

MADISON POLICY DIGEST

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Too Much Money, Too Little Money

Stingy, Fair, Misunderstood: That's School Funding in Florida

New State Rules On Bonuses Rile Teachers, Worry School Budgeters  
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TOO MUCH MONEY, TOO LITTLE MONEY

[http://www.palmbeachpost.com/state/content/state/epaper/2006/02/27/m8a\\_taxcut\\_0227.html](http://www.palmbeachpost.com/state/content/state/epaper/2006/02/27/m8a_taxcut_0227.html)

Gov. Bush will enter this legislative session with plans to cut taxes by \$1.5 million dollars due to the fact he believes the state has too much money.

At the same time, however, Gov. Bush will go into session arguing that limits on class size must be reduced by voters in November, since the state cannot afford the class size amendment.

Critics of the governor have begun to ask how both of these statements can be true.

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STINGY, FAIR, MISUNDERSTOOD: THAT'S SCHOOL FUNDING IN FLORIDA

[http://www.naplesnews.com/news/2006/feb/27/stingy\\_fair\\_misunderstood\\_s\\_school\\_funding\\_florida/?local\\_news](http://www.naplesnews.com/news/2006/feb/27/stingy_fair_misunderstood_s_school_funding_florida/?local_news)

With election time looming in November, many citizens are beginning to ask school board candidates one of two questions: Will they lower property taxes, or will they increase spending on education?

What Florida's voters need to understand, is that school board members do not have a say in either matter.

Rather, both of these decisions rest with the governor and those lawmakers who are in the state Legislature.

Many citizens wonder why, with property taxes so high due to the currently booming housing market, Florida ranks 45<sup>th</sup> in the nation on per-student funding.

According to the Naples News, "The reason is this: Florida's funding system is 'equalized.' Depending on how 'property-rich' a county is, the state then determines what proportion of their budget will be paid by property taxes and what will come from state money. Unlike in some other states, almost every homeowner pays the same property tax

rate, and every school spends about the same amount on each student. The difference lies in what proportion of their budget local sources will fund.”

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#### NEW STATE RULES ON BONUSES RILE TEACHERS, WORRY SCHOOL BUDGETERS

[http://www.palmbeachpost.com/treasurecoast/content/local\\_news/epaper/2006/02/27/m1a\\_teachpay\\_0227.html](http://www.palmbeachpost.com/treasurecoast/content/local_news/epaper/2006/02/27/m1a_teachpay_0227.html)

Last week the state Board of Education set new rules for teachers’ performance bonuses, which will now be based largely on student FCAT scores.

These new rules were put into effect to counter problems in the current bonus system that has been in effect since 2002.

According to the Palm Beach Post, “District officials complained there was no extra cash for the program and teachers said any new money should be used to boost salaries across the board.

In many districts, teachers and administrators sabotaged the law with either excessive applications or low participation rates.”

State Department of Education spokeswoman Cathy Schroeder said, “The reason why we're putting these new rules into place is not because districts weren't giving out enough money. It's because they weren't uniform in the way they gave bonuses to teachers.”

The Post reports, “Many teachers have implored state officials to use the bonus money instead to increase Florida's average teacher salary, which ranks 31st in the nation, according to the National Education Association.”

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#### QUOTE OF THE WEEK

The advancement and diffusion of knowledge is the only guardian of true liberty (James Madison).

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#### OPINION OF THE WEEK

“Something For Nothing: Part II” by Thomas Sowell

<http://townhall.com/opinion/columns/thomassowell/2006/03/01/188160.html>

“Government is not the only institution that promises something for nothing. The decline of General Motors is just one consequence of the idea that labor unions can get their members something for nothing.

Workers themselves increasingly recognize the reality that there is no free lunch through unionization and are increasingly voting to be non-union. But the word has yet to reach many among the intelligentsia, who still think of labor unions as institutions that benefit the working class.

You can always benefit particular segments of any society at the expense of some other segment but unions do not benefit even the working class as a whole -- just those who are current union members -- at the expense of other workers, current and future.”

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