

From: Smith, Kevin
Sent time: Monday, October 03, 2011 4:29:42 PM
To: Cari Miller (Cari@excelined.org) <Cari@excelined.org>; Lee, Laurie; Colle, Hope; Campbell-Smith, Amy; Tart, Suzanne; Evan Lefsky <elefsky@cfl.rr.com>; Walt Griffin <walt_griffin@scps.k12.fl.us>
Subject: FW: 10/01/11 through 10/03/11 Education Round-Up

FYI – have a great afternoon!

Sincerely,

Kevin Smith,
Educational Policy Analyst,
Just Read, Florida! Office
Florida Department of Education
325 W. Gaines Street, Suite 501
Tallahassee, Florida 32399
(850) 245-0503
(850) 245-5105 (Fax)
www.justreadflorida.com



From: Higgins, Deborah
Sent: Monday, October 03, 2011 10:30 AM
Subject: 10/01/11 through 10/03/11 Education Round-Up

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



[Teachers are workers like everyone else](#)
(Bradenton Herald © 10/03/2011)

I have read the Sept. 29 letter from Tim McGonegal, superintendent of Manatee County schools, and find his facts are a little twisted to make what he writes appear correct. So I checked the teachers contract with the Manatee County School system. A teacher receives six paid holidays per year and they are paid 24 paychecks over the calendar year. A teacher can choose between 24 equal checks or 1...

[Public Schools Also Lose When Online Students Fail](#)
(Education Week © 10/03/2011)

By Burt Hubbard, I-News Network, & Nancy Mitchell, Education News Colorado Colorado taxpayers will spend \$100 million this year on online schools that are largely failing their elementary and high school students, state education records and interviews with school officials show. The money includes millions in tax dollars that are going to K-12 online schools for students who are no lo...

[Schools adding staff](#)

(Florida Keys Keysnews © 10/03/2011)

The Monroe County School District will add to its payroll three full-time teachers, a part-time teacher and a supplemental pay increase for an existing teacher to cope with increased class sizes, including a spike of kids recently enrolled at Glynn Archer Elementary School. The \$221,134 the School Board approved last week likely will increase as principals and administrators continue to keep a ...

[Brevard schools start keeping score on stipends](#)

(Florida Today © 10/03/2011)

Brevard Public Schools distributes millions of dollars each year in coaching and activity supplements. Now, in the wake of a scandal regarding where some of that money went last year at Viera High, district officials are paying closer attention to who is getting those dollars. District leaders have changed their human resources procedures to better monitor the extra pay. "We're trying to ...

[Excel in education](#)

(Ft. Myers News Press © 10/03/2011)

The region of Southwest Florida needs to become a talent incubator, developer, nurturer and magnet that seeks to achieve world-class excellence in the 21st century. There's a will to do that - among educators, business leaders and lawmakers. The problem is their approaches are not aligned, and that threatens to impede honest efforts to make our region globally competitive. Educators want mor...

[Guest opinion: Students must stay globally competitive](#)

(Ft. Myers News Press © 10/03/2011)

Children entering elementary school today are joining at an early age our increasingly connected world in which most countries' physical boundaries no longer serve to keep some things in and other things out. High-speed Internet, 24-hour news coverage from all points of the globe, email, electronic books, and social media are shaping the way young people look at the world and its possibilities...

[Guest opinion: Highly educated people key to prosperity, liberty](#)

(Ft. Myers News Press © 10/03/2011)

The art of critical thinking lies at the core of a bold faculty initiative at Edison State College called "The Cornerstone Experience." The qualities that have made Edison an influential agent of progress and prosperity in Southwest Florida will converge in this introductory program designed to yield learners whose future will be etched by their aptitude, intellectual resilience, and integri...

[Schools can train, but for what?](#)

(Ft. Myers News-Press © 10/03/2011)

Training tomorrow's workers is a little like trying to hit a fast-moving target with a broken arrow. That's the burden Southwest Florida schools and colleges face as they prepare tomorrow's workforce. In some cases, the organizations charged with matching the supply of workers to the jobs in demand aren't even allowed to take aim until the last possible second. Education takes time, fro...

[Combating middle school malaise](#)

(Ft. Myers News-Press © 10/03/2011)

The ninth-grade gap. The middle school malaise. The summer slide. When students in the region's five counties reach middle school, their academic achievement plummets. Children who excelled in elementary school transform into below-average readers by 10th grade. The development is no stranger to Southwest Florida educators. Just 38 percent of Lee County sophomores, for instance, met the stat...

[Future unwritten for youngest](#)

(Ft. Myers News-Press © 10/03/2011)

When this year's kindergarten class graduates high school in 2024, schools will look nothing like they do today. Students may not have read a textbook in years. Books will be digital. It's likely they'll be using an iPad-like device that isn't even invented yet. They may not even have teachers in their classrooms. But the pressure to learn and succeed in a competitive world will remain. With mo...

[Training is key, teachers suggest](#)

(Ft. Myers News-Press © 10/03/2011)

Southwest Florida's schools emphasize testing at almost every level, but not too much time is spent on preparing students for the future workforce, teachers said. "Nowhere is anybody saying, 'Let's make sure these kids know how to participate in a job interview, shake hands and interact with adults,'" Riverdale High business teacher Ileana Flores said. "These are skills that employers often say..."

[Polk School Board Turns Down Charter Request](#)

(Lakeland Ledger © 10/03/2011)

BARTOW | The Polk County School Board turned down a request from a proposed charter school in the county, with district officials saying it doesn't meet the state's new law for duplicating the programs of other high-performing charter schools. Charter Schools USA is proposing Renaissance Charter, a K-8 school with a projected 1,400-...

[Incentive goals lacking specific measures for student achievement](#)

(Lehigh Acres Citizen © 10/03/2011)

The Lee County School Board has given its new superintendent five performance incentive goals for the upcoming year, all but one keyed to school or teacher achievement. In addition to minimum job requirements and strategic plan goals, Dr. Joseph Burke will work to achieve: * A 4 percent increase in the number of schools earning a state-determined "A" or "B" school grade. * Maintaining the schoo...

[Educators outline plan to improve Hispanic graduation rate](#)

(Miami Herald © 10/03/2011)

President Barack Obama and others have called for the United States to dramatically increase its number of college graduates, but a report released by the College Board on Friday warns that America's Hispanic students — now the largest minority in K-12 public schools — are significantly trailing their classmates when it comes to attaining degrees. Unless that trend changes, the report states, the...

[Second chance: Many Collier, Lee teachers chose it as their second career](#)

(Naples Daily News © 10/03/2011)

NAPLES — Neil Gahagan was always interested in teaching, but when he mentioned it to his high school guidance counselor, he was told he was "better than that." "I said OK and that was it — teaching was out," he recalled. So he majored in politics and economics in college, graduated and eventually landed a job at the helm of a corporation in Hartford, Conn. He hardly looked back — until ab...

[UCF learning to be a landlord by building more dorms, Greek housing on campus](#)

(Orlando Sentinel © 10/03/2011)

The University of Central Florida is increasingly getting into the landlord business, netting millions of dollars in rents annually and rolling out plans for new dorms and Greek housing set to open in 2013. Housing has been a moneymaker for more than five years at the former commuter campus, which has transformed itself into the nation's second-largest university. Once the new dorms are built...

[Backlash building on "closing gap" emphasis](#)

(Orlando Sentinel/The School Zone Blog © 10/03/2011)

Ten years into No Child Left Behind and 15 or more into the latest education reforms, a backlash is rising against the emphasis on "closing the gap" in academic performance between white children and minorities. The total focus on that objective has distracted the schools from pushing top students to greater achievement, critics argue. Then we wonder why many other countries in the World show...

[Inadequate Political Progress](#)

(Palm Beach Post © 10/03/2011)

President Obama is right to offer states a waiver from the No Child Left Behind Law, but he's waiving it favor of bad or worse education "reforms." Championed in 2001 by President George W. Bush and the late Sen. Ted Kennedy, NCLB came with good intentions. It confronted racists who thought minorities couldn't keep up academically and limousine liberals who made excuses when they didn't. ...

[Cash-strapped New College sets \\$60 million target](#)

(Sarasota Herald-Tribune © 10/03/2011)

SARASOTA - The "B" grade came as a shock to college senior Casey Morell. This is New College, after all, Florida's highly selective and unconventional liberal arts honors college, where letter grades are never given. Morrell's "B" came from a tradition-bound visiting professor, one of many the college has used as it seeks to c...

[Education mandate for online class puts pressure on Florida's rural districts](#)

(St. Petersburg Times © 10/03/2011)

Florida legislators have strapped school districts with yet another expensive unfunded mandate. Gov. Rick Scott signed into law this year legislation that requires high school students to take at least one online class to graduate. The law went into effect this term and affects incoming freshmen. The measure seems benign at first blush, but it will unduly stress districts that do not have deep...

[For many Broward teachers, the job hunt continues](#)

(Sun-Sentinel © 10/03/2011)

For 1,400 teachers in Broward County, the summer started with pink slips and the unsettling realization that last year could be their final one in a classroom. Among their ranks were reading teachers Erin Simpson-Krar and Terrell Spicer, history teachers Laurie Marks and Cherine Akbari, and music teacher Anthony Tabacco. Another 400 teachers lost their positions but were reassigned. Science tea...

[Hillsborough wrestles with how to reveal Gates' findings](#)

(Tampa Tribune © 10/03/2011)

Hillsborough wrestles with how to reveal Gates' findings By Sherri Ackerman Imagine knowing what your child's teacher is good at before the school year even starts. Or choosing a school based on the number of teachers with a track record of raising student test scores. That's what some parents and others hope to see in Hillsborough County as the school district continues its seven-ye...

[Expert: Facebook could be disastrous](#)

(Venice Gondolier © 10/03/2011)

FORT LAUDERDALE — The popularity of smartphones and social networking sites is keeping a growing number of people connected — to danger, deception and a loss of academic or career opportunities. Many haven't set secure privacy settings on their profiles, and may not realize how easy it is for a Facebook friend to spread embarrassing content from a private profile. Add in impulsivity, multitasking ...

[Illegal students face obstacles after college](#)

(Venice Gondolier © 10/03/2011)

PROVIDENCE, Rhode Island (AP) — When Rhode Island became the thirteenth state to allow cheaper in-state tuition for illegal immigrants at public colleges, supporters heralded the move as one that would give students the kind of advanced education they need to succeed in the work force. But students who are not here legally may still face a major obstacle even with the benefit of a college degree:...

[Manatee schools gear up for state-mandated performance pay](#)

(Bradenton Herald © 10/02/2011)

The Hechinger Report The way teachers are paid in Manatee County — and in all of Florida — is poised for a big shakeup in the next few years. By 2014, all districts will have to adopt a scale that determines salary based on teacher performance, as a result of controversial Senate Bill 736. The law also dictates that 50 percent of a teacher's evaluation must be tied to student tes...

[Teachers go extra mile outside classroom](#)

(Bradenton Herald © 10/02/2011)

ataylor@bradenton.com MANATEE — Marilyn Kelly has taught at Johnson Middle School for the past eight years. But before the school year started this August, Kelly changed roles. She became a surrogate mother to a former student enrolling at Florida A&M University. She made the 300-mile trip to Tallahassee to help the student enroll. "Her mom couldn't get off from work. I did ...

[Kirk's death brings back an old ghost](#)

(Bradenton Herald © 10/02/2011)

Ron Getman. Claude Kirk. Gene Witt. The first, a former state trooper and county commissioner. The second, a colorful, controversial Florida governor. The third, a former educator and Manatee County schools superintendent. "A long time ago," said Witt, now 81. A time that came back for him and Getman when Kirk, 85, died Wednesday in West Palm Beach. A moment in time when they w...

[Saving the 'Lost Boys' of Higher Education](#)

(Chronicle of Higher Education © 10/02/2011)

By Robert B. Smith In J.M. Barrie's novel Peter Pan, Peter explains to Wendy that the "lost boys" are toddlers who fell out of their prams at Kensington Gardens and were

whisked away to Neverland. "Are none of the others girls?" asks Wendy. "Oh, no," Peter says. "Girls, you know, are much too clever to fall out of their prams." Literary scholars can debate whether Peter was simply currying fav...

[Mining Student Data Could Save Lives](#)

(Chronicle of Higher Education © 10/02/2011)

By Michael Morris He hadn't taken his medication in weeks—didn't need it. His clarity and focus over the past couple of months were sharper than they had ever been. As he stood in the hallway preparing to enter the campus library through a side door, his sweating hands firmly clutched the grips of the twin Glock 22 pistols he had ordered online. If only there had been a way to look into a crista...

[District: 'Constitution' booklets cross into politics](#)

(Citrus County Chronicle © 10/02/2011)

INVERNESS — It was seen as act of civic duty, providing Citrus County school students with pocket-size booklets containing the U.S. Constitution and Declaration of Independence. But the two groups, working independently of each other, went a step further. One set of booklets included advertisements for the Heritage Foundation, a conservative think-tank that seeks to shape public po...

[Florida Walmart stores to sell lottery tickets](#)

(Florida Today © 10/02/2011)

TALLAHASSEE ? Florida may have just hit a jackpot. Wal-Mart, the world?s largest retailer, has agreed to end its long-standing refusal to sell lottery tickets in its U.S. stores after reaching a deal with the Florida Lottery. Starting in early October the retailer will embark on a pilot program at 27 Walmart neighborhood markets that stretch across central, southwest and South Florida. The firs...

[Day 1 of series: Southwest Florida schools face crucial test in creating tomorrow's workforce](#)

(Ft. Myers News-Press © 10/02/2011)

Southwest Florida schools are struggling to produce smart graduates ready to jump into the workforce. Instead, the school districts are developing students who are below-average in reading, writing and science in a system that hasn't changed much in 100 years. And educators and business leaders say it won't get better until the old system is cast aside for a new one that focuses less on testing ...

[Despite criticism, standardized tests here to stay in Florida](#)

(Ft. Myers News-Press © 10/02/2011)

Bonita Springs Middle School teacher Sandra Andrews will administer 27 state-mandated standardized tests to her eighth-grade students this year. Twenty-four of those tests will take two class periods to complete, which means that her students will spend 51 class periods, or 34 hours, testing. "The time left to actually educate students, to teach them to reason and comprehend, is less and less eac...

[Liberty Bank sells 5-acre tract for new charter school](#)

(Ft. Myers News-Press © 10/02/2011)

?Liberty Bank FSB sold a five-acre commercial tract at 8870, 8871, 8890 and 8891 Daniels Commons Drive, Fort Myers, to DeLaSalle Academy of Fort Myers Inc. for a new charter school. The property sold for \$1,400,000 and was brokered by Jay Lozano of DeRupo & Viera Realty Group and Jim McMenamy of Re/Max Realty Group Commercial Division. ?Woodruff Commercial Realty Venetian Plaza LLC purchased 3,4...

[Many ways to measure education success](#)

(Ft. Myers News-Press © 10/02/2011)

Comparing national K-20 education statistics isn't an easy task because states report student assessments in different ways. States use as many as three different graduation rate formulas to track diplomas, often picking the one that makes them look the best. Aside from national SAT and ACT tests that most students take, each state also has different tests to assess classroom achievement. In Flo...

[Education coverage leading to summit starts today](#)

(Ft. Myers News-Press © 10/02/2011)

How is Southwest Florida's educational system faring in developing a world class workforce? What are the gaps and how can we move forward to close those gaps? Those are the questions The News-Press Media Group addresses in a special series beginning today. On Wednesday, we will host a landmark regional conversation about the critical importance and interrelationship between educational excellen...

[UF wants to charge market-rate tuition for 5 online programs](#)

(Gainesville Sun © 10/02/2011)

For the second straight year, the University of Florida is seeking to charge market-rate tuition for several graduate programs. Last week, UF submitted proposals to the Florida Board of Governors to charge market rates for five online programs in a range of disciplines. They're part of UF's efforts to gain access to new markets and increase revenue ...

[Board OKs Tutoring Program](#)

(Lakeland Ledger © 10/02/2011)

BARTOW | The Polk County School District is striving to find consistency in how it tutors second- and third-grade students who are struggling in reading. Board members approved using \$1.8 million of district funds to implement the Catapult Learning program at its meeting Tuesday. The vote was 6-1, with Debra Wright dissenting. The tutoring progra...

[New Florida state motto: 'This space available'](#)

(Miami Herald © 10/02/2011)

Among Florida's beggared public institutions, their budgets desiccated, even a school bus looks like a big yellow business opportunity. Those unnatural sounds breaching the quiet along the state's network of nature trails? The voices of the outdoor advertising industry, offering to re-decorate those economically antithetical pathways. The Sunshine State's new motto: "This...

[New tech tools in classroom can be game changer](#)

(Miami Herald © 10/02/2011)

Imagine a classroom where every child moves at his own pace. Where lesson plans are customized to every student's individual strengths and weaknesses. Where a teacher spends less time grading papers and more time interacting one-on-one with students who are struggling — or who need to move ahead faster. Where real-time data on student progress makes a once-a-year standardized test obs...

[Editorial: Education ... Collier County schools, community coming together](#)

(Naples Daily News © 10/02/2011)

Something appears to be changing in the community. People seem to be more willing to step up and speak out about public education. Examples: The public hearings to gather input on criteria and a job description for a superintendent to succeed a.inline_topic: hover { background-color: #EAEAEA; } Dennis Thompson at the helm of Collier County Public Schools. Then came public attention and input a...

[Steve Hart: Guest commentary ... Let's do the math](#)

(Naples Daily News © 10/02/2011)

What if: *410,000 companies in Florida saw payroll taxes cut in half? * We invested almost \$1.6 billion to improve Florida's highways and transit system and, in the process, create 20,500 new jobs? * We invested nearly \$1.7 billion to save and additionally support nearly 26,000 Florida teachers, police officers and fire fighters? * We spent nearly \$1.3 billion to upgrade Florida schools to 21s...

[Palm Beach County seeks input on schools superintendent search](#)

(Palm Beach Post © 10/02/2011)

If you're interested in education in Palm Beach County, now's your chance to join a lively conversation about the next superintendent of schools. Beginning Monday in Palm Beach Gardens, the School Board is holding seven community meetings to hear what people prefer in an education chief. "The decisions we make now will have a lasting impact on our schools and the quality of e...

[Shelter made for JFK is a Cold War remnant](#)

(Sarasota Herald-Tribune © 10/02/2011)

PEANUT ISLAND - A nuclear bomb shelter was a must-have in the 1950s and '60s. Magazines displayed backyard do-it-yourself versions. Castro Convertibles pitched its foldaway "jet beds" as bunker-ready. And a pair of publicity-savvy newlyweds actually spent their honeymoon inside one for 14 days. President John F. Kennedy, who was facing a series o...

[Busing battle showed dark side of Kirk's flamboyance](#)

(Sarasota Herald-Tribune © 10/02/2011)

Claude Kirk, Florida's 36th governor, died last week, in relative obscurity, two generations after leaving office. Most news accounts of his passing focused – appropriately – on his flamboyant style, dramatic flair and combative governance. A few obituaries, including one from The Associated Press, mentioned his opposition to court-ordered busing ...

[Business group seeks review of Sarasota County schools](#)

(Sarasota Herald-Tribune © 10/02/2011)

A group of local business leaders is calling for an independent review of Sarasota County Schools, saying an outside look will help ensure that looming budget cuts do not harm education. The new Citizens for Academic Success in Education group includes representatives from chambers of commerce, real estate groups and leadership of the pro-business A...

[Voluntary Pre-K editorial lacked research](#)

(South Florida Sun-Sentinel © 10/02/2011)

Your Sept. 7 editorial about Voluntary Pre-K stated that providers should be "weeded out" if 70 percent of their children do not pass testing. It is sad that in preparation for your editorial, you did not talk with the Broward Early Learning Coalition or local providers. If you had, you would have learned the limitations of VPK, including ridiculously low funding provided by the Florida Legislatur...

[Parker: Quality over quantity in higher ed](#)

(St. Augustine Record © 10/02/2011)

By KATHLEEN PARKER Copyright 2011 . All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed. October 2, 2011 - 12:14am
Parker: Quality over quantity in higher ed Syndicated columnist Jobs, jobs, jobs, we keep hearing. But for whom, whom, whom? Certainly not for the many young Americans being graduated from colleges that have prepared them inadeq...

[Why don't more public schools offer bowling? Hillsborough athletic director gives two reasons](#)

(St. Petersburg Times © 10/02/2011)

TAMPA Charlie Heinke admittedly isn't what most people would call an athlete. But Heinke is athletic, having participated in tennis and swimming at Tampa Prep. Now, the 17-year-old senior has found something that matches his abilities, athleticism and interest level: bowling. "I like it a lot," said Heinke, a new bowler on the Tampa Prep boys team. "I'm not particularly talented at it, but bowl..."

[Review: Two new books explore lesser known moments of Zora Neale Hurston's life](#)

(St. Petersburg Times © 10/02/2011)

It isn't easy to sum up Zora Neale Hurston in a phrase. Born in Alabama in 1891 and raised in Eatonville, the Florida town that was the first all-black incorporated community in the United States, Hurston became an accomplished, globetrotting anthropologist and folklorist as well as a literary star with her fiction, poetry, essays, plays and memoir, *Dust Tracks on a Road* — all at a time wh...

[Media, technology assistance suffer amid budget cuts at Pasco schools](#)

(St. Petersburg Times © 10/02/2011)

WESLEY CHAPEL — Jean Marie Whaley was frustrated. Six weeks into the school year, Whaley, one of Pasco's first instructional technology specialists, still had not found the time to train all teachers in the district's new math software programs. She had iPads, digital cameras and SMART boards sitting unused. A long list of requests for her expertise remained unfulfilled. As part of ...

[Hillsborough County schools' career education programs fuse academics with work skills](#)

(St. Petersburg Times © 10/02/2011)

Mariann Byrd passed her first Advanced Placement test as a freshman at Spoto High School. She plans to pass another this year and more after that for college credit and a jump start on her career — in costume design. "I'd like to stay in Florida, but if I have to move to New York, that's okay," said Mariann, who sewed dresses for the prom, her eighth-grade dance and numerous contests....

[Kathleen Parker: Toss the tanning beds and offer a quality education](#)

(Tallahassee Democrat © 10/02/2011)

Jobs, jobs, jobs, we keep hearing. But for whom, whom, whom? Certainly not for the many young Americans being graduated from colleges that have prepared them inadequately for the competitive marketplace in which they find themselves. The failure of colleges and universities to teach basic skills, while coddling students with plush dorms and self-directed "study," is a dot-connecting exercise for ...

[Official wants Regent control shifted](#)

(Tampa Tribune © 10/02/2011)

TAMPA – Public perception of a new community center near Brandon has grown so toxic that one Hillsborough County commissioner wants to wrest control of the building from the nonprofit board that runs it. Commissioner Sandy Murman said Brandon area residents are outraged about the high rentals at The Regent, a Greek-revival-style building built with \$7 million of public money. The...

[US: Too many rules in higher education, study finds](#)

(University World News © 10/02/2011)

After surveying more than 2,000 higher education officials about which federal regulations they find too burdensome, a federal panel now has its answer: almost all of them, writes Libby A Nelson for Inside Higher Ed. The Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance last week released the preliminary findings of its Higher Education Regulations Study, which asked college officials from all s...

[BANNING THE FIRST AMENDMENT](#)

(American Reporter © 10/01/2011)

BLOOMSBURG, Pa. - Parents demanded it be banned. School superintendents placed it in restricted sections of their libraries. It is the most challenged book four of the past five years, according to the American Library Association (ALA). "It" is a 32-page illustrated children's book, And Tango Makes Three, by Peter Parnell and Justin Richardson, with illustrations by Henry Cole. The book is based ...

[Latinos Need More Support to Raise Abysmal Graduation Rates, Report Says](#)

(Chronicle of Higher Education © 10/01/2011)

By Lacey Johnson The college graduation rate for Latinos is less than half of the national average and will not improve until they are offered more help as they come up through the education pipeline, according to a report released Friday by the College Board Advocacy & Policy Center. The study, conducted in 2009, found that only 19.2 percent of Latinos between the ages of 25 and 34 had earn...

[House bill would drop Pell for part-time students](#)

(CommunityCollegeTimes © 10/01/2011)

An appropriations bill proposed by House Republicans would keep the Pell Grant maximum at \$5,550 for fiscal year 2012, but part-time students would no longer be eligible for the grants. The proposal crafted by Rep. Denny Rehberg (R-Mont.), chair of the Labor, Education, Health and Human Services Appropriations Subcommittee, would include other changes to Pell to reduce program costs by \$2.3 billi...

[2 students injured on Orange City roads this week remain hospitalized](#)

(Daytona Beach News-Journal © 10/01/2011)

Michael Salamon, 11, was at Arnold Palmer Children's Hospital in Orlando on Friday because of injuries he suffered after getting hit by a car after school Wednesday in Orange City. (Salamon family) Sharleen Vazquez Two West Volusia students were recovering Friday in hospitals days after they were struck by vehicles as th...

[School director reassigned; audit underway](#)

(Florida Keys Keysnet © 10/01/2011)

Sunny Booker, director of the Monroe County School District's Academic Connection for Excellence, was reassigned two weeks ago while two other administrators were brought in to overhaul operations at the alternative school she headed. The district's legal team and Chief Internal Auditor Ken Gentile are both investigating Booker and the operations at ACE, although little information regarding the ...

[Teacher had criminal history](#)

(Florida Keys Keysnews © 10/01/2011)

Teacher had criminal history Florida Keys News - Key West Citizen Saturday, October 1, 2011 Teacher had criminal history BY GWEN FILOSA Citizen Staff gfilosa@keysnews.com When the Monroe County School District hired a recently embattled math teacher in 2005, it knew he had been charged with soliciting prostitution in 2001, sanctioned by the state in 2004 and not rehired because he hid the ...

[School probes party pay](#)

(Florida Keys Keysnews © 10/01/2011)

An 11-year veteran school administrator has been moved from her United Street office to the Monroe County School District headquarters on Trumbo Road, as the district investigates how a \$300 graduation party at a Key West restaurant was paid for, the superintendent said Friday. Sunny Booker remains the director of Alternative Education and Safe/Healthy Schools, but her job as principal of a...

[Are evaluations a teaching tool or trouble brewing?](#)

(Florida Today © 10/01/2011)

Brevard's teachers union is pushing for parts of a newly revamped evaluation plan to be included in its union contract ? a request teachers say will protect them. But district leaders warn that could quickly turn the new teacher evaluation process into a ?nightmare.? What elements of the new evaluation will be included in the contract ? and thus, open to challenge ? is among the latest in a strin...

[Schools seek charity's aid as kids wear plastic bags for undies](#)

(Gainesville Sun © 10/01/2011)

Some elementary school students in Alachua County don't have the basics when they leave for class — something Rawlings Elementary School Principal Beth LeClear says she sees every day. "I have kids whose socks are so filthy because they only have one pair," she said. "I have kids that have no bottoms on their shoes." And she has children who ...

[Judge backs schools in suit over 'Islam is of the Devil' shirts](#)

(Gainesville Sun © 10/01/2011)

The Alachua County School Board did not violate the free-speech rights of members of Dove World Outreach Center when students from the church were sent home from school for wearing T-shirts bearing the words "Islam is of the Devil," a district court judge ruled Friday. Senior District Judge Stephan Mickle wrote that the U.S. Supreme Court has cons...

[Hispanic Students Leaving Alabama Schools In Wake of New Immigration Law](#)

(Lakeland Ledger © 10/01/2011)

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. | Hispanic students have started vanishing from Alabama public schools in the wake of a court ruling that upheld the state's tough new law cracking down on illegal immigration. Education officials said scores of immigrant families have withdrawn their children from classes or kept them home this week, afraid that sending the kids ...

[Educators outline plan to improve Hispanic graduation rate](#)

(Miami Herald © 10/01/2011)

President Barack Obama and others have called for the United States to dramatically increase its number of college graduates, but a report released by the College Board on Friday warns that America's Hispanic students — now the largest minority in K-12 public schools — are significantly trailing their classmates when it comes to attaining degrees. Unless that trend changes, th...

[Ex-Broward schools employee gets 5 years for stealing identities](#)

(Miami Herald © 10/01/2011)

A former Broward school district employee was sentenced Friday to a little over five years in federal prison for pilfering teachers' personal information and selling it to identity thieves. Jasmin Rembert, who spent 10 years in the district's teacher-certification department, was responsible for the theft of 42 people's identities statewide, with crooks racking up about \$408,000...

[Jeb Bush: Latino Education "Absolutely Critical"](#)

(NBC6.NET South Florida © 10/01/2011)

Following a study that says Latino students have the lowest achievement levels and a higher chance of dropping out of high school, former governor Jeb Bush said Friday in Miami that their progress is 'absolutely critical' to the future of the United States. "A third [of ...

[Obama administration challenges decision on Alabama immigration law](#)

(Orlando Sentinel © 10/01/2011)

The Obama administration is appealing a judge's decision in Alabama that upheld key parts of the nation's strictest state immigration law, including requirements for the police and school officials to question the status of persons, including children, who may be in the country illegally. U.S. District Judge Sharon Blackburn cleared the way Wednesday for much of Alabama's new law to take effe...

[Financial mismanagement leads schools' audit committee to recommend tighter controls](#)

(Palm Beach Post © 10/01/2011)

Principals in Palm Beach County should be held more accountable for the financial controls in their schools, the Palm Beach County School District's audit committee recommended this week. That suggested new policy came after auditors doing a surprise cash count this summer at Galaxy Elementary School found the latest in what officials called a long line of bookkeeping problems. "This is one ...

[Escambia High School coaches benched](#)

(Pensacola News Journal © 10/01/2011)

Escambia High School's head football coach and an assistant coach are under investigation by School District officials and the Escambia County Sheriff's Office. Head coach Scott Anderson and assistant coach Timothy Jansky both are on paid administrative leave while the Sheriff's Office probes allegations they tried to intimidate a football player into not pursuing criminal charges against another ...

[Bus accidents up slightly from last year](#)

(Santa Rosa Press Gazette © 10/01/2011)

The school districts bus service provider Durham School Services presented their quarterly report to school board members last Thursday as the bus provider saw an increase in the number of preventable bus accidents over last year's statistics, while the company has saved money even with the rising cost of fuel. According to the quarterly report, from June 2010 to August 2010, the average pri...

[Sing a song](#)

(Santa Rosa Press Gazette © 10/01/2011)

The sounds of music, vocal music that is, has returned to Hobbs and King middle schools. Two weeks ago a new program was launched to offer a chorus program to middle school students at these two schools on Tuesday's on a volunteer basis. So far the sounds and the numbers have been amazing as over 80 students are volunteering to participate in the new choir program supported by the City of Mi...

[Palm Beach County schools superintendent search heating up](#)

(South Florida Sun-Sentinel © 10/01/2011)

If you're interested in education in Palm Beach County, now's your chance to join a lively conversation about the next superintendent of schools. Beginning Monday in Palm Beach Gardens, the School Board is holding seven community meetings to hear what people prefer in an education chief. "The decisions we make now will have a lasting impact on our schools and the quality of education throughout ...

[USF Polytechnic not ready for independence, trustee says](#)

(St. Petersburg Times © 10/01/2011)

The head of the board that oversees the University of South Florida's Polk County branch said Friday that it's not the right time for the campus to become independent. Next month, the Florida Board of Governors is scheduled to consider a bid from USF Polytechnic to sever its ties to the main campus. "Right now USF Poly is not a complete package," Gene Engle said of the small commuter school, whi...

[Hernando School Board may adopt comprehensive smoking ban](#)

(St. Petersburg Times © 10/01/2011)

BROOKSVILLE — There aren't many places where Hernando school workers and visitors can smoke on district property. Soon, there may be no places at all. The School Board on Tuesday will consider a comprehensive tobacco-free policy, advocated by the state Department of Health, that would forbid smoking and other forms of tobacco use on all district property, including athletic fields and park...

[College boards don't reflect community](#)

(St. Petersburg Times © 10/01/2011)

Not one woman sits on the Board of Trustees at St. Petersburg College, where more than six of every 10 students are female. There's only one woman and one minority on the board at Hillsborough Community College, where women and minorities make up 56 percent and 50 percent, respectively, of the student body. Gov. Rick Scott, in finally making appointments at these two taxpayer-funded institutions, ...

[Education mandate for online class puts pressure on Florida's rural districts](#)

(St. Petersburg Times © 10/01/2011)

Florida legislators have strapped school districts with yet another expensive unfunded mandate. Gov. Rick Scott signed into law this year legislation that requires high school students to take at least one online class to graduate. The law went into effect this term and affects incoming freshmen. The measure seems benign at first blush, but it will

unduly stress districts that do not have de...

[**Bob Minsky: Why aren't St. Lucie County residents demanding educational excellence?**](#)

(Stuart News © 10/01/2011)

May I take the presumptuous position to assume that almost everyone in St. Lucie County agrees the quality of education for our children is a significant factor for their successful and sustainable future? I cannot conceive of any parent not wanting the best possible education for their children. We all share the cost of providing education through our taxes whether as property owners or renters. T...

[**Quality Over Quantity in Higher Ed**](#)

(Sunshine State News © 10/01/2011)

Posted: October 1, 2011 3:55 AM WASHINGTON – Jobs, jobs, jobs, we keep hearing. But for whom, whom, whom? Certainly not for the many young Americans being graduated from colleges that have prepared them inadequately for the competitive marketplace in which they find themselves. The failure of colleges and universities to teach basic skills, while coddling them with plush dorms...

[**Report: Fla. Board of Governors on Graduation, Retention Rates**](#)

(Tallahassee-WCTV (CBS) © 10/01/2011)

MIAMI, FLORIDA – September 30, 2011 - The State University System of Florida's six-year graduation rates and second-year retention rates are very strong – and in the top 10 nationally – when compared to the nation's largest public university systems. Graduation rates for the State University System's minority students are also competitive, with specific rates f...

[**11-year-old fiddling phenom hitting all the right notes**](#)

(Tampa Bay Online © 10/01/2011)

SAN ANTONIO – When Ingrid Richter was a baby, her mother knew how to soothe and quiet her when she cried. "I'd turn on some music," Debbie Richter said. Now 11, Ingrid has won a scholarship to perform with the Tampa Metropolitan Youth Orchestra. An avid violinist and fiddle player, she also has performed at the Florida Folk Festival and plays weekly with the Wesley Chapel Wind...

[**FAMU, UF to get together on dental school proposals**](#)

(WFSU Newsroom © 10/01/2011)

A partnership may be emerging between Florida A&M and the University of Florida. Lynn Hatter reports the two schools are looking to collaborate on a mutually-beneficial issue: A dental school. Florida A & M wants to establish a dental school to improve minority and rural access to oral healthcare. The University of Florida wants to boost enrollment at its existing program. The University of Centr...

[**Scott turns attention to parent-driven charter schools**](#)

(WFSU Newsroom © 10/01/2011)

Florida Governor Rick Scott is looking at changing the rules for converting public schools into charters. Lynn Hatter reports the governor is floating the idea in a draft report of his 2012 legislative priorities. Florida law allows 51-percent of teachers in a failing public school to vote on whether they want that school converted into a charter. Scott is looking to enact a Parent-Trigger, whic...

[Vero Beach teacher threatened with knives during class at Vero Beach High School](#)

(WPTV NBC 5 Palm Beach County, West Palm Beach © 10/01/2011)

VERO BEACH, Fla. - A freshman threatened a Vero Beach High School teacher with two knives during class Thursday morning, according to an affidavit. The 16-year-old was charged with felony aggravated assault on a school board employee. The Indian River County Sheriff's Office took the teenage into custody and placed him at the Juvenile Justice Center in Fort Pierce. The incident happened about ...

[Manatee County sees truancy rates improve](#)

(WWSB ABC Sarasota County © 10/01/2011)

BRADENTON - According to a 2007 study, students with more than 20 absences a year have a less than 1 in 5 chance of graduating. Those numbers have prompted school districts on the Suncoast to come up with plans to keep students in school. There have been 50 truancy court cases since the beginning of this school year in the Manatee County School District. But compared to what officials have seen...

Have a super day! Please see the articles below.

Deborah



PresenterMedia

Tallahassee Democrat

October 2, 2011

Changes likely for state workers' health care

By Bill Cotterell Florida Capital Bureau

State employees and retirees will likely face insurance premium increases and cuts in benefits next year, as legislators look to address a billion-dollar projected spike in costs for a "paternalistic" health-care system.

The "carrot and stick" approach laid out in a consultant's report could lead to higher premiums, bigger deductibles and more copayments for participants in the state group-insurance plan and health maintenance organizations.

The most aggressive proposals could cost state workers thousands more a year for reduced coverage.

Proposals also include inducements for better health, everything from charging smokers extra to putting healthier snacks in vending machines.

And it could mean graduated premiums for bigger families, rather than the two-tier brackets that now charge \$50 a month for lone employees or \$180 for families — childless couples or big broods — in the regular-employee class.

State Sen. Bill Montford, D-Tallahassee, said state employees are "underpaid and underappreciated"

after five years without a pay raise and a mandatory 3-percent retirement contribution begun in July.

Montford said the state shouldn't close budget gaps by hiking premiums and cutting benefits.

"Keep in mind, the reason a lot of people went into state government was certainly not to get rich, but because you had good benefits and job security," said Montford. "Both of those have been weakened now, to a certain degree."

The 72-page study by Buck Consultants, sent to legislators by the Department of Management Services this weekend, says "total expenses under the State Employees Group Health Program are expected to increase by more than \$1 billion, from just over \$2 billion in fiscal year 2011-2012 to more than \$3.1 billion in fiscal year 2014-2015."

The Buck study said the state plan covers more than 140,000 active employees and more than 7,000 retirees, not yet eligible for Medicare. After two years of considering changes without acting, legislators this year directed DMS to contract a study of all options. Buck did not make recommendations, but ran projected costs on different options among conservative, moderate and aggressive solutions.

"The state's current approach to its health plan is best described as paternalistic, whereby the state serves as the architect/custodian of the plan, providing general benefits and allowing employees to be passive, and perhaps even entitled, with little concern about costs," said the Buck report.

A spokesman for Gov. Rick Scott declined to address the report specifically, but said the governor supports choice, competition, personal responsibility and accountability as general principles regarding health care.

Rep. Michelle Rehwinkel Vasilinda, a Tallahassee Democrat, said she'll be watching developments carefully.

"I'll be looking very closely at each one of these measures to see that state employees are treated fairly. Last session, they took the brunt of balancing the budget on their backs," Rehwinkel Vasilinda said. "There's a point where 'paternalism' ends and 'big brotherism' begins."

She said all employers should encourage healthy living, but that backing it up with financial penalties might be improper for the government to do, even with its own employees.

Most rank-and-file state employees pay \$50 a month for single coverage and \$180 for family insurance. Senior management and exempt, at-will workers, as well as legislative employees and those in the governor's office, pay \$8.34 a month for single coverage and \$30 for family insurance.

The state pays the lion's share of premiums with subsidies that amount to between 86 percent and 98 percent of the total cost. The state's share of premiums is \$12,760 for family coverage of Career Service workers and \$14,560 for families of the higher-ups.

Buck's study said a "conservative approach" to changing premiums might be to simply raise rates for employees in HMOs, which have better coverage than the group plan, and to "update" premiums in the preferred provider organization group plan.

An "aggressive approach" to premiums would be to cap state contributions at \$6,000 a year for single coverage and twice that for families, providing "the greatest incentive to employees to enroll in the most cost effective plan option," the Buck study said.

Scott and legislative budget writers will decide, in the session starting next January, how conservative, moderate or aggressive they want to be in health care cost containment.

The Buck study said smokers make up 21 percent of the workforce and cost an average \$3,391 more in annual medical costs per person. The study said the state and employees could save \$28 million a year if 35 percent of those workers kicked the habit. Another \$11.3 million would be gained by a \$50 monthly premium surcharge for smokers.

The study said the state could encourage workers to take health-risk assessments and biometric screenings, billing those who don't \$500 a year. That attitude adjustment could be underscored by "healthy cafeteria and vending machine options," along with "healthy meeting refreshments" at conferences.

"On-site gyms aren't necessary, but 'walking breaks' (instead of donut breaks) can be encouraged, along with taking the stairs rather than the elevator," said Buck.

Rep. Alan Williams, D-Tallahassee, said shifting costs from the state to the employees will be popular in the Republican-run Legislature next year.

"There are about 157 legislators who aren't from the capital area and have no appreciation of what our state employees do for the state every day," he said. "They haven't had a pay raise in years and this session, we took 3 percent from them. Where is it all going

The Chronicle of Higher Education

October 2, 2011

Education Dept.'s Reform Plan for Teacher Training Gets Mixed Reviews

By Collin Eaton

Washington – Arne Duncan, the U.S. secretary of education, laid out measures on Friday that would change how teachers' colleges are evaluated and supported, but the plan has some sticking points for teachers' colleges and teachers' unions.

At a forum here hosted by Education Sector, a nonpartisan research group, Mr. Duncan said that the American teacher-preparation system was a mixed bag of high- and low-quality colleges, and that 62 percent of new teachers said they were unprepared to begin teaching after graduating from those programs. One problem, he said, is that colleges are not held accountable for their students' teaching quality after graduation—measured by the performance of their graduates' elementary- and secondary-school students on standardized tests.

"It's stunning to me that, for decades, teacher-preparation programs have had virtually no feedback loop to identify where their programs prepare students well for the classroom and where they need to improve," Mr. Duncan said. "Our teacher-preparation programs have operated largely in the dark without access to meaningful data that tells them how effective their graduates are in the classroom."

The Education Department's plan, described in a report released on Friday, rests on slashing the number of items teachers' colleges would be required to report on a federal survey—currently 440 fields—and instead requiring them to report on the performance, job placement, and retention rates of their graduates' students.

That means following the example of Louisiana and Tennessee, two states that now have the data to see how well teachers from preparation programs perform. In Tennessee, the leading teachers' colleges produce teachers who are two or three times as likely to reach the top quintile in a given subject based on an assessment of test-score gains made by their students, and the worst colleges have graduates who are two or three times as likely to fall into the lowest quintiles, says the report, "Our Future, Our Teacher: The Obama Administration's Plan for Teacher Education Reform and Improvement."

A 'Foot on the Accelerator'

Randi Weingarten, president of the American Federation of Teachers, said in a written statement that the teachers' union was surprised that the department wanted to judge preparation programs with students' scores on standardized tests—a measure the tests were never designed for. Further, the use of standardized testing is under scrutiny from a number of sources, but the department "appears to be putting its foot on the accelerator by calling for yet another use for the tests," Ms. Weingarten said.

"The challenges we face today to improve teacher quality require a comprehensive approach," she said. "Revamping teacher-preparation programs is one part of a solution that also must include high-quality instruction for new teachers, as well as mentoring and professional-development programs that expose beginning educators to the best classroom models and the most skillful practitioners."

The Education Department's plan also would shift funds from the \$110-million Teach Grant program—which disbursed grants to 37,000 students at teachers' colleges last year—to a proposed \$185-million Presidential Teaching Fellows program that would provide scholarships of up to \$10,000 to high-achieving students in their last year of study at high-performing teachers' colleges.

Recipients of the scholarships would teach for three years in high-need schools after graduation.

The plan would essentially eliminate the Teach Grant program in its current form, and aid would go only to states that commit to ensuring high standards for teacher training and licensure. Part of the money from the fellowship program would pay for upgraded licensure and certification standards in the states, according to the department.

Hurting or Helping

Sharon P. Robinson, president and chief executive of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, said in a written statement that the Teach Grant program had helped hundreds of students since 2008, and should not be folded into the Teaching Fellows program. Ms. Robinson acknowledged that the grant program could use some changes—such as prohibiting low-performing students from receiving the grants—but she said eliminating it would hurt people studying to be teachers and their future students.

The AFT's Ms. Weingarten agreed. "Rewarding a few deserving candidates is a fine idea, but this is the time to address the larger structural issues confronting teacher education today," she said. The union president said that, nationwide, schools lose half of their teachers in the first five years of teaching, and that the Education Department should focus on improving the entire cadre of students at teachers' colleges, rather than setting up a competition that would support just high-achieving students.

However, other education leaders expressed their support for the department's plan.

It seems to be "a strong combination," Arthur E. Levine, president of the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation, said in an e-mail. The foundation has offered a state-based teaching fellowship that measures learning outcomes in Indiana, Michigan, and Ohio. The group's experience shows, he wrote, that "high-ability people" can be attracted to teach science, technology, engineering and math, and that universities "have the capacity to transform their teacher-education programs." Mr. Levine is a former president of Teachers College at Columbia University.

Deborah Loewenberg Ball, dean of the University of Michigan's School of Education, said in a written statement that creating performance standards for teacher-preparation programs would be a vital improvement to how the system works. "This teacher-education plan takes an important stand—it's the outcomes of teacher preparation that matter most," Ms. Ball said.

Under the plan announced on Friday, the department would also make a \$40-million budget request for teacher-preparation programs that serve mostly minority students. "There's a growing imbalance between what our students look like and what our teachers look like," Mr. Duncan said.

Ms. Robinson, president of the teacher-colleges group, said she fully supported the department's effort to diversify the teaching work force.

The Education Department will work with Congress to try to obtain funds to carry out the plan and with teachers' colleges on the collection of data about the effectiveness of their graduates.

Jackson Sun

Teachers: New evaluation system time consuming: Some question whether extensive lesson plans, increased observations are necessary

11:31 PM, Oct. 1, 2011

Jackson-Madison County principals and teachers say a new teacher evaluation system is time consuming and stressful, but they are adjusting.

Northeast Middle School Principal Jimmy Bailey said he's in classrooms at least two to three times a week to ensure all 39 of his teachers have the required four to six evaluations during the school year.

"Between handling discipline and day-to-day operations, the evaluations are a big chunk of the day," Bailey said.

It's near the end of the first nine weeks of school, and Beech Bluff fourth-grade teacher Derrick Taylor has already had two classroom visits from his principal, Pam Betler.

"The first visit was a 15-minute classroom environment observation," said Taylor, a tenured teacher with 16 years of experience.

The second visit was late last month when Betler sat in on an hour of math instruction.

As a tenured teacher, Taylor must have four classroom observations this school year. Apprentice teachers — those in their first few years of teaching — will be evaluated six times during the year.

The new evaluation requirements were approved by the state Legislature in January along with changes in how tenure is granted. Prior to the changes, all Jackson-Madison County teachers were evaluated once a year. The waiting period for teachers to be granted tenure was increased from three years to five years.

Teachers say the new evaluation system brings more paperwork and planning, which adds stress and takes the focus away from educating students. Some say the evaluation rating system presents unrealistic expectations.

Read the rest of this print-exclusive story in Sunday's edition of The Jackson Sun.

— Tajuana Cheshier, 425-9643