

TELEVISION QUARTERLY ISSUES-PROGRAMS REPORT

Station: WFGX-TV
Location: Fort Walton Beach, FL
Quarter ending: March 31, 2006

ISSUE/description: 5. EDUCATION: Local availability of higher education; teacher salaries and benefits; crime and violence in schools; curriculum matters; method of handling poorly performing schools and teachers; school vouchers; costs; minority concerns.

How Issue was treated (Program, PSA, etc.):

<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Time/Duration</u>	<u>Program type</u>	<u>Description</u>
1. 3 in the Morning (airs tape-delayed to 8AM on WFGX-TV)	01/04/06	08:34AM/2 minutes	News	*

* We reported on a new plan in the works to ask voters to ditch the class size amendment. The proposal caps class sizes at the county level, not at individual schools. Districts would also be required to spend 65 cents of every dollar in the classroom. District school superintendents say they like more flexibility in class sizes, but they don't want to be told how to spend local money. The bill to gut the class size amendment is sponsored by Ken Pruitt of Port Saint Lucie, who is due to take over as president of the Florida Senate in November. Twenty-one senators are co-sponsoring the proposal, including Durell Peadon of Crestview and Charlie Clary of Destin. Three more sponsors are needed to send it back to the ballot.

2. Channel 3 News at 6PM 01/04/06 07:01PM/2 minutes News **
(airs tape-delayed to 7PM on WFGX-TV)

** Education Reporter Cynthia Reeve reported on local students and schools preparations for the Florida Comprehensive Assessment test. There are 33 days left to prepare for the FCAT. Another report was about Florida's "B-" grade for overall quality of education as rated by "Education Week" magazine. The National Average is a "C+".

3. Channel 3 News at 10PM 01/05/06 11:02PM/2 minutes News ***
(airs tape-delayed to 11PM on WFGX-TV)

*** Our report was on today's ruling by the Florida Supreme Court that the state's voucher system, which allows some children to attend private schools at taxpayer expense, is unconstitutional. The 5 to 2 ruling ends a nearly 7-year legal battle, but supporters say it's far from over. At the end of this school year one of Florida's voucher programs called the Opportunity Scholarship, that's been around 7 years, will be discontinued. Florida's other voucher programs, for disabled and disadvantaged students, which include nearly 30-thousand statewide, are not affected by Thursday's high court ruling. Governor Jeb Bush, who championed school vouchers, says he'll still look for ways to continue all of the programs.

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4. Channel 3 News at 6PM (airs tape-delayed to 7PM on WFGX-TV)	01/06/06	07:01PM/2 minutes	News	****

**** Education Reporter Cynthia Reeves reported that Thursday's Florida Supreme Court ruling on the state's voucher program means current "F" schools won't have to worry about the possibility of losing students to private schools, but that doesn't mean the schools are completely off the hook. There are currently four F schools in Northwest Florida. All of them are in Escambia County. But in Florida, a school that earns two "F"s in a four year period is considered a failing school and must take certain steps to correct the problem. School leaders say accountability for failing schools has gotten more intense rather than less.

In a second story, we reported the Florida Catholic Conference is dismayed at the Court ruling. More than 700 children who had been attending failing schools use the school vouchers to attend primarily religious schools, many of which are Catholic. More than 16,000 students with disabilities use the similar McKay Scholarship Program. The Florida Catholic Conference says it knows parents are worried their children could lose their scholarships too.

5. Forest History	01/14/06 UFN	various/30 seconds	PSA	*****
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***** This announcement, produced by the Library of Congress, encourages students to log on to the website LOC.gov, to find out how much fun history can be.

6. 3 in the Morning (airs tape-delayed to 8AM on WFGX-TV)	01/18/06	09:07AM/2 minutes	News	*****
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***** The controversial plan to increase teacher pay by cutting high school class periods is dead. For the second time in two months, the Escambia County School Board voted against it. The board heard from a room full of opponents including people from the Pensacola Opera and Symphony who say the plan would kill most opportunities for students to take fine arts electives. The plan would help the district give teachers a raise by reducing high school class periods from seven to six, but district staff confirmed the "Tech High", which has a special program, would be allowed to have a seven period day. Chairman Gary Bergosh urged parents and teachers to ask Florida legislators for better funding so he won't be in this position again.

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7. Channel 3 News at 6PM (airs tape-delayed to 7PM on WFGX-TV)	01/19/06	07:02PM/3 minutes	News	*****

***** Education Reporter Cynthia Reeves reported that efforts to improve teacher pay in Escambia County are back to the drawing board. The school board has voted against all the proposals Superintendent Jim Paul has suggested in the last two months. Woodham Math teacher Bill Vincent, bargaining chairman for the teacher's union, says raises aren't worth it if they come on the backs of students. But Paul says to be competitive in a state with a huge teacher shortage, raising teacher's salaries must be a priority. The latest statistics show Escambia County ranks 57th in the state for average teacher pay and that is thousands of dollars less than surrounding counties. State Representative Dave Murzin says the district received an additional 16.1 million dollars in state funding this school year, but part of the problem is Escambia County teachers have the best benefits package in the state, and aren't willing to sacrifice it.

In a second story, we reported that Florida's Department of Education says even though the state desperately needs teachers, districts are still going to be very selective about whom they hire. The state is kicking off a massive recruiting drive, including a 30 million dollar proposal for incentives like signing bonuses and housing allowances. Applicants will have to pass a background check and tests to show they've mastered their subject area, as well as show state certification. State research shows that the number-one factor for student success is the quality of the teacher.

8. Channel 3 News at 10PM 01/23/06 11:07PM/3 minutes News *****
(airs tape-delayed to 11PM on WFGX-TV)

***** Education Reporter Cynthia Reeves reported that Santa Rosa County is booming and new subdivisions are popping up all over, bringing more students to overcrowded schools. The growth means rezoning is a possibility for nearly every school. Because of the growth, the class size amendment, increasing construction costs, and the hurricanes, the county's five year construction plan completed in 2004 is already outdated. On January 31st, the school board will begin looking at redistricting, which will be a challenge because of the geography of Santa Rosa County. The district is large and has the bay, military installations, and state forests to consider. Meanwhile, the new Holley Navarre Primary school will open August 2nd for about 900 students, and bids open Tuesday to build a new elementary school next to Avalon Middle School to open in August 2007.

In a related report, Governor Jeb Bush wants to spend \$239 million on attracting and keeping teachers. Florida needs to hire about 30,000 teachers by fall. But, salaries are low and Florida ranks poorly in secondary education. Some of the initiatives include giving all teachers a laptop computer, extra pay for math and science teachers and more money for college loan reimbursements. The proposal will be presented to the legislature in March for approval in the 2006-2007 budget.

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9. 3 in the Morning (airs tape-delayed to 8AM on WFGX-TV)	02/02/06	09:03AM/2 minutes	News	*****

***** President Bush's proposed budget reduction package includes cutting \$13 billion from the student loan program, and eliminating the Perkins loan program which helps thousands of students attend college. The Director of the Financial Aid at the University of West Florida says the cut would impact more than 300 local students. Her fear is some of the neediest students would have to drop out or give up on their dream to attend college. The other part of the proposed student loan cuts could increase the debt burden of parents and students because interest costs could rise. It is estimated a student with an average loan of \$17,000 could end up paying an additional \$6,000.

10. 3 in the Morning (airs tape-delayed to 8AM on WFGX-TV)	02/15/06	08:33AM/3 minutes	News	*****
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***** The middle and high schools of the future could be more like college. Governor Jeb Bush is proposing a reform package that calls for pushing students harder, with an emphasis on student interests and career goals rather than on a "one size fits all" system. The proposal calls for tougher graduation requirements. Middle schoolers would have to earn 12 credits in Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies to advance to high school. High school students could have a major or minor area of study, just like in college, but they'd also have more rigorous course work including four years of high school Math. The proposal also calls for the creation of a \$50 million "Ready to Work" certification program for students who want to enter the workforce straight out of school.

11. Channel 3 News at 6PM (airs tape-delayed to 7PM on WFGX-TV)	02/22/06	07:03PM/2 minutes	News	*****
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***** We reported on a scholarship program created and funded by self-made success Jim Cronley of Teharr & Cronley Contractors. Cronley is paying \$45,000 in scholarships that will pay for 15 students to get two years of training at George Stone Vocational Center. The students will train for construction positions as plumbers, electricians or other subcontractors. These students could eventually help ease the construction quandary in our area.

In a second story, Education Reporter Cynthia Reeves profiled a local "F" school that is striving to shake off its reputation as a failing school by luring top teachers from other schools and motivating the students to make better grades and improve their FCAT scores.

And in a third story we reported that Escambia School Superintendent Jim Paul had pulled from the school board agenda a proposal to create a rezoning committee, following complaints from Woodham High School parents, students and teachers. His critics believed he was trying to move forward on plans to close Woodham and convert it to a middle school with as little public input as possible.

We also reported the Florida Board of Education has unanimously approved a controversial plan that will tie teachers' salaries to their students' performance on the standardized FCAT tests. The state teachers union is threatening to go to court to block the plan.

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12. Channel 3 News at 6PM (airs tape-delayed to 7PM on WFGX-TV)	03/01/06	07:02PM/2 minutes	News	*****

***** Education Reporter Cynthia Reeves reported that the Florida legislature reconvenes next week, and educators are closely watching several proposals including a move to revise the class size amendment. The top issue this session for teachers is the controversial E-Comp plan that calls for FCAT based performance pay. The so-called 65 Percent Solution is also causing a stir. It would require schools to spend 65 cents of every dollar in the classroom. Educators are waiting to see whether lawmakers will include costly expenditures such as transportation in the formula. Another bill calls for a uniform start time for Florida schools. A group called Save Our Summer wants to make it a law that no school will start a week prior to Labor Day. Support comes largely from the tourism industry. It gets mixed reviews from parents and students. Most educators believe the school calendar should be set at the local level. The little known School Safety Bill is calling for school districts to adopt a policy against bullying and harassment. The session starts March 7th.

13. 3 in the Morning (airs tape-delayed to 8AM on WFGX-TV)	03/07/06	08:30AM/2 minutes	News	*****
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***** We reported on the controversy over the grading of the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test. The Department of Education is using temporary workers to grade the writing portion of the FCAT. The qualifications are a Bachelor's degree and one week of training. Local students and teachers are outraged that graders with so little qualifications can impact which colleges will accept the students, and possibly which teachers lose their jobs.

14. Channel 3 News at 10PM (airs tape-delayed to 11PM on WFGX-TV)	03/14/06	11:07PM/5 minutes	News	*****
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***** We reported that some Florida lawmakers are proposing a plan to make sure all children are exposed to arts education. It would require at least nine weeks of class time in arts and in music for every sixth grader. Under Governor Bush's education proposal, high schools would no longer require students to take one credit of art. But these lawmakers say they're still committed to making sure students get a well-rounded education. Educators have criticized Bush's plan to eliminate the high school art requirement, arguing that some schools will get rid of art classes altogether to cut costs and focus on the F.C.A.T.

In a second report, President John Cavanaugh of the University of West Florida today presented his blueprint for the future at a town hall meeting. He addressed issues such as legislative budget requests and faculty and staff salary increases.