

**From:** Smith, Kevin  
**Sent time:** Wednesday, December 07, 2011 5:03:34 PM  
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**Subject:** FW: 12/07/11 Education Round-Up

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FYI – have a great evening!

Sincerely,

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**From:** Higgins, Deborah  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 07, 2011 11:47 AM  
**Subject:** 12/07/11 Education Round-Up

## DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



[Number of students attending charter schools soars](#)  
(Associated Press © 12/07/2011)

The number of students attending charter schools has soared to more than 2 million as states pass laws lifting caps and encouraging their expansion. The National Alliance for Public Charter Schools released new figures today showing a 13 percent growth in enrollment. That's the equivalent of about 200,000 students. More than 500 new charter schools opened for the 2011-12 school year. The...

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[In celebration of Manatee High's centennial](#)  
(Bradenton Herald © 12/07/2011)

Manatee High School's rich past and bright future merits applause during the school's centennial year, celebrated by hundreds on Saturday. With a lengthy list of illustrious alumni and a colorful history of academic and sports success, we salute Manatee High and the school's incalculable contributions to this community and beyond. The school's somewhat frequent name changes reflect changing...

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[Manatee County school board wasting tax money on unworthy lawsuits](#)

(Bradenton Herald © 12/07/2011)

The Manatee County School Board is on the wrong side of the law again. Whether pushing the envelope on a school prayer issue, upon which the courts had already ruled, or holding a de facto meeting in violation of the Sunshine Law, our gang can't shoot straight but certainly can generate legal bills. Beset by budget woes growing steadily worse, the board must abandon its litigious ways. Our b...

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[Improve public schools by giving teachers more power](#)

(Bradenton Herald © 12/07/2011)

On the Nov. 28 TV show "Rock Center," they conducted an investigation about cheating in the Atlanta school system (and in other states). The teachers were changing test scores to show improvements in education and how teachers were financially rewarded by this! What do they expect when you offer bonuses for teacher and student improvement! If it is not already, it will be happening in F...

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[Setting unrealistically high goals could backfire for Florida students](#)

(Daytona Beach News-Journal © 12/07/2011)

Valentine is superintendent of Flagler County Schools. A new Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test, commonly referred to as FCAT 2.0, will be administered to Florida public school students in spring 2012 for the first time, with scoring levels established by a standard-setting committee, reviewed by stakeholders and approved by the State Board of Education. The FCAT 2.0,...

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[Flagler weighs ad sales on district website, fields to recoup school funding](#)

(Daytona Beach News-Journal © 12/07/2011)

BUNNELL – Flagler County school officials are hoping to turn space on the district's website, athletic fields and other property into dollars for the district. During a regular meeting on Tuesday night, School Board members considered putting a call out to consultants who could handle the district's advertising but decided they needed more time to work out the details. They'll discuss the matte...

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[Is Gingrich an Edu-Flip-Flopper?](#)

(Education Week/Politics K-12 © 12/07/2011)

The GOP's presidential frontrunner, Newt Gingrich, has one of the longest records on K-12 policy in the Republican field. His views on education have gotten a lot of attention lately. But they have been—and seem to still be—all over the map. For instance, Gingrich said in a recent debate that he likes Race to the Top, the grant competition run by the feds that rewards states for embracing cer...

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[A nation remembers 70 years ago](#)

(FL Times-Union © 12/07/2011)

By The Times-Union jacksonville.com Copyright 2011 The Florida Times-Union. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed. December 7, 2011 - 12:04am A nation remembers 70 years ago There's a certain peace to a cemetery. There is an impressive silence to a historic military battlefield. Put the two together and you have the incredible im...

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### [Debt Follows Florida Graduates Long after School](#)

(Florida A&M Famuan © 12/07/2011)

For many college seniors in Florida, the monumental moment of parading across the stage at graduation has been overshadowed by financial woes that await them after graduation. Students are borrowing more money to cover the cost of college than ever before resulting in higher default rates than a year ago. College seniors who graduated with student loans in 2010 owed an average of \$25,250, acco...

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### [Governor shifts education stance](#)

(Ft. Myers News-Press © 12/07/2011)

After years of budget cutbacks, Lee and Collier county public schools might receive more funding from the state next year. Today, Gov. Rick Scott will introduce a budget for 2012 that calls for increasing the amount spent on the state's nearly 2.7 billion public school students by slightly more than \$100 each and more than \$1 billion overall. Scott told Florida's 67 superintendents in a conferen...

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### [Lee school board considering creating health clinics for staff](#)

(Ft. Myers News-Press © 12/07/2011)

Looking to save money on rising employee health insurance costs, the Lee County School District is considering hiring its own physicians, nurses and medical staff for district-only medical offices with a small-scale pharmacy. With a patient pool of nearly 10,000 employees, plus their spouses and dependents, health clinics could save money and provide better service than many private physicians, o...

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### [County schools face \\$6.8 million shortfall](#)

(Gainesville Sun © 12/07/2011)

Alachua County Public Schools face a potential \$6.8 million budget shortfall for the upcoming fiscal year, but a pending court case could cause that figure to balloon to \$14.1 million and put the district at financial risk, staff said Tuesday. Assistant Superintendent Keith Birkett said conflicting information has come from Tallahassee, but the di...

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### [UF students not so studious](#)

(Independent Florida Alligator © 12/07/2011)

Julia Glum, Alligator Contributing Writer The Independent Florida Alligator | 0 comments Whether the weather or the curriculum is to blame, four Florida universities recently ranked on the Princeton Review's top 20 list of colleges where students study the least. UF is ranked No. 14, the lowest out of the Florida schools included. Florida State University rung in at No. 9, the University of South...

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### [Polk State College Ranked for Fast Growth](#)

(Lakeland Ledger © 12/07/2011)

LAKELAND | Tough economic times and high rates of job losses have led more people to find their way to the admissions offices of community colleges, and the trend has not slacked off in Polk County. Polk State College secured the No. 12 spot in a list of 50 fastest growing, public community colleges with enrollment of more than 10,000. The study us...

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### [Scott to Propose Additional \\$1 Billion for Florida Schools](#)

(Lakeland Ledger © 12/07/2011)

30,000 more students over the current school year. Facts "I'm going to tell the Legislature, 'I'm not signing the budget unless we substantially increase state funding for

education," because that's what our hard-working Floridians want." Gov. Rick Scott A spokesman for the governor said late Tuesday that officials in the...

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#### [Former cheer coach: Parent sent 100 emails complaining about Hooters job, misconduct](#)

(Naples Daily News © 12/07/2011)

The former Estero High School varsity cheerleading coach, who was fired unexpectedly last month, said Tuesday she believes her termination stems from the emails from a parent of a junior varsity cheerleader. Nicole Zivich, 24, said the parent wrote more than 100 e-mails to the Lee County School Board and the superintendent complaining about her second job at Hooters and accusations of her misconduct...

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#### [What could happen at this week's Collier bus stop stabbing hearing?](#)

(Naples Daily News © 12/07/2011)

NAPLES — a.inline\_topic:hover { background-color: #EAEAEA; } Jorge Saavedra will be back in a Collier courtroom Wednesday as a judge weighs whether the teen acted in self-defense when he fatally stabbed a schoolmate in January. Though witness lists aren't public record in juvenile court, where Saavedra is charged, defense attorney Donald Day has said students who saw the events surrounding a....

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#### [At Top Public Schools, the Arts Replace Recess](#)

(New York Times © 12/07/2011)

In the art room at P.S. 188 in Bayside, Queens, a group of 9-year-olds was busily putting the finishing touches on an enormous poster for the fourth-grade play. Its topic: saving the Earth. Down the hall in the music room, beneath portraits of Mozart and Bach, classmates were breaking into a spirited rendition of "Hear Those Bells" on fluorescent-colored recorders. Cheerleaders in the gym were per...

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#### [Gov. Rick Scott to ask for \\$1 billion boost in school spending](#)

(Orlando Sentinel © 12/07/2011)

TALLAHASSEE — Gov. Rick Scott is set to propose a \$1 billion increase in education spending over this year and is planning to call Wednesday for a boost to per-student spending despite a state revenue shortfall and lower local school tax dollars. In a conference call with state school superintendents Tuesday, Scott said he plans to call for lawmakers to increase per-pupil spending from \$6,2...

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#### [Parents protest Seminole school closing](#)

(Orlando Sentinel © 12/07/2011)

SANFORD — Plans to close another Seminole County public school to cut costs have brought protests from parents who say their children will suffer. The Hopper Center for emotionally handicapped elementary and middle-school students is to be shuttered at the end of the school year in June under a recommendation by Superintendent Bill Vogel that the School Board tentatively approved last month...

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#### [Scott pledges \\$1B for schools](#)

(Pensacola News Journal © 12/07/2011)

TALLAHASSEE ? Florida Gov. Rick Scott, who was criticized for pushing school funding cuts earlier this year, is asking for a billion dollars more for education to come during an election year. Scott will introduce a budget today for 2012 that calls for increasing the amount spent on the state's public school students by slightly more than \$100 each and more than \$1 billion overall. Local superi...

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### [Pasco school district revisits background check policy](#)

(St. Petersburg Times © 12/07/2011)

LAND O'LAKES — The Pasco County school district's tough stance on criminal background checks for potential employees and contractors is preventing many county residents from doing construction work for the district — even on sites without students. "We've lost four to five (contractors) a week" because of decades-old convictions that have not been repeated, new construction director J...

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### [FAMU's Marching 100: Some local students still want to join](#)

(St. Petersburg: WTSP (Ch. 10) © 12/07/2011)

TAMPA, Florida - Despite the death of 26-year-old Florida A & M University student Robert Champion, there are many students from the Tampa Bay area who want to be a part of the world famous marching band. The Marching 100 dates back to 1946. It started out with just 16 members, but currently has more than 400. The music and the bold moves band members perform on the f...

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### [Boy suspended after calling teacher 'cute'](#)

(St. Petersburg: WTSP (Ch. 10) © 12/07/2011)

GASTONIA, N.C. – Gaston County school officials are offering an apology to a 9-year-old boy who was suspended for sexual harassment after he was accused of calling a teacher "cute." WSOC-TV reported that school officials issued a statement Tuesday saying it was determined that the fourth grader at Brookside Elementary School did not engage in sexual harassment. The statement said the superintend...

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### [Does 'Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer' promote bullying?](#)

(St. Petersburg: WTSP (Ch. 10) © 12/07/2011)

PITTSBURGH (KDKA/CBS Pittsburgh) - Does a Christmas classic send the wrong message (See video below)? A Long Island University professor says "Rudolph The Red-Nosed Reindeer" promotes bullying. There's even a book about it called "No More Bullies on the North Pole." Dr. Paul Friday, head of Shadyside Psychological Services, has heard the conclusions of Long Island University Professor George Gi...

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### [New charter school, principal on course](#)

(Tampa Bay Online © 12/07/2011)

RIVERVIEW – Terry Johnson Jr. doesn't just like greeting the students waving to him in the halls of Winthrop Charter School. He literally embraces it. Johnson is the first principal at Winthrop, a new school that opened Aug. 23. Charter schools are run independently but publicly funded, with the school district providing services and training. Whenever he strolls the school's h...

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### [Educators prep for stiffer FCAT scoring](#)

(Tampa Bay Online © 12/07/2011)

LAND O' LAKES – Pasco County school officials are bracing themselves as the state plans for a tougher scoring system for the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test. The state board of education is expected to vote Dec. 19 on proposed higher FCAT cut scores, which determine each level of proficiency on the tests. Higher cut scores are expected to result in more students falli...

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### [Schools may expand use of social media](#)

(Tampa Bay Online © 12/07/2011)

LAND O' LAKES – The Pasco County school district may turn to Facebook and Twitter as additional ways of reaching out to parents. Superintendent Heather Fiorentino told the school board Tuesday that the district is working on a plan to incorporate social media into its communications network. Many parents now do much of their communicating via Facebook and Twitter, she said,...

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#### [Free school lunch list still growing](#)

(Tampa Bay Online © 12/07/2011)

LAND O' LAKES - The effect of the weak economy continues to be reflected in the serving lines at school cafeterias. More than 55 percent of the Pasco County School District's 66,000 students qualify for free or reduced-price meals under the National School Lunch Program. That percentage has grown steadily over the past few years, as the economy dipped in and out of a recession and the unemploy...

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#### [When an adult took standardized tests forced on kids](#)

(Washington Post/The Answer Sheet Blog, Valerie Strauss © 12/07/2011)

Original post: This was written by Marion Brady, veteran teacher, administrator, curriculum designer and author. By Marion Brady A longtime friend on the school board of one of the largest school systems in America did something that few public servants are willing to do. He took versions of his state's high-stakes standardized math and reading tests for 10th graders, and said he'...

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#### [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 ...

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#### [McKay Scholarship expose prompts reform of a billion-dollar educational catastrophe](#)

(Miami New Times © 12/06/2011)

By Gus Garcia-Roberts Thursday, Dec 8 2011 Five months ago, Miami New Times exposed a taxpayer-funded voucher program that, even on the overblown Floridian scale of dysfunction, is a stunning boondoggle. Students who receive the John M. McKay Scholarship for disabled students are taught in public parks or not at all, the story showed. Administrators and teachers at schools given millions by the...

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#### [How to Rescue Education Reform](#)

(New York Times © 12/06/2011)

By FREDERICK M. HESS and LINDA DARLING-HAMMOND THE debate over renewing No Child Left Behind, the education reform act that will be 10 years old in January, has fallen along partisan lines even though school improvement is one of the few examples of bipartisan cooperation over the last decade. Though the law was initiated and signed by a Republican president, presidential candidates like Mitt R...

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Have a lovely day! Please see the articles below.

*Deborah*





## Tallahassee Democrat

### Jefferson County Schools work to improve, still face challenges

By Ashley Ames

December 7, 2011

MONTICELLO — The superintendent of Jefferson County Schools can still recall a conversation he had with state Sen. Bill Montford, D-Tallahassee, just after he was elected in 2008 to lead the troubled school district.

"He said, 'Son, y'all are in trouble. You are broke,'" Superintendent Bill Brumfield said. "And I thought, 'Oh, goodness. What have I gotten myself into?'" The last three years have certainly been challenging. Brumfield, who worked as a teacher and coach in the county for 27 years, inherited a D school district — with one failing school — that was almost \$1 million in the red.

"I had to go from \$800,000 in the hole to \$400,000 in the good," he said. "So you are talking about a \$1.3 million dollar turnaround in just 196 days."

This year, the district received a C and the school district budget is in the positive. Because of attrition and retirement, there were no staff cuts this year, Brumfield said, although several positions had been eliminated in previous years. To get back in the black, the district, led by Brumfield, also reduced the Jefferson Elementary School Principal Valerie Thompson and School Superintendent Bill Brumfield have teamed up to give school children a safe place to learn. number of bus routes from 17 to 12, deferred maintenance, reduced travel and sold "a lot" of property, he said.

"With God's help, by the end of the year, we had our 3 percent (in the black)," said Brumfield, who keeps a Bible and large cross on his desk. "We are going to end the year with around a 12 percent fund balance."

But in terms of school performance, things are still on shaky ground.

"In the last four years we have done a good job, I think, in turning the financials around," said Marianne Arbulu, a first-term school board member. "Academically, I think it's fair to say that we have not accomplished as much as we had hoped."

"New programs don't teach children," she said. "Cutting back on budgetary items doesn't improve student achievement. We need to get to the core of what we are lacking to make sure that our students are achieving and progressing at the level that they should be."

The two schools that make up the district — Jefferson County Elementary and Jefferson County Middle/ High, with a total population of just over 1,000 students — are still awaiting a final grade for this year. The elementary school was placed under investigation for an unusually high number of erasure marks on its FCAT entries over the summer and the final grade has not been announced, Brumfield said. High school grades are expected to be announced sometime this month, according to the Florida Department of Education.

The high school, which has never scored higher than a D since the 2003-2004 school year, has been designated an "intervene" school by DOE for the last three years. That means that the school is monitored and given on-site support by the state. The school must close and reopen as a charter school, reassign students, and convert to a district turnaround school or contract with an outside entity to run the school, according to DOE.

The district chose to contract with management company Educational Directions, which oversees things on the academic level, Brumfield said. The two principals who were at the schools when he came into office were both replaced, Brumfield said — although one still works in the district office.

The district also added dual enrollment options with North Florida Community College and opened three new academies, Brumfield said, hoping to expand options for students.

The elementary school, which has wavered between a C, D and F over the last 10 years, has also been monitored by the state, although not to the same extent as the high school.

The district has also brought on several new principals over the last few years — two at the high school, one at the elementary — to turn performance around.

"I had to go a different direction. I didn't have a choice," said Brumfield, who added that some of his decisions have made him a lot of enemies. "Will Rogers said, 'If you find yourself in a hole, stop digging.' So we found ourselves in a hole. And we had to start filling that hole up."

Hoping for a C

But Brumfield has confidence in the upcoming school grades.

"I don't see any reason why we won't make a C at the high school," he said. "I feel like if we don't get a C, I will be sorely disappointed."

Edward Vollertsen, a Jefferson County School Board member, said he believes the district is heading in the right direction.

"I think Bill came into a very difficult situation. And I think that he has done a very good job for the most part of handling it," he said. "We have good staff, we have good teachers and I am very optimistic."

Newly hired principal of the middle/high school, Guy Cooper, said that based on his experience since the beginning of the year, there is a culture in the county that needs to change for the district to make progress.

"I think one of the contributing factors to poor performance among the schools is there is a lack of motivation among students to pursue higher education," Cooper said. "There are a lot of students who don't realize that there is a bigger world outside of Monticello."

Cooper, who recently helped turn around a failing public school in Georgia, said that he has been making his own changes at the school level. He said he has moved the career counselor to the front of the building, set and enforced conduct rules for teachers and students, created a schoolwide grading scale and tried to engage students and their parents with different events centered on family and school. A focus on the importance of education had been lacking, he said.

"I think that it has been something that is culturally acceptable, and there hasn't been a real push from former staff and administration to say look, you have to better yourself," Cooper said.

"It's not that (the students) are not smart enough to learn. It's just that they are not motivated," Vollertsen said. "Even the lowest performing students can learn and often do, if we can continue to track them and teach them and get the parents involved."

Cooper also brought on several new teachers fresh from the local universities. "The majority of the new teachers that I hired were out of Florida A&M University and Florida State University, which gave me a pull of new people who were willing to try new things and not continue the behaviors of the past," he said.

Cooper added that when he first arrived with a new approach, many would tell him that they had been doing something a certain way for years.

"But the school was failing last year, and failing the year before that," Cooper said. "If you continue to do the same thing over and over and expect a different result, by definition that is insanity."

With regard to student performance, Cooper said he thinks the school has a few years to go.

"The state of the school when we found it was so out of sync that it is going to take at least two to three years to get it where we want it to be," Cooper said.

"I think that there needs to be a continuation of administration. And continued support from the DOE. And if we can continue to build support from the community, I don't see why Jefferson County Middle/High can't be an A school within the next two to three years at the minimum."

Responsibility to all

As of January 2011, according to the DOE, more than 75 percent of the students at both schools were on free or reduced price lunches.

Cooper said he doesn't think that should be used as a justification for low performance. The school has a responsibility to all students, he said.

"Parents send you the best children that they have, which are the only children that they have," he said. "And they are trusting you to educate them — and by golly, that's what you are going to do or you are out of there." Arbulu said she believes that in many ways, the district has failed the students.

"We have wonderful students. Our students are capable of learning, they have the desire," she said. "I feel that we have failed them as adults. It's not the student side of the equation, it's the educators."

The district needs strong leadership, said Arbulu, who will be running for superintendent next year, sai.

"I think our low performance comes from a lack of solid direction," she said. "We need to do a better job of envisioning and planning and then working the plan, as a school board."

Part of the problem, she said, was that there wasn't any movement.

"We are basically in the same place. And that is the problem," she said. "We have an obligation to educate students in this county and to give them the very best education that the state has to offer. And we are capable of doing that, but we are not doing that. Anything less than that is not getting the job done. We need to keep working at it."

No quick fix

Brumfield, who is planning to run for reelection in 2012, said he inherited a district that had been struggling for a long time.

"Everything just kind of collapsed," he said. "I feel like there weren't good checks and balances with what was going on, both financially and academically."

And it isn't something that can be fixed overnight, he said. You can't fix something in four years that didn't take four years to get that way, he said, repeating what people have told him.

The support of the community — especially the parents of the students — would go a long way.

"I found in this job, too, if you are pleasing everybody, you aren't doing a good job," he said. "But I am going to go out and follow my convictions when it comes to what I have to do for these children in the district."

Brumfield is determined to see it through.

"I think it is going to take time," he said. "We just had a bad rap for so many years."

**The FL Current**

**Budget and Taxes**

**State debt drops for first time in 20 years**

**Gray Rohrer, 12/06/2011 - 03:48 PM**

After adding on an average of \$1 billion of debt per year for the past 10 years, Florida's overall state debt dropped this year for the first time in at least two decades.

Division of Bond Finance Director Ben Watkins presented a report on Florida's debt to Cabinet members Tuesday, noting that overall debt dropped \$500 million this fiscal year to \$27.7 billion.

Gov. Rick Scott has been vocal about keeping Florida's debt level low, and vetoed \$135 million in public education capital outlay (PECO) funds and \$300 million in Florida Forever funds this year, reducing the amount of new debt for the state. He hinted to reporters later that his budget, due out Wednesday, won't contain much borrowed money.

"I don't want to burden future generations on debt that we should be controlling in our state," Scott said. "I'm going to continue to be very cautious on debt. As you go through the coverage numbers it suggests that we can't really afford more debt."

Those vetoes helped Florida pay down \$1.4 billion in debt this fiscal year while issuing \$900 million in new bonds.

Florida's debt service costs will be \$2.2 billion in the 2012-13 fiscal year, and based on current revenue estimates, the state's reserves will swell by \$1.4 billion next year, or 6.2 percent of general revenue.

Since most of the state's debt is dedicated to education and PECO funds – about \$15.9 billion, or 57.4 percent – it appears education construction and maintenance is in for another tough budget year even though all allocated PECO funds were funneled to charter schools this year rather than public schools.

#### **First Coast News**

#### **Test Mistake Boots Tulsa Welding Student From School**

**6:12 PM, Dec 6, 2011**

**Ken Amaro**

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. – Jayson Martinez had a rough week in his Tulsa Welding School class.

"They called me into the office and told me I was withdrawn from school," said Martinez.

Martinez, 26, is still trying to get over what he was told by the staff.

"I was shock because I worked hard during those three months and for them to tell me something like that I was shocked," he said.

The husband and father of three is working on an education in Electro Mechanical Technology, HVAC. He said it was going well until the school told him there was a mistake with his admission test.

"They just told me they did a mistake, they gave me the wrong test, I had to retake the test again, classes all over from day one," he said.

Martinez did not finish high school and he does not have a General Equivalency Diploma (GED); to be able to attend the school he has to take and pass a nationally standardized, independently administered exam called the Ability to Benefit test.

#### **ON YOUR SIDE**

Because of privacy laws the school cannot discuss his passing or failing of any admission test, but in order for the school to be in compliance with federal laws, Martinez has

to take the test again.

Tom Brooks, a spokesperson for Tulsa Welding School, said he can't disclose everything due to privacy act, but he said the school is not to blame.

"He (Martinez) has a justifiable reason to be upset; this is based on his own doing," said Brooks. "Everything has been voided; we will have to return the tuition money; he was not eligible to start school."

Even so, Brooks said the school has not given up on Martinez. He said, "We are still trying to find a solution that can help him."

Martinez hopes it is a quick solution.

"This is something I really want to do, HVAC, now I have to start all over again," said Martinez.

The school is licensed and in good standing with the Florida Department of Education.

And since it receives federal dollars for tuition, it has to comply with federal regulations, one of which would be student eligibility.

The school reached out to Martinez and told him he must retake the admission test, if he passes, he does not have to start over he can resume his education.

Martinez is please with the resolution.