

The
Florida Education Monthly

February 2007

Presented by: **The James Madison Institute**

Featured Articles

**UNIVERSITY OFFICIALS AIR CONCERNS OVER UNIVERSITY MASTER PLAN
DISTRICT WEIGHING FCAT-TIED BONUS
STEVE JOBS HAS GUTS
GOVERNMENT GROUP GIVES FSU \$50K GRANT**

University Officials Air Concerns Over University Master Plan

Sarasota Herald Tribune

By Jim Ellis

ORLANDO, Fla. -- Education leaders aired concerns Tuesday over a study commissioned by the Florida Board of Governors proposing that some state universities be offered financial incentives to focus almost entirely on undergraduate education, while community colleges transition into state institutions.

The study was conducted by Stamford, Conn.-based Pappas Consulting Group as a blueprint for higher education in Florida. The Board of Governors, which oversees Florida's 11 state universities, paid for the study with private money. Public hearings will be conducted around the state over the next several months before leaders convene to draft a formal report this spring.

"We are going to have to work together in order to plan for the future," said David Armstrong, Florida's Chancellor of Community Colleges, during the meeting.

The study also concluded that Florida has a disorganized system of undistinguished universities. It also predicted the system was headed for bankruptcy because of low tuition and the high cost of scholarships and the state's Prepaid Tuition Program.

For complete report click here:

<http://www.heraldtribune.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20070227/APN/702272920>

This study may have brought to light some of the problem areas of Florida's higher education system that have been recognized in the past, but were ignored. Perhaps now is the time to revisit some of these issues and look for more comprehensive ways of improving our colleges and universities.

District Weighing FCAT-Tied Bonus

Palm Beach Post

By Christina Denardo

Voting to accept \$10 million from the state may seem like a no-brainer. It's not. Just ask the Palm Beach County School Board.

Today, the board is scheduled to vote on a state teacher bonus plan that gives cash to teachers whose students improve on the FCAT.

If the board votes for the plan, which comes with \$10 million, they'll upset thousands of teachers who say it will divide schools and lower morale. If they reject it, they need to craft another way to reward good teachers - and they'll have to pay for it.

"One of the awkward things about the STAR plan is if you don't take their money you have to fund it yourself," said Schools Superintendent Art Johnson.

For complete article click here:

http://www.palmbeachpost.com/pbcentral/content/local_news/epaper/2007/02/28/s3b_skstar_0228.html

County school boards claim this decision isn't a "no-brainer," but it should be. This is free money to teachers whose students improve on the FCAT. The counties cannot seem to come up with a better system for performance pay and therefore the only ones who should be in opposition to this idea are those teachers who know they are not up to par with their peers—who are not penalized in any way by the STAR program.

Steve Jobs Has Guts

The New York Sun

By Jay Greene

February 21, 2007

Steve Jobs has guts — enough guts to speak his mind about what he thinks is wrong with public education even at the risk of harming his business interests.

In a speech on Friday, the chief executive officer of Apple and Disney honcho declared: "I believe that what's wrong with our schools in this nation is that they have become unionized in the worst possible way."

The problem with unionization, Mr. Jobs argued, is that it has constrained schools from attracting and retaining the best teachers and from dismissing the less effective ones. This, in turn, deters quality people from seeking to become principals and superintendents. "What kind of person could you get to run a small business if you told them that when they came in they couldn't get rid of people that they thought weren't any good? Not really great ones because if you're really smart you go, 'I can't win,'" Mr. Jobs said. He concluded by saying, "This unionization and lifetime employment of K-12 teachers is off-the-charts crazy."

There is a price to be paid for this kind of frank analysis and Steve Jobs knows it. "Apple just lost some business in this state, I'm sure," Mr. Jobs said. Of course, Apple sells a large portion of its computers to public school systems. By taking a stance against school unionization, Mr. Jobs may lose some school sales for Apple.

For complete article click here:

<http://daily.nysun.com/Repository/getmailfiles.asp?Style=OliveXLib:ArticleToMail&Type=text/html&Path=NYS/2007/02/21&ID=Ar00903>

It is nice to see that Steve Jobs, CEO of Apple Computers, is taking some of his knowledge of competition in business and is explaining how it's a necessity in education as well. He reiterates how the unionization of teachers often stymies efforts to improve our schools.

Government Group Gives FSU \$50k Grant

Florida Today
By Bill Cotterell

TALLAHASSEE -- Florida State University was awarded a \$50,000 grant today to improve training of local government managers and provide a forum for research and education in running cities and counties.

The Florida City and County Management Association chose FSU from a field of seven schools for its new "partnership for excellence in local public management" project. The FSU Askew School of Public Administration and Policy and the John Scott Dailey Florida Institute of Government will participate in the project, helping to train the next generation of city and county managers.

FSU President T.K. Wetherell and former Gov. Reubin Askew, for whom the FSU school is named, said they hope the \$50,000 will grow into \$1 million or more for cultivating city and county leaders. The program will also create a public forum in which local government managers can share "best practices" and will establish a network of public-administration schools to focus on needs of cities and counties.

For complete article click here:

<http://www.floridatoday.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20070227/BREAKINGNEWS/70227074/1086>

FSU is receiving \$50,000 to start a program specializing in training up-and-coming city and county managers. For taxpayers' sake, let's hope Fiscal Responsibility and Accountability 101 is the first class taught.

Speakers' Bureau

Need a speaker for your next event? JMI's team and network of scholars are available to headline or participate in your organization's next gathering. JMI staff will help you match the topic with the appropriate speaker. To learn more contact Thomas at 850-386-3131 or Thomas@JamesMadison.org

ADVANCE THE CAUSE OF LIBERTY WITH A TAX-DEDUCTIBLE GIFT TO JMI!

JMI accepts no government funding so we rely on contributions from people like you. Giving to the Institute is now easier than ever with our secure, online system powered by *PayPal*. Your contribution is tax deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law; your greatest benefit will be a freer and more prosperous Florida. For more information about becoming a JMI member, visit our [Membership](#) page or contact Becky Liner at 850-383-4623 or Membership@JamesMadison.org

Log onto our web site for additional resources and more public policy information:
www.JamesMadison.org

The Florida Education Monthly is a free, monthly e-newsletter that summarizes Florida's top educational headlines from around the state, complete with topical research and comment by The James Madison Institute. Suggestions and feedback are welcome at Thomas@JamesMadison.org.