn made everything as easy as possible. She helped me get the accommodations that I needed for school," he says. That included allowing Melvin more time to take tests or allowing him to take the test out of the room and away from distractions.

Sottong recommends OJT to other employers. "There is a definite benefit to the company. You're basically getting a person that someone is paying for you. It didn't cost us anything. And there is some great talent out there. If you find the right people that mesh with your business, what's to lose?"

— If your business would like to participate in the On-the-Job Training Program, contact your local VR office at 800-451-4327 or visit [Rehabworks.org](http://Rehabworks.org).

## **Tallahassee Democrat**

### **What Others Say: Tuition hikes**

#### **Don't take education from the middle class**

**5:55 PM, Oct. 28, 2011**

Florida's public universities need to charge higher tuition rates, but they also must take care not to price the middle class out of higher education.

Tuition at Florida public universities still ranks 48th nationally, with an average tuition of \$4,886 per year. Nationwide, in-state tuition and fees at four-year public universities average \$7,600, says the College Board.

So when lawmakers two years ago allowed universities to raise tuition by up to 15 percent per year until it matched the national average, it sounded painful but reasonable, especially with recession-plagued lawmakers tightening state aid to higher education.

Florida higher-education leaders argued that this was essential in order to maintain or grow programs and retain the best faculty.

But some projections of how much tuition could rise in Florida are shocking.

For instance, if current increases continue, a four-year education, including room, board, fees, etc., will cost \$204,929 (about half of it tuition) at Florida Gulf Coast University by 2024, just 13 years from now, according to Sallie Mae, a leading source of college loans.

FGCU's annual tuition for a full-time, in-state undergraduate this year is \$5,533, a 15-percent jump from 2010. Could tuition really jump 20-fold in a little over a decade?

That's quite possible if that national average continues to rise — it's up almost 8 percent this year alone — and the economy and state tax revenues continue to lag.

Will the value of the education be worth that much by then? It's important to pose that question to local and state higher-education leaders and demand an answer.

This year, the state's 11 public universities told the system's board of governors that, unless the economy improves significantly, they expect to continue those 15-percent annual tuition increases.

That's the same economy that is making it harder for families to afford tuition.

Higher education is essential to a strong and growing middle class, itself essential to American strength. The middle class seems neither strong nor growing these days, with wages decreasing and unemployment still high.

University trustees and the board of governors must beware of letting tuition soar to levels that make university education the province of the economic elite.