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**Sent time:** Thursday, November 17, 2011 11:16:54 AM  
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**Subject:** FW: 11/17/11 Education Round-Up

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FYI – have a great day!

Sincerely,

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**From:** Higgins, Deborah  
**Sent:** Thursday, November 17, 2011 10:49 AM  
**Subject:** 11/17/11 Education Round-Up



**[Deputies: Angry mom started fight with child at school](#)**  
(Bradenton Herald © 11/17/2011)

The Orlando Sentinel ORLANDO – An Orlando-area mom reportedly angry that her child was being bullied took matters into her own hands on Tuesday –and was arrested for her trouble. Leslie Ann Thomas, 31, charged into Lockhart Middle School on Doctor Love Road about 9:16 a.m., according to an arrest report. Thomas, who had not checked in at the school's front office and did not have ...

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**[Professionals Return to School to Participate in the Great American Teach-In](#)**  
(Brandon Patch.com © 11/17/2011)

Professionals from all walks of life will head back to school today, Nov. 17, as part of the annual Hillsborough County Great American Teach-In. Hundreds of residents ranging from business professionals to hobbyists will visit public schools today to share their knowledge with students. The teach-in is presented by SERVE, the volunteer arm of the school district, and brings professio...

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### [‘Taj Mahal’ Judge Hawkes resigns](#)

(Citrus County Chronicle © 11/17/2011)

TALLAHASSEE — With a state panel preparing to grill him on ethics charges, Paul Hawkes decided to back out instead. Hawkes is resigning as First District Court of Appeal judge effective Jan. 4, about four weeks before he was to appear before the Judicial Qualifications Commission to answer charges stemming largely from his lead role in the construction of a \$48.8 million court...

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### [Race to Top Consolation Prize: \\$200M for STEM](#)

(Education Week/Politics K-12 © 11/17/2011)

The U.S. Department of Education has now spelled out what the nine runner-up finalists from last year's Race to the Top competition must do to get a piece of the \$200 million consolation prize. This new money, which makes for a third round of the Obama administration's signature education-reform initiative, must be spent on programs aimed at improving science, technology, engineering, and mat...

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### [Stephen Wise wants to steer gaming money toward education](#)

(FL Times-Union/PolitiJax Blog © 11/17/2011)

With talk of sprouting three mega casinos in South Florida dominating talk at the Capitol, state Sen. Stephen Wise, R – Jacksonville, quietly filed a bill last week that would funnel some gaming money to education. The bill would take 2 percent of all gaming money that comes into the state each year and place it in an education endowment. He was clear that this was separate of this year's effort...

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### [Schools panel agrees to abide by Sunshine Law](#)

(Florida Keys News © 11/17/2011)

By SEAN KINNEY [skinney@keynoter.com](mailto:skinney@keynoter.com) Posted - Wednesday, November 16, 2011 11:18 AM EST After extensive discussion, input from Assistant Monroe County State Attorney Mark Wilson and a tight vote, the Monroe County School District's Audit and Finance Committee has agreed to follow state open-government laws. The issue considered by the five-member advisory panel in a Friday meeting at...

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### [Rage Against the Machine](#)

(Folio Weekly © 11/17/2011)

Infuriating: Don't Accept News on "Intervene" Schools (This post by Julie Delegal originally appeared on her Facebook page) Thousands of citizens, myself included, got nauseous this morning over the "news." After many trials and tribulations and all out begging in Tallahassee, we recently got a year's reprieve to "turnaround" our four "f..."

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### [Editorial: Higher ed needs to measure up](#)

(Ft. Myers News Press © 11/17/2011)

We like FGCU President Wilson Bradshaw's response to Gov. Rick Scott's campaign to make Florida universities more accountable for their work. Bradshaw was cool about Scott's recent ultimatum to the state's 11 public universities to prove they were doing a good job. Bradshaw declared himself delighted to be held accountable, then said the evidence was already in that his Florida Gulf Coast Univ...

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### [Editorial: What's the rush?](#)

(Gainesville Sun © 11/17/2011)

If Gov. Rick Scott and the Florida Legislature are known for anything, it's quick fixes. Last year they quickly fixed the public schools, prisons and the state pension system. So far what those serial quick fixes have produced is a load of litigation. Now, going into an election year session in which lawmaker will surely be preoccupied with reap...

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#### [Angry Letters Fly From Senators on Both Sides of USF Poly Issue](#)

(Lakeland Ledger © 11/17/2011)

State senators fire off a volley of missives, demanding information, audits and investigations. By Mary Toothman THE LEDGER Published: Wednesday, November 16, 2011 at 3:29 p.m. LAKELAND | Upset state senators fired off accusatory letters Wednesday, making demands in the debate over the University of South Florida Polytechnic in Lakeland. They want information. They want audits. They wan...

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#### [Bright Futures changes would help students afford graduate school, says council](#)

(Orlando Sentinel © 11/17/2011)

More college students would be able to use their Bright Futures scholarship money to pay for graduate school if the Florida Legislature follows a recommendation that's likely to come from a key group of education leaders. Under current rules, most students participating in the state's popular scholarship program can only spend those funds on undergraduate or vocational programs. In select cas...

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#### [Deputies: Angry mom charged into school, started fight with child](#)

(Orlando Sentinel © 11/17/2011)

An Orlando-area mom reportedly angry that her child was being bullied took matters into her own hands on Tuesday —and was arrested for her trouble. Leslie Ann Thomas, 31, charged into Lockhart Middle School on Doctor Love Road about 9:16 a.m., according to an arrest report. Thomas, who had not checked in at the school's front office and did not have permission to be on the property, headed...

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#### [Eased zero-tolerance law brings fewer arrests in Florida schools](#)

(Orlando Sentinel © 11/17/2011)

The number of Florida students arrested in school has dropped significantly in the past six years, a trend accelerated by lawmakers' decision to dial back the state's strict zero-tolerance law in 2009. But some say easing the state's hard line against potentially criminal behavior in schools has not done enough and has not been uniformly embraced by districts across the state. Lawmakers may m...

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#### [First ketchup, now pizza as a vegetable?](#)

(Orlando Sentinel/The School Zone Blog © 11/17/2011)

You may have heard that Congress is trying to force the USDA to recognize pizza as a vegetable. It's a sad reminder of how political the process of feeding schoolchildren has become. Is this a vegetable? The final version of a spending bill released Monday would undo Obama-backed and USDA-proposed changes that attempt to reduce the reliance on pizza and french fries in school lunches. Suppor...

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#### [Palm Beach County school officials foresee \\$52 million budget deficit next year](#)

(Palm Beach Post © 11/17/2011)

School board members this evening got an early look at the budget looming for the next school year and they did not like what they saw: a projected deficit of at least \$52 million. They warned it now appears impossible to avoid affecting students and essential services with cuts. "We're cutting into the meat now. All the fat is gone" said School Board Vice Chairwoman Debra Robinson of th...

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[How a Venice charter school is doubling down on fitness](#)

(Sarasota Herald-Tribune © 11/17/2011)

VENICE - While other schools are cutting P.E., or making it optional, the new SKY Academy sprints in the opposite direction. The YMCA charter school, which opened in August, requires students to take not one but two physical education classes. Every morning and every afternoon, they break a sweat. At SKY – an awkward acronym for "Strength and Kn...

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[Mission accomplished: Nature Coast High students convert car from gas to electric](#)

(St. Petersburg Times © 11/17/2011)

BROOKSVILLE — It's sportier than a Prius, uses less gas and gleams with a new coat of Sharks blue paint. After hundreds of hours of labor, students at Nature Coast Technical High School have converted a 2002 Toyota Celica to run on rechargeable batteries. "It's pretty impressive," said 17-year-old Sean Bobbert, a senior who was among the students who started the project at the end of the...

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[Senator asks for USF leaders to be investigated](#)

(St. Petersburg Times © 11/17/2011)

TAMPA — The powerful lawmaker who crusaded to make the University of South Florida Polytechnic independent is now asking state leaders to investigate USF president Judy Genshaft. State Sen. J.D. Alexander on Wednesday accused Genshaft and other USF leaders of intentionally misleading the Florida Board of Governors as they lobbied against separation. The Senate budget chairman called USF's stat...

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[Bill filed to expand vouchers in Florida](#)

(St. Petersburg Times/The Grade Book Blog © 11/17/2011)

To ease a growing waiting list for private-school vouchers, a Florida state senator has filed legislation to expand the program next year. SB 962, filed by Sen. Lizbeth Benacquisto, R-Ft. Myers, would increase the corporate donations cap for the tax-credit voucher program from \$218.7 million in 2012-13 to \$250 million. The program is funded by corporations that get a dollar-for-dollar tax credi...

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[Board urged to reject 5 proposed charter schools](#)

(Tampa Bay Online © 11/17/2011)

LAND O' LAKES – Pasco County school district staffers are recommending the school board reject applications from five proposed charter schools, including one with connections to two state lawmakers. The school board is scheduled to vote on the applications at 6 p.m. Tuesday. The application for one of the schools, Classical Preparatory School, was submitted by Anne Corcoran...

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[Brogan talks with House Dems about higher ed reform](#)

(WFSU Newsroom © 11/17/2011)

Governor Rick Scott has called for greater accountability in tracking how the state's 11 public universities spend their money, calling attention to the issue a few months ago by posting the salaries of faculty and staff online. Lynn Hatter reports State University System Chancellor Frank Brogan says the funding issue is an important conversation to have just not this year. Florida's public univ...

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### [South Florida lawmakers discuss easing casino restrictions](#)

(WFTS ABC Channel 28 Tampa © 11/17/2011)

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. - A major construction association in South Florida announces it will support legislation to build three, multi-billion dollar resort casinos in Miami-Dade and Broward counties because of the jobs they would create. Members of the Latin Builders Association carried shovels into the state Capitol and wore hardhats that said, "We Need Jobs Now." The group says its economic anal...

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### [Federal funds in place for Lake Wales charters](#)

(Winter Haven News Chief © 11/17/2011)

LAKE WALES - The charter school system had to amend its budget this week. Lake Wales Charter Schools Inc. has received another \$845,000 in federal funding under its new status as a local education agency, bringing the total federal programs budget for the six-school system up to \$2.3 million. In June, the board of trustees approved a resolution to ...

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### [Would-Be Engineers Hit Books the Hardest, a Study Finds](#)

(Winter Haven News Chief © 11/17/2011)

Business majors spend less time on course work than other college students, but they devote more hours to nonschool duties, like earning money and caring for family members. In contrast, engineering students spend the most time studying and the least on outside demands. Those are among the findings released on Thursday from the annual National Surve...

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### [Teachers had a deal](#)

(Daytona Beach News-Journal © 11/16/2011)

In response to the letter writer who said teachers were "whining" that they have to pay part of their pensions – am I the only one sick and tired of the public not understanding this issue? We signed a contract with the Volusia County School Board that was a compensation package. We said yes to lower salaries so we could have a pension. Pensions allow people dignity when they retire. Pensions all...

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### [Schools to make more cuts](#)

(Florida Keys Keysnews © 11/16/2011)

The Monroe County School District will have a budget shortfall next fiscal year, and must make further cuts in 2011 in order to pay for increased enrollment at Florida Keys charter schools, Superintendent Jesus Jara told the School Board Tuesday night. "We are meeting tomorrow to really start cutting and making some reductions this current fiscal year," said Jara, who reported that more than 1...

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### [New \\$30M fund to help Florida charter schools](#)

(Ocala Star Banner © 11/16/2011)

The state has established a \$30 million fund to entice successful charter school operators to open new schools or expand existing ones to serve 15,000 more low-income children statewide. Charter School Growth Fund and Florida Department of Education officials said only successful charter schools serving low-income students, and which have the capaci...

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### [Mom accused of helping daughter beat up another student bonds out of jail](#)

(Orlando-WFTV (ABC) © 11/16/2011)

ORANGE COUNTY, Fla. — An Orange County mother accused of storming into a middle school cafeteria and helping her child beat up another student has bonded out of

jail. Deputies said the fight broke out Tuesday when 29-year-old Leslie Thomas teamed up with her 12-year-old daughter at Lockhart Middle School. Both mother and daughter were arrested, and the mother was charged with battery, c...

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#### [School shows honor veterans](#)

(Sarasota Herald-Tribune © 11/16/2011)

McIntosh Middle School, Sarasota Military Academy and Sarasota High School recently partnered to host multiple celebrations honoring local veterans. Jill Rothenburg organized the celebration at McIntosh Middle School. Rothenburg welcomed more than 100 veterans. "I am just so proud of our veterans and our school," said Rothenburg, whose father was...

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#### [Adult education participation drops after fees imposed](#)

(St. Augustine Record © 11/16/2011)

By LILLY ROCKWELL Copyright 2011 . All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed. November 16, 2011 - 12:01am Adult education participation drops after fees imposed News Service of Florida TALLAHASSEE — In the four months since Florida began charging tuition for adult education programs, enrollment has dropped dramatically, prompting concern fro...

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#### [Florida seeks waiver to No Child Left Behind law](#)

(Bradenton Herald © 11/15/2011)

The Associated Press Florida is among the first states to seek a waiver from the federal No Child Left Behind law. State education officials earlier had said they would take up the Obama administration's offer of waivers, but Monday was the first day requests could be filed. State Education Commissioner Gerard Robinson said the waiver would give Florida the flexibility to strengthen its ac...

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#### [Feeding empty tummies in Manatee County](#)

(WWSB ABC Sarasota County © 11/15/2011)

BRADENTON - Being able to go home after school or a long day's work and have a home cooked meal is something many people look forward to every day. But for others, a meal is something wished for as the number of homeless continues to rise on the Suncoast. What's even more heartbreaking , many of those are elementary school children and the numbers are shocking. "There were about ...

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One Day 'Til



FRIDAY!!!

Have a lovely day!

*Deborah*

Tallahassee Democrat

Editorial

## **Beyond homecoming**

### **Giving back isn't a one-week thing**

**November 17, 2011**

In its simplest terms, homecoming is a chance for alumni to reconnect with the school — and the community — that gave them such fond memories.

It's a celebration, and that's what Florida State University is doing this week: celebrating homecoming and all that homecoming traditionally means, from the parade to the homecoming court to Saturday night's football game.

But there's a more serious side to homecoming, as well. It's also a chance for the school to recognize the contributions that alumni have made to the community and, in fact, to the world, as well as an opportunity for alumni to see what giving back can mean.

Giving back will be celebrated Friday when the College of Business has a ribbon-cutting for a state-of-the-art facility that will let students and faculty in the Professional Sales Program learn to use mobile technology for a range of business activities.

The Marvin A. "Mitch" Mitchell Sr. Behavioral Laboratory was boosted by a \$50,000 gift from Fort Lauderdale businessman Andy Mitchell and his wife, Kathy Ireland Mitchell. The Mitchells are Seminoles through and through: Andy and Kathy are 1974 graduates of the College of Business; a daughter, Kristen, is a 2007 grad of the College of Business; and the husband of another daughter earned his degree from the College of Business in 2006. The gift was made in honor of Andy's father, Marvin A. "Mitch" Mitchell Sr.

At the annual Homecoming Awards Breakfast on Saturday, the FSU Alumni Association will honor its "Grads Made Good." If we may brag a bit, one of those is former Democrat publisher Mike Pate. Since leaving the

Democrat, he has kept busy with the John S. and James L.

Knight Foundation, helping to provide funding for local initiatives such as the Knight Creative Communities Institute, Sustainable Tallahassee, the Tallahassee Film Festival and Get Gaines Going.

A second "Grad Made Good" is Susan Hassmiller, now senior adviser for nursing for the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. She is active nationally in campaigns to address the nursing shortage, and she has received the Florence Nightingale Medal, the highest honor given to nursing professionals by the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Others grads who will be honored Saturday include Leslie Pantin Jr. (Bernard F. Sliger Award), a native of Cuba and founder of the Calle Ocho block party that helps fund youth projects and scholarships; Jeff Shaara (Distinguished Writing), who has been on the New York Times bestseller list with his last 10 books; Gene Deckerhoff (homecoming parade grand marshal), the voice of the Seminoles; and Jawole Willa Jo Zollar (homecoming parade faculty grand marshal), founder and artistic director of the Urban Bush Women dance company.

FSU grads, you're in distinguished company.

So, welcome back. We know you'll enjoy the festivities. And we hope you'll be inspired by the Mitchells, the Grads Made Good and many other of your fellow Seminoles to continue supporting your school and your communities and bringing honor to Florida State.

## **Tallahassee Democrat**

### **Bill Cotterell Capital Curmudgeon**

#### **Don't blindly accept the tall tales of politics**

**November 17, 2011**

The spirit of the famous "thespian speech" lives on, powered by the new social media.

If you're on Facebook and your interests are even mildly political, you probably got a shocking little missive in the last few days about how members of Congress get paid \$174,000 a year — for life. This particular urban legend also says presidents are down for \$425,000 a year and the House speaker and congressional minority leaders are automatically set for life, the day they take office.

The point of this information is that a typical soldier in Afghanistan, or schoolteacher in Detroit, or Los Angeles police officer, is worth much more but earns far less. The message is adaptable, depending on which group the sender wishes to use in comparison to the luxurious lives of the political ruling class.

And it's correct in its concept — congressional and executive benefits are very generous at the federal level — if you're not too picky about your facts. The salary and pension information is sometimes coupled with aggravating data about free health insurance for life, or congressional staffers not having to repay student loans.

We all know that if something sounds too good to be true, it probably isn't. The same goes for things that seem bad beyond belief.

Basically, congressional pensions are based on a percentage of salary multiplied by years of service. Members get vested in five years and can start collecting at age 62, with 20 years service, in most cases. And the salary is based on the average peak three years of service.

That's a lot better pension than most of us get, especially when you consider that members of Congress can slide effortlessly into lobbying gigs or high-pay, little-work jobs at law firms or trade associations. But it's nowhere near \$174,000 a year.

Nor is the insurance free, nor the student loans forgiven automatically.

Shocking political rumors have always been with us. Jefferson, Jackson and Lincoln were all subjected to whispering campaigns — often containing just enough truth to sound plausible.

Florida's most famous campaign hoax was that speech George Smathers never made about Sen. Claude Pepper in their 1950 Democratic primary. He said plenty of scary things about Pepper's "red" record, but Smathers never told rural voters that the senator's sister was "a well-known thespian in wicked New York City," that Pepper was "known as an extrovert in Washington" or that he and his wife "openly practiced celibacy before they were married."

It makes an amusing legend but, if you think about it, trying to hoodwink poor, uneducated voters would have been the dumbest thing Smathers could have done. Even those who didn't recognize the words right away would catch on in a day or so, and Smathers would have looked like some wise guy lawyer from Miami (which, incidentally, he was, not that there's anything wrong with that).

Would you vote for somebody who just made you look like a rube?

Or remember Congressional Bill 42-P? That was the mythical legislation to slap a fivecent federal tax on every email message, supposedly to bail out the Post Office. The dire "call your congressman" warning galloped around the Internet so widely, about a dozen years ago, that ex-Rep. Allen Boyd posted a notice on his website — telling voters, "If you're contacting me about Congressional Bill 42-P, it's a hoax."

Anyone who knew anything about lawmaking would have instantly recognized that bills aren't numbered that way in Congress — they're House Bill or Senate Bill, or House Joint Resolution, etc. But this one shouldn't have passed the sniff test, even if you don't know how bills are numbered, because it would be electoral suicide for any member to propose such a tax.

Maybe if you believe some total stranger is going to park \$40 million in your bank account, as soon as you send him your PIN code, you'll believe Congress would consider an email tax. (Actually, this wouldn't be a such bad idea, if it were physically possible, maybe a penny per email. They could exempt the first 5,000 messages per week, per person — that would take care of you and me, but it would put the spammers out of business by Tuesday.) Email hoaxes could cover a lot of ground quickly, but Facebook and Twitter make it far faster. If I'm sufficiently horrified by something you post, I can repost it and hit maybe 1,500 people at the click of a mouse — and each of them can flash it to all their friends and followers.

The re-senders are mostly innocent. They believe what they receive and want to alert others to something awful allegedly going on. But there are two interesting things about these mass messages.

First, even innocently perpetuating a hoax damages the credibility of the point being made. Yes, it's shocking that members of Congress make a lot while a soldier in Iraq makes a little — but let's not illustrate that point with a ridiculous exaggeration.

And second, the reason these things get traction is that they are basically plausible. We're so used to outrages from Congress, we don't bother checking the facts.

"Yeah," we think, "that sounds like something those guys would do."

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Bill Cotterell Capital Curmudgeon