**From:** Smith, Kevin
**Sent time:** Monday, March 19, 2012 10:40:25 AM
**To:** Lee, Laurie; Colle, Hope; Walt Griffin <walt_griffin@scps.k12.fl.us>; Cari Miller <Cari@excelined.org>
**Subject:** Fwd: Education Roundup 3-17-12 through 3-19-12

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FYI - have a great week!

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
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Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** "Mongiovi, Jamie" <Jamie.Mongiovi@fldoe.org>
**Date:** March 19, 2012 8:07:59 AM EDT
**Subject: Education Roundup 3-17-12 through 3-19-12**

# Florida Department of Education

## News Clips

## March 17-19, 2012

**Report: US makes modest gains in graduation rate**
(Bradenton Herald © 03/19/2012)

HAGERSTOWN, Md. — The last straw for 17-year-old Alton Burke was a note left on his door. The high school dropout picked up the phone and re-enrolled at South Hagerstown High. Burke missed roughly 200 days of class, but Heather Dixon, the student intervention specialist who left the note, never gave up on him. Aggressive efforts to prevent students such as Burke from dropping out...

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**Report: High school grad rate in Fla. improving**
(Bradenton Herald © 03/19/2012)

MIAMI — A new report on graduation rates finds Florida making improvements, though the overall rate still lags behind the nationwide average. The report released Monday concludes the state's high school graduation rate climbed 5.5 points between 2002 and 2009, one of the largest increases observed. The overall graduation rate was 68.9 percent, lower than the 75.5 nationwide averag...

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**Teachers Observing Teachers: Instructional Rounds**
(Edutopia © 03/19/2012)

A former teacher and instructional coach, is now a transformational leadership coach in the Oakland Unified School District. Teachers and administrators all over are trying to figure out how to support English Learners (ELs). One of the schools that I work with, United for Success Academy (UFSA), in Oakland, CA, has launched a concerted effort in the last year to address the needs of their ELs who...

**Duval charter school struggling to survive**
(Florida Times-Union © 03/19/2012)

One of Jacksonville's oldest charter schools faces potential closure because of chronic problems including failure to meet state and federal student academic proficiency standards. School of Success Academy Charter Middle School is also about $40,759 in the red this year – continuing an annual deficit trend that began in the 2007-08 term. And its five-year lease with the city for the school's pr...

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**Editorial: Let's turn talk into policy and action in schools**
(Naples Daily News © 03/19/2012)

It is up to each county school system in Southwest Florida to educate its students and prepare them for whatever lies ahead. Still, when they leave the schools students go on to the next steps — college, trade school, the workplace or families — with everyone else. Everybody in every county has a vested interest in their success. Against that background, the Alliance of Educational Leaders — ma...

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**Many low-income students struggle with lack of Internet at home**
(Orlando Sentinel © 03/19/2012)

Every time 15-year-old Eduardo Pérez is assigned an online project at school, he and his mother scramble to a family member's home, library or Wi-Fi hot spot because they can't afford Internet access at home. The Lee Middle School eighth-grader often depends on his 4G smartphone to do research, but the 4-inch screen is a strain on his eyes. Computer labs at public libraries fill quickly, and fin...

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**New Orange schools chief optimistic about tough road ahead**
(Orlando Sentinel © 03/19/2012)

Barbara Jenkins faces a formidable array of challenges when she takes over as new superintendent of Orange County public schools in June. Among them: low teacher morale, budget shortages, lagging student test scores, and school grades expected to drop under the state's new grading system this year. And that's just for starters. But Jenkins, chosen Thursday night to succeed retiring Ron Block...

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**Polytechnic questions**
(Tampa Bay Online © 03/19/2012)

Gov. Rick Scott has met with Sen. JD Alexander, the powerful and manipulative Polk senator who wants the governor to approve legislation establishing the state's 12th university in Lakeland. But before Scott makes this critical decision, he should meet with the people who will be most affected — the students and faculty of the University of South Florida Polytechnic branch campus in Lakeland. Bot...

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**Volusia, Flagler school officials strive for fairness in discipline but disparities exist**
(Daytona Beach News-Journal © 03/18/2012)

Flagler school enrollment White 68.9 percent Black 17.4 percent Hispanic 10.8 percent In-school suspensions White 59 percent Black 30.2 percent Hispanic 9.3 percent Out-of-school suspensions White 55.2 percent Black 33.5 percent Hispanic 10 percent Volusia school enrollment White 64.3 percent Black 15.2 percent Hispanic 18.4 percent In-school suspensions...

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**Flagler teacher evaluation system changing**
(Daytona Beach News-Journal © 03/18/2012)

BUNNELL -- A new teacher evaluation will replace an old system that was "too generic" and resulted in most teachers receiving exemplary reviews. The Flagler County School Board will hear about the changes during a regular meeting that starts at 6 p.m. Tuesday at the Government Services Building. School systems across the state are revamping their teacher-evaluation systems to comply with the R...

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**Rubio joins bid to aid college costs**
(Ft. Myers News-Press © 03/18/2012)

U.S. Sen. Marco Rubio, R-West Miami, has co-sponsored bipartisan legislation that would help low-income students prepare and pay for college. The American Dream Accounts Act, also co-sponsored by Democrats Chris Coons of Delaware and Jeff Bingaman of New Mexico, would authorize three-year competitive grants for high schools, colleges, local nonprofits and businesses to develop Facebook-inspired, ...

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**Editorial: A vital question**
(Gainesville Sun © 03/18/2012)

It is an encouraging sign that the Florida Supreme Court has decided to weigh in on the issue of whether the Legislature or the Board of Governors has the authority to set university fees and tuitions. Ever since a lower court ruled in favor of the Legislature, the Board of Governors has been content to let the issue drop. It pulled out of the origi...

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**A cause of the moral vacuum in schoolColumn**
(Hernando Today © 03/18/2012)

Parental blindness of the child's misbehavior and the unwillingness to listen to and respect the teacher's word has made it taboo for schools to confront inappropriate acts. This parents supporting of the child over the teacher has led to acceptability of antisocial behavior in our schools. Schools prefer to keep parents content under the illusion their child is close to perfect. It is easier. Fr...

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**Polytechnic Bill: Stand Up for Florida's Universities**
(Lakeland Ledger © 03/18/2012)

When state Sen. J.D. Alexander undertakes a quest, controversy is his common companion. That was the case when 30 Polk County Civic leaders sent the State University Systems' Board of Governors a letter last summer. They asked the board to consider separating the polytechnic from USF and making it an independent state university. Alexander, R-Lake Wales, who is the powerful chairman of th...

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**New FCAT rules = more failures**
(Marathon & Big Pine Free Press © 03/18/2012)

Higher passing score means fewer students will make the grade on required state test Heads up, Monroe County students and families: With the upcoming Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test now harder to pass, administrators expect a spike in the number of kids failing. Adjust your expectations and know that lower FCAT scores do not necessarily indicate that a student learned less than in prior year...

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**Bottom line on paddling: Florida schools still do it**
(Miami Herald © 03/18/2012)

Spanking in school may seem like a relic of the past, but in Florida, students from preschoolers to high-school seniors are still being paddled by teachers,

principals and school-bus drivers.In parts of the state, mostly in the rural north, getting spanked at school, on your butt, with a wooden or fiberglass board, is just part of being a misbehaving student."I been getting them since about...

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**Moms flex muscles — and Twitter fingers — in Tallahassee. And they win**
(Miami Herald © 03/18/2012)

It was one of the session's hardest-fought battles.On one side: a coalition of disparate, but determined parent groups.On the other: former Gov. Jeb Bush and the powerful school-choice lobby.With the clock about to run out, the parents overcame some of the most entrenched powers in Tallahassee and won just enough votes to kill one of Bush's priority proposals."They had all of ...

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**Fallacies about teachers**
(Ocala Star Banner © 03/18/2012)

According to a report in Florida Today, the Florida Legislature, supported by the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), plans on portraying teachers as "overcompensated underachievers" in an apparent effort to continue dismantling Florida's public school system, replacing it with corporate-run, for-profit, public charter/virtual schools. Another report, co-sp...

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**Faculty turnover brings questions, myriad answers**
(Orlando-WFTV (ABC) © 03/18/2012)

VICKSBURG, Miss. — For longtime educator Joe Loviza the alarm sounded when month after month he and other school board members were told more teachers had resigned or retired. "That's entirely too many," Loviza said in January as he and the other four members of the Vicksburg Warren School Board met in a monthly meeting and were asked to approve departures of faculty members. "You heard ...

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**Tom Philpott: More protection sought for Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits**
(Pensacola News Journal © 03/18/2012)

What if the military gave every service member an expensive car as a reward for honorable service, but they could take delivery only at night and the headlights didn't work? Many of those gift cars might end up damaged. Something similar is happening to thousands of veterans leaving service with Post-9/11 GI Bill eligibility worth tens of thousands of dollars. The government is providing an extra...

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**After the pros, Derrick Brooks enjoys successful business career**
(Pensacola News Journal © 03/18/2012)

For the majority of his adult life, playing football consumed Derrick Brooks. He reaped the benefits of his blessed talent, his determination and the year-round commitment to prepare his body for what became four collegiate seasons at Florida State, followed by 14 star-kissed years in the NFL with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. Few linebackers in NFL history played longer with more acclaim, putting Br...

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**Sarasota High School plan worries architects**
(Sarasota Herald-Tribune © 03/18/2012)

Sarasota High School plan worries architects It was a crowd of 150, but an audience of five. When the Sarasota Architectural Foundation hosted a panel discussion on the significance of Paul Rudolph's Sarasota High School building Wednesday night at Ringling College of Art & Design, it pulled out the heavy guns. For this event, ...

**Wearing their heart, and more, on their wrist**
(St. Petersburg Times © 03/18/2012)

SPRING HILL — Sean Moffit appreciates the female form as much as the next 15-year-old male. But the slogan around his wrist, he says, is all about cancer awareness. Moffit likes to sport a purple and black bracelet stamped with the phrase "I ♥ boobies!" It's the slogan for the Keep a Breast Foundation, a nonprofit organization based in California that aims to educate young people abou...

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**Faith-based group presses for 'direct instruction' method at Pinellas schools**
(St. Petersburg Times © 03/18/2012)

Ramona Denmark remembers how she felt when her son's teacher told her he needed to be retained in the first grade. He wasn't reading as he needed to be reading, they told her. He needed one more year. "It was like a shocker for me," said Denmark, whose older daughter had excelled at the same school years before. Now, Ramona Denmark and her mother are part of a vocal group pressuring Pinellas Co...

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**Studying STEM — math, science and more — in Hillsborough Schools**
(St. Petersburg Times © 03/18/2012)

First she fell in love with math and science as a fifth-grader at Mintz Elementary. Then, robotics at McLane Middle School fueled her passion. Everything Jeanelle Baldwin learned at those two Brandon schools inspired her to attend a new biomedical/biotechnical track at Middleton High School in Tampa. Today, the 14-year-old is well on her way to studying STEM — science, technology, engineer...

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**Students benefit by understanding the Florida Sunshine Law**
(Tallahassee Democrat © 03/18/2012)

Scavenger hunts and field trips are part of the course for students in my Reporting and Writing I class at Florida A&M University. Within the past few weeks, students have interviewed legislators plus other movers and shakers at the Capitol. Some shook hands and photographed Gov. Rick Scott minutes before covering the Civil Rights Hall of Fame induction ceremony in the Capitol Rotunda. Part of my...

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**Black history gets boost in school**
(Tallahassee Democrat © 03/18/2012)

Leon County school officials are ready to take the last two steps toward implementing a comprehensive black history curriculum and winning "exemplary" status for their efforts to teach black history throughout the year, across all subject matters and in all grades. Coincidentally, at about the same time school board members were given an update on the Leon plan, a civil rights group released sugg...

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**Four-day school week task force to present findings**
(Tampa Tribune © 03/18/2012)

LAND O' LAKES -- A task force researching a possible four-day school week in Pasco County is scheduled to present its findings to the school board at a workshop Tuesday. The task force, led by board member Steve Luikart, won't make a recommendation on how the board should proceed, though. Instead, the task force of parents, union representatives, district staff, teachers and ...

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**Manatee schools aim to be among state's top 25 with new strategy**

(Bradenton Herald © 03/17/2012)

MANATEE -- Manatee County's schools will be asked to pinpoint exactly what they need to improve their students' performance by at least 3 percent in a plan to be unveiled Monday that is intended to boost Manatee from the bottom one-third of Florida's school districts to the top one-third. The plan's creation, ledby new Assistant Superin-tendent Bob Gagnon, isaimed at giving individual schools and...

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**Troubled Keys charter school plans to expand**
(Florida Keys Keysnet © 03/17/2012)

With charter school management firm Academica now at the helm, the Key West Collegiate School board is expecting rapid growth in the coming years for the struggling Stock Island high school. Concurrently, Monroe County School District Superintendent Jesus Jara is crafting policy that would place enrollment caps on the six Florida Keys charter schools in an effort to avoid budgetary surprises in t...

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**Retirement appeal going to Florida Supreme Court**
(Gainesville Sun © 03/17/2012)

TALLAHASSEE — An appeal of a ruling that struck down a requirement for public employees to contribute to their pensions is going to the Florida Supreme Court. The 1st District Court of Appeal on Friday agreed to send the state's appeal directly to the justices. That was a victory for the Florida Education Association and other public employee...

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**A.A. Dixon may not have done enough**
(Pensacola News Journal © 03/17/2012)

While A.A. Dixon Charter School of Excellence has taken steps to bring up its failing grade, a Department of Education official said it may not be enough. During an Escambia County School Board workshop Friday, Fred Heid, the department's bureau chief for school improvement, said there is not enough data available to tell if the students are making progress. He said it will be a difficult task f...

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**Palm Beach County schools facing $31.7 million shortfall**
(South Florida Sun-Sentinel © 03/17/2012)

It's another gloomy financial forecast for Palm Beach County public schools, but a projected $31.7 million shortfall is a slight improvement over last year. School District officials on Friday previewed the developing 2012-13 budget, outlining possible impacts on academic programs, building projects, students and workers. The good news is more state funding for schools that maintain an A rating ...

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**Scott can use power of the pen**
(South Florida Sun-Sentinel © 03/17/2012)

The fate of scores of bills passed by the Florida Legislature in this year's session now rests with Gov. Rick Scott. We hope he stops at least seven from becoming law. We realize that some of the measures on our veto list are half-court shots, based on Scott's record or rhetoric. But for the same reason, others should be slam dunks. We'll start with the half-court shots: ...

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**St. Johns rep joins state panel on controversial FCAT testing**
(St. Augustine Record © 03/17/2012)

By MARCIA LANE staugustine.com Copyright 2012 St. Augustine Record. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed. March 17, 2012 - 12:08am St. Johns rep joins state panel on controversial FCAT testing marcia.lane@staugustine.com Panel formed after firestorm of criticism over FCAT testing of profoundly handicapped St. Johns County now h...

**Elsie Visel: Closing Indian River Correctional Institution would be major loss for community, prisoner-students who have desire to get high school degrees**
(Stuart News © 03/17/2012)

Florida Gov. Rick Scott should not close the Indian River Correctional Institution. When I moved to Vero Beach in 1986 the vision of the Florida penal system that came to mind was the shackled Paul Muni in the 1932 film, "I Am a Fugitive from a Chain Gang." I discovered a much more civilized system when I learned about the Indian River Correctional Institution, a youthful offender facility sout...

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**Ammons announces 'major changes' in leadership team**
(Tallahassee Democrat © 03/17/2012)

Florida A&M University President James H. Ammons has shuffled two key members of his leadership team and given additional responsibilities to a third member in what Ammons characterized as "major changes." Larry Robinson, a special assistant to the president since he returned to the university in November, is replacing Cynthia Hughes Harris as provost and vice president for academic affairs. Hugh...

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**Task Force looks at testing options**
(Tallahassee Democrat © 03/17/2012)

The state task force of parents and educators created to investigate how students with disabilities should be included in performance assessment standards in Florida will have its first face-to-face meeting next week, but members have been laying the groundwork with conference calls focusing on three areas of interest. State Education Commissioner Gerard Robinson has charged the task force with c...

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**Data breach hits University of Tampa students**
(Tampa Bay Online © 03/17/2012)

TAMPA -- One breach left the Social Security numbers and dates of birth of more than 6,800 University of Tampa students from the fall semester in public view of anyone armed with a computer. Two other breaches — affecting nearly 30,000 individual records — exposed the same kind of information involving faculty, students and staff members who had been at the univers...

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Please see the article below.

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**Tallahassee Democrat**

**An alternative view of the governor's agenda**

**11:46 PM, Mar. 18, 2012**

**By Andy Opel - My View**

After reading Bill Cotterell's assessment of Gov. Rick Scott's accomplishments during the recent legislative session ("Scott leaves his mark on his second session," March 12), a more thorough assessment is in order. Where Cotterell asks how successful the governor has been at achieving his agenda, the more relevant question is what have the governor and the Republican majority done for the people of Florida?

A quick review of the major initiatives by the long-standing Republican majority shows us an abject failure to deliver meaningful legislation to middle-class Floridians and a penchant for dismissing data-driven policies in favor of faith-based decisions — and not the kind of faith based on a belief in God, but rather faith in the idolatry of anti-tax ideology.

In a state that ranks dead last for high-school graduation rates and dead last on K-12 spending per capita according to the Bob Graham Center, what was the big solution this Legislature came up with to improve education in Florida? — More teachers? Better curricula? Models taken from high-performing states? No, the best solution they could come up with was the failed parent trigger bill.

That's right — facing wholesale underfunding of education, the best the Republican leadership could offer parents was to sell their kids out to charter school company Parent Revolution. While there are 49 other states that have better outcomes from their public schools, the Republicans chose to try to make Florida students part of an experiment in school privatization. Facing a $2 billion deficit, the governor and the legislative leadership proposed a massive prison privatization effort that would have turned our prisons over to prison profiteers in return for 7 percent savings — less than $20 million annually. Was this decision based on proven reductions in recidivism rates? Better education or job training of prisoners? More effective prison management?

No, this was a "faith" based decision that it is better to save a nickel on prisons than to close a tax loophole on a tobacco company. Dosal, a Miami-based tobacco company is currently exempt from paying the same taxes and fees as other tobacco companies because they were not part of the 1997 Florida Tobacco Settlement Agreement.

According to the Consumer Federation of the Southeast, Dosal currently manufactures 20 percent of the cigarettes sold in Florida and closing the tax loophole could add between $50 million to $200 million a year to the tax base — many times the possible savings from the failed prison privatization effort. This would be a win for taxpayers and for public health but the option was off the table because our Republican leadership is ideologically committed to policies that put corporate tax breaks above students, prisoners and the public good.

In a final act of quixotic zeal, the "no-data" decision makers proposed a $300 million cut to spending on higher education. While more than $350 million a year is given to accounting and financial services through a tax loophole, lawmakers refused to close the loophole and instead chose to increase tuition for university students.

We know that spending on higher education returns $4 to the economy for $1 invested. What is the return on the $350 million invested in the financial services tax loophole? I want to see the data. Where is the data to support this and the many other tax subsidies?

Florida currently spends over $4 billion a year in corporate subsidies at the same time that it is cutting Medicare, education and a host of social services. If these subsidies are paying big economic dividends, show me the data. Instead of evidence, all they offer is the tired mantra, "taxes are bad."

In the midst of economic turmoil, with complete control of state government, the best Florida Republicans could deliver was a series of failed initiatives. With the Florida Supreme Court's rejection of the Senate's redistricting map, the most recent legislative session is best summarized as nothing but a dismal failure.

Instead of funding education or health care, addressing robo-signing and the foreclosure crisis, promoting energy efficiency and renewable energy, or supporting infrastructure projects that will benefit the public and the business community alike, this administration has distracted us with drug testing state workers who are not on drugs, and asking students to pray in underfunded schools.

Floridians deserve better. With over a decade of one-party rule, the Republican Party has had ample opportunity to improve Florida. Do you think they deserve more time?

deserve more time.

— Andy Opel is an associate professor and director of the media production program in the School of Communication at Florida State University. He can be reached at aopel@fsu.edu.