

From: Smith, Kevin
Sent time: Thursday, December 22, 2011 11:07:19 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: 12-22-11 Education Round Up

FYI – Merry Christmas! ☺

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



From: Champion-Mongioli, Jamie
Sent: Thursday, December 22, 2011 9:13 AM
Subject: 12-22-11 Education Round Up

Florida Department of Education



[Safety at charter school still being questioned](#)
(Charlotte Sun Herald © 12/22/2011)

DESOTO COUNTY — Concerns over the safety of students at Community Green Charter School in Lake Suzy continue to mount. Several parents attended a meeting of the board of directors on Dec. 14. Parent Anne Marie Bachman stated her daughter came home from school that day and said some children at the school were nearly electrocuted by other students. ...

[Duval School Board chairwomans name comes up in brothers corruption trial](#)
(Florida Times-Union © 12/22/2011)

Federal prosecutors accused the brother of Duval County School Board Chairwoman Betty Burney of using \$7,200 from a "slush" fund to purchase 600 of her self-published books, according to a New York Daily News report. A witness said the books were bought through a nonprofit organization controlled by Bronx City Councilman Larry Seabrook, who's corruption case was declared a mistrial thi...

[Scott appoints 16-year-old son of former state Senate candidate to community service commission](#)

(Florida Times-Union © 12/22/2011)

Gov. Rick Scott Wednesday appointed 16-year-old Justin Quiggle to the Florida Commission on Community Service. The high school student is the son of former Republican state Senate candidate Dan Quiggle. He lost in a bruising 2009 special election to state Sen. John Thrasher. Here is a quick reminder of that sharp-elbowed race. Justin's appointment is subject to confirmation by the Senat...

[Sen. Montford opens local office, talks of redistricting](#)

(Jackson County Floridan © 12/22/2011)

The office at 2866 Madison St. may not be his for long; state redistricting plans could boot Jackson County into Senate District 2, with incumbent Greg Evers currently at the helm. Montford isn't expected to keep a local office if Jackson falls outside District 6 when the dust settles. Also, the 10-year cycle of redistricting means that Montford will have to run for re-election next fal...

[Ed Dept. chides Hawaii for use of grant dollars](#)

(Miami Herald © 12/22/2011)

An Education Department official on Wednesday admonished Hawaii for its "unsatisfactory" performance under a \$75 million federal grant the state won last year in a high profile competition and said it was placing it under "high risk" status. That means the state is in danger of losing the money if it doesn't make improvements. This is the first time the department has placed under such a status a s...

[Top stories of the year #10: School budget crisis](#)

(Ocala Star Banner © 12/22/2011)

Superintendent of Schools Jim Yancey warned early this year that deep state funding cuts, which totaled about \$22 million for the 2011-12 school year, would mean big changes for the community in order to save jobs. Yancey initially announced plans to cut resource officers at middle and high schools, some substitute teachers and supplements for after...

[The FCAT gamble](#)

(Sarasota Herald-Tribune © 12/22/2011)

The state Board of Education has approved new passing scores for standardized tests, raising the ante in its already high-stakes student assessments. So why are we not surprised that part of the resulting costs could be paid through increased lottery ticket sales? But the tests are not a game for the third-graders and high school students who have ...

[State's grades for high schools are delayed](#)

(Sarasota Herald-Tribune © 12/22/2011)

High school principals hoping for an early Christmas gift in the form of an A grade for their school will have to wait a little longer. Florida Department of Education officials confirmed today that the state will not be releasing the 2010-11 school year grades this week. Last year, the grades were announced on Dec. 7. Officials said the results may...

[Social media reputation could crush college dreams](#)

(St. Petersburg: WTSP (Ch. 10) © 12/22/2011)

Port Richey, Florida – Getting into college just got tougher it turns out a stellar transcript, raving reference letters and lots of community service hours may not be enough. A Kaplan survey shows a student's digital footprint can crush their college dreams. A student's online reputation on Twitter, MySpace or Facebook can damage their chances for college admissions. "It's...

[Gov. Scott views first year in office as successful start](#)

(Tallahassee Democrat © 12/22/2011)

Governing the nation's fourth-largest state isn't all that harder than running a worldwide business corporation — it just takes a little more time to make big changes and the whole world is watching, Gov. Rick Scott said Wednesday. In an interview with the Tallahassee Democrat, the governor summed up his first year in office as a successful start for a political outsider. Some veteran Capitol...

[School board post angers union](#)

(Tampa Bay Online © 12/22/2011)

LAND O' LAKES – A Pasco County School Board decision to create a new management job at the district level has drawn criticism from the president of the school employees union. The board voted Tuesday night to create the position of compensation specialist in an effort to have a go-to person when it comes time to determine salary levels for employees. To free up money for the...

[FAMU named among most affordable universities](#)

(WTXL ABC Channel 27 Tallahassee © 12/22/2011)

Tallahassee, Fla. (WTXL)– Florida A & M was named among one of the nation's most affordable colleges by Jet Magazine. Students say the low cost of education is helpful because they can pursue a degree without having to go into debt. Other universities mentioned in the magazine include the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill, The University of Florida and the University of Virginia. ...

Please see articles below.

Have a great day!

Jamie Champion Mongiovi

Office of Communications & External Affairs

Florida Department of Education

jamie.champion-mongiovi@fldoe.org

(850) 245-0413

Orlando Sentinel

Orange charter high schools defend reputation against pending F grades

Aloma, Chancery and Sheeler high schools say they excel at helping dropouts and deserve to expand

By Lauren Roth

When state grades came out for elementary and middle schools in July, charter schools were responsible for an outsized share of the F's. And when high-school grades are released in coming days, three Orange County charters, all run by the same company, are poised to continue that trend.

Aloma, Chancery and Sheeler high schools, which work with students who are years behind in school or have dropped out, all expect to earn F grades. But citing the schools' unique mission, the county School Board last week granted a fourth charter to the same management company, Accelerated Learning Solutions of Miramar.

The new school will be called Sunshine High and located in or near the Edgewater High School zone.

"These are last-chance, dropout schools," said School Board Chairman Bill Sublette. "The board views them very differently than Imani," he said, making reference to a Pine Hills charter elementary school that the board shut down in the spring amid academic and financial failings.

The last time Orange County had three failing high schools was five years ago, when Evans, Oak Ridge and NorthStar Charter High got F's. The district has never had more than three high schools fail in a single year.

Like the School Board, the state sees these alternative charters as different from other struggling high schools despite low graduation rates, high turnover and low FCAT scores. Starting next year, Aloma, Chancery and Sheeler will earn "School Improvement Ratings" — declining, maintaining or improving — instead of grades. Statewide, 74 alternative schools earned such ratings for 2010-11.

Despite this, Chancery High will likely face a future School Board hearing on whether to continue its charter after receiving F grades two years in a row, a violation of its contract.

But school officials say the grade isn't a reflection of their true performance.

"There are too many good things happening to have that grade," said Angela Whitford-Narine, Chancery's former principal.

At Chancery recently, students worked on computer terminals in a brightly decorated school in a South Orange Blossom Trail strip mall. Like many for-profit colleges, the school has a full-time staffer dedicated to enrollment and runs multiple sessions of classes. All of the teachers are certified, and the principals at all three schools have master's degrees.

Gemima Hippolyte, a 17-year-old junior, said she transferred to Chancery after a year at Oak Ridge.

"I'm not the kind to drop out. I want to do courses faster," she said.

But though the classes that students take are based on the same Florida standards as traditional courses, they have far less depth. Students said they complete credits, the equivalent of an entire course, in a month or less.

For a literature class, students answer questions on books based on summaries instead of reading the texts themselves.

Jean Antoine, 18, just finished English 4 in about two weeks by staying for multiple sessions. The 18-year-old junior left Evans High School last year when he found out he wouldn't have enough credits to graduate.

"I've learned more here in a week than I would in a month in school," he said.

Based on the data available, it's hard to tell whether the schools are as successful as they claim.

The three schools say they had 236 graduates last year, but the state gave them credit for only 89 who graduated on time, a graduation rate that varied from 12 percent at Aloma to 26 percent at Sheeler.

By comparison, Mavericks High in Osceola, which is expanding to Orange County with a similar online-based credit-recovery program next year, had a 43 percent graduation rate. Within Orange County, Workforce Advantage Academy Charter, which teaches work skills and academics to students at risk of dropping out, had an 83.2 percent graduation rate.

Officials with Chancery and its sister schools said many of their students are years behind in credits and might graduate late. The advantage of their model, they said, is that classes are self-paced, with individualized support from teachers in each computer lab.

But John Saez, 19, said the online model wasn't for him. He left Aloma about two years ago after earning two credits in five months. He ended up graduating from another charter school last spring.

Many students such as Saez leave the three schools, including nearly 1,300 during the 2009-10 school year. Few returned to their home schools, and several hundred graduated.

Orange County School Board member Rick Roach said the district should copy the best innovations of alternative charter schools such as Workforce Advantage and Chancery.

"If you can show us something, we should replicate it and benefit from it," he said. "We haven't really taken advantage of that."

Tafari Huggins said he wouldn't have succeeded without an alternative option. A former Jones High football standout, he had too few credits to graduate until he went to Chancery. He caught up on credits and graduated a few weeks ago. He's headed to Alabama A&M, where he will play football and run track.

"Because of schools like Chancery, I can say I'm still alive. I beat out the predictions. I have no kids. I'm not in jail. I'm going to school," he told the School Board last week.

"Schools like Chancery give kids hope."

Education Week

Merged NCATE Likely to Raise Teacher-Entry Bar

When united, two accreditors hope to change recruiting

By Stephen Sawchuk

As the two bodies that accredit American teachers' colleges prepare to merge into a single entity, its leaders are signaling that the new Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation plans to require training programs to improve their processes for selecting candidates.

"The new CAEP standards are going to be much more rigorous with regard both to admission policies and recruitment policies," James G. Cibulka, the president of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, or NCATE, said in a recent interview.

His comments give the first inkling of what the new body will consider as part of a revamped accreditation process, and are germane to a growing debate about how to recruit more academically capable individuals into teaching, especially at the elementary level.

Though details still need to be fleshed out by CAEP, the basic proposal already has backing from influential figures in the teacher education world.

"It's exciting, and it's been too long in coming," said David M. Steiner, the dean of the school of education at Hunter College, in New York City. "Let's pull our sleeves up and get to work."

NCATE and the Teacher Education Accreditation Council, or TEAC, announced plans to merge late last year. The new body, CAEP, is scheduled to begin accrediting programs in 2013. ("Merger Lies Ahead for Accrediting Bodies of Teacher," Nov. 3, 2010.)

NCATE, by far the larger of the two accreditors, requires teacher-training programs to establish an admissions process, but has not set any particular standard for entry qualifications, such as minimum exam scores or grade point average.

New Thinking

In a recent letter to *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, Mr. Cibulka intimated that the time is ripe to take a closer look at the issue.

"Accreditation standards have been mostly silent on admissions in the past; that must change," he wrote.

In addition to admission, CAEP will consider requiring programs to document efforts to recruit top-caliber talent from a diverse pool, and the evidence behind those efforts.

"You can have high standards for admission, but if you do nothing to reach out to identify the target audience and attract that audience into the program, you may have very little effect," Mr. Cibulka said.

A number of factors appear to have influenced the new accrediting group's thinking. For one, empirical research over the past decade has identified some teacher characteristics that are correlated with better student academic outcomes. And NCATE, Mr. Cibulka said, has been examining the recruiting practices of Teach For America, an alternative-certification pathway that places graduates from top colleges in urban and rural schools. It is well known for its competitive admissions and detailed teacher-selection criteria, several of which have been linked by research to student achievement.

Mr. Cibulka also pointed to a congressionally mandated report on teacher preparation by the National Academies that identifies teacher selection as one of three leverage points for improving training. ("Draw Called Over Routes to Teaching," May 12, 2010.)

And finally, case studies on foreign countries have consistently identified highly selective entry requirements to teacher training as a teacher-quality strategy used by some of the top-performing nations on international exams. An influential report from McKinsey & Co., an international consultancy with headquarters in New York City, for instance, recently examined the idea of recruiting teachers from the "top third" of academic talent.

Both states and programs have widely divergent minimum requirements for admission. Among those with the highest standards is Boston College, which requires students transferring to its teacher education program from other schools to have at least a 3.5 GPA in lower-division coursework. (Graduate students need at least a 3.0.)

"It just reflects the fact we know the kind of competition they'll be up against, and we want to be sure they're successful here," said Maureen E. Kenny, the interim dean of the college's Lynch School of Education. "We are not a place in the university where people come who are struggling academically; they need to be strong in their content area and major."

Room to Experiment

Several groups have proposed a stricter entry cutoff. A contested review of teacher education programs being conducted by the Washington-based National Council on Teacher Quality, for instance, will look at whether programs require candidates to have at least a 3.0 GPA for admission to graduate programs or to attain a specific numerical score on college-entrance exams for entry to undergraduate programs.

And in an education reform plan unveiled in October, Iowa Gov. Terry Branstad proposed a state requirement of 3.0 for students to enter state teaching programs. The proposal by the Republican governor needs legislative action and is expected to be included in a package of education bills.

But Mr. Cibulka promised that the new CAEP standards, which are to be fleshed out by a commission of experts to be appointed next month, will leave room for experimentation and will examine a variety of factors, not just GPA.

"We want to write the standards in a way that raises the bar, but not in such a prescriptive way that we can't learn about what works from having the institutions try different things," he said.

That flexibility is likely to be welcomed by teacher-educators, several of whom praised the idea but said there could be cases in which a hard-and-fast admission standard might bar potentially good teachers from enrolling, especially at the postbaccalaureate level.

"What's always difficult is that there's always a reason to make exceptions—maybe a candidate's undergraduate work doesn't reflect what they're currently capable of," said Richard De Lisi, the dean of the graduate school of education at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, N.J.

But, he added, "especially now with some members of the public not having confidence in teacher education, I think [a higher standard] sends a nice, strong signal about rigor and the importance of having well-qualified students potentially entering into the teaching profession."

Mr. Steiner of Hunter College argued that the change could, in fact, help upgrade the prestige of the teaching profession.

"If you make a powerful gesture policywise to show that teaching is really tough, and only those who are very able are suited for it, you make the profession more attractive," he said. "You have a Teach For America effect on a much, much larger scale."

CAEP is scheduled to begin accrediting programs in January 2013. Until the new standards take effect, programs will be allowed to seek accreditation or reaccreditation through the pathways offered by either NCATE or TEAC.

Atlanta Journal Constitution

Latest charter-school fight shows Legislature must act in 2012

By Kyle Wingfield

One of the nation's best schools may have to pack up its chalkboards and lock its doors come June because of a fight that would appear to concern money. But the bottom-line problem with the Fulton County school board's refusal Tuesday to grant an extension of the contract for the Fulton Science Academy isn't really the acclaimed charter school's bottom line.

It's this: While adults argue about the length of the contract for one particular school, the worst schools throughout Georgia have perpetual contracts with scant chance of ever losing them due to poor performance, fiscal mismanagement, cheating scandals — you name it.

Like a lot of big school systems, Fulton has some schools that are stars, and others that are so pitiful, you'd be forgiven for thinking you can't spell education without "dud."

Four of Fulton's 23 middle schools, including Fulton Science Academy, ranked in the top 10 statewide for standardized test scores, according to the Georgia Public Policy Foundation's 2010 Report Card for Parents. But four others were on the wrong end of the spectrum, landing in the lower fifth of those same rankings. Two of them failed to make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), determined by the federal No Child Left Behind law, four times since 2007.

The Fulton system as a whole has failed to make AYP each year since 2008. Unfortunately, it's not alone: The Atlanta, Clayton, Cobb, DeKalb, Gwinnett and Paulding systems are in the same category.

Yet, there is no debate about shutting down the underperforming schools — one of which is even a charter school and should be easier to close. Instead, the only school that faces closure is Fulton Science Academy, which was designated this year as a national Blue Ribbon School of Excellence.

Nor is there serious debate about shutting down any of the 44 Atlanta schools where teachers and principals were found to have cheated to make sure students passed the state's standardized test. Ditto for Dougherty County in south Georgia, where just this week state investigators announced similar test cheating took place at 11 schools.

Last year, more than one in four schools in Georgia failed to meet the federal standard. The state's reaction was to seek a waiver from No Child Left Behind. That could be a boon if it allows for more detailed and nuanced measurement of students' progress and teachers' effectiveness — or a farce if it merely leads to protecting schools and teachers that perform poorly.

Even if the state takes the high road, it's unlikely any of the laggard schools will be closed to make way for better options for students. Compare that to the record for charter schools. The Center for Education Reform reports that, nationwide since 1992, about 15 percent of charter schools have been shut down, for a variety of reasons.

You will never see that kind of accountability among traditional public schools.

And, yes, charter schools are public schools: They're publicly funded and are governed ultimately by public institutions. Which brings us to a point that will become very important in less than three weeks when the General Assembly reconvenes.

Ever since the Georgia Supreme Court's decision last spring overturning the state's strongest charter-schools law, there's been much talk but few specifics about how the Legislature might set things right again.

The belief among many, including yours truly, is that a constitutional amendment is necessary if the state is to get back in the business of approving charter schools. However, almost as many people share the fear that it's unrealistic to think two-thirds of legislators will sign onto such a measure. Both Speaker David Ralston and Lt. Gov. Casey Cagle, in separate interviews with me during the past few months, questioned the odds of success for a charter-schools constitutional amendment.

I have my doubts about the political feasibility, too. But there could be no better argument for choice measures than the cases of cheating in Atlanta and Dougherty County, and the recent school-board fights over charter contracts in Fulton and Gwinnett.

If not now, when?