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**Sent time:** Sunday, January 29, 2012 5:45:18 PM  
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**Subject:** FW: 1-27-12 Education Round Up

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FYI – have a great afternoon!

Sincerely,

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**From:** Etters, Cheryl  
**Sent:** Friday, January 27, 2012 9:42 AM  
**Subject:** 1-27-12 Education Round Up

**[Obama to target rising college tuition costs](#)**  
(Bradenton Herald © 01/27/2012)

Associated Press President Barack Obama wants to shift some federal dollars away from colleges and universities that aren't controlling tuition costs to those that are. He's also proposing competitions among higher education institutions to encourage them to run more efficiently. Obama will spell out his plans Friday during a speech at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor focused on coll...

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**[Parents voice frustrations at Seminole County school leaders](#)**  
(Central Florida News 13 © 01/27/2012)

OVIEDO – Hundreds of parents and students from several elementary schools in Seminole County filled an auditorium Thursday night. They met for an open mic meeting with school district officials at Oviedo High school. Those in attendance held up signs reading "Save My School." The first three schools that would close down to help fig...

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**[They get an 'A'](#)**  
(Citrus County Chronicle © 01/27/2012)

CITRUS HILLS — One's a physical education teacher and the other a custodian, but Michael Porcelli and DennisDAVE SIGLERMichael Porcelli was named Teacher of the Year on Thursday at Citrus Hills Country Club. Porcelli, right, shakes hands with teacher Scott Hebert while making his way toward a podium to be recognized. Hebert was named Florida Teacher of the Year in 1999. Buy this pho...

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### [State school rankings stir controversy](#)

(Clermont South Lake Press © 01/27/2012)

TAVARES Staff Report Lake County finished in the bottom third of the state's 67 school districts based on scores from the 2011 Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test for reading, math and science, according to results released this week. The Florida Department of Education said Lake tied for 44th with Escambia and Marion counties with 510 points, good enough for a "B" grade. The district also ...

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### [White House will detail proposals in a few weeks](#)

(CommunityCollegeTimes © 01/27/2012)

MIAMI—Administration officials hit the road this week to re-affirm President Barack Obama's commitment to community colleges, noting that more details on the plans he mentioned during his State of the Union address this Tuesday will be unveiled in a few weeks. At the American Association of Community Colleges' Workforce Development Institute (WDI), Jane Oates, assistant secretary of employment an...

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### [Nassau schools 14th best in state](#)

(Fernandina Beach News Leader © 01/27/2012)

TALLAHASSEE - The Nassau County School District is the 14th best in the state, according to a new ranking developed by the Florida Department of Education. St. Johns County ranked first of the 67 Florida counties. Duval County was 50th. The rankings are intended to help parents of school-age children, educators and taxpayers in Florida evaluate their school districts. It is one of the first such num...

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### [Port St. Lucie teacher arrested in sex sting](#)

(Fort Pierce Hometown News © 01/27/2012)

By Jay Meisel [meisel@hometownnewsol.com](mailto:meisel@hometownnewsol.com) PORT ST. LUCIE - A Port St. Lucie teacher traveled to a Waffle House in Kissimmee earlier this month to have sex with a child, Osceola authorities said. Alexander Roy, 32, of 2377 S.W. Fern Circle, Port St. Lucie, a sixth-grade teacher at Manatee Elementary, was arrested in Kissimmee on numerous charges, authorities said. He was charged with traveling t...

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### [Volusia schools looking at ways to combat bullying](#)

(Fort Pierce Hometown News © 01/27/2012)

By Patrick McCallister For Hometown News VOLUSIA COUNTY - Schoolyard bullying has been going on since there have been schoolyards. Now, however, emerging technologies have given bullies power that extends well beyond the borders of the school. "I think cyber bullying is a huge issue," said Cindy Fisher, Volusia County Schools' coordinator for student discipline and records. "I think it makes b...

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### [Ironing out the kinks in teacher evaluations](#)

(Hernando Today © 01/27/2012)

BROOKSVILLE -- As it stands, high school teachers won't know until after the school year begins whether they rate as an effective teacher. By then classes will have already started and schedules will have been set. Joe Vitalo, president of the Hernando Classroom Teachers Association, said before that can happen, union and district officials are still finalizing details for the as...

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### [Tuition, fair representation top student agenda in capitol](#)

(Independent Florida Alligator © 01/27/2012)

Joey Flechas, Alligator Rally in Tally Florida Student Association chairman Michael Long, of New College of Florida, speaks to a crowd of students at the annual Rally in Tally. Erin Jester, Alligator Staff Writer The Independent Florida Alligator | 0 comments TALLAHASSEE — About 200 university students from around the state gathered on the steps of the Historic Capitol Museum on Thursday for th...

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#### [Florida Gets High Mark For Educator Quality From National Advocacy Group](#)

(Lakeland Ledger © 01/27/2012)

BARTOW | A national advocacy group has awarded Florida a B grade in educator quality, the highest in the nation, in its biennial report. Facts "It is more honestly a reflection of the work the teachers are doing to move student learning than the simplistic system the governor put out the other day." Anissa Wilfalk, SENIOR COORDINATOR OF RECRUITING The National Council on Te...

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#### [University students protest higher tuition](#)

(Miami Herald © 01/27/2012)

Some students protested tuition increases. Some lamented cuts to the Bright Futures scholarship program. And some said they were only after the extra credit. But when the 200 or so university students cheered, chanted and booed on the Capitol steps Thursday, they all seemed to have one common goal. "Being a student means you've sometimes got to speak truth to power, and let them know..."

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#### [Editorial:](#)

(Naples Daily News © 01/27/2012)

We are fascinated by the response to the first to the first-ever rankings of school districts based on Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) scores. The Florida education commissioner says rankings that show Collier County schools in the middle — 33 out of 67 — and Lee County higher, at 22, are about making education information more transparent and starting a conversation about public sch...

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#### [Trying to make sense of beating on bus](#)

(Ocala Star Banner © 01/27/2012)

The full video made me numb. My eyes were watery and red as I watched Liberty Middle School students — multiple students — wailing on a smaller classmate, punching wildly with arms rearing back far and fast for maximum impact. On Jan. 6, school bus security cameras recorded a beating. Not a fight, but a beating. A small-but-violent por...

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#### [For high school recruits, good grades are essential](#)

(Stuart News © 01/27/2012)

There's a new scarlet 'A' and it stands for academics. And just as in Nathaniel Hawthorne's classic, "The Scarlet Letter," high school seniors who don't get qualifying grades are scaring off college football coaches who otherwise would be interested in offering scholarships. "Every high school coach wants to find the scenario that's best for their kids," Martin County coach Chuck Kenyon said. "T..."

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#### [St. Lucie County schools celebrate opening of Parent Academy, Early Childhood Initiative](#)

(Stuart News © 01/27/2012)

PORT ST. LUCIE — More than 400 local and state community, business, education and government leaders came together Thursday to make a statement. Children matter. Families matter. Because how children and family navigate life defines community. "Let us commit to breaking down the barriers that divide us and let us begin to unite our efforts in a cause to transform St. Lucie County for our childre..."

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### [Bill to Cap Nonprofit Salaries Passes Senate Panel](#)

(Sunshine State News © 01/27/2012)

Prompted by reports of highly paid executives at some community-based care organizations, a Senate committee on Thursday passed a proposal to cap salaries for such executives to no higher than the state's highest paid elected official. By a 4-0 vote, the Senate Commerce and Tourism Committee approved a measure, SB 596, that would cap salaries of nonprofit executives at \$129,972 if the group recei...

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### [Our Opinion: Good, up to a point](#)

(Tallahassee Democrat © 01/27/2012)

The release of how school districts rank in Florida, an exercise that Gov. Rick Scott and his team heralded as an example of transparency in government, has been met with a barrage of criticism from school superintendents who are crying foul. Should anyone be surprised? It's the latest example of what many perceive as us-against-them oversight of education in our state, and more reason that the ...

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### [Pasco district could start charter school](#)

(Tampa Bay Online © 01/27/2012)

LAND O'LAKES - The Pasco County School District could become a player in the charter school movement. The school district is considering starting a charter school, with the possibility of opening one or more in 2013, district Superintendent Heather Fiorentino said Thursday. "It would give different options for our parents to choose from; that's what we are really after," Fiorentino said. If ...

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## **Good, up to a point**

### **Tallahassee Democrat Editorial**

**January 27, 2012**

The release of how school districts rank in Florida, an exercise that Gov. Rick Scott and his team heralded as an example of transparency in government, has been met with a barrage of criticism from school superintendents who are crying foul.

Should anyone be surprised?

It's the latest example of what many perceive as us-against-them oversight of education in our state, and more reason that the Scott administration and education stakeholders need to find more common ground in working to improve the performance of public schools rather than butt heads over political philosophies.

There is no doubt that Gov. Scott and Education Commissioner Gerard Robinson want greater academic achievement, as do the state's school superintendents and principals. The problem is that those in the trenches often feel there is never a level playing field. While Mr. Scott trumpeted his request that \$1 billion be added to education spending, educators quickly reminded the governor that he approved a budgets last year that cut more than \$ 1 billion from education. Direct services to children in classrooms were reduced, including resources directed toward students who need special help grasping materials on which they will be graded.

And, so the dominos fall. A higher number of students needing special attention, particularly in rural school districts, affects how Florida's schools perform overall on tests such as the mighty FCAT. And, with Mr. Scott's blessing, legislators have decided that teachers will be evaluated and compensated on how well their students perform, especially on achievement tests.

That's why the rankings caused so much discontent. Superintendents say it is unfair for districts to be ranked solely on how well students perform on the FCAT. Instead, they urged Mr. Scott to include many more factors into the mix, to give a more reasonable assessment of how our schools are performing. That includes factors such as students receiving free or reduced lunch, minority enrollment and class size. Mr. Robinson told reporters that the purpose of publishing the rankings was to "broaden the discussion of education in Florida," which he hopes will lead to more residents, educators and community leaders coming together to help strengthen local schools. "Ranking districts and schools based on data-driven results demonstrates Florida's focus on ensuring students receive a high-quality education and provides another helpful tool for parents, educators and taxpayers," Mr. Robinson said.

Publishing the rankings is not in itself a bad idea. It's a measure of how local schools stack up against neighboring districts. But when multiple factors are considered, the rankings should be accompanied by some guarantee that the state is prepared to assist those districts and community leaders with resources needed to address the shortcomings.

Locally, Wakulla County Schools earned the highest ranking, at No. 11 in the state, followed by Leon (24), Franklin (60), Gadsden (62), Jefferson (66) and Madison (67).

Schools already find themselves labeled by grades that are doled out by the state, with teachers, parents and even students feeling under attack if their school ranks below a B.

Mr. Robinson has indicated that the state Department of Education will soon release a listing of how individual schools rank in districts. State Sen. Bill Montford, D-Tallahassee, should be commended for expressing the concerns of school superintendents to Mr. Scott, who apparently has agreed to consider including other factors in the next rankings.

That would help appease those concerned about this week's listing. But more importantly, the next step should involve a more inclusive discussion of how best to present this information in a way that it will help — not demonize — those who work with our children every day.



*Cheryl Etters*

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