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Sent time: Tuesday, December 06, 2011 12:17:43 PM
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Subject: FW: 12/06/11 Education Round-Up

FYI – have a great afternoon!

Sincerely,

Kevin Smith,
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From: Higgins, Deborah
Sent: Tuesday, December 06, 2011 9:58 AM
Subject: 12/06/11 Education Round-Up

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



[Senate taking up new district lines](#)
(Bradenton Herald © 12/06/2011)

Herald Times Tallahassee Bureau TALLAHASSEE – Legislators have reached their first deal in the once-a-decade redistricting battle: Senators will draw Senate maps and House members will draw House maps. It sounds like an obvious agreement – each chamber knows its own territory better than the other – but in practice it means that House and Senate leaders both have a better chance of makin...

[JOURNALISM NEXT | What students need to know to fight bullying](#)
(Bradenton Herald © 12/06/2011)

Special to the Herald Here's something people seem oblivious to, despite the fact it's happening all around them: peer pressure and bullying. The majority of teenagers today - including those at Bayshore High School – have given into peer pressure in one way or another. Whether it's being pressured into drinking alcohol or something simple like

jaywalking, nearly 30 ...

[Florida college students in budget crosshairs](#)

(Daytona Beach Journal © 12/06/2011)

OUR VIEW December 5, 2011 12:05 AM Posted in: N-J Editorials Tagged: budget , college funding With a \$2 billion budget shortfall looming over the next session of the Florida Legislature, lawmakers are floating a number of possible targets for cuts. On Thursday, college students in the Sunshine State were put on notice they may have to pay more for school as the Legislature grapples with th...

[Common Core Poses Challenges for Preschools](#)

(Education Week © 12/06/2011)

Educators walk a tightrope between academics and young children's developmental needs By Jaclyn Zubrzycki Although the common-core standards are calibrated to ensure that students leave K-12 schools ready for work and college, they are also posing challenges for the educators who work with children just starting out their school careers. As 46 states and the District of Columbia work...

[NCLB Waiver Plans: How Important Are Subgroups and AMOs?](#)

(Education Week/Politics K-12 © 12/06/2011)

If you haven't yet read all 11 No Child Left Behind Act waiver applications, read this story instead—my attempt at synthesizing the major components of states' plans to use flexibility to implement their own accountability systems. It's clear that these first-round waiver applications already raise some significant questions about the future of state-led education accountability. Among them:...

[Bill would allow adult education in Florida charter schools](#)

(Florida Times-Union © 12/06/2011)

Each of Florida's 154,780 charter school students shares a common trait: They are traditional, from kindergarten to high school. A proposal being pushed by state Rep. Janet Adkins, R-Fernandina Beach, looks to change that. Under her bill, state law would be tweaked to allow charter schools and nonprofits to offer adult education classes that are now mostly taken through public school districts o...

[PolitiJax: Vice President Joe Biden coming to Fletcher High School](#)

(Florida Times-Union © 12/06/2011)

Vice President Joe Biden will be talking college affordability Thursday at Fletcher High School, the White House announced Monday. He will be making the trip with Education Secretary Arne Duncan. The event is not open to the public. Biden's trip comes roughly a month after President Barack Obama announced measures to help those struggling with student loan debt. The move lowered the maximum ...

[Thrasher bill sails through committee](#)

(Florida Times-Union © 12/06/2011)

Legislation aimed at expanding a retirement program for university professors and administrators sailed out of its second committee stop without discussion Monday. The proposal has been sold in committee stops by its sponsor, state Sen. John Thrasher, R-St. Augustine, as a way to increase competition in the State University System Optional Retirement Program. He points to the fact that investment ...

[Florida Morning: Gambling loopholes: Scott wont touch local pension savings](#)

(Florida Times-Union © 12/06/2011)

By: Matt Dixon (matt.dixon@jacksonville.com, @Mdixon55) Florida Morning appears every weekday. Subscribe via e-mail. GAMBLING LOOPHOLES: As Florida considers ushering in a new era of casino mega-resorts, a dispute in the tiny Panhandle town of Gretna has focused attention on the state's existing gambling landscape — and the considerable confusion that surrounds it...

[Duval County School Board considers program contracts](#)

(Florida Times-Union © 12/06/2011)

School Board Agenda The Duval County School Board's monthly meeting is at 6 p.m. today in the auditorium of the School Administration Building, 1701 Prudential Drive. The meeting is open to the public and will be televised live on Comcast Cable Channel 99 and WJCT Digital Channel 7.4. WJCT TV-7 will air a tape-delayed broadcast at midnight. Among the items to be considered: ...

[Bill would OK adult education in charters](#)

(Florida Times-Union © 12/06/2011)

Each of Florida's 154,780 charter school students shares a common trait: They are traditional, from kindergarten to high school. A proposal being pushed by state Rep. Janet Adkins, R-Fernandina Beach, looks to change that. Under her bill, state law would be tweaked to allow charter schools and nonprofits to offer adult education classes that are now mostly taken through public school distr...

[College Leaders Meet With Obama to Discuss Costs and Productivity](#)

(Gainesville Sun © 12/06/2011)

In a private meeting on Monday, President Obama and his secretary of education, Arne Duncan, conferred with a dozen college presidents, mostly from public institutions, and leaders of two nonprofit education organizations, about how to curb the rising cost of college and improve graduation rates. "It was an unusually interesting meeting, and ...

[Editorial: Culture of cruelty](#)

(Gainesville Sun © 12/06/2011)

Robert Champion, a drum major with FAMU's legendary "Marching 100" band, died on Nov. 11 following the Florida Classic football game in Orlando. Suspected cause of death: Hazing. A criminal investigation is under way. All band activities have been suspended. Four band members have been expelled. FAMU's longtime band director, Julian White, has been fired for not doing enough to curb hazin...

[Fewer students completing teacher evaluations online](#)

(Independent Florida Alligator © 12/06/2011)

Brianna Kolota, Alligator Contributing Writer The Independent Florida Alligator | 0 comments Despite the convenience of online faculty evaluations, student response to these surveys has taken a dip since going digital. Faculty evaluations, which UF offers solely online this semester, are open, but data from Summer 2011 indicates that student feedback decreased about 20 percent with the digital sw...

[Letter: School code has Port St. Lucie High students dressing for success](#)

(Jupiter Courier © 12/06/2011)

Neal Lederer, Port St. Lucie Letter: School code has Port St. Lucie High students dressing for success Regarding Anthony Westbury's column supporting a strict dress code at Port St. Lucie High School, I take my hat off to him and Port St. Lucie High School Principal Mark Rendell. I applaud schools Superintendent Michael Lannon also for making a very firm statement. I am a school bus driver for St. Lu...

[Teacher pact nears approval](#)

(Lake City Reporter © 12/06/2011)

lhampson@lakecityreporter.com School board members hope to approve a final contract for teachers next week at their regular meeting. For Kevin Doyle, president of Columbia Teachers Association, that can't come soon enough. The new contract had been on the consent agenda at the Nov. 22 board meeting. However, four of five board members wanted more time to look it over before giving their final OK, an...

[Future Appears Bright For McKeel Schools After Recent High Rankings](#)

(Lakeland Ledger © 12/06/2011)

LAKELAND | The recently bestowed ranking of "High Performing Schools" provides The Schools of McKeel Academy with a number of advantages — including a reduction of about \$129,000 in annual administrative fees. Charter Superintendent Harold Maready on Monday told the McKeel board that the high ranking for all three schools also allows for incre...

[Magnet Schools Diversifying More: School District to Adopt New Methods](#)

(Lakeland Ledger © 12/06/2011)

BARTOW | The Polk County School District can no longer solely use race to ensure diversity at the eight magnet schools in the county. The change is a result of a 2007 Supreme Court ruling that states the individual race of a student can no longer be the determining factor of enrollment. Before the ruling, the district had two waiting lists for magn...

[Polk magnet schools aim to diversify](#)

(Lakeland Ledger © 12/06/2011)

BARTOW – The Polk County School District can no longer solely use race to ensure diversity at the eight magnet schools in the county. The change is a result of a 2007 Supreme Court ruling that states the individual race of a student can no longer be the determining factor of enrollment. Before the ruling, the district had two waiting lists for mag...

[Human slavery panel meets](#)

(Marathon & Big Pine Free Press © 12/06/2011)

The Florida Keys may not have a single criminal case related to human trafficking on its court dockets, but raising awareness of the modern-day slavery that often involves children forced into prostitution may save lives years from now, a veteran law enforcement officer told a local crowd Monday. "Is it here? I don't know," said Adriane Reese, chairwoman of the Broward County Human Trafficking Co...

[Miami Beach convention center supporters hedge casino bets](#)

(Miami Herald © 12/06/2011)

While searching for investors to help pay for a pricy convention center expansion that his city wants but can't afford, top Miami Beach administrator Jorge Gonzalez sat in Joe's Stone Crab last month with a businessman he says offered to pay for the whole deal. The catch? The man across the table was Las Vegas casino mogul Steve Wynn, and his pitch included a casino — something ...

[**On the road to four-day school weeks**](#)

(Ocala Star Banner © 12/06/2011)

Superintendent of Schools Jim Yancey is heading to rural Kentucky today to observe the Webster County school system, home of one of the nation's largest districts to have implemented four-day school weeks. Yancey will spend most of Wednesday and Thursday interviewing Webster County administrators, principals, teachers, parents and staffers to learn more about the four-day concept, which Webste...

[**10th-grade FCAT reading shouldn't get tougher, superintendents say**](#)

(Orlando Sentinel © 12/06/2011)

:33 PM EST, December 5, 2011 Advertisement Four Central Florida school superintendents today urged the State Board of Education not to make passing the crucial 10th-grade FCAT reading exam too hard. Making it tougher "isn't going to have a positive impact on anyone," said Seminole Superintendent Bill Vogel. "This will discourage students." Brevard, Orange and Volusia school leaders...

[**Rick Scott, universities and more: All in 50 words or fewer**](#)

(Orlando Sentinel © 12/06/2011)

Scott Maxwell TAKING NAMES 8:35 PM EST, December 3, 2011 Advertisement With the holiday season upon us, everyone's busy. That's why I'm here to help you save time — by boiling down the past week's big news items to 50 words or fewer. This way, you get a speedy recap of Florida news and can quickly resume buying presents for all your favorite friends, relatives and columnists...

[**Scott goes slowly on additional pension reforms**](#)

(St. Augustine Record © 12/06/2011)

December 6, 2011 - 05:40am Scott goes slowly on additional pension reforms TALLAHASSEE (AP) — Heading into a crucial election year, Florida Gov. Rick Scott won't be pushing any further changes to the state's massive \$100 billion plus pension plan. Scott is releasing his budget proposal for 2012 later this week and the governor will ask for a small amount of tax cuts, enough money to avoid...

[**Gov. Rick Scott now touts importance of school funding**](#)

(St. Petersburg Times © 12/06/2011)

As Gov. Rick Scott gets around the state, one message from Floridians comes through loud and clear. "They care about education," Scott says. This governor, who sought a 10 percent cut in school spending a year ago, appears to have learned an important lesson: No matter how bad the economy gets, cutting money for schools never seems popular. Scott ran for governor on a promise of property...

[**An advocate for equal education for all**](#)

(St. Petersburg Times © 12/06/2011)

Pinellas School Board member Lew Williams quietly but insistently focused on poor and minority students — the ones who are often left behind. His sudden death over the weekend after heart surgery leaves a hole in district leadership just when the issues he cared about matter more than ever. As Gov. Rick Scott appoints a replacement for Williams to serve until the general election, he should seek a...

[Brutality and impunity at FAMU](#)

(St. Petersburg Times © 12/06/2011)

Spike Lee's 1988 film *School Daze* is filled with violent hazing scenes involving the Gammities, pledges for the Gamma Phi Gamma Fraternity at Mission College. The Gammities struggle to please their Big Brothers. One scene is notably brutal: The Big Brothers line both sides of the dark hallway. At the farthest end stand the Gammities. One by one, the Gammities run through the line. They cover thei...

[Earliest years critical for good educational results](#)

(St. Petersburg Times © 12/06/2011)

Editor's note: David Lawrence Jr., president and co-chair of the Children's Movement of Florida and retired publisher of the Miami Herald, spoke in Tampa last week to a joint gathering of the Florida School Boards Association and the Florida Association of District School Superintendents. Here are those remarks, adapted and condensed for publication. The greatest American "invention" was not...

[FCAT cut scores debate continues](#)

(St. Petersburg Times/Grade Book Blog © 12/06/2011)

The Florida Board of Education ended its special workshop on FCAT cut scores Monday with more questions to answer before members must decide how high (or low) to set passing scores for the annual test. The debate has centered on high school scores, which have been recommended for lowering. The current scores have been in place for a decade, and board chairwoman Kathleen Shanahan noted that seve...

[A weekend interview with Rep. Bill Proctor, chairman of the Florida House Education Committee](#)

(St. Petersburg Times/The Grade Book Blog © 12/06/2011)

The Florida Legislature convenes for its 2012 session in just over a month. Much of the buzz relating to education issues this year has centered on taking higher education in the same direction that lawmakers took K-12 last year. House Education Committee chairman Bill Proctor, also chancellor of Flagler College, acknowledged there's been much talk about changing the colleges and universities. Bu...

[Teacher who berated special education student may lose job](#)

(St. Petersburg: WTSP (Ch. 10) © 12/06/2011)

SEWELL, N.J. (CBSNewYork) - A New Jersey teacher that was secretly taped verbally abusing a student may soon be out of a job. On Monday night, school officials suspended him, but as CBS 2's Hazel Sanchez found out the parents of the teenager at the center of the controversy say simply removing the teacher is not enough. It was not the brightest teaching moment for Steven Roth as he ber...

[Programs curb childhood obesity](#)

(Sun-Sentinel © 12/06/2011)

December 6, 2011 Advertisement Last week, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention confirmed what moms and dads have known for millennia: Kids are skittish about eating their veggies. Same goes for fruit. CDC researchers found fewer than one in five students (16.8 percent) consumed fruit at least four times a day. Worse, slightly more than one in 10 high-schoolers (11.2 perc...

[Education: Big reforms haven't yet produced big results](#)

(Sun-Sentinel © 12/06/2011)

TALLAHASSEE — After two years of hammering away on a K-12 education agenda designed by conservative think tanks, legislators have checked off a number of goals: merit pay, heightened graduation standards and an expanded voucher program. But even as they wait for these changes to take full effect, lawmakers are confronted by student standardized-test scores that seem to have hit a wall after a d...

[Study Praises RESTORE Act as Good for Businesses](#)

(Sunshine State News © 12/06/2011)

Workers clean Naval Air Station beach in Pensacola, as BP oil washes ashore June 10, 2010 | Credit: Cheryl Casey With the U.S. House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee set to meet on Wednesday to examine the Resources and Ecosystems Sustainability, Tourist Opportunities, and Revived Economies of the Gulf Coast States Act of 2011 (RESTORE Act), business and environmental leaders pointed to...

[Sweeping changes could be ahead for Florida school teachers' benefits](#)

(The Florida Current © 12/06/2011)

Florida's school teachers could see changes in their insurance benefits under a bill that is moving through the Florida Legislature and backed by powerful legislators. A Senate committee on Monday unanimously gave the nod to a bill that would require school 67 school districts across the state to join an insurance consortium that would be responsible for procuring insurance on their behalf. SB...

[Dropouts giving college degree another shot](#)

(Bradenton Herald © 12/05/2011)

The Hechinger Report PHILADELPHIA – Like many young Americans, Julia Capece went straight from high school to college. Halfway toward her bachelor's degree, Capece decided to move out of her parents' home. She tried juggling work and school, but living on her own and keeping up with tuition and coursework proved too much. Capece finally gave up and dropped out, becoming one o...

[Flagler school officials may seek help from ad sales](#)

(Daytona Beach News-Journal © 12/05/2011)

BUNNELL – Flagler County school property is fair game for advertisers and district officials are considering hiring someone to help maximize those ad dollars. The district may have a consultant sell ad space, with the hopes that the schools will receive most of the revenue. The School Board will discuss this possibility during a regular meeting that starts 6 p.m. Tuesday at the Government Ser...

[Florida college students in budget crosshairs](#)

(Daytona Beach News-Journal © 12/05/2011)

With a \$2 billion budget shortfall looming over the next session of the Florida Legislature, lawmakers are floating a number of possible targets for cuts. On Thursday, college students in the Sunshine State were put on notice they may have to pay more for school as the Legislature grapples with the revenue shortfall. State Senate President Mike Haridopolos, R-Merritt Island, told the Tampa Tribu...

[FAMU band member's death spotlights hazing's prevalence](#)

(Florida Times-Union © 12/05/2011)

Hazing in the Florida A&M marching band has been happening for decades, former members from Jacksonville say, but they don't blame ousted director Julian White for the continuance of the often violent tradition. Instead, they say he's been strictly, if unsuccessfully, trying to stop the abuse that national research shows is more prevalent than many people may realize. White has been at the...

[Teach for America now part of NO education](#)

(Lakeland Ledger © 12/05/2011)

NEW ORLEANS - They're everywhere: The superintendent of the state's Recovery School District. Two of his top deputies. The head of a local nonprofit that acts as gatekeeper for millions in federal dollars earmarked to start new charter schools. And when a new state school board is seated in January, the board member who will represent most of New Orleans. ...

[Online Learning. Personalized](#)

(Ocala Star Banner © 12/05/2011)

SAN JOSE, Calif. — Jesse Roe, a ninth-grade math teacher at a charter school here called Summit, has a peephole into the brains of each of his 38 students. He can see that a girl sitting against the wall is zipping through geometry exercises; that a boy with long curls over his eyes is stuck on a lesson on long equations; and that another boy in the front row ...

[Struggling schools push for involvement at home](#)

(Orlando-WFTV (ABC) © 12/05/2011)

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — It's almost dark as cars pull up to a back entrance at Knight Middle School — one of Louisville's persistently low-achieving schools — disgorging families who sprint through the rain to attend a family academic night. In the gym, where a few dozen families eat a free spaghetti meal and watch a band set up, new principal Faith Stroud makes an impassioned pitch...

[Area schools fight to keep kids in tune for learning](#)

(Pensacola News Journal © 12/05/2011)

Half of the 27 third-graders in music teacher Tina Gresham's class at Scenic Heights Elementary launch into "Knock No More," a song about winter by Elizabeth Gilpatrick. After the first verse, the other half of the class starts in so the students are singing in canons, also known as rounds. Then half of the group begins tapping xylophones and metallophones while the others continue to sing. "I ...

[Private-college presidents receiving higher salaries, study finds](#)

(St. Petersburg Times © 12/05/2011)

Presidents at 36 private colleges earned more than \$1 million in 2009, up from 33 the previous year, according to a study by the Chronicle of Higher Education. The annual study, using data from federal tax documents, found that the median compensation — including salary and benefits — was \$385,909, a 2.2 percent increase from the previous year. The median base salary increased ...

[FDLE asks BOG, FAMU to steer clear of law enforcement work](#)

(Tallahassee Democrat © 12/05/2011)

The Florida Department of Law Enforcement wants to ensure that institutional reviews of hazing at Florida A&M do not interfere with its investigation into the death of drum major Robert Champion. In letters sent Friday to FAMU President James H. Ammons and State University System Chancellor Frank Brogan, FDLE Commissioner Gerald Bailey asked officials to hold off on any disciplinary action or adm...

[Manatee County school district promotions with pay raises questioned](#)

(Bradenton Herald © 12/04/2011)

It certainly is disgraceful that Tim McGonegal would demand a pay raise for an administrative employee while also employing furloughs and pay reductions on the teachers. But everybody missed that he snuck in a comparable pay raise in September. Look at the Sept. 12, 2011 agenda, Item #42, Board Material. He promoted an Instructional Tech Specialist making \$58,970 to NCLB Specialist with a salary ...

[Going green creates green for schools](#)

(Orlando-WFTV (ABC) © 12/04/2011)

OXFORD, Miss. — Oxford school officials say the district has saved more than \$23,000 in energy costs in the past year with participation in the TVA Green School Initiative program. Brian Harvey, interim superintendent for the Oxford School District, tells the Oxford Eagle (<http://bit.ly/u4mJkY>) that the program helps schools save money on energy costs, protects the environment and allows ...

[Private college presidents pay up modestly](#)

(Orlando-WFTV (ABC) © 12/04/2011)

The median 2009 compensation for leaders at private schools was \$386,000, up 2.2 percent from the year before, according to the latest annual analysis by The Chronicle of Higher Education. The figures cover 519 presidents at private colleges with total budgets of at least \$50 million, and reflect the most recent year for which data from federal tax reports are available. Constantine Papadakis, th...

[Viewpoint: Education is the investment to fund Florida's future](#)

(Pensacola News Journal © 12/04/2011)

Education pays. According to the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics, education pays two ways: higher earnings and lower unemployment rates. The best way to ensure the next generation of Floridians and Americans finds success and continues to grow our economy is to invest in their education, even when our state is facing challenging economic times. As governor, I am committed to making sure every ...

[Hit the books, governor](#)

(South Florida Sun-Sentinel © 12/04/2011)

This one comes from the "Be Careful What You Ask For" department. Gov. Rick Scott tossed out a lot of questions at the state's 11 public universities. Now he's gotten volumes back in terms of answers. Good start, we say. ...

[Perspective: A Timely Call for Reducing the Cost of College](#)

(St. Augustine Record © 12/04/2011)

December 4, 2011 - 12:58am Perspective: A Timely Call for Reducing the Cost of College The Washington Post The price of a college education keeps spiraling upward. Tuition is up 8.3 percent for in-state students at four-year public universities for the 2011-12 academic year, according to the College Board. Lest you think state budget cuts are solely to blame, tuition at four-year private co...

[FDLE says Board of Governors can continue review](#)

(St. Augustine Record © 12/04/2011)

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — The Florida Board of Governors can continue its investigation of how Florida A&M administrators handled concerns about hazing at the school. The Florida Department of Law Enforcement on Friday asked the board to suspend any investigation into hazing while it and other law enforcement agencies investigate the death

of Robert Champion, a drum major in the university's Marchi...

[PHCC explores new paths](#)

(St. Petersburg Times © 12/04/2011)

BROOKSVILLE — One day last week, nursing students at Pasco-Hernando Community College's North Campus readied themselves for an exercise in a hospital shift change. In a nursing lab outfitted just like a ward, students, playing the roles of nurses leaving for the day, had to brief their relievers on the status of their "patients" — mannequin-like simulators that have vital signs and c...

[Rich Campbell: Self-interest and one-upmanship now the norms for public officials in Washington, D.C. and Martin County](#)

(Stuart News © 12/04/2011)

Our nation has been in an uproar over the failure of the 12-member, congressional supercommittee to cut \$1.2 trillion in spending from the federal budget. Didn't faze me one bit. As a resident and taxpayer of Martin County, I've been trained to expect dysfunction, intransigence and unprofessional behavior from committees, boards and commissions. Two government entities in particular — the County Com...

[Gov proposes parents 'union' to control underperforming schools](#)

(Lehigh News Star © 12/03/2011)

From academics to quality of teachers, Tice Elementary parent Maria Mendoza would make a lot of changes at her daughter's east Fort Myers school. Outside of PTA meetings or teacher conferences, though, Mendoza has little power to effect change. That could be changing. Gov. Rick Scott's draft legislative agenda includes a bill that would allow parents to close struggling schools and replace them...

[Somerset Academy wins planning board's OK for 350 students](#)

(Miami Herald © 12/03/2011)

The Coral Gables Planning and Zoning Board voted on Wednesday, Nov. 30, to recommend Somerset Academy of Coral Gables' expansion to 350 students but declined to recommend a change in land use. At the hearing, the board recommended Somerset Academy's request for the certificate of use and enrollment expansion, adding conditions to address neighbors' concerns. Among them, the scho...

[Palm Beach County schools could spread to land reserved for farming](#)

(Orlando Sentinel © 12/03/2011)

After pressure from parents, Palm Beach County commissioners on Thursday opened the door to allowing new schools on land reserved for farming west of Boynton Beach. Residents of the Canyon neighborhoods are pushing for new schools near their homes in the Agricultural Reserve, 21,000 acres of prime farmland west of Boynton Beach and Delray Beach. They want the county's permission to build schools...

[Charter school company looks to open New Tampa facility](#)

(Tampa Bay Online © 12/03/2011)

NEW TAMPA — A company specializing in building performance-based charter schools is eyeing property on Highwoods Preserve Parkway for a new campus, authorities said. Charter School Associates Inc., based in Sunrise, wants to build a new, state-of-the-art charter school in New Tampa with a curriculum focused on math and science, company president Mike Strader said. If it wins ci...

[Take politics out of education](#)

(Winter Haven News Chief © 12/03/2011)

One of the reasons given for making the position of state commissioner of education an appointed position instead of an elected one was to eliminate politics from the office. That hasn't worked, according to state Rep. Ben Albritton, R-Wauchula, who along with Sen. Joe Negron, R-Stuart, want to put the office back on the ballot. Restoring the educa...

Happy Tuesday! Please see the articles below.

Deborah



WTSP-TV Tampa

FCAT scoring changes on the way

8:47 PM, Dec 5, 2011

Written by [Isabel Mascarenas](#)

For the video of Commissioner see link: <http://www.wtsp.com/news/article/224576/8/FCAT-scoring-changes-on-the-way>

Tampa, Florida - It's been 10 years since state education officials reset the scoring system for the FCAT. Critics say the passing grade for high [school](#) students are too high and too low for elementary and middle school kids.

Education officials are making the adjustment now that [students](#) are taking the new revised FCAT 2.0. But passing the test may actually get harder to do as standards are raised.

Students like 11th grader Nick Brenner say the test is hard enough. When the East Bay High School [student](#) took the FCAT last year, he thought he would easily pass it. But Nick fell short in reading and had to retake it this year. "It's put a lot of stress on me. I was freaking out the day before the retake, thinking I'm not going to pass," says Nick.

But Nick did pass and knows the FCAT won't stand in his way anymore of graduating and being [college](#) ready. College officials say 70 percent of high school graduates are reportedly not ready and need remediation in reading or math or both.

"The definition of 'college ready' means they do not require remediation at all," Joe Pickens, President of St. John's River State College.

Florida's Education Commissioner Gerard Robinson says the board is trying to make sure assessments are in line with what research is saying it should be.

"We want to make sure we have scores in place that make sense. You don't want to make them too high or too low to the point where students are actually passing, giving them false hope or confidence to go into [workforce](#) or college," says Robinson.

One suggestion calls for a minimum 399 score on the new Algebra One end-of-course exam. Under the scoring system, an estimated 12 percent fewer students would pass the math portion.

The passing score for the new tougher reading test would possibly drop to 245 from 300. Despite the lower score, state studies shows four percent more students would fail under the new test and scoring system compared to the old one.

Pickens says today's State of Board of Education workshop at the Hillsborough School District's administration office should put parents on notice.

"Parents and students should be aware of the rigor that is required for number 1: students to be [graduates](#) from high school; number 2: be eligible to go to college and take college level course; number 3: to be successful in those classes," says Pickens.

"They shouldn't make it too easy and they shouldn't make it too hard," says Nick.

Says Robinson, "The goal really is to not focus on quotas, but focus on quality. That's hopefully what this will do in the end."

The State Board of Education will vote on the new scoring system December 19. The new scoring system will be used to score this year's FCAT. Students take the test in the spring.

Broward Palm Beach New Times

Records Show Miami Mavericks High Teachers Paid Peanuts, Less Than \$5K a Year

By Lisa Rab Mon., Dec. 5 2011 at 10:37 AM

Mavericks High in Homestead.

?State records show teachers at two Mavericks High public charter schools in Miami-Dade County earned less than \$5,000 a year in 2010, and many did not receive benefits.

According to records submitted to the Florida Department of Education, 14 teachers at the Homestead campus of Mavericks earned between \$3,350 and \$3,877 during the 2009-2010 school year. They were listed as full-time employees teaching special education, math, social studies, and other subjects. Only one language arts teacher earned \$52,000 that year.

Similarly dismal salaries were reported at the North Miami Beach campus of Mavericks, where 10 teachers made between \$3,500 and \$4,100 in 2010. Three of those teachers received benefits, along with two teachers in Homestead.

Tammy Lara, principal at Mavericks High in Homestead, says those salaries are not currently correct. "Our salaries are very competitive to Miami-Dade county public schools," she says.

Lara was not head of the school last year when the reports were submitted, and didn't know why the listed salaries were so low. The reports indicate there were at least two other principals of the school between the fall of 2009 and this year, when Lara came on board.

Mavericks corporate manager Lauren Hollander said she was unfamiliar with the state reports and would have to review them before commenting. The Pulp emailed her copies of the reports last Friday, and she has not yet responded.

The taxpayer-funded, tuition-free Mavericks charter schools target students at risk for dropping out. They are run by a for-profit Fort Lauderdale company, Mavericks in Education Florida, that has eight schools in Florida.

Mavericks students attend classes in four-hour shifts, and most of their time is spent sitting at computers, earning credits through online courses. Teachers are available to assist them and offer one-on-one tutoring.

Two former employees at Mavericks High in Homestead have filed whistleblower lawsuits alleging, among other complaints, that the school is not issuing Florida high school diplomas.

Frank Biden, a lobbyist and spokesman for Mavericks, denies the allegation, saying the school issues diplomas, but not all students graduate.

Tallahassee Democrat

Ammons faces tough questions

Anti-hazing forum draws large crowd, national media

12:11 AM, Dec. 6, 2011

By Jordan Culver Democrat staff writer

With newspaper reporters, television anchors and radio hosts bearing down on Florida A&M University, FAMU President James H. Ammons addressed more than 2,000 students for the first time Monday night in Gaither Gymnasium.

The message he gave the students was the same one he's provided since the death of Marching 100 drum major Robert Champion: Hazing will not be tolerated and FAMU must remain a center for respect and dignity.

After the Student Government Association forum to end hazing, Ammons tackled questions about when FAMU first learned of hazing incidents and why noticeable action has only been taken in the wake of Champion's death.

"The university has had a zero tolerance for hazing," he said. "The university's policies, procedures and practices are in line with the statutes here in the state of Florida. All allegations of hazing have been fully investigated."

University spokeswoman Sharon Saunders ended questions and Ammons was escorted out of Gaither after he answered a question about the indefinite suspension of the Marching 100. He refused to answer other inquires from members of the media — including a Democrat reporter — and was driven off campus.

Much to the chagrin of FAMU's students and administration, the details surrounding Champion's death have attracted the attention of the national media.

Allegations of hazing, and Ammons' actions to eradicate hazing, have thrust FAMU into the national spotlight. If the reaction to the presence of national media at Monday's event was any indication, students are eager to get out from under the microscope.

"I don't know that I heard hostility towards the media," said Director of Student Activities Marvin Green. "We live in a world where people typically capitalize on, or at least try to capture, the negative. We live in a tabloid journalism world."

The role of the media in the investigation into Champion's death was a significant topic of discussion at the forum. Many students shared the sentiment that the media — the campus newspaper The Famuan in particular — shed undue negativity on an unpleasant situation.

Green said providing a positive image to the university, not giving into the sensationalism of Facebook and Twitter, is the only way for the university to move forward. Ammons said standing unified in front of the media provides a positive image.

Green also addressed rumors about FAMU's chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha. He assured students that the fraternity's recent change to "inactive status" was not a suspension, nor was it hazing-related.

During a six-question question-and-answer session with the audience, Ammons and SGA president Breyon Love answered inquires from the audience about the state of the university. Three of the six questions were about the media's involvement with the story.

"This issue of hazing is a national issue," Ammons said to the crowd. "Honestly, I think that what we're doing here tonight, by interacting with the media, we are showing our leadership."

Love said students' prolonged silence when dealing with questions about hazing and FAMU's culture in general comes from the still-active investigation into Champion's death.

"I think the most important thing right now is it's still under investigation," he said. "That's the reason why most people aren't answering any questions. We really don't know all the facts."

Julian Kemper, a current FAMU student member of the Kappa Delta chapter of Alpha Phi Omega, said students feel a certain culture of arrogance.

"There can be a certain feeling of, 'Oh if you want to join my organization then you have to go through this stuff,' " he said. "I feel like people do it because they feel as though you need to earn your place."

During the forum, students signed and recited a pledge to end all hazing on FAMU's campus. The pledge was similar to one all students must sign to join an activity, but Ammons said Monday night was about rekindling that pledge.

Kenya Mawusi, another FAMU student and a member of Eternal Legendary Queen Inc., said she's heard all of the hazing rumors, but there is secrecy around FAMU's campus that's hard for anyone to break through.

"I have not been hazed," she said. "See, and the sad thing is, if people have been hazed they're not going to say they've been hazed. So you really can't take anybody's word for it."

Tallahassee Democrat

Bill Cotterell: It's back to Career Service for some state workers

10:03 AM, Dec. 5, 2011 | [10Comments](#)

That package of changes did a lot of things to make it easier for supervisors to deploy their troops, did away with seniority-based "bumping" in most cases and changing a whole slew of work rules. A lot of those rules dated to the days when including somebody in a message by carbon copy meant just that — messy purple carbon sheets cranked into a manual typewriter.

But for state workers, the most controversial part of the Bush plan was reclassification of about 16,400 employees out of Career Service jobs and into the Selected Exempt Service. The idea was to separate the "supervisory, confidential and managerial" employees from the rank-and-file workers.

Everybody said Bush and his acolytes — eager, very conservative young folks from the private sector who prided themselves in having little or no government experience — were casting too wide a net. Everybody was right.

Now, the state is rolling back the Selected Exempt reclassification and putting some people back in Career Service. But the rollback isn't without problems of its own.

The trade-off late in Bush's first term was that, while giving up the job security of Career Service, the affected employees were getting free health insurance in the Selected Exempt class. It's no longer free — the senior managers, elected officials and other previously exempt employees now pay one-sixth of the standard premium — but it's still a pretty good perk.

And, truth be told, nobody has any job security anymore — Career Service or not.

For about four years, the Department of Management Services has been advising state agencies to review their job classifications. A lot of those "supervisory, managerial and confidential" employees aren't, really.

The latest to reclassify is the Department of Corrections, where five SES employees were notified that they'll fall back to Career Service this week. An undetermined number will be moved on Dec. 23.

This has predictably irked some employees, who lose the higher SES rate of accruing vacation time and start paying \$50 or \$180 a month for insurance. Through an unfortunate quirk in state personnel laws, they will also be probationary employees in their newly Career Service positions for a year.

At first glance, that seems a bit unfair. You're doing your job for 10 or 20 years, they move you into SES without your consent, then they move you back and put you on probation.

But probation is all the time in Selected Exempt. All SES employees work "at will," so being on probation in Career Service, because of the new reclassification, doesn't put them at real risk. Keep doing a good job, and nothing changes; plus, after a year, you've got Career Service protection (such as it is).

One unfortunate consequence is that Career Service employees can carry only 360 hours of annual leave. SES employees can carry 480 hours, so if they're reclassified to Career Service, the overage tips over into their sick leave balances — which are less valuable financially.

Phil Spooner, the workforce design and compensation manager at DMS, explained that personnel laws require SES-level employees to actually be supervisors, or at least to have some confidential duties such as handling nonpublic information or strategy memos.

The sort of thing Bush used to call "real secret-squirrel stuff."

"If somebody supervised one OPS person, they put them in there, into SES," Spooner said of the original Service First plan. "Also, they put in the confidential employees, which was wrong. If they could look at a Social Security number, they felt that was 'confidential.'"

Spooner recalled that former Chief Financial Officer Alex Sink tried to cut the manager-worker ratio in her department to 7-to-1 a few years ago. He said DMS has a rule that "you have to supervise two or more, to be a supervisor."

He said the Department of Corrections has been doing some reorganization lately — that's an understatement — and now some of the SES "managerial" employees supervise only one person. Spooner said that when SES jobs become vacant, they are reviewed to see if they can be painlessly moved back into Career Service, so that no current employee loses any insurance benefits or other SES perks.

But the state can't wait until they all become vacant.

"When you do that, people are going to lose some benefits," he said. "We're all going to lose some benefits, I think, in the very near future."

Tallahassee Democrat

Editorial

Collateral damage is part of FAMU tragedy

December 6, 2011

Not all of the victims of the horrific events in recent weeks concerning Florida A&M University are so obvious.

Take, for example, the thousands of students who never hazed anyone, never allowed anyone to haze them and never witnessed anyone else being hazed, and the professors and staff who never turned a blind eye to such events.

One such victim called my wife and me at home the other day. She is a bright, hardworking young woman scheduled to finish her doctorate next spring.

She has her undergraduate degree from FAMU.

She was nearly in tears in anger as she talked, her voice shaking.

Her supervisor where she is completing a required residency wants to meet with her this week to discuss her "situation."

He told her that some in the program are questioning the competency of her degree — not because of her work or performance, but because of what is happening at FAMU.

She called me as a family friend, not as the editor of the newspaper. Still, she wanted the editor to know how the "negative publicity" was hurting her.

I guess she hoped I could somehow turn off the bad news, that I had the power to stop the events that seem to have taken on their own life.

For her sake, I wish an editor had that kind of power.

Virtually all she has done for as long as I've known her was to go to school, work part-time jobs and study. She just didn't have time for much more.

A beautiful and kind person, smart as smart can be, she has sacrificed a lot of "normal stuff" to achieve her degrees. She cared for my severely disabled daughter, Jessica, as a parttime job, but treated her as a sister. She comes from a good family, and she manifests the hard work of her parents who raised her with their values.

Now, everything she has worked so long for is being called into question.

She doesn't understand why, and, frankly, neither do I. There just is so much that is tragic, so much that is sad about FAMU right now. Nothing can compare to the loss of a child, which is the loss that drum major Robert Champion's parents endured when he died after being on a FAMU Marching 100 band bus. Investigators have said hazing was a factor.

But having your life's work discredited for something you had no role in is awful. And my friend won't be alone. These events will impact every student, every teacher, and every alumnus — everyone who loves FAMU. It is nothing short of tragic.

Ironically, it was just two years ago this week that FAMU announced it had come out from under what its president, Dr.

James H. Ammons, called its "challenging times." It had earned accreditation from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools' Commission on Colleges for a 10-year period "with no further reports required and no recommendations."

Ammons became president in July 2007. Just a few days before that, the association had placed the university on probation, finally lifting that in June 2008. Then, on Dec.

8, 2009, it announced the 10-year reaffirmation of FAMU's accreditation.

Rattlers everywhere celebrated, and rightly so.

"We have met our challenges, completed the accrediting process and are focusing our energies on creating a 21st Century Learning Center second to none. ... I can truly say that achieving this milestone was a team effort and confirms the academic and administrative strength of the university," Ammons said at the time.

Make no mistake: He earned the brag. Ammons and his team had righted the ship, and it was nothing but full speed ahead.

Then drum major Champion died after a football game in Orlando. A bunch of finger-pointing ensued.

Ammons fired the director of bands, Dr. Julian White, who, in return, accused Ammons and others of ignoring his pleas for help in fighting against hazing at FAMU, blaming their "reckless indifference."

A lot of high-priced attorneys are getting work, professional spokespeople are getting a workout, and the lines are being drawn for what appears to be a long battle in which anything goes. It is fair to say Ammons' entire administration now is embattled, if not downright endangered, depending on the facts developed by multiple investigations in various stages of being under way. No one knows how much damage the university will suffer as this plays out.

Meanwhile, my young friend was on the phone, unable to defend her degree against unfair suppositions. She is the unintended victim of collateral damage, and she is far from alone.

Ultimately, who will step up and take responsibility for that?

Here is what seems almost forgotten in all this: FAMU is not the band. It is not Julian White. It is not President James H.

Ammons. It is my young friend and all of the people like her, and they are being hurt the most.

She doesn't deserve this.

Bob Gabordi Associate Editor

Tallahassee Democrat

Group looks to raise those sagging britches

By Ashley Ames

December 6, 2011

The young men of the Tallahassee Chapter of Distinguished Young Gentlemen of America Inc. announced their newest initiative with clear eyes and strong voices Monday afternoon. The campaign, titled "Stop Saggin' and Start Swaggin'," is an effort launched by the national youth leadership program to demonstrate the potential impact baggy pants can have.

"When you walk around with sagging pants, you don't feel good about yourself," said Darian Colbert, 18. "You don't take yourself seriously. It shows that you don't want to be successful, and you don't take pride in yourself."

Members of DYG chapters across the nation came up with 10 reasons baggy pants are negative. The list includes things like "it's not urban culture, but prison culture," "how can you move forward when the world is looking at your behind" and "our ancestors worked too hard to stand up for us to trip and fall down."

"Dressing (well) defines you as a distinguished young man," said Markeal Dickey, a senior at Lincoln High School and chapter president. "You do that so you can be taken seriously."

This message will be spread by chapter members via social media, community outreach, events and word-of-mouth.

The idea is that teens talking to teens about the image sagging pants can convey will be more effective.

"Peer-to-peer communication is powerful," said Ramon Alexander, DYG program director.

Coming from a fellow student — and many of the young men also serve as team captains, class presidents and leaders at their schools — it could mean more than if it came from adults.

Alexander added that the campaign would be active in bringing the message to the kids.

"Go where they are," he said. "You have to go and be in the community."

Wednesday and Friday, the chapter members will be handing out flyers at community centers and university campuses. Thursday, they will lead a professional development workshop at Nims Middle School, teaching the students, among other skills, how to tie a tie, proper posture and, of course, dressing etiquette.

Saturday, the chapter will host a teen gathering at the Palmer Munroe Teen Center, which will include a college fair, teen activities and informational booths.

"I feel like younger kids in our generations look at people in their neighborhoods and people that make fast money as a good thing," Colbert said, adding that included emulating the saggy-pants look. "They feel that that is what they need to do to be successful. And that is just not true."

For more information about the Distinguished Young Gentlemen of America, go to www.dygofamerica.org.

org.

Tallahassee Democrat

My View

It's too late to slam the door on gambling

Ellyn Setnor Bogdanoff and Erik Fresen

December 6, 2011

The "destination resort" legislation we filed in October has triggered a spirited statewide debate. We have observed with intrigue and at times disappointment as tired rhetoric and clever sound bytes attempt to bury the facts relevant to this topic.

So here we seek to reiterate the facts and share our vision for Florida's future.

First, we must recognize and admit that under the nose of an "anti-gaming" legislature, Florida has become the fourth-largest gaming state in the nation over the last 10 years. It has grown in large part through statutory loopholes and clever lawyering.

There seems to be no end in sight to the expansion and lack of strategic direction to address it.

Second, this bill (SB 710, HB 487) is not bringing anything new to this state. Las Vegas-style casinos are already present in Miami-Dade, Broward, and Hillsborough counties.

The concept of the destination resort simply reforms what we have by moving from the third-tier gaming that caters exclusively to local residents to gaming that attracts non-Floridian and international tourists.

Make no mistake; we would like nothing more than to eliminate all gambling in our state. But our current landscape was set in motion with the lottery, long before either of us was elected.

Why not forget destination resorts and simply shut down the Internet cafes and let the pari-mutuel industry die a slow death? If it were that easy it would have been done years ago. To attempt that type of reduction is not a political reality but simply the making of a political statement. The next best thing is to harness and re-direct the type of gaming that does and will exist.

This bill will be the first proposal that creates a strategic vision for gaming in Florida.

We have done it in education, health care, criminal justice, and economic development.

The time has come to address gambling.

Without legislative approval or direction, the last few years have witnessed a proliferation of gambling locations. We've seen "Internet cafes," which are basically unregulated and untaxed slot barns. A recent court ruling seems to allow slot machines in any county, and the Seminole Indian casinos, which were sold a monopoly on the cheap by the state, continue expanding.

It is time to be sincere and to lead. We strongly disagree that our proposal would constitute the largest expansion of gaming in the state's history.

This bill desires to reduce gaming. We will address Internet cafes and either shut them down or highly regulate them. Additionally, placing the lottery under the new gaming commission could limit its expansion.

There are three other arguments that the "anti-gaming" organizers will use to attack this bill: That it will make us "the next Las Vegas or Atlantic City," that it will cannibalize existing businesses and that the social consequences outweigh any benefit. All are intellectually dishonest.

We could never be Vegas or Atlantic City. Vegas is a desert that, but for casinos, nobody would visit. Atlantic City was a ghost town before casinos came. Now, casinos are the only attraction. South Florida already is an international destination, and adding gaming to high-end resorts only enhances the mix of entertainment options. We are limiting the number of resorts, and the new Gaming Commission, together with local governments, will have broad authority to determine the number of resorts, their scale, and location.

Arguing against competition is just silly. Quality businesses always survive. Disney will continue to thrive. And Florida, with its "decadent" nightclubs on South Beach, its strip clubs throughout the state, and yes, gambling, has never lost its family-friendly image and never will.

We will have to address parity for the pari-mutuel industry (aka South Florida casinos). In large part, we are here because this industry funded the campaign to put slots on the ballot. It opened the door for the Seminole Indian casinos and set us on a path that has created a patchwork quilt of laws difficult to navigate and harness.

We will finally address where our state needs to be in years to come. If we fail to do so, we will find ourselves as the number one gaming state within five years and compro-

mise Florida politically and economically.

There will be no turning back.