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Sent time: Tuesday, October 25, 2011 6:54:49 PM
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Subject: Fw: 10/22/11 through 10/24/11 Education Round-Up

FYI... Have a great week!

Sincerely,

Kevin Smith,

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Sent from my BlackBerry Wireless Handheld

From: Higgins, Deborah
Sent: Monday, October 24, 2011 11:08 AM
Subject: 10/22/11 through 10/24/11 Education Round-Up



[Public hearing set to discuss proposed Val-P charter schools](#)
(Destin Log © 10/24/2011)

People will have an opportunity to discuss a proposed charter school in Valparaiso during Monday's Okaloosa County School Board meeting. The public hearing will be held before the board votes whether or not to accept the applications for the elementary and middle schools submitted earlier this summer by Somerset Academy Inc. The school district received the applications in August for Somer...

[School district will explore eBooks for students](#)
(Highlands Today © 10/24/2011)

SEBRING - The Highlands County School District has a few years before the state requires all new instructional materials to be in digital or electronic form, but a district task force will be established soon to explore how the district will go digital. "There are a lot of positives about eBooks (electronic books); it's just making that leap to being able to provide a device that you can afford fo...

[Education needs comprehensive overhaul](#)
(Independent Florida Alligator © 10/24/2011)

Travis Hornsby, Alligator Columnist The Independent Florida Alligator | 0 comments While discussing affirmative action in class recently, a fellow student said the reason we need policies that give minorities preference in admissions to the best institutions of higher learning is because of educational inequality in primary and secondary schools. As a society, we have been content with the grossl...

[Numbers of Blacks in Science, Math Decline](#)

(Lakeland Ledger © 10/24/2011)

With black unemployment reaching historic levels, banks laying off tens of thousands and law school graduates waiting tables, why aren't more African-Americans looking toward science, technology, engineering and math — the still-hiring careers known as STEM? The answer turns out to be a complex equation of self-doubt, stereotypes, discourag...

[Florida University System Draws More Scrutiny](#)

(Lakeland Ledger © 10/24/2011)

By NATHAN CRABBE THE GAINESVILLE SUN Published: Sunday, October 23, 2011 at 11:30 p.m. A member of the state board that oversees Florida's university system has asked Chancellor Frank Brogan to stop the University of South Florida Polytechnic push for independence project, saying it was "out of control" and a threat to system funding at a time of limited state dollars. Board member J...

[USF Polytechnic: Its Own Worst Enemy](#)

(Lakeland Ledger © 10/24/2011)

The University of South Florida Polytechnic wants to be known for progressive connections between education, research and business. Instead, USF Poly is becoming notorious for extravagance, poor communication and rancor. These are failures of the polytechnic's leader, Regional Chancellor Marshall Goodman. If he does not take care, he will become the developing university's own worst enemy....

[U.S.-citizen children of immigrants protest higher tuition rates](#)

(Miami Herald © 10/24/2011)

The far-reaching immigration debate in Florida and the nation has been going on for years, but until last week, the plight of students like Wendy Ruiz — an aspiring podiatrist — had been largely invisible. Born and raised in Miami, Ruiz is a U.S. citizen. But in the eyes of Florida's higher education system, she's a dependent student whose parents are undocumented immigrants — and not considered...

[Collier, Lee teachers turn to Internet sites to get classroom supplies from donors](#)

(Naples Daily News © 10/24/2011)

NAPLES — With her classroom needs high and her school's funding down, second-grade teacher Stephanie Irish made a wish list of classroom supplies — microscopes and magnifying glasses, compasses, measuring tape, an interactive calendar — that would help her students learn. Three weeks later, boxes containing the supplies were at her classroom door, provided by donors through a website called Do...

[Schools advocacy group TINT out of spotlight but still active monitoring education issues](#)

(Palm Beach Post © 10/24/2011)

Palm Beach Post Staff Writer Updated: 6:27 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 23, 2011 Posted: 4:55 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 23, 2011 Two years ago, Wellington mother Lisa Goldman created a Facebook page that turned a simmering stew of parent unrest into an activist movement of orange-shirted demonstrators. The group known as TINT, short for Testing is Not Teaching-Palm Beach County Citizens United to Make...

[Florida's university degrees: The real numbers](#)

(St. Petersburg Times/The Grade Book Blog © 10/24/2011)

In light of Florida Gov. Rick Scott's call to focus state university degrees on science, technology, engineering and math, USF professor Sherman Dorn took a closer look at exactly how many degrees the universities have granted in different fields. Dorn finds that "the reality is that business and health sciences are responsible for what the governor and legislators think liberal-arts programs...

[VPK providers say they need Race to the Top funds](#)

(WTSP-TV © 10/24/2011)

St. Petersburg, Florida - This week, Florida applied for another round of Race to the Top funds. The money this time would help improve the Voluntary Pre-K program. Florida is competing with dozens of other states, but the governor says he might turn down the money. "It breaks my heart. I see the need every day," says Mary Gray, director of the not-for profit Community School in St. Petersburg...

[New era of teacher evaluations commences in Manatee County](#)

(Bradenton Herald © 10/23/2011)

ataylor@bradenton.com MANATEE – About 70 percent of Principal Doug DuPouy's teachers at Orange Ridge/Bullock Elementary School spent an entire year in the classroom without being formally observed by an administrator. Now that's changed. Starting this year, DuPouy or Assistant Principal Greg Sanders will formally observe each teacher in his or her classroom at least once a...

[Fulbright Keeps Moving Forward Despite Budget Uncertainty](#)

(Chronicle of Higher Education © 10/23/2011)

By Ian Wilhelm As lawmakers seek to make deep cuts in federal spending, the U.S. State Department's Fulbright Program—the nation's flagship academic exchange—faces an uncertain future. Members of Congress have yet to set the 2012 fiscal-year budget, and proposals vary on how much the department's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, which oversees Fulbright, will receive. The Senate has a...

[Ill-Mannered Students Can Wreck More Than Your Lecture](#)

(Chronicle of Higher Education © 10/23/2011)

By Joan Flaherty Discourteous. Inattentive. Brazen. There's an old-fashioned cast to those terms, as if they've been lifted from the handwritten report card of some reprobate fourth grader. In fact, I feel like a fussy schoolmarm just typing the words, betraying myself as someone concerned with an irrelevant matter: good manners in the postsecondary classroom. We all prefer students to behave we...

[Mini grants enhance lessons for Flagler students](#)

(Daytona Beach News-Journal © 10/23/2011)

Cathie Zanella Dana Hausen PALM COAST – Dana Hausen's students will get to learn about grant writing from a pro – their teacher. Hausen recently won a grant for \$1,400 that will be redistributed to her service learning students. They'll have to earn that money by writing their own grant applications. The Indian Tra...

[Gov. Rick Scott proposal could cost area governments \\$37.7 million](#)

(Florida Times-Union © 10/23/2011)

A proposal by Gov. Rick Scott could wring nearly \$40 million in pension savings from local governments in Northeast Florida. Some have built those savings into their current budgets and would have to cut services if those dollars evaporate. The savings come from a change to the Florida Retirement System requiring that for the first time state workers must contribute 3 percent to their retirement...

[Failure not an option for Imagine charter](#)

(Florida Today © 10/23/2011)

WEST MELBOURNE — Art lessons have been replaced, at least temporarily, with intensive reading and math classes. A new math curriculum has been introduced, and the school day extended a half-hour. And in some classrooms at Imagine Schools in West Melbourne, even desks have been rearranged in groups, which is supposed to help younger students learn. One of Brevard's original charter schools i...

[State University System under scrutiny by current and former lawmakers](#)

(Gainesville Sun © 10/23/2011)

Bob Graham says he had a close relationship with the state university system as Florida governor, but took a different approach from the current office holder, Gov. Rick Scott. Scott has made his intention known in recent weeks to push for changes in the university system, raising questions about university majors, salaries and preparation of studen...

[Editorial: Scott's education](#)

(Gainesville Sun © 10/23/2011)

Gov. Rick Scott is demanding extensive information about how Florida's universities operate and spend money. And that's a good thing, because from some of his recent statements, we can only conclude that Scott suffers from woeful ignorance about the worth and value of public higher education in Florida. This week, for instance, in an interview with ...

[Polk County's Homeless Students Need Help Now](#)

(Lakeland Ledger © 10/23/2011)

BARTOW | Polk County's homeless students can't wait for the holidays to get assistance, says Dee Dee Wright, the Polk County School District's homeless liaison. They need necessities now, such as warm clothes and food. With cool temperatures already here, Wright said her department is accepting donations for the purchase of new zip-up hoodie jackets...

[GOP's jobs agenda a 'bait and switch'](#)

(Miami Herald © 10/23/2011)

Earlier this year, as Florida's number of unemployed continued to soar above the national average and Tallahassee Republicans maintained a deaf ear to residents' plight, one GOP lawmaker rose above the conservative rhetoric, castigating her party members for deference to dogma over responsibility: "I came up here to get people jobs," said Sen. Evelyn Lynn, R-Ormond Beac...

[Don't cut tuition for illegal immigrants](#)

(Orlando Sentinel © 10/23/2011)

At a debate last month, GOP presidential hopeful Rick Perry said it's heartless to deny illegal immigrants the right to attend college at in-state tuition rates. We'd call it fair and fiscally prudent. As Texas governor, Perry signed a bill in 2001 that lets illegal immigrants pay the lower tuition cost for state residents at public colleges and universities. Similar proposals have ...

[Gov. Scott shifts focus to colleges' role in creating jobs](#)

(Palm Beach Post © 10/23/2011)

[Choosing interim schools superintendent a tough task](#)

(Palm Beach Post © 10/23/2011)

Wanted: temporary caretaker for the nation's 11th-largest school district. Requirements: in-depth knowledge of the inner workings of the Palm Beach County School District and a willingness to juggle the demands of different interest groups, an expected multimillion-dollar budget shortfall and enactment of new teacher evaluations, all while tending to the needs of about 174,000 students and more t...

[Women making gains in science and math](#)

(Sarasota Herald-Tribune © 10/23/2011)

For many of the women, the chemistry lab was a home away from home – one that also hinted at a slow but steady shift in technical fields that have been traditionally filled with men. Rebecca Allred has fond memories of that lab at the College of William and Mary in Virginia. She and her peers spent hours there. They worked into the night for thei...

[Could Florida face a college student brain drain?](#)

(South Florida Sun-Sentinel © 10/23/2011)

For some of Florida's best and brightest students, the most affordable places to attend college are often outside the state. The reason: For years, low tuition and Bright Futures scholarships made it cheaper for most students to attend college in state —and 87 percent of them did. But 15-percent-a-year tuition increases and big cuts to Bright Futures have shrunk the gap between the costs of...

[Broward School Board considers western boundary changes](#)

(South Florida Sun-Sentinel © 10/23/2011)

To alleviate crowding at Falcon Cove Middle in Weston, the Broward School Board might send students to schools in the north, east and south next year. Four major proposals are under consideration, including options that would send some students from A-rated Falcon Cove to B-rated Bair Middle in Sunrise and from A-rated New Renaissance Middle to C-rated Henry D. Perry Middle, both in Miramar. Non...

[Scott's plan to reclaim pension savings would leave \\$5.5 million hole in county budget](#)

(St. Augustine Record © 10/23/2011)

By Matt Dixon Copyright 2011 . All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed. October 23, 2011 - 12:43am Scott's plan to reclaim pension savings would leave \$5.5 million hole in county budget Record Tallahassee Bureau A new law requiring that state workers contribute 3 percent to their retirement accounts translated into \$5.5 million in savi...

[John Hopkins Middle School battery arrests revive concerns about teacher safety](#)

(St. Petersburg Times © 10/23/2011)

Since last week, three students at John Hopkins Middle School have been arrested on felony charges that they battered their teachers. Interim school superintendent John Stewart said Friday he will send additional officers to the campus Monday to help students and teachers feel safe. "I'm concerned any time an employee is attacked or battered or has to engage in a physical act with a student," St...

[Proposal to move some Pinellas elementary students has parents riled](#)

(St. Petersburg Times © 10/23/2011)

Like ripping off a Band-Aid. Pinellas School Board members have used that phrase many times to describe what it will be like to end a policy that allowed students to stay in schools for which they aren't zoned. Last week, they heard what the reaction to the ripping will be like. "Are you stinking kidding me!" wrote Brenda Yeater, a parent at Cross Bayou Elementary in Pinellas Park. "I ...

[More tax cuts: A failed recipe for jobs](#)

(St. Petersburg Times © 10/23/2011)

Gov. Rick Scott and Republican legislative leaders continue to act as if Florida will magically return to prosperity if they can just cut taxes and business regulations enough. But new state revenue forecasts for the next two years expose the fallacy of that argument. Florida in the next two years won't have the means to maintain even the current level of often inadequate spending, particularly in...

[Our Opinion: Making sense](#)

(Tallahassee Democrat © 10/23/2011)

The old saying, renewed in practice almost daily here in the capital city, is that politicians use statistics the way drunks use a light post: for support, not illumination. As the Jan. 10 legislative session approaches, statistics are flying between and among the governor's office, legislative committees, state agencies, lobbyists, public relations firms and the occasional ramped-up public-inter...

[Aaron Richard: Louis Schwartz showed how one person can make a difference](#)

(Tallahassee Democrat © 10/23/2011)

On Oct. 6, Louis Schwartz unexpectedly passed away. How can one measure his life? From Plato to Martin Luther King Jr., people have asked, "What is the measure of a man?" Is it his might, his political affiliation and influence, the depth of his pocketbook, or how well he has done for himself? Or is it something else: his compassion, his willingness to put the needs of others above his own, his ...

[Polytechnic fans engineer a dud for taxpayers, students](#) Editorial

(Tampa Tribune © 10/23/2011)

In these tough economic times, it's critical that Florida spend strategically. Yet facing a \$1.5 billion budget shortfall, how do state lawmakers and education leaders respond? They are entertaining a daffy proposal to develop another university when the state cannot adequately support its existing 11 institutions. The scheme to make the University of South Florida Polytechnic campus an indepen...

[A more reliable funding source is needed for schools](#)

(Winter Haven News Chief © 10/23/2011)

Excerpted from an Oct. 16 editorial in The Gainesville Sun: We can argue until the cows come home about whether there ought to be fewer anthropology majors and more engineering students in University of Florida classrooms. But here is a point that is beyond argument: The demand for classroom seats at UF and at other Florida universities and colleges...

[Lively Rally Urges Passage of Jobs Legislation](#)

(American Federation of Teachers © 10/22/2011)

A laid-off teacher from Broward County, Fla., was one of the featured speakers at a lively Capitol Hill rally on Oct. 19 in support of the Teachers and First Responders Back to Work Act, a key piece of President Obama's agenda for creating jobs that the U.S. Senate is expected to take up later this week. Cherine Akbari (pictured at left), a history teacher in Oakland Park, Fla., joined Vice Presid...

[American Federation of Teachers Reinforces Anti-Bullying Message on National 'Spirit Day'](#)

(American Federation of Teachers © 10/22/2011)

"We cannot tolerate kids being bullied or called names simply for being who they are." WASHINGTON American Federation of Teachers members across the country are wearing purple today the second annual "Spirit Day" to symbolize their support for measures to stop bullying of teenagers based on sexuality or gender identity and to remember those who have been lost to suicide. Earlier this we...

[Weingarten On ESEA Reauthorization Bill](#)

(American Federation of Teachers © 10/22/2011)

Statement by Randi Weingarten, President of the American Federation of Teachers, Senate education committee's approval is first step in long-delayed overhaul of nation's education law WASHINGTON Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act has been delayed for four years. So, it is good that the Senate education committee voted last night to report out a bill that begins th...

[AFT President Randi Weingarten, U.S. Rep. Christopher Murphy, Union and Education Leaders Push for Jobs Plan in New Britain, Conn.](#)

(American Federation of Teachers © 10/22/2011)

Union and Education Leaders Push for Jobs Plan in New Britain, Conn. NEW BRITAIN, CONN. American Federation of Teachers President Randi Weingarten today visited the decrepit mobile classrooms at Chamberlain Primary School in New Britain, Conn., saying Congress needs to pass the American Jobs Act to help modernize Chamberlain and 35,000 other schools in desperate need of repairs. The jobs ...

[Manatee school district revamping its budget process](#)

(Bradenton Herald © 10/22/2011)

ataylor@bradenton.com BRADENTON – Manatee County School District officials have revamped their budget process, eliminating a long-time committee, and residents plus one political party are crying foul. Gone is the community-based budget committee that was once relied upon to give fresh ideas about what can be added or eliminated to the budget. Instead of a community committee, school board...

[Bradenton's Richard Milburn Academy draws nearer to closing](#)

(Bradenton Herald © 10/22/2011)

ataylor@bradenton.com BRADENTON – Steps to finalize the closure of Bradenton's Richard Milburn Academy will be taken Monday. School board members are expected to vote on whether or not to give Superintendent Tim McGonegal approval to end the charter school's contract. McGonegal recommended the school be closed in September after an investigation revealed students were not ful...

[Daytona State College revises funding request, puts renovation 1st](#)

(Daytona Beach News-Journal © 10/22/2011)

DAYTONA BEACH – Daytona State College has set new priorities in its legislative request with classroom needs at the Palm Coast campus at the top of the list and less money needed to expand the News-Journal Center. The overall request has also been reduced from \$23.2 million to \$18.6 million. The board approved the new capital-

improvement plan on Thursday and the updated funding requests for t...

[Greek crisis: what would the ancients say?](#)

(Daytona Beach News-Journal © 10/22/2011)

ATHENS, Greece (AP) – More than 200 international philosophers braved strikes and protests to come to Greece this month to join a forum and debate matters of the mind. Topics on the program included "The Limits of Abstraction: Finding Space for Novel Explanation" and "Partial Realism, Anti-realism and Deflationary Realism: Can History Settle the Argument?" For the organizers, the event was a ...

[Charlotte School District looks to careers](#)

(Englewood Sun Herald © 10/22/2011)

After Gov. Rick Scott drew a wave of response last week saying he wanted to shift state funding toward education for in-demand jobs, Charlotte superintendent Doug Whittaker was not alarmed. In fact, he couldn't agree more. The Sun Newspapers no longer ...

[Mandarin High School principal gets strength, support from students, school staff](#)

(Florida Times-Union © 10/22/2011)

Principal Donna Richardson has always believed in being strong and supportive for her students, teachers and staff at Mandarin High School. It wasn't until she was diagnosed with breast cancer this year, however, that Richardson realized how important their strength and support was to her. "It made me want to come back to work. ... I felt like I was enveloped in love," Richardson said Tuesday....

[Bible classes drop off in Georgia](#)

(Florida Times-Union © 10/22/2011)

ATLANTA — Georgia was the first state in the nation to allow Bible classes in public schools, but the number of districts offering the classes has dwindled to just a handful as budgets tighten. Superintendents say interest has waned in the once-controversial classes and schools don't have the money to pay for courses with only a few students enrolled. What's more, budget cuts mean it now takes m...

[District considers shutting two elementary schools](#)

(Florida Today © 10/22/2011)

Brevard County School Board members will meet Monday afternoon to discuss possibly closing two under-capacity elementary schools ? one in the northern part of the county and another beachside. At this point, it's just a staff proposal. If the school board decides to pursue the option, no final decision would be made until January, after community meetings and a public hearing. District officials...

[Former, current Lee County school board members spar](#)

(Ft. Myers News-Press © 10/22/2011)

A talk by former Lee County school board member Bob Chilmonik - sounding like the candidate he's likely to be in next year's election -sparked fireworks this week when board Chairman Tom Scott took issue with some of Chilmonik's comments. Chilmonik, who left the school board to run unsuccessfully for Lee County Commission last year, spoke to members of Businesspeople United for Political Action a...

[Education called said key to change at Fort Myers event](#)

(Ft. Myers News-Press © 10/22/2011)

The rallying cry Friday at the Dr. Carrie Robinson Center to address education problems in Dunbar and east Fort Myers was simple but stark. "Community for real change," it went. "Do you hear the call?" The 21st Century Collaboration, a group dedicated to addressing social problems in those neighborhoods, made its goals for the community clear: In the next five years, it hopes to improve the high...

[Senate Panel Approves Bill That Rewrites Education Law](#)

(Gainesville Sun © 10/22/2011)

Legislation rewriting the No Child Left Behind education law finally gained traction this week, and the Senate Democrat whose committee passed the bill said on Friday that progress became possible because lawmakers were irritated by the Obama administration's offering states waivers to the law's key provisions. "Some of us on bo...

[Portfolio versus lottery](#)

(Hernando Today © 10/22/2011)

BROOKSVILLE - Some students are chosen to attend magnet schools based on their hours spent putting together portfolios and applications. For others it's a pick of the draw from a lottery. But if you're wondering if one group could outperform the other academically, speculate no more: School district officials say children hand-picked to attend schools perform no better on tests than those accept...

[Time for OWS to broaden its appeal](#)

(Hernando Today © 10/22/2011)

BY TED RALL, Liberal viewpoint It has been 30 days since Occupy Wall Street began. The movement hasn't shaken the world à la John Reed — not yet — but at 1,000 occupations and counting, it can't be ignored. OWS has become so impressive, so fast, that it's easy to forget its half-assed origin. No matter. The fact that the French Revolution was partly set off by the drunken ravings of the Marqui...

[Free abuse recognition training conference offered to teachers at FAU](#)

(Jupiter Courier © 10/22/2011)

Free abuse training conference offered to teachers at FAU In many cases of abuse and neglect, school personnel and educators may be the only other adult to witness a child's well being from day to day. Educators who are trained to recognize abuse and neglect and make effective reports can prevent the child from further harm. The conference includes professionals from multiple disciplines providing t...

[Teacher Confidential: Taking Back the Classroom](#)

(Lakeland Ledger © 10/22/2011)

Every Department of Education committee, agency, educational legislative group, educational vendor, academic think tank and school board know-it-all bigwig is passing down programs for Polk County school teachers to implement. This has been going on for three years, nonstop, with no regard for what else is being asked of teachers and students. Well,....

[Union to Seek Deal for School Bus Drivers, Food Service Workers](#)

(Lakeland Ledger © 10/22/2011)

BARTOW | The American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees will appear before the Polk County School Board Tuesday in hopes of increasing salaries and eliminating health insurance premiums for its members. AFSCME Local 2227, which represents custodians, bus drivers and attendants and school food service assistants met with School Dist...

[Non-Instructional Employees Seek Raises From School Board](#)

(Lakeland Ledger © 10/22/2011)

BARTOW | The American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees will appear before the Polk County School Board Tuesday in hopes of increasing salaries and eliminating health insurance premiums for its members. AFSCME Local 2227, which represents custodians, bus drivers and attendants and school food service assistants met with School Dist...

[Schools Will Be Allowed to Continue Serving Starchy Veggies](#)

(Lakeland Ledger © 10/22/2011)

Kids love Tater Tots, french fries, hash browns and corn. They can thank the Senate for keeping these and other starchy vegetables in school lunchrooms. Enlarge KINDERGARTNER JOELLA HEIN?waits for Tater Tots at her school cafeteria. This week, a proposal by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to severely ...

[Science matters](#)

(Miami Herald © 10/22/2011)

Gov. Scott doesn't have to skewer anthropologists to bolster his argument that Florida's university system needs to produce more graduates with the kinds of degrees that employers wielding well-paying jobs want most. The governor is definitely on the right track. He's also likely to meet like-minded academics on the same route. Cooperation, therefore, should be the watchword as...

[Is school cheating a prologue to Wall Street deceit?](#)

(Miami Herald © 10/22/2011)

Before we rage about the ethics of Wall Street tycoons, before we point the finger at executives who scam the system, maybe we should go back to school. I have no doubt the habit of cheating begins in the corridors of our youth, in the backs of classrooms, at the beginning and end of exams — in other words, long before anyone dons a suit or carries a briefcase to the office. The past few mon...

[What Rick Scott doesn't want you to see](#)

(Orlando Sentinel © 10/22/2011)

TALLAHASSEE – Information is power in the framing of politics and policy, and Gov. Rick Scott's administration is working hard to tightly control what comes out. Look at his office's decision to release the salaries of thousands of public university employees on the eve of his push for substantial higher education reforms next year. Critics are calling it an attempt to undermine traditi...

[Teacher Accused Of Domestic Violence](#)

(Orlando-WKMG (CBS) © 10/22/2011)

ORANGE COUNTY, Fla. – An Orange County middle school teacher was arrested on domestic violence charges on Wednesday. Gretchen Gonzalez was arrested after her husband called deputies Wednesday evening and reported that his wife had hit him in the face with a stack of mail, knocking off his glasses. Deputies said Gonzalez's husband told them he had gotten into a verbal altercation with his wife o...

[Shameful conduct](#)

(Osceola News-Gazette © 10/22/2011)

We would be 100 percent behind the Osceola County School Board if it decides the School District should not reimburse Board Member Jay Wheeler for legal costs and related fees that he incurred while fighting an ethics complaint brought against him by now-fellow Board Member Tom Long. Wheeler on Tuesday requested the district cover \$15,000 in costs, based on the argument that the Florida Commis...

[Pay next schools chief less than Art Johnson?](#)

(Palm Beach Post © 10/22/2011)

The Palm Beach County School Board is looking for a new superintendent. After a bit of back-and-forth, the board agreed to advertise a salary range of \$225,000 to \$285,000. Ex-Superintendent Art Johnson made \$250,000 plus \$50,000 in deferred compensation. Members of the public had urged less. One suggested \$150,000. The current superintendent, Bill Malone, who is paid monthly at a rate equivalent...

[Robot kits delivered to schools](#)

(Panama City News Herald © 10/22/2011)

PANAMA CITY — Nearly \$15,000 worth of Lego robot kits will be delivered to local schools for teachers to expand science, technology, engineering and math education. School Board member and Florida State University Panama City STEM Institute coordinator Ginger Littleton delivered four Lego Mindstorm robot kits at Everitt Middle School on Friday morning and two Lego WeDo kits at Oscar ...

[Schools integrating academics and career preparation](#)

(Panama City News Herald © 10/22/2011)

PANAMA CITY — For parents and students, creating new career academies means more students graduate high school with a career plan. For the community it likely will mean a solid pipeline of students to enter the local workforce. "I think that without this academy I would just be another student and I would not feel so confident about myself," said senior Jill Hallett, who wants t...

[Bowden: Scott misses the mark in monetizing all learning](#)

(Pensacola News Journal © 10/22/2011)

Gov. Rick Scott, an amateur education mechanic working under a shade tree, knows better. His latest nonsense debases the liberal arts, an essential component of higher education, targeting Florida anthropology students ? even if his daughter studied the diversified field that contributes greatly to science and discovery. His stirring words: "We don't need a lot more anthropologists in the state. ..."

[District needs to be building a school a year, but has no money to do so](#)

(St. Augustine Record © 10/22/2011)

By MARCIA LANE Copyright 2011 . All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed. October 22, 2011 - 12:01am District needs to be building a school a year, but has no money to do so marcia.lane@staugustine.com If the St. Johns County School Board had the money, it would be building a school a year in order to handle the growing number of studen...

[St. Petersburg College taps Gibbs High principal to lead downtown and midtown campuses](#)

(St. Petersburg Times © 10/22/2011)

ST. PETERSBURG — Kevin Gordon, the Gibbs High principal who is widely credited for jumpstarting a turnaround at the long-troubled school, is headed for a top post at St. Petersburg College. SPC has tapped him to be provost of the downtown and midtown campuses, replacing Yvonne Ulmer, who is retiring as the campuses' chief executive officer. The two campuses have a total of 3,200 students. H...

[Skating rink owner wants school fundraising events to be kept local](#)

(St. Petersburg Times © 10/22/2011)

PORT RICHEY — Tiffany Balay, whose family owns SpinNations Skating Center, has grown tired of watching Pasco schools take their skating fundraisers to her Tarpon Springs competitor, Astro Skate. The kids and their business should remain in Pasco, supporting the tax base and local companies, Balay contends. "We need local support," she said. She and her family have sent letters asking s...

[Weekly Roundup: Scott Rocks Higher Ed Boat](#)

(Sunshine State News © 10/22/2011)

Posted: October 22, 2011 3:55 AM The work in committees went slowly this week, as lawmakers discussed plenty about the budget and redistricting but took relatively few actions on the big-ticket items of the looming legislative session. But when lawmakers and Gov. Rick Scott talked, those with an interest in the matters listened. And generally talked back. While Scott found him...

[J. Robert McClure: Why invest in an education for jobs that scarcely exist?](#)

(Tallahassee Democrat © 10/22/2011)

Florida's job-promoting Gov. Rick Scott recently ruffled some feathers in academe when he suggested that public university students, whose education is heavily subsidized by tax dollars, should be encouraged to study subjects that would lead to a productive career. In particular, he urged an emphasis on the so-called STEM subjects: science, technology, engineering and math. It's but one facet of ...

[Sizable problem for cash-strapped Pasco schools](#)

(Tampa Bay Online © 10/22/2011)

When a proposed constitutional amendment setting class-size limits went before Florida voters in 2002, we suggested the measure would do nothing to help the state's public school students and would lead to all manner of folly. A majority of voters ignored our warnings and approved the amendment – and we've been smugly saying "told you so" ever since. The cash-strapped Pasco School District fac...

[Pork is pork](#)

(Tampa Bay Online © 10/22/2011)

Hats off to State Sen. Paula Dockery ("USF Poly's finances questioned by senator," front page, Oct. 20). She raises questions regarding expenditures for the University of South Florida Polytechnic in Lakeland. There is, however, a bigger problem here. We have two large state universities, the University of South Florida and the University of Central Florida, within 80 miles of each other. There ar...

[Are we becoming a cant-do nation?](#)

(Tampa Bay Online © 10/22/2011)

China has just launched a Long March rocket carrying the first module intended for a new space lab. Next year, China plans to launch a lunar probe that will land a rover on the moon. And yes, they plan to land a man on the moon. It may be hard to believe in an era when NASA is imploding and our astronauts are hoping to hitchhike rides into

orbit, but we did get a man on the moon once upon a time....

[School officials help students let their imaginations set sail](#)

(Tampa Bay Online © 10/22/2011)

BROOKSVILLE - It was barely an audible "arrggh," slightly louder than a whisper that was carried from the microphone into the auditorium at Hernando High School. Many parents and adults might've barely registered it, but no sooner had Superintendent Bryan Blavatt uttered the pirate noise, small heads immediately focused on him as kindergarteners and first-graders rose to the challenge. "AAAAAA..."

[Charter schools get closer scrutiny](#)

(WFSU Newsroom © 10/22/2011)

Lawmakers are once again taking a look at Charter schools, although not in the way some supporters would prefer. Lynn Hatter reports a string of bad headlines this year has some state officials debating on whether it's time to reign in Florida's most popular form of alternative education. Charter schools get state funding, without having many of the same strings attached that traditional public ...

[Former Polk teacher training others to teach through dance and song](#)

(Winter Haven News Chief © 10/22/2011)

LAKELAND - Jessie Del Castillo has always lived in a bilingual world. Growing up in Panama she constantly saw English and Spanish intertwined. But as a teacher in Polk County, she saw how uninterested students were in learning a new language – so she began creating songs to help her students learn Spanish. In 2006, Del Castillo took a break afte...

[Teacher's arrest escaped background checks](#)

(WTVT Fox Tampa © 10/22/2011)

BROOKSVILLE - When Diana Young applied for a job as a teacher, the Hernando County School District did what's called Level 2 background check. "We work through the state to do a background check and we also include an FBI check," according to Hernando County School Superintendent Bryan Blavatt. Young passed all the background checks. Her fingerprint check also showed no legal problems. What ...

[UPDATE: Bill aimed at ending Fla. tuition discrimination](#)

(WTLX ABC Channel 27 Tallahassee © 10/22/2011)

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (AP) - Proposed legislation would let U.S. citizens whose parents are illegal immigrants qualify in-state university tuition if they are Florida residents. State Rep. Reggie Fullwood filed the bill Friday, two days after the state was sued over the issue. State universities currently charge much higher out-of-state tuition to the sons and daughters of illegal immigr...



Please see the four articles below. *Deborah*

Tallahassee Democrat

VR welcomes new director, Aleisa McKinlay

12:51 AM, Oct. 23, 2011

By Dave Hodges Democrat Business Editor

Aleisa McKinlay says the first order of business Nov. 1 when she becomes director of the state's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is to carry on the progress and improvements of her predecessor, Bill Palmer.

Palmer is retiring after six and a half years at the helm of VR, which is part of the Department of Education.

"It's fun. It's a fun job because the outcomes we achieve for people are spectacular," she said.

VR provides assistance to those with injuries or disabilities who are seeking to re-enter the workforce and need a hand to do so. Stories of many clients and their successes have been featured this month in the Democrat as part of Disability Employment Awareness Month.

The division assisted a total of 5,018 people during the 2010-11 fiscal year, which was a 30-percent increase from the previous year. Palmer says VR is on track to see a 20-percent increase in individuals assisted this year.

For almost three years, McKinlay has been a VR bureau chief, responsible for such functions as legislative affairs, communications, working with the Centers for Independent Living, and the Office of the Ombudsman. "It's very broad," she said of the work. "It is not the heart of VR, but it's all the little pieces that wrap around it and make it work."

Her background is in public mental health. Prior to joining VR, she was chief of adult community mental health at the Florida Department of Children & Families, as well as the director of the Protection and Advocacy for Individuals with Mental Illnesses Program at the Advocacy Center for Persons with Disabilities (now Disability Rights Florida). In addition to holding her law degree, McKinlay has significant experience in the administration of public mental health services.

Given the rigors of the job market and the struggle that those with disabilities face in finding work, the mental toll is apparent, she noted. Many are discouraged, depressed and isolated by the situations they're in. Today, 40 percent of VR's caseload is people whose primary disability is a mental illness.

Tallahassee Democrat

School-resource officers protect students, help steer them toward making good choices

11:55 PM, Oct. 23, 2011

STATISTICS

Student arrests

Number of arrests in Leon County elementary, middle, high and special schools:

2006-07: **199**

2007-08: **257**

2008-09: **240**

2009-10: **266**

2010-11: **212**

School-resource officers in other districts

- **Gadsden County:** A combination of 16 sheriff's deputies and security guards from Barkley Security Agency for about \$440,000 a year.
- **Wakulla County:** A total of four sheriff's deputies at between \$150,000 and \$160,000 a year.
- **Statewide:** The Florida Association of School Resource Officers estimates there are about 900 school-resource officers in the state.

Dressed in the standard uniform of the Leon County Sheriff's Office, Jon Etheridge wears a duty belt slung around his waist, the keys to his patrol car within reach and a golden star shining just above his heart.

But every morning, for more than a decade, his destination has not been the streets of Tallahassee or an office off Municipal Way. Instead, he has a parking spot at Godby

High School.

Deputy Etheridge — or Bubba, as he is fondly known around the school — is entering his 12th year as a school-resource officer in Leon County. His time as an SRO makes up more than half of his 23 years with the sheriff's office, and one he has declined supervisor positions to keep.

"When I wake up in the morning and get in the car and start heading this way, I'm not going, 'Oh man, I've got to go to work another day.' It's an opportunity that I may be able to make an impact on a kid's life," he said.

Although his badge and deep voice lend Etheridge, a Lincoln alum himself, the authority it takes to manage 1,132 students every day, he wants to make sure students see him for what he is: a resource.

"I (don't want) the kids to see me as this guy with a uniform, a gun, a badge, a Taser," he said. "I want those kids to know that they can come to me, they can talk to me."

Since 1981, the Leon County Sheriff's Office has partnered with and distributed deputies throughout the school district. There is a specific process to becoming a school-resource deputy, said Rory Robbins, lieutenant of the LCSO school resource officer program. When a position opens up, the deputies who apply — all of whom must have been with LCSO for at least 18 months — are interviewed in front of a sheriff-appointed board regarding juvenile law and crime. Character is taken into consideration and, at the end of the interview process, a recommendation is made to the sheriff, who makes the ultimate decision.

The deputy must then have 40 hours of basic SRO training, and many also are sent to advanced training.

This is important, since the role of an SRO can range from confidant to investigator to an officer breaking up a fight. Parents and teachers often seek out school-resource deputies for assistance as well. A day can include kicking off trespassing dropouts, talking to a student about sexual abuse at home, accompanying a football team to its Friday night game, mediating a feuding couple and teaching a class on driving safety.

The deputies are there in two capacities: to protect the students, but also to help them handle the difficulties of school and stay on the right path.

Sometimes that comes in the form of a one-on-one conversation. Sometimes it means finding a diversion program to keep students from developing a criminal record. And sometimes it comes in the form of simply being there.

"I have kids in this office every day," said Chris Jacobs, SRO for Raa Middle School. "Some just come in and want to talk. It may be something that is absolutely unimportant to everybody else in the world. But it's everything to that kid."

Working as a bridge

Aside from the No. 1 goal of school protection, the intention of the program is the same as it was 30 years ago, said Robbins. Form a positive connection to the schools and the community.

"You are dealing with students, teachers — everyone related to the schools," he said. "It breaks down barriers between law enforcement and the citizens."

Joe Thomas, supervisor at the Walker-Ford Community Center, said the SROs work with the center to make sure students make it to their after-school program or let them know if there may be trouble.

"Most of the time, the SRO knows those kids personally," he said. "That helps us identify problem kids."

Thomas said the role the deputies play in terms of school security was integral, particularly in areas of the city that have a higher crime rate.

"We need to have every type of service in place that we can to make sure that these kids get a fair chance at learning," he said.

The diversion programs, which help keep kids out of jail, also are important, Thomas noted. Students could be facing any number of difficulties at home, Thomas said.

"Those diversion programs that the officers are right there to offer make a big difference," Thomas said. "Kids are going to be kids, and they are going to make some mistakes along the way."

Jim Munn, LCS liaison to the courts, called school-resource deputies "counselors in green."

"I see their roles as crucial in helping us in the school system," he said.

He has seen deputies walk up and down a street for hours talking to a student who has fallen into trouble. He's seen them take extra steps and different approaches to help a kid.

"They are there to protect these kids, they are not there as a 'gotcha,'" he said. "They are a part of the community effort to help young people."

"It takes a village to raise a child — it takes all of us," he said.

Teresa Howard, SRO for Pace Secondary School, said she applied for the job because she wanted to make a difference. "It's hard to be preventative when you are working on patrol," she said. "We are kind of reactive when there is a situation."

Pace, a school for students who have not had success in a traditional school setting, offers Howard a chance to connect with students who otherwise might have had a negative opinion of law enforcement.

"When they have issues in the community," she said, "if they have a good relationship with their SRO, they can associate law enforcement being a positive instead of always being a negative."

"It's amazing how many of the kids, when they are in a crisis situation, turn to the school resource officer," said Mike Rychlik, a teacher at SAIL High School. Rychlik said that although he had never personally felt unsafe, he is grateful for the protection and presence an armed deputy gives the schools — particularly when it comes to potential outside threats to the students. In his 25 years as an educator, he has never heard any of his peers complain about the program.

"They are really just here to protect us and serve the community," he said. "It's a great program on a lot of levels."

The funding for the operation — about \$2.3 million — is split down the middle between the district and the sheriff's office. The district is given money from the state to use specifically for school safety — last year it was \$975,000.

The program is a team effort, explained John Hunkiar, chief of safety and security for the school district.

"In any community, schools are a huge part of policing," he said. Having an officer on the school grounds means that the SRO can handle fender benders or minor fights instead of taking up the time of a patrol officer, he said, and the service the schools get is much more enhanced.

"They are not just there when they are handling a call," he said. "The biggest part of their job is the interactions with the student."

Gangs in Tallahassee

The deputies also keep an eye out for signs of gang involvement and activity, something they are specially trained to recognize. Many times, students will be forthcoming to a deputy they trust, letting them know when there may be a fight or providing them with other details.

"I hear it all the time: Tallahassee doesn't have a gang problem — yah, it does," Howard said. "Students see how it is glorified on TV. They are young, they don't have that affection (in their home life) so they get it from the gangs."

While there aren't any cases this year at Raa, Jacobs said he has his eye on students who have family members in gangs.

"There are gangs in Leon County. It's getting worse," he said. "They are getting more prevalent. More kids are wanting to say, 'I am in a gang.'"

Jacobs said that, sometimes, letting a student know there are other choices besides what they may observe at home can be integral in getting them on the right path.

"They think that is normal, because they don't see anything else," he said. "If you can point out to them that's not everybody's life, there are other things you can do."

But Etheridge said students aren't bringing their gang activity to school as often.

"Are there gang members who go to school at our public schools? Absolutely," he said. "But they are not bringing it on campus as frequently as it had been."

Deputies who observe any kind of gang activity or involvement report it back to the gang unit at LCSO. In many cases, they are the front line in terms of student involvement.

"Obviously, there are gangs in Tallahassee," Robbins said, adding gang violence has increased over the last 10 years. "Some are small, some are more organized."

"We make every attempt to ID gang members and get to know them," Robbins said. "And try to have a positive influence."

A resource officer often serves as a bridge between the world of law and law enforcement and the school setting.

All resource officers teach classes, which include and range from the standard alcohol, drugs and tobacco education to harassing phone calls, responsibility and honesty, and teen suicide. School-resource deputies also work with school administration and diversion programs so a student, whenever possible, can get a second chance and avoid a permanent record.

"If the option is open to divert them, then that is what we try (to do)," Robbins said.

Deana McAllister, assistant principal for student services at Godby High, said the school tries to handle as much discipline as possible, but when the situation becomes a crime, the school-resource officer is involved. SROs are specifically trained to know what options are available for students who have wandered off the path, and have the time and relationship with the school to handle it differently than if it occurred on the street.

"It is our job to keep the student in school," McAllister said.

There are, of course, acts of zero-tolerance.

Sexual battery, dealing drugs, carrying a weapon — these are offenses that are an almost guaranteed arrest and expulsion. But much of what the deputies are called in for is less serious: finding an indication of drug use or alcohol, or a student who needs help managing anger, McAllister said.

One of the primary goals of the SROs is to stop students from getting to the point where any law enforcement is necessary.

Jacobs said that while the deputies are there to enforce the law, most would rather prevent it from being broken in the first place.

"The safety of the kids is our biggest concern," he said. "Whether it be from themselves, with drug use or violence, or from an outside source."

He didn't sign up to make arrests, Jacobs said. If he had, he would still be on the road. He wanted to help the kids.

"A lot of these kids have no role models," he said. "If I can just get one who was going to go down the wrong path to just turn around and go on the right path, that's an accomplishment for me."

Although the hours can be long and emotionally draining, Etheridge said it is a privilege to be able to work as a resource officer.

"It's special that I have this opportunity. That's the thing," he said. "We all do this job because that's what we want to do."

"It's a situation that you look at and you say, man, if I've got this opportunity, I'd better take it," he said. "And I do the best I can do every day to take advantage of that opportunity."

Tallahassee Democrat

Bill Cotterell: Politics, math mug state workers

Once again, nobody expects raises

6:27 PM, Oct. 21, 2011

State employees are in for another rough year in the 2012 legislative session.

In other breaking news, the sun rose in the east this morning and, if forecasts are accurate, will set somewhere in the west.

For state employees and legislators, the budget math is painfully simple and the politics more than obvious. The state is facing a revenue shortage approaching \$2 billion — which Senate President Mike Haridopolos says might be an overly optimistic outlook — and the cost of employing people is going up.

The session starts early, due to legislative and congressional redistricting, so legislators will be working with fairly preliminary tax-collection numbers. Those can be revised later in the fiscal year but, to be safe, the House and Senate budget committees will want to stash a billion or so in reserve — in case things turn out even worse than the deliberately gloomy expectations they put in the budget.

Not only is there no prospect of any tax increases, but Gov. Rick Scott wants to cut even more corporate taxes, on top of the already-slumping regular tax collections. But that is what he campaigned on as a candidate last year, so no one should be surprised.

Scott also promised to shrink the size and cost of state government. He got started last session, with the 3 percent employee contribution to the Florida Retirement System and about 1,500 job eliminations, and there's no reason to believe that trend won't continue.

Never mind that Florida already ranked last among states, or tied for 50th, in its ratio of state employees to total population and per-capita cost of state personnel. Those figures, incidentally, are compiled year after year by the state's own Department of Management Services — not by some government-worker union or liberal think tank.

All over the country, there is a widespread public perception that government — national, state and local — is too big, expensive and intrusive. So never mind the facts; except for about five legislators from around here, there is no political gain to be made by defending salaries and benefits of state workers.

Scott arranged a teleconference from Brazil last week to announce the September unemployment figures. The statewide jobless rate was virtually unchanged from August, with about 977,000 people still out of work in the state, but Scott made a particular point of mentioning that total government employment has declined steadily since he took office last January.

Overall, it's down by 19,700 jobs — mostly federal and local jobs. Total government employment lost more jobs than any other sector of the economy, about 15,000 jobs, even outpacing the long-struggling construction industry. And about 3,100 of those government job losses were in state agencies, over the year.

So what about next session?

Nobody expects any pay raises. The employee share of health insurance premiums hasn't gone up lately, but a new consultant's study projects a billion-dollar bump in state costs over the next three years if nothing is done — which means, things will be done.

It's not all increases in premiums, copayments or deductibles. The Buck Consultants report recommended a "carrot and stick" approach to health care costs, such as a "carrot" of smoking cessation programs — backed by a "stick" of premium surcharges for those who continue smoking.

Sen. Don Gaetz, R-Niceville, probably the most influential member of the Senate since he'll be Senate president in the 2013-14 terms, said the lifestyle penalties might also be extended to obesity. He said employees who choose to live less healthy lives shouldn't shift part of the cost onto fellow employees, in the form of higher premiums.

The state could cap its health care expenses at a flat rate, giving employees an array of options if they want to buy more. Look for more health-savings accounts, too, as a means of giving employees an incentive to shop for cheaper insurance.

The ultra-cheap rates for elected officials and senior managers — \$30 a month for family coverage, \$8.34 for single insurance — will probably go away. This one isn't so much a financial necessity as a political embarrassment for legislators and Scott, himself, paying one-third of the premiums that Career Service employees pay.

Well, it used to be totally free for Selected Exempt, Senior Management and the elected officers. And there's a fairness factor, since about 16,000 of those SES employees used to be in Career Service, until Gov. Jeb Bush's "Service First" initiatives moved them — with free insurance being the trade-off for giving up job security, such as it is.

And then there are pensions. Scott tried for a 5-percent employee contribution to the Florida Retirement System, and got 3 percent. There's no reason he couldn't come back for the other 2 percent — state employees would howl, but they don't vote Republican anyway, and the average Florida voter would say, "Yeah, go for it!"

A more likely pension change, perhaps, would be making all new hires join the defined-contribution plan, phasing out the defined-benefit FRS system.

"I think everything has to be on the table," Haridopolos said of the pension plans. Sen. JD Alexander, R-Lake Wales, chairman of the Senate budget committee, said pretty much the same about employee health insurance.

In the budgetary parlance, being "on the table" means being changed. Being changed usually does not mean being improved.

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Why invest in an education for jobs that scarcely exist?

J. Robert McClure
My View, Tallahassee Democrat

October 22, 2011

Florida's job-promoting Gov. Rick Scott recently ruffled some feathers in academe when he suggested that public university students, whose education is heavily subsidized by tax dollars, should be encouraged to study subjects that would lead to a productive career. In particular, he urged an emphasis on the so-called STEM subjects: science,

technology, engineering and math.

It's but one facet of his job-creation strategy, which also includes lowering business taxes and various regulatory obstacles. The goal is to give Florida an advantage in today's intense competition to recruit and retain job-producing enterprises. His views on the evolving role of public universities reflect his belief that today's graduates will also face intense competition — for jobs.

He's not alone in this view. It's an idea promoted by observers across the political spectrum. They include liberal columnist Thomas Friedman, author of "The World Is Flat." Their concern is that in important fields essential to our nation's future competitiveness in a global economy, the United States is falling behind emerging nations such as China and India — especially in the STEM fields.

Meanwhile, the persistence of high unemployment during what's being called "a jobless recovery" raises another question relevant to Gov. Scott's concerns: Why do millions of willing workers remain jobless while millions of good jobs remain unfilled?

Tallahassee Fire Chief Cindy Dick may have inadvertently provided an insight during a recent speech to a local civic club. She noted that Tallahassee — one of the few cities still hiring — has been deluged with applicants for each of the few vacancies that occur as veteran firefighters retire. Some applicants were laid off by fiscally troubled cities, but many others are recent graduates of training programs still cranking out firefighters despite the diminished demand.

This situation is hardly unique. Journalism is another career field in which there's a growing mismatch between an oversupply of eager grads and a paucity of job opportunities. It's a reminder that American education is not exactly nimble in adapting to changes in the economy.

One of the principal reasons for the inertia was never explained better than during a speech given by Willard Daggett at the "2006 Florida Education Summit" co-sponsored by the James Madison Institute.