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NATIONAL NEWS

What's Up for Digital Learning Day?

Education Week

By: Ian Quillen

January 30, 2012

http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/DigitalEducation/2012/01/whats_up_for_digital_learning.html

Many of you have no doubt already informed yourself about your state's plans ahead of Wednesday's inaugural [Digital Learning Day](#), an observance launched by the Alliance for Excellent Education, one of two education advocacy groups behind the [Digital Learning Now initiative](#).

But if you'd like more information about what's going on either in your backyard or around the country, check out the [state events page](#) on the Digital Learning Day website. Several states are using webcasts to showcase best practices for digital learning from within their borders, and a few are kicking off larger initiatives.

You can also [register for the webcast](#) of a national town hall meeting in observance of the day, beginning at 1 p.m. ET on Wednesday afternoon. The event will feature U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan, Federal Communications Commission Chairman Julius Genachowski, American Federation of Teachers chief Randi Weingarten, and National Online Teacher of the Year [Kristin Kipp](#), among others. And we'll be sure to follow up with coverage of some of the day's bigger news.

The Alliance for Excellent Education is headed by former West Virginia Gov. Bob Wise, a Democrat, who fused a bi-partisan coalition former Florida Republican Gov. Jeb Bush's Foundation for Excellence in Education to launch Digital Learning Now in late 2010. The effort aims to push states into policy reforms that increase access to digital learning opportunities.

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School Chiefs' Group Elbows Into Policy Fight

Education Week

By: Michele McNeil

January 31, 2012

http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2012/02/01/19chiefs_ep.h31.html?r=531376963

Amid the cacophony of special interests fighting to be heard in statehouses and on Capitol Hill, a cadre of current and former chief state school officers is elbowing its way into the nation's education debate at a time when states are taking more control of K-12 education.

A little more than a year old, [Chiefs for Change](#) is an invitation-only group of nine current and two former state chiefs whose causes include teacher evaluations tied to student achievement, more school choices for families, rewards for successful schools and more-intensive interventions for failing ones, and more-transparent accountability systems.

The group has taken this "bold, visionary" agenda, as its members call it, on the road: to Congress, where they often testify

before the Republican-controlled House education committee; to state capitals, where they've touted school choice; and to the U.S. Department of Education, where they've urged Secretary Arne Duncan to grant states a longer accountability leash in exchange for holding them to a higher bar.

Already, leading education voices from Mr. Duncan to U.S. Rep. John Kline, R-Minn., the chairman of the House education committee, have invoked Chiefs for Change to justify various policy proposals. But whether the group has staying power, given how much turnover can occur in state superintendents' and commissioners' jobs, and whether they'll have a significant impact beyond their own borders is an open question.

"They are having some effect now, ... but the fact is that so many conservatives control state governments now, and their ideas are things Republicans want to do," said Jack Jennings, a former longtime Democratic aide on Capitol Hill and the retiring head of the Center on Education Policy, a Washington research group. He said that, with the group's support of policies such as school choice, he views it as a partisan one with a "conservative agenda. They're trying to cloak it in nonpartisanship and reform."

Chiefs for Change takes the policy stage at a time when a number of ideas long associated with the conservative end of the political spectrum—vouchers, for example, and linking teachers' evaluations and student test scores—have drawn more far-ranging momentum. And a robust debate continues over who will claim the mantle of "reform" in education policy.

This group of mostly new state chiefs has an education godfather of sorts: former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush, a prominent Republican whose [Foundation for Excellence in Education](#), based in Tallahassee, Fla., houses and provides staff support and financial resources to the chiefs' group.

For Mr. Bush, the dividing line isn't Democratic or Republican: "It's are you for the status quo, or are you being reform-minded?"

Though nonpartisan, Chiefs for Change has other strong Republican ties on top of the Bush connection. Two current chiefs in the group are elected Republicans, and nine took office through various appointment processes in states that now have Republican governors.

Only Deborah Gist, Rhode Island's education commissioner, works in a state without a Republican chief executive: Gov. Lincoln Chafee was elected as an Independent after serving in the U.S. Senate as a Republican.

"I saw firsthand how important it is to have reform-minded commissioners," said Mr. Bush, who implemented an A-to-F grading system for schools and measures such as school vouchers during his time in office, from 1999 to 2007.

"But it gets lonely if you're the sole reformer. They don't always have a political base that can protect them from criticism that comes from advocating big change," he said of state chiefs.

Common Cause

The concept behind Chiefs for Change emerged nearly two years ago. Indiana schools chief Tony Bennett and then-chiefs Eric J. Smith of Florida, and Paul G. Pastorek of Louisiana, all were looking for a way to more aggressively advance their ideas.

That trio recruited two others: Ms. Gist of Rhode Island and Gerard Robinson, who was Virginia's education secretary at the time and is now the Florida chief.

Those five became the original members when Chiefs for Change was launched in 2010, and over the next several months, they recruited five more: Janet Barresi of Oklahoma; Kevin Huffman of Tennessee; Chris Cerf of New Jersey; Stephen Bowen of Maine; and Hanna Skandera of New Mexico. This week, newly appointed Louisiana Superintendent of Education John White became the 11th member.

Though there is no formal selection process, the members of the group, both sitting and former chiefs, must agree on any new additions.

"We want to have a membership that makes us relevant," said Mr. Smith, who is now doing consulting work. "We're selective. We don't have a need to be all-encompassing. We want to be pushing and a bit on the edge."

Even with its Republican ties, Chiefs for Change is pressing an agenda that isn't necessarily aligned with Republicans on Capitol Hill. While the group is calling for both greater state flexibility and strong federal oversight in areas such as accountability for at-risk students and teacher performance, congressional Republicans seem bent on scaling back the federal role in accountability.

"They're in a funny spot in that their natural allies on the Hill are the ones that want to reduce the federal role in education. I think it's difficult politically," said Michael J. Petrilli, the executive vice president of the Thomas B. Fordham Institute, in Washington. "What they are promoting are policies [that] Democrats out there can support."

As one example, the chiefs joined with civil rights groups in calling for increased subgroup accountability in the proposed version of a new Elementary and Secondary Education Act that Senate Democrats have put forward. They were unsuccessful in getting those changes made—at least so far.

Whether Republicans in Congress are listening is unclear, said Charles Barone, the federal policy director for Democrats for Education Reform, a New York City-based political action committee that espouses many positions akin to those of the chiefs. "But they've filled a niche for Republicans in that they are willing to be pragmatic about the role of the federal government," he said.

It's a niche that the Council of Chief State School Officers, the long-established organization representing nearly all state chiefs, couldn't fill.

All of the Chiefs for Change also belong to the CCSSO, and, in fact, Mr. Bennett, the Indiana superintendent, joined that group's board late last year. But the CCSSO is limited in what it can do—and how quickly it can do it—by its members, who represent 49 states with a wide range of specific concerns, political ideologies, and policy agendas. (Texas is not a CCSSO member.)

"We need to have a bold consensus, and we need the ability to move quickly," said Ms. Skandera of New Mexico, who was a deputy education commissioner in Florida under then-Gov. Bush.

Or, as Mr. Robinson put it, Chiefs for Change was created "for the same reason you have new priests and new churches, because there's a need to have a different voice for the same mission."

For the CCSSO, officials say anything that elevates the visibility and influence of state chiefs is a plus.

"When Chiefs for Change succeeds, it helps us," said Chris Minnich, the senior membership director for the Washington-based CCSSO.

Independent Streak

A group of state chiefs getting together to form a separate group with an edgier agenda than that of the official national organization is not without precedent.

In 1996, some conservative-leaning chiefs banded together to form the Education Leaders Council to press for policy measures they felt established education groups were not advancing. Led for part of its history by Lisa Graham Keegan, the former Arizona chief who is set to advise the presidential campaign of Newt Gingrich on education policy, the ELC pushed stronger accountability systems and assessments.

But the group ran into trouble in 2006 when an Education Department audit found the organization had misused nearly \$500,000 in federal grant money. (["Audit Faults Spending by Leaders Council,"](#) Feb. 15, 2006.)

Chiefs for Change may share a similar education agenda, but its organizational structure is far different from that of the ELC.

It's more of a club, and not a legal entity, relying heavily on the Foundation for Excellence in Education for logistical and financial support.

The foundation does everything from putting together policy statements to fielding media requests. It also keeps tabs on federal education issues for the chiefs, organizes biweekly conference calls for members to talk policy, and covers expenses incurred with its Chiefs for Change work.

The foundation, which receives funding from such donors as the Broad Foundation, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and the Walton Family Foundation, declined to say how much money it spends on the chiefs' activities. (*Education Week* also receives grant support from the Gates and Walton foundations.)

The Foundation for Excellence in Education also works to bring the chiefs together for joint initiatives and to help them leverage private funds to pay for those projects; four of the chiefs, as one example, are pursuing a pilot project to jump-start a blended-learning effort, which seeks to combine online and face-to-face learning.

Despite the close working relationship, the foundation and Chiefs for Change remain distinct groups, said Patricia Levesque, the foundation's executive director.

"The chiefs come up with their policy decisions, and they decide what to make statements on," Ms. Levesque said. "Our mission is how do we advance reform policies to improve student achievement, and we believe it happens on a state level. We can help chiefs implement good policy."

Early Impact

Though the chiefs say it's far too early to gauge their influence, they also say it's not too early to see some results—especially at the state level.

Some members of Chiefs for Change are leading Race to the Top states: Florida, Rhode Island, and Tennessee.

Six of them submitted waiver applications in the first round of the federal Education Department's new effort to grant flexibility under the No Child Left Behind Act. Those first-round applications are likely to help shape a flood of second-round applications

expected later this month.

"We are leading out front there," Ms. Gist of Rhode Island said.

Most of the states have moved, or are moving, to an A-to-F grading system for schools, modeled after Florida's more than decade-old accountability system. Five of the seven states that last week earned the highest grades from the National Council on Teacher Quality for improving teacher policies are led by a Chief for Change.

Mr. Bennett, the chairman of the group, has served as an ambassador of sorts, visiting states including Kansas, Ohio, Michigan, and Utah to talk about improving education and about his efforts in Indiana, sometimes testifying before state legislative committees.

"We're trying to advance a conversation for more comprehensive education reform," Mr. Bennett said.

On the federal or national level, the impact is more subtle.

"We're pushing the needle a little bit further and a little bit harder toward reform," Ms. Barresi said.

The chiefs have endorsed a project by the National Council on Teacher Quality and *U.S. News & World Report* to grade every teacher-preparation program in the country.

They also supported the House Republicans' proposal to encourage the growth of high-quality charter schools and released their principles that Congress should heed as it rewrites the ESEA.

Worried about implementation challenges that have plagued Race to the Top states, Chiefs for Change members spoke with Secretary Duncan in August and subsequently issued a letter urging the secretary to stick to his guns as he holds winning states accountable for \$4 billion in prize money.

"It's mostly found within state action and state policy. You'll see these states expand choice opportunities for parents. They are really working hard to increase transparency on school accountability," he said. "There has been a very significant impact even though we are very young," Mr. Smith said.

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Education: States should do more to reach students

Associated Press

By: Staff

January 31, 2012

<http://www.foxnews.com/us/2012/01/31/education-states-should-do-more-to-reach-students/#ixzz1I2TLDiZq>

MIAMI — In its initial review of No Child Left Behind waiver requests, the U.S. Education Department highlighted a similar weakness in nearly every application: States did not do enough to ensure schools would be held accountable for the performance of all students.

The Obama administration praised the states for their high academic standards. But nearly every application was criticized for being loose about setting high goals and, when necessary, interventions for all student groups — including minorities, the disabled and low-income — or for failing to create sufficient incentives to close the achievement gap.

Under No Child Left Behind, schools where even one group of students falls behind are considered out of compliance and subject to interventions. The law has been championed for helping shed light on education inequalities, but most now agree it is due for change.

Indiana's proposal to opt out of the federal law's strictest requirements was criticized by the Education Department for its "inattention" to certain groups, like students still learning the English language. New Mexico's plan, a panel of peer reviewers noted, did not include accountability and interventions for student subgroups based on factors like achievement and graduation rates. In Florida, the department expressed concern that the performance of some groups of students could go overlooked.

The concerns were outlined in letters sent last December by the administration to the 11 states that have applied for a waiver. Since then, state and federal officials have been talking about how to address the concerns; some states have already agreed to changes.

The letters were obtained by The Associated Press for all of the states except Tennessee and Kentucky, which declined to provide them until an announcement is made on whether a waiver is granted. The Education Department has previously said it expected to notify states by mid-January.

"Our priority is protecting children and maintaining a high bar even as we give states more flexibility to get more resources to the children most in need, even if that means the process takes a little longer than we anticipated," said Daren Briscoe, a department spokesman.

Jack Jennings, president of the Center on Education Policy, said federal officials are in a challenging spot.

"The current law means that each group of kids, whether they are children with a disability, or African-American, or poor kids, have attention paid to them, because the schools are accountable for each and every group," said Jennings. "But what the states are asking is that they all be lumped together."

The Bush-era law is aimed at making sure 100 percent of students reach proficiency in [math and reading](#) by 2014, a goal states are far from achieving. As that year draws closer, more and more schools are expected to fall out of compliance, subjecting them to penalties that range from after-school tutoring to closure.

While there is bipartisan agreement the 2002 law needs to be fixed, Congress has not passed a comprehensive reform. President Barack Obama announced in September that states could apply for waivers and scrap the proficiency requirement if they met conditions designed to better prepare and test students.

The 11 states that applied for the first round of waivers were Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Kentucky, Oklahoma, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Jersey, New Mexico and Tennessee. Many more states are expected to request waivers in the second round — meaning all eyes will be on the first approvals.

The Center on Education Policy analyzed all the waiver requests and found that in nine of the 11 states, almost all decisions on penalties and interventions would be based on the performance of two groups: all students and a "disadvantaged" group that would replace the current system of separate categories of students according to race, ethnicity, income, disability and English language proficiency.

Those separate categories are at the heart of what No Child Left Behind aimed to correct — vast achievement gaps between white, black and Hispanic students, between the affluent and low-income — and what most agree is the problem with the law: If any one of these groups of students does not meet the state's annual benchmarks for proficiency in reading and math, the school is labeled as "failing."

In a letter sent Jan. 17, Sen. Tom Harkin, D-Iowa, and Rep. George Miller, D-Calif., urged Education Secretary Arne Duncan to require strong accountability measures and ensure civil rights and educational equity gains under No Child Left Behind are not lost.

"We fear that putting students with disabilities, English language learners and minority students into one 'super subgroup' will mask the individual needs of these distinct student subgroups," they said.

In the feedback provided to states by a panel of peer reviewers in December, many states were praised for plans to institute college and career-ready standards and develop teacher evaluation systems that take into account student growth — two hallmarks of the Obama administration's education policy. The panel's concerns varied, but meeting the needs of all groups of students was one consistent theme.

In New Mexico, for example, the U.S. Education Department expressed concern about a lack of incentives to close achievement gaps and hold schools accountable for the performance of all students. In a follow-up letter sent late in January, subgroup accountability was still an area of concern.

Hanna Skandera, secretary designate for the New Mexico Public Education Department, said the state's original plan did include breaking down data on [student performance](#) by subgroup on each school's report card. But after conversations with the U.S. Education Department, schools will be adding information on whether they are on track for progress and growth in meeting annual targets. If a group falls behind, schools will be subject to intervention measures.

"We had high level reporting," Skandera said. "Now we're going to provide another layer so everything is crystal clear to parents across the state."

Minnesota's initial feedback included concern about "the lack of incentives to improve achievement for all groups of students and narrow achievement gap between subgroups." Sam Kramer, federal education policy specialist for the Minnesota Department of Education, said most of that criticism was focused on the state's graduation rate. In its initial submission, the state did not take into account the graduation rate of different subgroups in its annual targets.

After receiving the letter, the state switched to a system that will take into account how subgroups of students did in meeting those graduation targets.

Kramer said he thinks Minnesota will be better able to meet the needs of disadvantaged groups of students under the new system.

"No Child Left Behind was very good at diagnosing the problem," Kramer said. "It was very good at shining a light on the differences between subgroups."

It was less effective, he said, at offering successful ways to help improve.

"We are going to be able to go in and be flexible and reactive to the specific needs of those subgroups," Kramer said.

Pedro Noguera, an education professor at New York University, said the struggle by school districts to lift the performance of different groups of students is a signal of a deeper problem that won't be solved by waivers.

"We need to make sure the districts and schools feel some pressure to make sure that all the students they are responsible for are being educated," he said. "However, they need to focus on different kinds of evidence, and not merely performance on a standardized test. That's where they don't get it."

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STATE NEWS

New Mexico: Opinion: School Reform Bills a Vital Start

Albuquerque Journal

By: Hanna Skandera

January 30, 2012

<http://www.abqjournal.com/main/2012/01/30/opinion/school-reform-bills-a-vital-start.html>

The passion for truly educating our children in New Mexico goes without question. I know this is true, despite our current ranking (48th in the nation). So it's now time to take notice of our failing school system, examine the opportunities for positive change and give our public education system the chance to live up to its potential.

And it's time for our parents, our communities and our legislators to embrace the reforms necessary to make it so.

In the past year I have visited nearly 50 of our 89 school districts. I have heard the resounding voices of adults and children – all eager to see our schools and students succeed. With each visit to every school, and in every classroom, I have witnessed the optimism, desire and hope on the faces of every student across the state. Our students, educators and parents deserve to be recognized for their continued trust in our public school system and deserve to realize true progress as a result of their faith.

There is no magic solution to our current status, but there are a few key initiatives that will have a lasting impact on our students' futures. Two bills before the Legislature right now will, when passed, dramatically and positively impact our students.

Bills to assess and advance reading proficiency (House Bill 69 and Senate Bill 96) are being considered by our legislators. The news media call this initiative the "No Social Promotion" bill and while, yes, third-grade retention is part of it, that label demeans the bill's true purpose and character. This initiative would, for the first time, gauge the reading skills of our children from kindergarten through the third grade, something many schools don't do now. This provides us – parents, teachers, administrators – the opportunity to help our children with progressive reading interventions years before they reach the third grade.

We have proposed \$17 million for this program. While this may seem like a large sum, the cost is insignificant in comparison to the cost to our children and their future if we fail to intervene now. Only if they learn to read will our children have the chance to excel in subjects like math, science and social studies and be empowered in all aspects of their lives. We know if a child can't read by the end of third grade, he or she is four times more likely to drop out of school.

The second initiative now before the Legislature would redesign the system for evaluating our teachers and principals. We need to identify our greatest teachers, celebrate them and, yes, pay them more. New Mexico's current teacher evaluation system places nearly zero weight on student performance, which means that those teachers working miracles in our classrooms receive no credit for their heroic efforts. New Mexico teachers can reach the ceiling for pay in just seven years based only on years of experience and number of college degrees – not how successful they are in teaching our kids. Our teachers deserve the satisfaction of being rewarded for their efforts. If a teacher continues to demonstrate excellence through improved student achievement, then she or he deserves a system that continues to reward those strides.

According to the 2011 Diplomas Count report, New Mexico loses 71 students every school day. When we say "lost," we mean these students will fail to graduate with a diploma. These children are our loved ones, our neighbors, our future and ultimately our responsibility. We cannot maintain the status quo – it's not working. If we're going to push education forward in New Mexico, we're going to need to speak up for these reforms.

If these ideas sound like the kind of reform you want for our children, I urge you to join us. Please email us at school.success@state.nm.us and we'll keep you updated on opportunities to support these initiatives. And please don't hesitate to call your legislator!

I love this Land of Enchantment because of its rich culture, history and passionate people. These three factors play an enormous role in our education system. Let's make sure we continue to honor the diversity of our state, learn from our history and move forward with real change for our children.

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Michigan to host first ever Digital Learning Day Wednesday

MLive.com

By: Monica Scott

January 30, 2012

http://www.mlive.com/education/index.ssf/2012/01/michigan_to_host_first-ever_di.html

GRAND RAPIDS – The [state Department of Education](#) is participating in a national campaign designed to celebrate innovative teaching and highlight practices that make learning more engaging for students.

The department, in partnership with the Alliance for Excellent Education, announced Monday it would be a state host for the

first-ever Digital Learning Day campaign on Wednesday, kicking off Michigan's "Year of the Digital Learner."

"There is a significant potential to expand the use of online learning as a practical strategy to help students stay in school and graduate," said state Superintendent of Public Instruction Mike Flanagan.

This national campaign will explore how digital learning can provide all students with the opportunities they deserve — to build the skills needed to succeed in college, a career, and life, according to a press release.

"In Michigan, the first state to require students to successfully complete an online course or learning experience, digital or online learning provides a powerful alternative for students who have a need for greater flexibility with their education due to individual learning styles," Flanagan said.

Digital Learning Day will be the start of a year of digital learning activities to be designated as 2012 Year of the Digital Learner.

State officials say they are striving to build momentum for a wave of innovation that changes policies, shifts attitudes, and supports wide-scale adoption of these promising instructional practices.

"Digital Learning Day is more than just a day," said Bob Wise, president of the Alliance for Excellent Education and former governor of West Virginia. "It is about building a digital learning movement that provides teachers with better tools to truly provide a quality education for every child."

Wise said simply layering on technology alone will not move the education needle very much. He said effective technology combined with great teachers and engaged students have the potential to transform the world of learning.

As host, the state will highlight a school that is using innovation to make a difference for students. The state also will continue to reach out and share resources that support the goals of and participation in Digital Learning Day and 2012 Year of the Digital Learner.

All education stakeholders—parents; teachers; students; librarians; administrators; policymakers; and school, district, and business leaders — are being encouraged to sign up now. Participants will have access to targeted tool kits outlining ideas and ways to plan their Digital Learning Day celebration, as well as updates, informational videos, webinars, and other resources.

State leaders say this campaign will challenge education professionals and policymakers at all levels to start a conversation, improve a lesson, and/or create a plan.

To learn more about how to be a part of this event, people can [sign up](#). They can also "like" Digital Learning Day on [Facebook](#) and follow the discussion on Twitter using the hashtag #DLDDay.

There will be official announcements of Digital Learning Day at on the [website](#) and on [Piers Morgan Tonight on CNN](#).

For more information on Michigan events, go to the website for the [Michigan Association for Computer Users in Learning](#).

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Florida issues ranking for every school in state

Tampa Bay Times

By: Ron Matus and Jeffrey Solocheck

January 31, 2012

<http://www.tampabay.com/news/education/k12/florida-issues-ranking-for-every-school-in-the-state/1213054>

First school districts. Now individual schools.

The state Department of Education quietly released more FCAT-based rankings Monday — this time of every elementary, middle and high school in the state.

Following last week's ranking of all 67 school districts, the latest numerical ratings drew the same kind of response: Cheers from the top. Groans from the bottom. And lots of criticism that they're way too simplistic.

"Schools just can't be rated like shampoos," said Andy Ford, president of the statewide teachers union.

The DOE said on its website that the rankings are part of ongoing efforts to give parents, teachers and taxpayers ways to better evaluate their schools.

"It is critical that our students have access to world-class schools," Gov. Rick Scott said in a press release. "Measuring each school's performance helps gauge our progress toward that goal."

The rankings for elementary and middle schools are based on FCAT scores. The rankings for high schools are based on FCAT scores, Advanced Placement scores, graduation rates and other indicators.

Like the district rankings, the school rankings appear to be heavily correlated with poverty. But because information about past performance or demographics is not included, it's not easy to pinpoint which schools are doing better or worse than their demographics might suggest.

In Pinellas, the principals of both top- and bottom-ranked schools had mixed feelings.

St. Petersburg Collegiate High School, a charter school, came in at No. 1 in the district and No. 8 in the state. Its students graduate with high school diplomas and two-year college degrees from St. Petersburg College.

"Are rankings important? Yes, because parents put value in rankings in choosing schools," said principal Starla Metz. "But I don't know that rankings can be entirely fair because I don't know that you can take into account every single factor."

Boca Ciega High ranked last in Pinellas, even though it made the biggest FCAT gains among district high schools last year. Principal Michael Vigue said the rankings are disappointing and potentially misleading, but also motivating.

"We'll keep grinding away," he said.

In Hillsborough, Bevis Elementary was tied for most points among all elementary schools in the state. Yet superintendent MaryEllen Elia went on record just a week ago blasting the measures the state employed to rank districts.

District spokeswoman Linda Cobbe said the system was proud to have a top-rated school, but loathe to brag about it because the ranking method was so questionable.

In Pasco, Veterans Elementary in Wesley Chapel was the district's third-highest elementary school and 301st in the state. Principal Donna Busby said she wasn't aware the state planned to rank schools, and had no plans to use the measure to tout hers.

"My job is to focus on the students here and to make sure they're getting the best education possible," Busby said. "We use lots of different kinds of data to make instructional decisions for each individual student and what they need."

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