



NORTHERN EXPOSURE

The Newsletter of Village Academy North, Inc.

Yes, the economy remains horrible. Yes, there isn't enough money for everything. But we get pretty worked up when the subject is cutting education funds. And cutting is the order of the day in Tallahassee right now.

We think you should consider what we are going to tell you in the next story an outrage. We urge you to let your State Senator and Representative know that you think this is categorically wrong. Please hurry.

VILLAGE
ACADEMY NORTH

A CALL TO
ACTION

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THE LEGISLATURE

The Legislature is in session and education is ending up on the cutting room floor.

If your child is at Village Academy North, they are either in VPK or will eventually be in VPK. Now please understand - VPK works. Children who leave here after having been with us for at least two years are almost always reading. Imagine reading on the day you walk in to Kindergarten!

As we told you last month, VPK is guaranteed by the Florida state Constitution. But the Legislature has yet to provide it a stable funding source.

In 2007, the "Base Student Allocation" was \$2,646 per child, or \$4.90 per hour to teach VPK. The following year, they lowered the BSA to \$2,594 at the beginning of the year, and then lowered it twice during the year (ignoring our contract with them.) Right now, the bills in the House and Senate both

call for reducing the BSA to **\$2,200**. I hope you share our opinion that investing in education in Florida is going the wrong way. (Elementary school is \$7,045 per pupil.)

The legislature hopes to ease our pain by raising the student teacher ratio. One of the bills would allow us to have 24 students in a class instead of a max of 18. We don't think that's right either.

Don't think that this kind of budget cutting is limited to VPK. The Legislature is also trying to find a way around the class size amendment, and they are raising the requirements for Bright Futures funding. So your children are going to be impacted from Village Academy North, through elementary school, and all the way through and including college.

We are asking you again to call or email your State Senator and Representative and tell them that education has to have a greater priority in Florida. Please hurry - time is of the essence.

For Sen Stephen Wise:

wise.stephen.web@flsenate.gov

(850) 487-5027

For Sen John Thrasher:

thrasher.john.web@flsenate.gov

(850) 487-5030

For Senator Anthony Hill:

hill.tony.web@flsenate.gov

(850) 487-5024

For Rep Michael Weinstein:

mike.weinstein@myfloridaho.usc.gov

(850) 488.1304

For Ronald Renuart:

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(850) 488.0001

For William Proctor:

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(850) 488.2977

Please call or email. You will be helping your child!!!

SPRING BREAK

There's a long spring break coming up, and we will be open for business. (Don't forget that Monday, April 5, is still a vacation day for St Johns County.) We are planning some special activities for our elementary-age children, so please stop by the front desk and let them know if your child will be attending.

DATES TO REMEMBER	MAR 29 - APR 5	MAR 23	APR 22
	St Johns County Spring Break (Village North Open)	Early Kindergarten Registration	Early Kindergarten Registration

BUCKLE YOUR CHILDREN UP!

The St Johns County Sheriff is now sending deputies to our school to monitor compliance with Florida seat belt laws. Belting your child in is an act of love; letting them move around the car without protection is not. We feel very strongly about this, and welcome the presence of the deputies.

READING AT HOME

I read an interesting article on the impact of environment on reading skills. The study looked at over 300 sets of twins enrolled in either Kindergarten or 1st Grade, and then followed for two years. "In word and letter identification, environment explained about two-thirds of the test results, while genetics explained one-third. For vocabulary and sound awareness, genetics and environment had equal influence. Genetics accounted for 75% of results on reading speed tests, they noted." However, when looking at growth in a child's reading skills, the study found that environment "almost completely responsible for the growth of reading skills that are taught, such as words and letters, and 80% responsible for growth in awareness of sounds in reading". The "so-what" here is that what you do at home is as important as what we do here. So please, read to your child every day.

ADMIN NOTES

Potty-trained or not, we really need your child to have a change of clothes here...Can you donate any used clothing for ages 1-4? We can use some spare clothes to deal with accidents...Please read to your child - every night...Starting to warm up - at least I hope so. Please check and make sure we have a signed form for applying sunscreen, bug repellent, etc.