

ST.JOHNS COUNTY CIVIC ROUNDTABLE

EDUCATION COMMITTEE REPORT

SEPTEMBER, 2008

Our school system has once again scored above the State and National averages on recently released Scholastic Aptitude Test [SAT] scores. Exceeding the state average by 92 points [1566] and 55 points higher than the national average of 1511. ACT scores[American College Test] were 22.0 , which is above the national average of 21.1 and state score of 19.8. This is quite an accomplishment as we rank 50th in our financial support of our educational system.

We now have 28,301 students in our system, an increase of 2,654 since the first day of classes this year. It's encouraging to see your system do so well with so little financially.

It's troubling when you look at the numbers: we're 50th as state in financial support at \$33.51/\$1000. By comparison the U.S. average is \$43.34/\$1000. Alaska spends the most at \$62.68/\$1000 and D.C. the least at \$30.09. To expand that number you must include average income, which is \$29,173 ranking us 23rd in the nation. The 23rd ranked state is Kansas: \$43.57 [23 cents above national average. For information purposes, Connecticut is first at \$42,104 and Mississippi last at \$22,861. From Wikipedia, demographics for St. Johns county indicate 49,614 households with the median income per household of \$50,099. If the schools received the national average of \$43.34 vs. the \$33.51, our school system would receive a significant sum of money. Using our median income and 49,614 households the increase would be:

$\$43.34 \text{ minus } \$33.51 \text{ equals } \$9.83 / \$1000 \text{ times } \$50.099 \text{ thousand equals } \$492.47/\text{year-per household times } 49,614 \text{ households equals } \$24,433,406 !$

No one wants their taxes to increase as many are on fixed income. Here in lies the problem. Interestingly enough, the state found \$300 million for a prison and cut a like amount from education. "incarcerate don't educate" Arizona has the correct idea- tents- good enough for our military in Iraq where it's much hotter.

Somewhere out there in some school district, the future leaders of our great nation are currently students. Maybe even in our district schools. We can't afford to short change their education. Parents need to get involved and academics must take precedence over expedience and athletics. If a student can't do the required work, they shouldn't be advanced for any reason.

Jim McLane, Education Committee Chairman- St. Johns County Roundtable
home address: 500 Willow Walk Place
St. Augustine, Fl. 32086