

**From:** Smith, Kevin  
**Sent time:** Tuesday, January 03, 2012 2:32:19 PM  
**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: 12-31-11 through 1-3-12 Education Round Up

---

FYI – have a great afternoon! ☺

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:** Etters, Cheryl  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 03, 2012 10:55 AM  
**Subject:** 12-31-11 through 1-3-12 Education Round Up



[Manatee school board chair ignores public call](#)  
(Bradenton Herald © 01/03/2012)

"I spent a day and a half with our legal counsel on this," School Board Chairman Harry Kinnan is quoted in Thursday's Herald as saying regarding the alignment of numbering school districts with county commission districts. Isn't it amazing that apparently it never dawned on Mr. Kinnan that an issue important enough for him to have spent "a day and a half"...

---

[People to Watch: Alliance of Educational Leaders](#)  
(Ft. Myers News-Press © 01/03/2012)

Fixing Southwest Florida's educational woes and aligning the educational system with employer needs is going to require a community effort, officials say. It will take businesses getting involved, parents getting involved, said Pat Riley, director of the Alliance of Educational Leaders, an organization made up of five school superintendents and five college chiefs that aims to improve Southwest...

---

[More Collier, Lee government employees take early retirement in 2011](#)

(Naples Daily News © 01/03/2012)

NAPLES — Eight people enrolled in 2007. Five years later, the number of Collier County government employees enrolled in a deferred retirement program rose to 19. The number of people enrolling in Florida's Deferred Retirement Option Program — commonly referred to as DROP — is on the rise, and changes to the Florida Retirement System could be the reason why more public employees are enrolling in ...

---

#### [Pre-K violinists hone skills that can aid in math, reading](#)

(Orlando Sentinel © 01/03/2012)

Maybe none of them will grow up to be the next Itzhak Perlman, but a group of Osceola County pre-K students are getting a head start on their education through violin lessons. About 80 at-risk kids have embarked on the music program — offered at Chambers Park Community Center, Boggy Creek Elementary and the Poinciana Academy of Fine Arts — to develop skills that will help them in ...

---

#### [D.A.R.E. anti-drug program disappearing from S. Fla. schools](#)

(Orlando Sentinel © 01/03/2012)

The iconic D.A.R.E. anti-drug program — once a fixture in South Florida schools — is becoming a relic. Fewer students in Palm Beach and Broward counties are parading the once-popular T-shirts and bumper stickers with the slogan "D.A.R.E. to keep kids off drugs." In 2011, only 2,430 students in both counties completed the 10-week course, state records show. That's a sha...

---

#### [Some fear Palm Beach school board's squabbles will deter superintendent candidates](#)

(Palm Beach Post © 01/03/2012)

During the final days of Superintendent Bill Malone's tenure, school board members praised the sense of calm and civility he had brought to a district that had known turmoil in the past. In the month since Malone departed, however, that calm and civility have been in short supply. Board members have called one another out at meetings and in letters to newspapers. Some of them - Vice Chairwoman D...

---

#### [Fire does \\$350,000 in damage to Martin County High School](#)

(Palm Beach Post © 01/03/2012)

By JEFF SKRZYPEK STUART — Investigators determined late Monday night that the fire that broke out at the Martin County High School was started by a construction worker who was cutting steel. The fire started around 12:45 p.m. on Monday, just two days before students and teachers returned from winter break. Firefighters said they got a call from some construction workers, who had just r...

---

#### [Healthy eating fuels students](#)

(Pensacola News Journal © 01/03/2012)

It's the first week of a new semester in Escambia and Santa Rosa public schools. And with a little more than three months until third-graders take the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test for the first time, they need to be as focused as possible. While studying hard and reading every day are crucial to academic success, there's another basic concentration-boosting component we sometimes forget...

---

#### [A fearless look at 2012 in Florida](#)

(South Florida Sun-Sentinel © 01/03/2012)

The new year is here, and this much is assured: It will be longer than 2011. A not-so-serious look into the crystal ball for leap year 2012 and its 366 days... Jan. 10: The Legislature opens its 60-day session in Tallahassee two months earlier than usual, adopting the motto "Avoid the rush, go ugly early." In his annual State of the State address, Gov. Rick Scott proclaims Florida "booty-ful,...

---

### [Earlier school start would require waiver](#)

(South Florida Sun-Sentinel © 01/03/2012)

The first day of classes in Palm Beach County next school year might come when parents and students expect to be enjoying the end of summer vacations. An opening as early as Aug. 13 is increasingly likely for the 2012-13 school calendar. This is because the School Board should be able to bypass a state law that prevents the school year from starting more than 14 days before Labor Day, district a...

---

### [Nearly one in five Hillsborough public school students extended their holiday](#)

(St. Petersburg Times © 01/03/2012)

TAMPA — Automated phone calls and frantic Facebook posts could go only so far in getting kids back to school Monday in Hillsborough County. At day's end, the school district estimated attendance at 82.3 percent. Nearly one in five students were not in their seats. "Everybody likes an extra day off," said district spokesman Steve Hegarty, who also checked the attendance rate for the first d...

---

### [A progress report on the New Florida program](#)

(St. Petersburg Times © 01/03/2012)

TAMPA — The announcement came in 2010 with a promise to transform Florida's economy. With \$10 million from the Legislature, higher education leaders were ready to set projects across the state university system into motion. The money was split into 31 grants funding everything from research to new hires, all with the intention to create the state's new "knowledge-based economy." So, h...

---

### [Me fail English? Thats impossible](#)

(Tampa Tribune © 01/03/2012)

One test. One test can determine success or failure. It could set your path in life. It possibly will determine if you will be successful in the future. It separates students into categories, those who can; and those who can't. Those who pass, and those who fail. What I am talking about is the third-grade reading test Florida gives its students. A little ridiculous? That is how public perceptio...

---

### [Charter school becomes a success story](#)

(Bradenton Herald © 01/02/2012)

McClatchy-Tribune What does berry picking have to do with math? Children at a public charter school in Anchorage, Alaska, know the answer - they've sorted berries by color, size and shape, measured and weighed them, and figured out how many there are per square foot of ground. Turning berry picking into a math lesson is one example of an approach that is helping students at the A...

---

### [Charter schools provide high-quality public education](#)

(Miami Herald © 01/02/2012)

More than 10 percent of Florida's public schools are charter schools. The first charter school in the state opened in 1996, and 15 years later, there are 520 charter schools serving more than 177,000 students. This clear and steady rise in enrollment is because parents want to provide their child with the best public educational option that fits their individual needs, instead of a one-size-fits-...

---

[Florida parents seek help from special-education advocates](#)

(Orlando Sentinel © 01/02/2012)

Tavious Diamond, 9, knows he's missing out on events such as Field Day and subjects such as art because he's in special-education classes at his elementary school. His mother, Jennifer, is sure he would do better in reading if he were moved into regular classes. But she has felt so stymied trying to convince his school that she hired a special-education advocate. "I'm furious," said the...

---

[What Others Say: Judicial power-grab](#)

(Tallahassee Democrat © 01/02/2012)

This editorial was published Thursday in the Pensacola News Journal. Gov. Rick Scott is definitely getting a handle on this politician thing. In December, it was reported that he wants the Legislature to give him far more power to appoint judges. It should not. "When you're elected governor, people expect you to not have a limit on whom you can appoint," Mr. Scott said in a radio interview. Uh...

---

[Dont tell us what to study. Daddy ScottCommentary](#)

(Tampa Tribune © 01/02/2012)

Question: What do novelist Kurt Vonnegut, Animal Planet host Jeff Corwin and evangelist Billy Graham have in common? Answer: They studied anthropology in college. This is more than a curiosity because some in Florida's political leadership believe that degrees in the social sciences are worthless. The degrees that lead to jobs, we are told, are the ones in science, technology, engineering and mat...

---

[Aspen Competition Drives Innovative Ideas for Community Colleges](#)

(Chronicle of Higher Education © 01/01/2012)

When Valencia College became the first recipient of the Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence last month, an unsung sector earned uncommon recognition. Now that the speeches are over and the prize money has been awarded, the Aspen Institute is sharing early lessons from its yearlong effort to determine the top community college in the country. In a way, that is the real goal of the group's...

---

[Stop Letting High-School Courses Count for College Credit](#)

(Chronicle of Higher Education © 01/01/2012)

By Michael Mendillo It has been 25 years since I ended administrative service to return to the joys of full-time teaching and research in a science department at a major research university. One of the assets I brought back to my department was a thorough familiarity and appreciation of the teaching and research done by colleagues in the humanities and social sciences. When advising our undergrad...

---

[Himmel: Preparing for the new year](#)

(Citrus County Chronicle © 01/01/2012)

INVERNESS — Challenges in academics and budgets will continue in 2012 for Sandra "Sam" Himmel and the Citrus County School District. MATTHEW BECK/Chronicle fileSam Himmel says FCAT requirements will increase in 2012. Buy this photo Himmel, the district superintendent of schools, said educators are already preparing for higher standards to graduate based on the Florida Compre...

---

[Daytona State College education grads finding teaching jobs](#)

(Daytona Beach News-Journal © 01/01/2012)

Bennett Haller DAYTONA BEACH – When Alexandra Bennett graduated high school and decided to major in education, she started hearing negative feedback about how teachers are being let go and questioning whether she would find a job. She gave in and switched to nursing for one college semester in Jacksonville, but found ...

---

#### [Flagler to weigh charter for school specializing in Russian language](#)

(Daytona Beach News-Journal © 01/01/2012)

PALM COAST – A new Flagler County school is poised to open in the fall. The Flagler County School Board will decide Tuesday whether to approve a five-year contract with the Global Outreach Charter Academy of Palm Coast, a charter school that will specialize in Russian language instruction. The School Board will meet for a workshop at 5 p.m. followed by a regular meeting at 6 p.m. at the Gove...

---

#### [Editorial: Jacksonville needs a shared vision](#)

(Florida Times-Union © 01/01/2012)

If one aspired to build a great community, a vigorous, top-tier place to live, work, raise children and retire, it would be difficult to find a place with greater basic assets than the Jacksonville area. But for all it has going for it, this area has a debilitating shortcoming: lack of a shared vision about what it wants to be. There's no shortage of studies. Jacksonville has been cal...

---

#### [Monet and Me won't reopen](#)

(Lake City Reporter © 01/01/2012)

[lhampson@lakecityreporter.com](mailto:lhampson@lakecityreporter.com) Monet and Me, a Lake City performing arts private school, will not reopen after winter break. After moving to a new location in June, owner Letha Raulerson discovered the building at 4471 West U.S. 90 in Lake City would have to be rezoned to allow a school there. However, Raulerson was not able to rezone in time to meet state standards. Now the school's contents are in s...

---

#### [Academy Seeking Partnership to Expand](#)

(Lakeland Ledger © 01/01/2012)

LAKE WALES | Our Children's Academy is hosting a breakfast Monday to unveil its expansion plans to the community and to make its case that Roosevelt Academy of the Polk County School District should become a part of Our Children's charter system. The breakfast begins at 8:30 a.m. and will be held at First Presbyterian Church of Lake Wales, 16 North Third St. The breakfast will include a p...

---

#### [More than jobs: a winning strategy](#)

(Miami Herald © 01/01/2012)

Have we hit bottom yet? Don't be so sure. The economic outlook for 2012 is the brightest since the sharp downturn that began in 2007, but too many Americans remain out of a job, the real estate market is struggling, and political leaders at home and abroad can't seem to unite on a common strategy to inspire confidence in the business community. Keeping the recovery alive depends not j...

---

#### [Guest column: Wilson Bradshaw ... FGCU flying high with community's support](#)

(Naples Daily News © 01/01/2012)

When I think back on this past year at FGCU, I am amazed at the many accomplishments of our faculty, staff and students; the continued growth of our institution; and the spirit with which our university and greater communities embrace our mission. This past year our community-minded students passed the 1 million hour mark of providing volunteer service to Southwest Florida — and beyond. That's an...

---

### [2011 marred by test cheating scandals across US](#)

(Bradenton Herald © 12/31/2011)

AP Education Writer It was the year of the test cheating scandal. From Atlanta to Philadelphia and Washington to Los Angeles, officials have accused hundreds of educators of changing answers on tests or giving answers to students. Just last week, state investigators revealed that dozens of educators in 11 schools in Georgia's Dougherty County either cheated or failed to prevent cheating on ...

---

### [State ag department takes over school nutrition](#)

(Bradenton Herald © 12/31/2011)

The Associated Press Florida's Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services will take over the state's school nutrition program starting Jan. 1. The transfer is a result of a decision passed during the 2011 legislative session. With the transfer of the program, about 45 full time employees move from the Department of Education to the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. Agr...

---

### [New year activates new state laws](#)

(Central Florida News 13 © 12/31/2011)

ORLANDO – When the clock strikes midnight on Sunday, several new laws will go into effect across Florida. There's been a lot of talk the past few years about our children and their diets. Several area school districts have received grants to promote healthier eating habits in school, and provide healthier choices for children. Start...

---

### [Let's Improve Learning. OK, but How?](#)

(Chronicle of Higher Education © 12/31/2011)

By W. Robert Connor Does American higher education have a systematic way of thinking about how to improve student learning? It would certainly be useful, especially at a time when budgets are tight and the pressure is on to demonstrate better results. Oh, there's plenty of discussion—bright ideas, old certainties, and new approaches—and a rich discourse about innovation, reinvention, and transfo...

---

### [Board of Governors targets increase in math, science degrees](#)

(Daytona Beach News-Journal © 12/31/2011)

Goals Here are some of the goals of the Board of Governors' Strategic Plan for the State University System of Florida: 2012-2025. The State University System includes 11 public universities. Average time to obtain a degree for first-time college students: Currently: 4.3 years; 2025 Goal: 4 years Four-year graduation rates for first-time college students: Currently: 34 percent; 2025 ...

---

### [Budget mess marks past 12 months for Keys schools](#)

(Florida Keys Keysnet © 12/31/2011)

The Monroe County School District learned in 2011 to live with a lot less, cutting more than \$9 million in expenses largely by slashing teacher pay and putting off a number of planned initiatives. And based on the fiscal outlook for the coming year, the lean times are far from over – administrators are already projecting at least a \$4 million shortfall for the fiscal year that starts July 1. Pr...

---

### [Jara: Booker is target of second probe](#)

(Florida Keys Keysnews © 12/31/2011)

The superintendent of the Monroe County School District said Friday he is further investigating the work of 11-year-veteran employee Sunny Booker as part of a review of whether high school students received more make-up credits than allowed. "We can't tolerate relaxed behavior around this process," said Jesus Jara, who said the inquiry into Booker's handling of a June graduation party for a...

---

#### [For kids, school's out, but the fun continues](#)

(Florida Today © 12/31/2011)

VIERA — A roomful of active, elementary-age students doesn't begin to faze Ryan Merryman, a Brevard Community College student who hopes to study pediatric psychology. That attitude helped when he signed on as a counselor for a winter day camp, hosted from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. this past week and next Tuesday to Friday at Viera Regional Park Community Center. It's one of nine such camps offered...

---

#### [Lawyer investigates Kathleen coach cited in pinching incidents](#)

(Lakeland Ledger © 12/31/2011)

LAKELAND — The family of a Kathleen High School football player has retained a Tampa-based lawyer to investigate accusations the school's head football coach, Irving Strickland, abused his authority in twisting a teen's nipple to the point of bruising. A letter delivered this week by the high school senior's lawyer to the Polk County School Board requested all available documents about t...

---

#### [Miami-Dade schools ride wave of success but new state rules will make that tougher](#)

(Miami Herald © 12/31/2011)

Miami-Dade County's public schools are riding the crest of a wave of success. In light of dramatically changed standards and the rolling out of a new and significantly tougher FCAT, this remarkable evolution merits both a retrospective and prospective look. The number of A and B schools in Miami-Dade County is at a record level, and graduation rates have soared six percentage points, exceedi...

---

#### [School Board tries to rein in transportation overtime costs](#)

(Palm Beach Post © 12/31/2011)

Updated: 5:45 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 31, 2011 Posted: 5:37 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 31, 2011 No department in the Palm Beach County School District spends more on overtime than transportation. In 2010 alone, it totaled more than \$2.5 million for more than 120,000 hours worked. With a deficit of more than \$50 million looming for the next school year, ...

---

#### [Six resolutions for 2012](#)

(St. Petersburg Times © 12/31/2011)

For several years, Florida and Tampa Bay have been focused on short-term decisions to weather a tough economy. Now the worst appears to be over, and Floridians have many opportunities in the new year to look beyond the immediate issues and plan for the long term. Resolutions made now can lead to smarter investments in time and talent to ensure a brighter future. Here are six areas that should rece...

---

#### [An ill-advised toss of the dice](#)

(St. Petersburg Times © 12/31/2011)

Yogi Berra said "if you come to a fork in the road, take it." There are those who feel we can follow Yogi's advice on the casinos proposal for Florida. We can have casinos and expand our economy beyond its traditional bases. But in my judgment, if we accept this siren call we are not taking the fork in the road; we will be selecting a path that will foreclose the far wiser one we have pursued for...

---

[Wendy N. Powell: Is Ohio State's Meyer really worth \\$24 million over six years, plus perks and bonuses? What's that say about the state of college education, athletics?](#)

(Stuart News © 12/31/2011)

While we bemoan the salaries and gains of Wall Street and Troubled Asset Relief Program-funded businesses, there is another category of serious curiosity — the dramatic increase in salaries of football coaches at public institutions. While the everyday American struggles to make ends meet, we escape by cheering on our favorite college teams. We own them; talk about "my team," wear our school colors...

---

[Lawyer investigates Kathleen coach cited in pinching incidents](#)

(Winter Haven News Chief © 12/31/2011)

LAKELAND -- The family of a Kathleen High School football player has retained a Tampa-based lawyer to investigate accusations the school's head football coach, Irving Strickland, abused his authority in twisting a teen's nipple to the point of bruising. A letter delivered this week by the high school senior's lawyer to the Polk County School Board requested all available documents about t...



*Cheryl Etters*

Cheryl Etters

Interim Director

Office of Communications and Public Affairs

Florida Department of Education

325 W. Gaines Street

1524 Turlington Building

Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0400

850-245-0413

[cheryl.etters@fldoe.org](mailto:cheryl.etters@fldoe.org)

Please note: Florida has a very broad public records law. Most written communications to or from state officials regarding state business are public records available to the public and media upon request. Your e-mail communications may be subject to public disclosure.

