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Subject: FW: Education Roundup 1-24-12

FYI have a great evening!

Sincerely,

Kevin Smith,

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From: Champion-Mongiovi, Jamie
Sent: Tuesday, January 24, 2012 8:24 AM
Subject: Education Roundup 1-24-12

Florida Department of Education

[Volusia schools ranked in middle of pack](#)

(Daytona Beach News-Journal © 01/24/2012)

MORE: School District Ranking Volusia County schools finished in the middle of the pack Monday when state officials released a new ranking of school districts based on FCAT scores, but Superintendent Margaret Smith said that doesn't capture a complete picture of how local schools are doing. "I've never been a believer that one test score is the way I want to judge a stud..."

[State of Florida considers tougher rules for grading schools](#)

(Florida Times-Union © 01/24/2012)

TALLAHASSEE - A set of rule changes proposed by the Department of Education to the State Board of Education could result in four times as many F schools and 493 fewer A and B schools across the state. The state presented the simulation of how the rules could impact the states schools by using data from last years Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test. The State Board is scheduled to vote on ...

[**State's school district rankings rankle some**](#)

(Florida Times-Union © 01/24/2012)

Floridas education department released a new ranking of the states 67 school districts Monday, with the states top educator saying it will make it easier for parents and taxpayers to assess a school systems performance. But critics see it as yet another way to stigmatize struggling districts. Gov. Rick Scott requested the student achievement ranking &...

[**Department of Education releases grades for school districts**](#)

(Florida Tribune © 01/24/2012)

The Department of Education released grades for Floridas 67 school districts Monday, with the majority receiving grades of A or B. Overall, 30 districts received As, 23 received Bs, 13 received Cs and one D was issued. No district received an F. The rubric used to measure the districts relied on the FCAT scores of students. Reading and math scores account for 75 percent of the grade, with...

[**Broward schools weigh options to meet state class size**](#)

(Miami Herald © 01/24/2012)

Broward students at overcrowded public schools could have co-instructors next year. Some students may have the option of enrolling in multi-grade courses, and high-schoolers may be encouraged to take at least one core class online. Those are some of the options offered by the Broward School District as it wrestled with ways to meet state class size limits, and reduce a \$66 million fine levied by the...

[**State again stirs up unease by ranking schools**](#)

(Saint Petersburg © 01/24/2012)

The St. Johns County School system is number one in a newly publicized education ranking from the Florida Department of Education, reports the News Service of Florida. Its been an A-rated district for eight years. Meanwhile the Leon County School system, which includes Tallahassee has also been an A district for the same amount of time. However it is at number 24 on the states mea...

[**Keep Bright Futures merit-based**](#)

(South Florida Sun-Sentinel © 01/24/2012)

Statistics showing the Bright Futures scholarship program is a fairly egalitarian one are welcome, but the data released by state education officials still leave some potentially illuminating questions unanswered. Figures released this month by the Florida Department of Education at least allay long-held concerns that the scholarships benefit affluent families able to afford higher education cost...

[**District rating plan draws fire**](#)

(St. Augustine Record © 01/24/2012)

By MARCIA LANE staugustine.com Copyright 2012 St. Augustine Record. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed. January 23, 2012 - 11:16pm District rating plan draws fire marcia.lane@staugustine.com Rankings that put St. Johns County in top slot not helpful State education officials say a numerical ranking of school districts released Mon...

[**Scott appointee to Pinellas School Board has short time in county**](#)

(St. Petersburg Times © 01/24/2012)

Glenton Gilzean Jr. has lived in Pinellas County only since November. Despite that short residency, Gilzean will soon be one of seven people casting votes affecting more than 100,000 Pinellas County students. Gov. Rick Scott on Monday appointed Gilzean, 29, to replace the late Lew Williams in the District 7 School Board seat representing St. Petersburg and much of south Pinellas. Gilzean, a for...

Please see the articles below.

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Miami Herald

Critics say parent trigger bill favors charters over public schools

A proposal known as the parent trigger has some parents up in arms.

BY KATHLEEN MCGRORY

TALLAHASSEE Florida parents are taking sides over a controversial piece of legislation known as the parent trigger.

The buzzed-about bill would let a majority of parents at low-performing public schools demand dramatic changes at the school, or even have it converted into a publicly financed, privately managed charter school. Similar laws have already passed in California and Texas, sparking debate and controversy along the way.

The Florida version comes in front of House and Senate panels Tuesday.

Supporters of the bill say it gives power to dissatisfied parents.

The more we can do to empower parents and give them tools to enhance their childrens education, the better outcomes were going to get, said Rep. Michael Bileca, R-Miami, who is sponsoring the proposal in the House.

But a coalition of parent groups that includes the Florida PTA says the bill is really aimed at promoting charter schools and for-profit school management companies.

This isnt about empowering parents, said Mindy Gould, legislative chair for the Florida PTA. This is about handing over the neighborhood school to a private, for-profit corporation.

Under state and federal law, school districts must enact dramatic changes at their lowest-performing schools. School board members have a menu of options: they can replace the principal and pump resources into the school, hire a private management company, or turn the school over to a charter school operator.

Few districts in Florida have chosen the charter route; most have elected to change the staff and provide extra support from school system personnel.

Bileca said he believes parents should be part of the decision-making process.

If his bill were to pass, it would apply to low-performing schools where the school district has already intervened. If the reforms didnt spur improvements after one year, a majority of parents could petition to pull the trigger and choose another one of the options.

The bill goes beyond the so-called trigger, giving parents the right to know if their child's teacher has received unsatisfactory evaluations over time and to be made aware of virtual instruction options from a teacher with better track record. The same would hold for teachers who are teaching out of field.

Backing the legislation: The Florida Chamber of Commerce and The Foundation for Florida's Future, an education think tank created by former Gov. Jeb Bush that supports school accountability and choice.

So often, parents are limited in how they can influence what goes on in the school system, said Patricia Levesque, the foundation's executive director. This gives parents a legit seat at the bargaining table.

But the proposal has been a lightning rod.

Don Kearns, of the grassroots education advocacy group Support Dade Schools, said he opposes the bill because it would serve the financial interests of charter schools.

Charter school operators are heavily invested in this type of thinking, Kearns said. We shouldn't be turning our schools over to them. School districts like Miami-Dade have done a phenomenal job in bringing up the test scores.

Kearns also had concerns as a taxpayer.

We'd be turning over public assets, some of which are still being paid for by the public, to a charter school operator with no real oversight, Kearns said.

Bileca, the House sponsor, said he envisioned the school districts maintaining ownership of the school facilities, though the text of the bill doesn't address that point.

A House education panel will take up the proposal Tuesday morning. A Senate education panel will hear the bill in the afternoon.

The Tampa Tribune

Elia faults system that ranks Hillsborough schools 38

By ROB SHAW

TAMPA -- We're No. 38.

That's where the Hillsborough County School District ranks among Florida's 67 counties in first-ever rankings released by the Florida Department of Education.

The department issued those rankings this morning based on how students scored on last year's standardized public school examination, the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test.

Gov. Rick Scott asked Education Commissioner Gerard Robinson to come up with a way to provide more detailed information on how the taxpayers' investment in education is going, said Jamie Mongiovi, spokeswoman for the state education department.

"It's important to realize it's a different way of looking at FCAT performance and school grades," she said. "We've set a precedent for other states to follow."

But MaryEllen Elia, superintendent of Hillsborough schools, is not a fan of the way the ranking is done. She said the districts at the top of the list are small and wealthy and don't have the same challenges and makeup of big-city districts.

"To put it down to one ranking is not probably as revealing as it could be or should be," Elia said. "In a state like Florida, it's just not realistic."

Instead of ranking districts based only on FCAT scores, she said, state officials should look at other measures, as well, including graduation and dropout rates, industry certification exams and the number of National Merit Scholars.

"I'm not afraid of numbers and I'm not afraid of the accountability of how we are doing," Elia said. "My big take-away is you need to use multiple measures when you are making statements about how a district is doing."

For example, Elia noted, Hillsborough fourth-graders scored highest in reading among 21 other urban districts nationwide and from districts across the state.

Elsewhere in the Tampa Bay area rankings by district, Pasco County schools are ranked 34th, while Hernando County comes in at 38th. Manatee County is ranked 47th, while Pinellas County is No. 49.

Sarasota County schools, meanwhile, are ranked fourth in the state.

At No. 1 is St. Johns County on Florida's northeast coast. Coming in last with the only D among the districts was Madison County east of Tallahassee.

The rankings track letter grades, A through D, that were issued earlier by the state based on FCAT scores. FCAT subjects are reading, math, science and writing.

Thirty of the state's 67 districts, including Broward and Palm Beach, received an A. Twenty-three districts received a B, including Hillsborough, Pinellas and Miami-Dade among large counties and Pasco, Pinellas, Manatee and Hernando in the Bay area.

Polk County was one of 13 districts receiving a C.

Hillsborough's grade last year was an A.

Even more detailed information is set to be released by state education officials in the near future. Coming next: A ranking of all public schools in Florida.