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NEWS / GRADEBOOK

## ICYMI: Florida education news in review, week of Jan. 1, 2019

A collection of news and views from around the state.

By Jeffrey Solochek

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Two things this week: A new report on school security recommendations, and a Supreme Court ruling throwing out a decade-old education equity lawsuit. Who says education news takes a holiday just because schools are closed? Read on for that and more news. • Don't miss our weekly highlights of the news, views, reports and more. You can keep up daily with our conversation on Facebook, hear our podcast, and follow our blog to get all the latest Florida education news. All tips, comments and ideas welcome. Know anyone else who'd like to get this weekly roundup or other email updates? Have them send a note to [jsolochek@tampabay.com](mailto:jsolochek@tampabay.com).

### Top of the Times

Police should have more say over arresting students, say panelists advising Gov.-elect DeSantis, Lawrence Mower

*"Police officers should have more discretion over arresting students in schools, parents whose children were killed in the Marjory Stoneman Douglas massacre told a panel advising Florida Gov.-elect Ron DeSantis today. 'Bureaucrats don't understand policing or police work,' said Andrew Pollack, whose daughter, Meadow, was killed in the shooting. 'We need to take bureaucrats out of the mix of policing in the schools.'*

Florida Supreme Court tosses out decade-old education funding lawsuit, Jeffrey S. Solochek

*"Florida's 10-year-old lawsuit contending the state has shortchanged some of its public education students has ended with the Supreme Court's narrow rejection of the complaint. Three justices plus a substitute associate justice, subbing in for recused Justice Ricky Polston, agreed with the trial and appellate court rulings that the constitutional terms the plaintiffs relied upon are political aspirations, without enough specificity for court judgment."*

**FINAL RULING:** Citizens for Strong Schools vs Florida Board of Education

Richard Corcoran once backed state testing for private schools accepting tax credit scholarships. Will he again?, Jeffrey S. Solochek

*“His critics have complained that his ideas divert taxpayer funds to private institutions that remain largely free of the test-based accountability system that district-run schools must abide. But [incoming education commissioner] Corcoran has, in the past, voiced his backing for the use of that same assessment model for the private schools that accept state assistance. It was his own 2012 legislation that opened the door for them to use the FCAT (since replaced) as a way to measure student performance.”*

Florida lawmaker seeks to let retired teachers return to classrooms sooner, Jeffrey S. Solochek

*“Florida’s teacher shortage has been well documented and growing. It has come at a time when national data show educators quitting the profession at the highest rate in years. A Sarasota Democrat hopes to ease the resulting burden school districts face with a simple tweak to state retirement laws.”*

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## **Around the State**

This Miami student improved 330 points on her SAT. Test scorers suspect she cheated., Miami Herald, Colleen Wright

*“But a few weeks after taking a second SAT in October, she received a letter that her scores were flagged. She says a representative from the company that validates the scores told her on the phone that her test was under review because she scored a 1230 — a 330-point jump from her first test in March — and that she likely had ‘prior knowledge’ of the test.”*

Stoneman Douglas commission calls for arming teachers, more school security spending in first report to state leaders, Sun-Sentinel, David Fleshler, Larry Barszewski, Stephen Hobbs and Scott Travis

*“The 458-page report by the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Public Safety Commission addresses the cascade of errors revealed in the wake of the shooting, including fumbled tips, lax school security policies and unaggressive Broward sheriff’s deputies who hung back as shots were fired. The report now goes to Gov. Rick Scott, DeSantis, Senate President Bill Galvano and House Speaker José Oliva.”*

Volusia hoping to tempt home-school students with more online learning opportunities, Daytona Beach News-Journal, Cassidy Alexander

*“The rise in popularity for home-schooling gave Volusia School Board members pause at their December meeting, when district staff gave a presentation on enrollment trends and predicted the home-schooling numbers will continue to grow. New board member Ruben Colon brought up the need for Volusia County to focus on online education options.”*

## Other Views

Pro-Choice?, Duval County teacher Gregory Sampson, Grumpy Old Teacher blog  
*“Education is crucial for the young. Everyone agrees on that. We also know from the last 20 years that many of the choices parents are offered are not good ones.”*

Florida Virtual School’s odd lack of curiosity, Orlando Sentinel editorial  
*“For an agency whose job is to promote learning, the Florida Virtual School’s board of trustees is showing an odd lack of curiosity. Confronted with a sobering audit that singled out former general counsel Frank Kruppenbacher, trustees for the state’s online public school reacted defensively last week, going after the auditor who presented the findings.”*

Lawmaker aims to preserve history with Memorial Protection Act, Tallahassee Democrat columnist Bill Cotterell  
*“With all they have to do, it’s not likely legislators will want to start what would probably be a racially colored debate about Confederate heroes. Democrats would reflexively unite against Hill’s bill, and the Republicans who run the Capitol won’t want to further alienate black voters.”*

Parkland study: Schools remain unsafe, St. Augustine Record editorial  
*“The report says more money should be made available to all schools for upgrades in hardening against attack and in screening potential problem students. It is not surprising it recommends allowing school districts to raise millage rates to cover that cost — rather than general fund tax dollars. It’s the ‘we’ll set the policy, you pay the bill’ mentality.”*

How Boca Raton Got Lucky on Schools, and Decisions on Camino Square, Alina?, Boca Magazine column, Randy Schultz

*“It’s hard to overstate Boca Raton’s good fortune as the year closed. One of outgoing Florida Education Commissioner Pam Stewart’s last acts was to approve the proposed elementary school next to Don Estridge Middle. The Palm Beach County School District had applied for state approval several months ago, but the state had delayed a decision as district officials pressed their case. ... If Stewart had let the decision go into 2019, Boca Raton likely would have lost the school.”*

## Reports of Note

Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Public Safety Commission Initial Report  
*“School safety in Florida needs to be improved. We can do more and we can do a better job of ensuring the safety of students and staff on K-12 school campuses. Not all school security changes or enhancements have financial costs, and some only require the will of decision makers to effect change and hold people responsible for implementing best practices. Safety and security accountability is lacking in schools, and that*

*accountability is paramount for effective change if we expect a different result in the future than what occurred at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School (MSDHS) on February 14, 2018.”*

The Learning Styles Educational Neuromyth: Lack of Agreement Between Teachers’ Judgments, Self-Assessment, and Students’ Intelligence, Frontiers in Education

*“No relationship was found between pupils’ self-assessment and teachers’ assessment, suggesting that teachers cannot assess the [learning style] of their students accurately. Moreover, students’ intelligence was not found to drive teachers’ assessment of their LS. This study adds to the body of evidence that is skeptical of the adoption of LS in mainstream education.”*

Can Restorative Practices Improve School Climate and Curb Suspensions?, Rand Corp.

*“Despite fewer suspensions, academic outcomes did not improve in PERC schools. At the middle grade level (grades 6–8), academic outcomes actually worsened in the treatment schools. Neither did we find fewer suspensions in middle grades. It could be that it is more challenging for restorative practices to positively affect middle grade students, at least within a two-year time frame.”*

## **Coming Up**

**Jan. 8:** Senate Education, 2:30 p.m. • House Education, 3 p.m.

**Jan. 9:** House Higher Education committees joint meeting, 1 p.m. • House PreK-12 Innovation, 5 p.m.

**Jan. 10:** House PreK-12 Appropriations, 9 a.m. • House Higher Education, 9 a.m.  
• House PreK-12 Quality, 11 a.m. • House Higher Education Appropriations, 11 a.m.

**Jan. 16:** Florida Board of Education, 10 a.m. (EST), Pensacola State College

**Jan. 30-31:** Florida Board of Governors, Florida International University

Link: <http://www.tampabay.com/blogs/gradebook/2019/01/05/icymi-florida-education-news-in-review-week-of-jan-1-2019/>