

**From:** Smith, Kevin  
**Sent time:** Wednesday, December 21, 2011 10:02:22 AM  
**To:** Cari Miller (Cari@excelined.org) <Cari@excelined.org>; elefsky@cfl.rr.com; Lee, Laurie; Colle, Hope; Walt Griffin <walt\_griffin@scps.k12.fl.us>  
**Subject:** FW: 12-21-11 Education Round Up

---

FYI – have a great day!

Sincerely,

Kevin Smith,  
Deputy Director,  
Just Read, Florida! Office  
Florida Department of Education  
325 W. Gaines Street, Suite 501  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399  
(850) 245-0503  
(850) 245-5105 (Fax)  
[www.justreadflorida.com](http://www.justreadflorida.com)



---

**From:** Champion-Mongioli, Jamie  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 21, 2011 9:31 AM  
**Subject:** 12-21-11 Education Round Up

## Florida Department of Education



**[Civil rights group plans suit against school district](#)**  
(Citrus County Chronicle © 12/21/2011)

Shemir Wiles Staff Writer INVERNESS — An Orlando-based civil rights group announced Monday plans to file a federal lawsuit against the Citrus County School District for defamation, false imprisonment and upholding racially biased policies in its Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) at Withlacoochee Technical Institute. According to a press release from the Florida Civil Rights Associ...

---

**[Higher FCAT standards could hurt graduation rates, officials say](#)**  
(Collier Citizen © 12/21/2011)

Fewer students in Southwest Florida and around the state are expected to pass the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test in 2012 due to higher scoring standards approved Monday by the state Board of Education. The State announced a higher minimum score or "cut-score" for the newly revised state reading and mathematics test. The reading test is administered from grades three to 10. The math test is...

---

[Volusia students first in state to embark on civics program](#)

(Daytona Beach News-Journal © 12/21/2011)

DELAND – Illiteracy. Poverty. Beach driving. Those are just a few of the issues some Volusia County teens may tackle in a two-year program to learn about their communities' challenges and how citizens can help find solutions to them by working with local and state government leaders. The 55 teens from DeLand, Mainland and Spruce Creek high schools are part of the Florida Civic Leadership Acad...

---

[Investigators Allege Test Tampering in Second Georgia District](#)

(Education Week © 12/21/2011)

More than 40 teachers and administrators in the 16,000-student Dougherty, Ga. school system engaged in test tampering on the 2009 administration of the state exam, according to a report released today by the same investigators who delved into a cheating scandal earlier this year in Atlanta. The investigation showed cheating took place in at least 11 of 26 schools in the district, which is locat...

---

[Public school funding: The state must do more](#)

(Florida Times-Union © 12/21/2011)

For all those who wonder about funding the Duval County public schools, the Jacksonville Public Education Fund has answered three important questions: Q. Does the district have enough money? The answer is no. Q. Is the state doing its part to fund schools? The answer is no. Q. Does the district spend its money responsibly? The answer is yes. The answers came in a report titled "Demystify..."

---

[Editorial: Pay out 'A' school bonuses](#)

(Ft. Myers News-Press © 12/21/2011)

The failure of the state of Florida to pay \$100 million in hard-earned bonus money to high-performing schools in time for the holidays is a slap in the face of educators and students. The decision to delay payment of bonuses to A-rated elementary and middle schools just because the high school ratings aren't in yet has the state playing the Grinch. The delay means bonuses will not go out until n...

---

[Editorial: Pay out 'A' school bonuses](#)

(Lehigh News Star © 12/21/2011)

The failure of the state of Florida to pay \$100 million in hard-earned bonus money to high-performing schools in time for the holidays is a slap in the face of educators and students. The decision to delay payment of bonuses to A-rated elementary and middle schools just because the high school ratings aren't in yet has the state playing the Grinch. The delay means bonuses will not go out until n...

---

[School athletic director accused of sexual battery is arrested and released](#)

(Miami Herald © 12/21/2011)

Miami-Dade Police said the athletic director of a West Kendall private school, who was on the run and wanted for sexual battery on a child, was apprehended in Polk County and extradited to Miami-Dade County, where he was released after posting a \$7,500 bond. Paul Michael Mira, 29, of the 13400 block of West Calusa Drive in West Kendall, who worked as the athletic director of Archimedean Middle Cons...

---

[Zero tolerance for hazing](#)

(Miami Herald © 12/21/2011)

OUR OPINION: Stronger action required to avoid more tragedies By The Miami Herald Editorial HeraldEd@MiamiHerald.com Every few years, there's news that a college student has died or been seriously injured during hazing on a college campus. Unlike plagues of locust, this cycle could and should be broken. Yet the "stern" measures that each tragedy provokes fade too quickly from memory. The beating d...

---

#### [More Georgia Schools Accused of Cheating](#)

(New York Times © 12/21/2011)

Investigators who this year found rampant cheating among Atlanta public school teachers and principals released another report on Tuesday detailing widespread wrongdoing in another Georgia county. Related Times Topic: Cheating News, data and conversation about education in New York. Join us on Facebook » Follow us on Twitter » Cheating by officials on 2009 state standardized tests was fo...

---

#### [Volusia mother sues, says School Board, teacher failed to protect son from bullies](#)

(Orlando Sentinel © 12/21/2011)

The mother of a Volusia County seventh-grader is suing the School Board and a former teacher because she says they did not protect him from bullies, the family's attorney announced Monday. On Oct. 5, 2010 at Holly Hill Middle School, four older students attacked the boy in the locker room, where he was "verbally assaulted," punched, kneed in the stomach, stripped and photographed, the lawsuit all...

---

#### [Seminole fights law letting top charters expand](#)

(Orlando Sentinel © 12/21/2011)

Two school boards in Central Florida were faced with a similar dilemma this fall — either approve a charter school application that board members felt was lacking, or face a fight with the state. Seminole County embraced the fight, filing suit against the state Board of Education and rejecting the applicant, a school that would be managed by Charter Schools USA. Orange County, by contrast,...

---

#### [Board denies charter school contract extension](#)

(Orlando-WFTV (ABC) © 12/21/2011)

SANDY SPRINGS, Ga. — The Fulton County Board of Education has denied a contract extension for an Alpharetta charter school, which could lead to the school closing this summer. The board's unanimous decision regarding Fulton Science Academy Middle School was made in a Tuesday night vote in Sandy Springs. The Atlanta Journal-Constitution reports (<http://bit.ly/uJbAKR>) that a standing-room ...

---

#### [Several schools to get new choice programs next year](#)

(Palm Beach Post © 12/21/2011)

Several schools are expected to get new choice programs in everything from cooking to robots next year. A committee of Palm Beach County School District department heads on Jan. 13 are planning to review and likely approve proposed academies at Odyssey Middle School in western Boynton Beach, Galaxy Elementary School in Boynton Beach, and Independence Middle School in Jupiter. Officials at Lake W...

---

#### [Bondi uses new law to put measure back on ballot; would allow taxes to go to religious institutions](#)

(Palm Beach Post © 12/21/2011)

A question asking Florida voters to do away with a century-old constitutional prohibition on using state money for religious institutions is back on the ballot for now after Attorney General Pam Bondi rewrote the ballot summary as is allowed by a new state law. A week after Leon County Circuit Judge Terry Lewis struck the proposed Religious Freedom constitutional amendment from the ballot on th...

---

[Scott sticks to message](#)

(Pensacola News Journal © 12/21/2011)

Gov. Rick Scott stuck to his tried and true mantra of more jobs and less government spending to get the state's economy back on track during an interview with the News Journal's editorial board Tuesday. He plowed little new ground on a variety of issues, from oil drilling exploration to specific economic development efforts for the Panhandle. As during his 2010 campaign, he repeatedly returned t...

---

[Grower makes Ag-Venture a tradition](#)

(Sebring Highlands Today © 12/21/2011)

LAKE PLACID – As the third-graders step off the bus for their "Ag-Venture" experience, they are all wearing name tags. Darlene Phypers makes sure she greets them by name, and she recalls laughingly, "The kids would whisper, 'she knows our names!'" "I just have always loved being around children," said Phypers, who runs the sales, ordering, and customer service end of Happiness ...

---

[Mother named adult school volunteer of the year](#)

(South Florida Sun-Sentinel © 12/21/2011)

Kendra Palumbo commutes 7 miles each way and puts in eight- to 10-hour work days at Eagles Landing Middle and Del Prado Elementary schools, and she doesn't even get paid. A list of what Palumbo does at Eagles Landing alone, sent by her principal Cindy Chiapetta, fills up an entire page, and this school year she has logged 1,800 hours so far. So it would be no surprise to the people who know her t...

---

[Curbing hazing is FAMU's challenge](#)

(South Florida Sun-Sentinel © 12/21/2011)

With a probe under way into the alleged hazing-related death of Florida A&M University drum major Robert Champion, Gov. Rick Scott last week stuck his gubernatorial nose where it didn't belong. Supposedly concerned over the probe's transparency, the governor called for FAMU President James Ammons' temporary ouster. Unfortunately, his remarks inadvertently created an unneeded racial distract...

---

[Spin instructor aims to get teens fit with new program](#)

(South Florida Sun-Sentinel © 12/21/2011)

To most Barrington Gilbert is just another 21-year-old working to pay for college but he's much more to spin instructor Susan Mandell. Gilbert, a Lake Worth High School graduate, was playing for the basketball team a few years back when his coach recommended he take a few spin classes with Mandell to up his fitness. Mandell, in her textbook relentless way, saw something in Gilbert and called him...

---

[Superintendent denies he banned holiday parties in Hernando schools](#)

(St. Petersburg Times © 12/21/2011)

BROOKSVILLE — To hear some tell it, Hernando schools superintendent Bryan Blavatt was setting himself up for a visit from the ghosts of Christmas past, present and future. Blavatt the "scrooge," as one anonymous caller to the St. Petersburg Times put it, had "effectively taken away Christmas from our children" by banning holiday parties. Blavatt's office received similar calls. The conster...

---

[Pretty close to 'Asians need not apply'](#)

(Tampa Bay Online © 12/21/2011)

To check or not to check the Asian box? That is the pointed choice faced by Asian-American students applying to gain admission to what are supposed to be the most tolerant places on Earth, the nation's colleges. The Associated Press ran a report on Asian students of mixed parentage checking "white," if possible, on their applications to avoid outing themselves as Asians. The Princeton Review Stu...

---

[Concerns Raised over New Passing Scores on FCAT](#)

(WJXX ABC 25 Duval County © 12/21/2011)

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. – The Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test has always been a controversial assessment tool since its inception a decade ago and now it's sure to stir up more heated debate with some new changes. Florida has decided to make the FCAT harder and more students are expected to fail as a result. The pass rate for the 10th grade test is expected to drop from 60 percent to 52 percent...

---

[USF President Removes Polytechnic Chancellor](#)

(WUSF Tampa © 12/21/2011)

TAMPA (2011-12-20) - University of South Florida President Judy Genshaft has removed Marshall Goodman as USF Polytechnic's chancellor. In a letter Genshaft sent to Goodman she says she has "lost confidence in [his] ability to lead." Goodman is scheduled to return to the faculty as a tenured full professor after a year of professional development leave. David Touchton will serve as interim...

---

[Food program helps feed kids away from school](#)

(Daytona Beach News-Journal © 12/19/2011)

Hosseini Students Without Homes Homeless students in school districts in Florida, ranked by the top 10 (and including where Flagler County ranks): 1. Miami-Dade 4,406 2. Orange 3,887 3. Hillsborough 3,659 4. Lake 2,992 5. Pinellas 2,915 6. Polk 2,446 7. Pasco 2,230 8. Broward 2,101 9. Volusia 2,016 10. Osceola 1,923 37. Flagle...

---

Please see the article below.

Thanks!

Jamie Champion Mongiovi

Office of Communications & External Affairs

Florida Department of Education

[jamie.champion-mongiovi@fldoe.org](mailto:jamie.champion-mongiovi@fldoe.org)

(850) 245-0413

**Tallahassee Democrat**

**Cannon looks ahead to 2012 legislative session**

**Speaker predicts casinos will fail, education will gain**

**11:58 PM, Dec. 20, 2011**

House Speaker Dean Cannon said Tuesday legislators will move swiftly, but judiciously, in redrawing Florida's political boundaries in the coming legislative session.

Cannon said legislative and congressional district maps proposed recently by House and Senate committees comply with the Fair Districts Florida constitutional amendments that were adopted by voters last year — forbidding any favoritism of political parties or incumbents and protecting minority voting access. He and two members of Congress — a Democrat and Republican — went to court in an effort to overturn those mandates, but Cannon said the legislative and congressional districts proposed by House and Senate committees are as non-political as possible.

In a year-end interview at his Capitol office, the powerful speaker also said odds are against three destination-resort casinos in Southeast Florida — at least this year. He praised Gov. Rick Scott's budget plan for restoring \$1 billion in public education funding, as well as the emphasis Scott and Senate President-designate Don Gaetz, R-Niceville, are focusing on science, technology, engineering and math in higher education.

"I am not comfortable, I am philosophically not comfortable, with an expansion of gaming in our state," said Cannon. "I've heard the arguments that you can reconfigure gaming, so as to perhaps allow destination-resort casinos on the one hand but at the same time reconfigure or constrain other gaming in our state so it would result in a net reduction, but I'm skeptical about that."

Sen. Elyn Bogdanoff, R-Fort Lauderdale, and Rep. Erik Fresen, R-Miami, have introduced the big casino bill. It has divided the powerful business lobby — Associated Industries of Florida favoring casinos, the Florida Chamber of Commerce opposing them — and the issue has taken on more heat in an election year.

"Traditionally, the House has been a little more anti-gaming and the Senate has been a little more pro-gaming, and I think those tendencies get amplified in an election year," said Cannon. "So I think it's an uphill battle."

With revenue shortages projected at nearly \$2 billion, and no new taxes possible, Cannon said legislators have to make hard choices in the budget. He said Scott's budget proposals "reflect wise policy choices" for state agencies.

"We share the governor's goal of holding harmless K-12 education; if possible, we'd like to give it an increase," said Cannon. "In Gov. Scott, we've now seen a thoughtful, policy-oriented, intellectually based budget recommendation. It may not be exactly the way we would have done it, but it's the beginning of a very good dialogue."

Scott's \$64-billion budget proposal would eliminate about 4,500 state job positions, most of them vacant. It was projected to cause about 600 layoffs.

Cannon, R-Winter Park, expressed confidence that the 60-day session will end on time in early March.

On redistricting, he declined to predict whether drawing the districts without regard to incumbency or partisan registration will help or hurt Republicans — who now hold two-thirds majorities in both chambers. But House Democratic Leader Ron Saunders, D-Key West, predicted that his party will gain three seats in the Senate and eight in the House, plus a couple of congressional seats, in a heavy-turnout election next year.

Cannon said the session that starts Jan. 10 will concentrate on the two things legislators are constitutionally required to do — pass a budget and redistrict the legislative and congressional boundaries. Everything else is secondary in the 60-day session, he said.

"We're sure not going to do them until they're ready and we've got to put, again, reapportionment right alongside the budget as those are the only two mandatory things we must do," said Cannon. "We won't delay but neither will we do them too soon."

Unlike past 10-year reapportionments, Cannon said, next year's task is made somewhat easier because neither he nor Senate President Mike Haridopolos, R-Merritt Island, is looking to carve out a congressional district to run in next year.

Whatever House, Senate and congressional plans are produced in the 60-day session will end up in court, with legal challenges to minority voting strength or partisan divides, but Cannon said at least there won't be accusations of top-down pressure to reserve Florida's two new congressional districts for anyone.

The 2002 redistricting resulted in Republicans building on their legislative and congressional majorities, to the point that there are now 81 GOP House members, 28 Republican Senators and a 19-6 GOP majority in the state's congressional delegation. Cannon, whose Orange County district is mostly Democratic by registration, said the drawing of lines is overrated in determining winners and losers politically.

"I don't anticipate losing or gaining seats (because of redistricting) and I'll give you a great example of that," said Cannon. "There's one district we know was drawn with no political influence by the Florida Legislature. It's called the statewide offices. And four out of four happen to be Republicans."

Gov. Rick Scott and all three GOP Cabinet candidates won last year.

"That completely does away with the fallacy that the drawing of districts has a great deal of influence on the election of individuals," said the speaker. "I think the candidates matter more, their philosophies matter more."

Saunders, who served in the House when Democrats controlled state government 20 years ago, agreed — but said money is another huge factor in electing legislators. The Republicans have enormous fund-raising advantages, as they control the process at all levels.

Still, Saunders said drawing legislative and congressional districts without regard to protecting incumbents or favoring either party should help the Democrats next year. A lot will depend on whether it is "a wave election," as 2006 was for Democrats and 2008 was for Republicans, said Saunders.

President Obama's re-election campaign will pour millions of dollars into Florida, which has 29 crucial electoral votes, and a hot U.S. Senate race will generate large voter turnouts in the Aug. 14 primary and fall elections. Saunders said that if the legislative and congressional districts are drawn as last year's Amendments 5 and 6 require, his party should start a comeback.

"There should be a natural pickup by Democrats. The maps were drawn so badly for us 10 years ago that it would be hard for the Republicans to repeat with their super majorities," said Saunders. "Of course, you still have to find the right candidates, raise the money and run good campaigns."