

**From:** Smith, Kevin  
**Sent time:** Wednesday, March 14, 2012 10:43:24 AM  
**To:** Cari Miller (Cari@excelined.org) <Cari@excelined.org>; walt\_griffin@scps.k12.fl.us; Lee, Laurie; Colle, Hope  
**Subject:** FW: Education Roundup 3-13-12

---

FYI – have a great day!

Sincerely,

Kevin Smith,  
Deputy Director,  
Just Read, Florida! Office  
Florida Department of Education  
325 W. Gaines Street, Suite 501  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399  
(850) 245-0503  
(850) 245-5105 (Fax)  
[www.justreadflorida.com](http://www.justreadflorida.com)



---

**From:** Mongiovi, Jamie  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 13, 2012 8:46 AM  
**Subject:** Education Roundup 3-13-12

## Florida Department of Education



### [2012 Legislative Session wrap up](#) (Chiplew Bugle © 03/13/2012)

TALLAHASSEE – On January 10, as legislators gathered to convene to 2012 Legislative Session, Florida Governor Rick Scott used his State of the State message to urge support for his budget, calling for a \$1 billion increase in state education funding. Lawmakers heeded the Governor's message, and education was a major focus of the legislative session, resulting in the allocation to education of the ...

### [Education 'an emotional topic for many'](#) (Fernandina Beach News Leader © 03/13/2012)

The last two weeks of the legislative session always include many long hours. This is the time where endurance and stamina are most critical. The difference in a bill dying or being adopted can often be a direct result of your commitment and tenacity to overcome the objections. Monday of last week was the 48th day of session. That afternoon I attended the final Education Committee meeting. Two hour...

[Duval may face fierce competition for high-caliber superintendent](#)

(Florida Times-Union © 03/13/2012)

The Duval County School Board could face a bidding war for its next superintendent. Chairwoman Betty Burney said it is the board's ambition to select a new superintendent before the Aug. 14 election for board members, with that individual being on the job by the end of the year. Outgoing Superintendent Ed Pratt-Dannals, whose contract was not renewed, is leaving Dec. 31. Competition, however, is...

---

[How did UF grad schools fare in U.S. News and World Report's rankings?](#)

(Gainesville Sun © 03/13/2012)

The University of Florida's College of Education made a major jump in U.S. News and World Report's rankings of top graduate programs, rising 18 spots from last year. The college placed 34th in the annual rankings of top education schools in the magazine's 2013 edition of Best Graduate Schools, posted online today and available April 3 in stores. UF...

---

[Rewarding Teaching](#)

(Inside Higher Education © 03/13/2012)

What would it look like if, say, the Federal government were to decide to prioritize good college-level teaching at the same level that it supports university research? This piece in IHE addressed the question, but it struck me as falling badly short of reality. Briefly, the piece suggests that Congress establish a National Pedagogy Foundation as a sort of counterpart to the NEH o...

---

[LA schools brace for deep cuts, protests expected](#)

(Lakeland Ledger © 03/13/2012)

LOS ANGELES - Scores of teachers and other Los Angeles Unified employees are expected to protest deep program cuts as the school board seeks ways to close a \$390 million budget gap. The board is scheduled to vote at its 1 p.m. meeting Tuesday on a budget plan that could slash adult education, preschool, elementary arts programs and busing. The board also will decide whether to ask voters...

---

[Students' religious rights restored](#)

(Miami Herald © 03/13/2012)

Re Myriam Marquez's March 4 column, What an uninspiring bunch, Lord: The point of allowing student-led, student-initiated inspirational messages is to end discrimination by restoring basic fairness, equality, tolerance and respect for children of all faiths. Student speech is protected as long as it isn't disruptive and the fact that someone, somewhere, imagines that it may somehow ...

---

[State: Ex-porn actor and substitute teacher can pursue teaching certification](#)

(Palm Beach Post © 03/13/2012)

Posted: 2:58 p.m. Monday, March 12, 2012 A former porn actor who was fired from his job as a Miami-Dade Public Schools substitute teacher can pursue teaching certification, a state commission has ruled. Shawn Loftis is also trying to get his substitute teaching job back. "Pornography is not against the law," said Loftis, 36. The stat...

---

[Tuition bill puts future of Florida Prepaid in question](#)

(South Florida Sun-Sentinel © 03/13/2012)

Newly passed legislation allowing some universities to charge whatever rates they want could spell the death of Florida's popular prepaid tuition program. The bill, which awaits Gov. Rick Scott's signature, would permit the University of Florida and Florida State University to set their own tuition, rather than facing state-imposed caps. Other universities would get this authority if they're able...

---

#### [A budget only special interests could love](#)

(St. Petersburg Times © 03/13/2012)

Look no further than the 2012-13 state budget headed to Florida Gov. Rick Scott to understand that special interests remain firmly in control of Tallahassee. The \$70 billion spending plan is a study in niche tax breaks financed on the backs of local governments, the courts, public schools, universities, hospitals and in-state retailers. With every legislative seat up for re-election this November,...

---

#### [Florida a National Leader in Private-Sector Job Growth](#)

(Sunshine State News © 03/13/2012)

Jan Hatzius, Chief Economist at Goldman Sachs, and Mark Wilson, President of the Florida Chamber of Commerce | Credit: goldmansachs.com - flchamber.com Bouncing back from tough times, Florida is now among the nation's top job creators. A Goldman Sachs survey found that job growth in four "sand states" – Arizona, California, Florida and Nevada – is outpacing the rest of the country. "I was a l...

---

Please see the column below. Have a great day!

Jamie C. Mongiovi

Office of Communications & Public Affairs

Florida Department of Education

[jamie.mongiovi@fldoe.org](mailto:jamie.mongiovi@fldoe.org)

(850) 245-0413

### **Orlando Sentinel**

#### **Tougher school standards are just what we need**

**By Beth Kassab**

What is the best way to create world-class public schools in Florida?

- 1.) Keep the number of A-rated schools artificially high so Florida looks good and so property values don't fall.
  
- 2.) Demand real accountability. Raise standards. Accept that fewer A's are more meaningful A's. And give students and teachers the resources to meet these new, higher standards.
  
- 3.) Hire Jeb Bush as secretary of education

Put to a vote of the people and No. 3 likely would win. But since that's out of the question, we need to focus on No. 2. And current Secretary of Education Gerard Robinson is already well on the way.

This year the FCAT will be graded on a far stricter standard. The way Florida calculates its graduation rates will get much tougher too. As a result, the number of A schools will drop. And the number of F schools will rise.

That has school superintendents and principals fretting. As well as some politicians inclined to select choice No. 1.

"The families living in those school zones are going to be living in an area that is designated a D or F. That's going to impact their property values dramatically," Republican Sen. David Simmons of Maitland told WMFE. "It's going to impact businesses there. It's going to impact the recruiting of businesses from other states to the state of Florida."

Simmons wanted the state to back off the new, tougher standards and plans to ask Gov. Rick Scott to use his influence and persuade the state Board of Education to delay the more difficult rules.

That seems unlikely. But because schools are economic linchpins, it's worth looking at — and debunking — his argument.

School grades help drive the economy when the system for measuring them is credible. If we hand out A's like Little League participation trophies, they become meaningless.

That why it's important to raise standards. Demand more and get more.

Look at the school grades in your county and you are sure to find a lot of A's. Some schools, though less than a handful, even made the honor roll last year with fewer than 25 percent of their students reading at grade level.

An A should signify excellence. Schools filled with struggling readers hardly seem to fit.

But a rule change that would have meant automatic F's for schools with fewer than quarter of their students reading at grade level was deemed too onerous and left out of this year's changes.

Even so, Seminole County Superintendent Bill Vogel says the new standards are still "too much, too fast."

Seminole County brags about its schools the way Napa Valley brags about wineries. It's that ingrained in the community.

Under the new standards, the number of A schools in Seminole will drop from 45 to 38. The number of B's will rise from nine to 12 and three schools would drop to C's. The new grading system also would give the district two D's.

Seven schools falling out of the A category? That doesn't seem like school-grade Armageddon to me.

It seems like a reasonable increase in expectations and, eventually, an even stronger district.

According to state figures, every time Florida has raised grading standards, the number of lower-performing schools decreased in the following year. In other words, the schools got the message and students rose to the challenge.

It is true that schools need to be well taken care of to meet these higher standards. The Legislature tried to undo some of their damage from earlier years by sending an extra \$1 billion to schools this year. That philosophy needs to continue in years to come, as well.

Increased standards and performance plus increased investment in the state are what will turn the heads of businesses, improve property values and boost Florida to a new level.