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## FCAT SHOWS MOST STUDENTS CONTINUING TO INCREASE PERFORMANCE

The Associated Press Reports, "Gov. Jeb Bush said today that Florida students in grades three through ten have made their biggest one-year increase in reading scores since 2001.

"The governor also said students have improved their math scores.

"Fifty-seven percent of students scored at or above their grade level in reading on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test. That's up four points from 53 percent last year.

"The figure for math increased from 59 percent to 61 percent."

Accountability is working. For the complete story click here:

<http://www.heraldtribune.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20060523/APN/605230792>

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## SCHOOLS LOOKING TO MAKE MAJOR CHANGES

Starting with the class of 2011, students entering high school will have to pick an academic major similar to a college major. To help make the choice productive, high schools are beginning to offer more focused classes for students.

The Naples News gives several examples of what some schools are offering: "Students at Barron Collier High School interested in studying architecture will be able to concentrate on classes in digital design or drafting. Students who want to get into the sports entertainment business will have the chance to experiment at Gulf Coast High School in a class on sports marketing. And students who want to become nurses will be able to take anatomy courses at Golden Gate High School.

"Under the state's proposal, which requires that students earn 24 credits to graduate, students must take 16 classes in their core requirements such as English and math. The remaining eight credits will include four classes in their major area and four electives.

“The program is part of the A++ Plan, which the Florida Legislature passed earlier this month.” For the complete story click here:

[http://www.naplesnews.com/news/2006/may/23/district\\_looks\\_design\\_majors\\_students\\_following\\_pa/?local\\_news](http://www.naplesnews.com/news/2006/may/23/district_looks_design_majors_students_following_pa/?local_news)

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## BOARD PRESSES VOUCHER ISSUE

The St. Petersburg Times reports, “School vouchers didn't make it to the 2006 ballot, but that won't stop the state Board of Education from pressing the issue.”

Board member Roberto Martinez said, “Although the Senate defeated the constitutional amendment opportunity ... it's my opinion that we should not stop there.” Martinez and his six fellow board members will continue the push towards helping children out from inferior schools.

One solution that the Board has come up with was to expand the corporate scholarship program. The Board, however, still believes that adding a voucher amendment to the Florida Constitution is necessary.

Kathleen Shanahan, another Board of Education member, defended vouchers saying, “By having choice, the institution of public education is improved.”

The St. Petersburg Times also reported, “During a break, Martinez said he thinks the voters of Florida should have a full-blown debate on the matter and decide for themselves whether they support vouchers.” For the complete story click here:

[http://www.sptimes.com/2006/05/17/State/Board\\_presses\\_voucher.shtml](http://www.sptimes.com/2006/05/17/State/Board_presses_voucher.shtml)

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## SCHOOL CHOICE EXPANDING IN THREE STATES

The Heartland Institute reports, “Three states either created new school choice programs or expanded existing ones in late March—a trend suggesting the movement is gaining wider support among legislators.

“In Utah, the Carson Smith Scholarship Program for autistic students was widened to include more schools, and the legislature removed a requirement that private schools must ‘specialize’ in serving special-needs populations in order to participate.

“On March 29, Arizona Gov. Janet Napolitano (D) allowed a corporate tax credit program to become law without her signature, ending a year-long battle with legislators, during which she twice reneged on her promise to sign the measure into law.”

This is great news for our country. This should also strengthen the hearts of those fighting for school choice here in Florida. For the complete story click here:

<http://heartland.org/Article.cfm?artId=18916>

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