



GREATER FLORIDA CONSORTIUM OF SCHOOL BOARDS' 2019 LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

Constitution of the State of Florida, Article IX - - Section I.

“The education of children is a fundamental value of the people of the State of Florida. It is therefore a paramount duty of the State to make adequate provision for the education of all the children residing within its borders. Adequate provision shall be made by law for a uniform, efficient, safe, secure, and high-quality system of free public schools that allows students to obtain a high-quality education....”

GOAL: TO INCREASE, ON A PHASED-IN BASIS, THE AVERAGE PER STUDENT FUNDING TO ENSURE THAT FLORIDA IS IN THE TOP HALF OF THE STATES AND CAN PROVIDE A WORLD CLASS EDUCATION TO ENABLE ITS STUDENTS TO COMPETE AND ACCEL IN THE GLOBAL MARKET PLACE.

ENSURE THAT, IN ALL CASES, LEGISLATION BE EVALUATED TO PROVIDE THAT IT DOES NOT CONFLICT WITH THE CONSTITUTIONAL AND HOME RULE AUTHORITY OF SCHOOL BOARDS TO “OPERATE, CONTROL, AND SUPERVISE” ALL PUBLIC SCHOOLS WITHIN THEIR SCHOOL DISTRICTS.

PRIORITY ISSUES

RESPECT THE CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY OF SCHOOL BOARDS

“The school board shall operate, control and supervise all free public schools within the school district and determine the rate of school district taxes within the limits prescribed herein. Two or more school districts may operate and finance joint educational programs.” – The Florida Constitution, Article IX, Section 4(b).

FUNDING

Allocate sufficient total funds with flexibility to enable school districts to support: guaranteed continuation budgets that provide for enrollment changes, inflationary increases, competitive salaries and benefits for teachers and other personnel and quality program improvements, by increasing the Base Student Allocation (BSA) for FY 2019-20 at least five percent per student.

Restore the full calculation of Required Local Effort (RLE) to include new construction and property reassessments.

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Fully fund any new mandates, without transferring money from the Base Student Allocation (BSA) or Discretionary Local Effort (DLE).

CAPITAL OUTLAY FUNDING

Recognize school board's authority to control Local District Capital Outlay spending without any required diversion.

Restore the full optional 2.0 mill levy for capital purposes to meet school maintenance and technology needs and reject any further reduction and continue the flexibility to use this capital revenue to pay property and casualty insurance premiums; to purchase equipment to implement on-line testing; and, to purchase software required to run equipment or other critical capital or allow .25 (of the 2.0 mills levy) for critical operational needs.

STUDENT SAFETY/MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Determine and fully fund the state mandate of one officer per school by increasing the Safe Schools allocation.

Redirect any unused Aaron Feis Guardian Program Funds available to school districts who would like to spend it as required by the Safe Schools allocation instead of on school guardians.

Build upon the investment made last year for mental health services by providing funding to hire additional school counselors, to expand and enhance mental health services available through school and community coordinated services, and to provide enhanced wrap-around services.

Continue funding for school safety infrastructure enhancements to schools.

2019 ADDITIONAL PRIORITY ISSUES

ACCOUNTABILITY

- Extend the option of **paper/pencil exams for expansion to grades 7-10** for Florida Standards Assessments (FSA) in English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics.
- Continue to **streamline and reduce the amount of state-required student assessment** to bring it in line with requirements of the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), also ensuring the FLDOE concordance with SAT/ACT exams with FSA is completed; and provide state funds to cover the cost of SAT/ACT test administration in districts.
- **Continue the use of the Postsecondary Educations Readiness Test (PERT)** as an alternative to FSA Algebra and continue state funding of district administration costs.
- Require the **Department of Education** to allow for districts to substitute correlated national exams in lieu of FSA for reading and/or mathematics.
- Provide the statewide assessment, including the General Equivalency Diploma (GED), in multiple languages to English Language Learners (ELL) who have received instructions for less than three (3) years, which is allowed by Federal Regulations.

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WORKFORCE EDUCATION

- Maintain the **dual education delivery system** that allows both the local school district and community/state college to offer post-secondary career, technical and adult education programs.
- Accurately align our funding model and **provide additional dollars to reflect student enrollment growth** in career, technical, and adult education programs throughout Florida.
- **Create incubator Workforce Education Grant Program**, adjunct to Workforce Education categorical funding, of \$60 million for school districts to start new career academy and Postsecondary Adult Vocational programs (PSAV) that provides funding for equipment and initial operations, including instructor recruitment bonuses.
- Restore **workforce education funding** to 2007 levels and commit to annual increases thereafter for school districts to meet state and regional workforce needs as outlined by the Department of Economic Opportunity.

FUNDING

- Provide state funding for any increased costs to the employer's contribution to the **Florida Retirement System**.
- Maintain **Adults with Disabilities (AWD) program** funding.
- Allow for **voter approval of the half-cent sales tax** for operational as well as capital construction purposes and school bus purchases.
- Reinstate the funding for **251, 252, 253 on a per student basis, and eliminate the arbitrary cap on gifted students**.
- Extend the term of **locally voted levy from four (4) years to ten (10) years**.
- **Revise the TRIM notice** to delineate whether a tax increase is due to an increase in the proposed millage rate and/or property reassessments by the property tax appraiser.
- Create a **waiver of tuition for parents and/or guardians of students at Title I elementary schools** who take workforce development programs offered by technical colleges or technical centers on the campus of their child's school.
- Collect and earmark the **internet sales tax** for public schools.
- Restore the FTE definition to provide for **six (6) periods** and fund additional instructional time for **dual enrollment, IB, AICE, and virtual programs** up to a maximum of **eight (8) classes** per student.
- **Fully fund and provide the flexibility in providing the additional time during summer school** or a combination to meet the additional 180-hour reading instruction requirement at the lowest-performing elementary school.
- **Eliminate the wealth adjustment** from the sparsity formula.
- Oppose the automatic increase each year for the **Tax Credit Scholarship Program**.

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TITLE I FLEXIBILITY

Return full control of **Title I spending** to local school board discretion to support district improvement efforts for students and allow school districts to stipulate the use of its Title I funding at the local level, especially if it is to address school improvement as intended by the Federal Regulations, excluding the district's indirect rate from the administrative cost.

STUDENT STATION COSTS

Provide for a district or regional index for the per-student-station cost cap to keep pace with changing market place increases for labor, materials, and code requirements.

HURRICANE/DISASTER RELIEF

Establish **permanent statutory authority to assist** school districts **with hurricane damage** without negatively affecting resources for other districts, including:

- Providing **an avenue for school boards to seek necessary waivers of state law for up to a year**, such as shortening the school year, in order to resolve some of the immediate impact of hurricane damage;
- **Funding all costs** associated with shelter operations; and,
- Increasing the multiplier for the Declining Enrollment Supplement as found in the Appropriations Act proviso language for a decline in full-time equivalent students attributable to a major storm/disaster event to .75 (currently .25).

STUDENT SAFETY

Increase penalties for **firing a gun within 1000 feet of a school**.

DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE (DJJ) FUNDING

Allow districts to **waive the \$45 fee for adult education basic or GED courses** offered to students in jails, stockades, or DJJ facilities.

CHARTER SCHOOLS

- Focus the **approval of charter applications** to a specific academic or space need which the local district does not or cannot meet or if the district determines the application is in the best interest of the student.
- Exempt school districts from paying **ad valorem tax for leased properties** similar to charter schools.
- Require a **charter school to return any and all public funds**, excluding the Charter School Planning Grant funds, to the sponsor upon the charter school's election of any deferral of opening the charter school.
- Allow school boards to waive the same laws and rules that **charter schools** can waive on a district-wide basis.

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- Allow school boards with at least 10 percent of its student enrollment in Charter Schools to determine the need for additional schools and/or require new charters to locate in areas to address overcrowding, provide choice opportunities to students/parents zoned to failing schools, or meet specific academic needs the school district is not addressing.

OTHER ISSUES

FUNDING

- Ensure that any changes to the **District Cost Differential** reflect the costs of housing, insurance, poverty, and transportation, rather than wages.
- Allow local school boards the option to double the **Discretionary Local Effort (DLE)** to 1.496 mills.
- Oppose further equalization of the **Local Discretionary Millage (LDM)**.
- Uphold the **90 percent rule** in the FEFP, and fund state mandates for Transportation and Instructional Materials entirely from state revenue and do not include this funding when calculating the 90 percent rule.

CAPITAL OUTLAY FUNDING

- Prohibit the **personal enrichment** of charter operators from public funds.
- Establish a **long-term, stable, and recurring revenue source** to provide increased school construction funds to support new facilities, renovations, replacement schools, school maintenance, land acquisition, mandated class size reduction, hurricane shelter retrofitting, pre-kindergarten programs housed in public schools, and the additional costs of constructing environmentally-efficient “green” schools.
- Eliminate the “**may not exceed the cost per student station**” provision as it applies to new construction using any non-state funds.

CRITICAL SHORTAGE

- **Fund strategies**, such as teacher fellowship and loan forgiveness programs, to recruit and retain teachers.
- Provide for **rehiring of administrative and instructional personnel, support personnel and law enforcement officers, personnel as substitute teachers**, and hiring of retired bus drivers on a part-time basis after one month after termination without penalty to their state retirement pension.
- Expand options for individuals to obtain **temporary teacher certification** and, subsequently, full professional certification who demonstrated their work to be highly effective.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

- Require all **pre-K teachers to meet the same certification requirements**, regardless of provider, and provide adequate funding for training.
- Fund a **high quality optional full-day voluntary pre-K (VPK) program**.
- Rename the education statute to include pre-Kindergarten, allowing certified pre-school teachers to be included in incentive programs and retirement options currently only afforded to K-12 teachers.

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ACCOUNTABILITY AND STATE ASSESSMENT

- **Move the June 30th FLDOE reporting deadline** for FSA tests back to June 8th.
- Give districts **greater flexibility in determining third grade retentions and promotion criteria** to measure each student's progress and customize his/her education plan.
- Enhance **state funding for educator professional development and training** on Florida State Standards, the related assessments, required use of technology.

INNOVATIVE SCHOOL DISTRICT

Create an "innovative school district" program that a district, state-rate "B" or higher, may apply to the State Board of Education as a five-year agreement for fiscal and program flexibility in meeting state standards in return for improved student performance and use of fiscal resources.

ELIMINATION OF DUAL ENROLLMENT TUITION FEE

Apply the tuition and fee waivers granted private school students in 2018 for dual enrollment to public school students so that students can continue to access college courses without financially penalizing school districts.

BEST AND BRIGHTEST PROVISION CHANGES

Apply "Best and Brightest" requirements and eligibility to all instructional personnel or eliminate the program and return the monies to school districts for use towards salaries or incentive programs for highly effective teachers and other instructional personnel or hiring bonuses to fill vacancies in critical shortage areas or high needs schools.

PERSONNEL – TEACHER EVALUATION

Support district authority over teacher evaluations and pay for performance, including removing the Value-Added Model (VAM) from teacher evaluations, particularly for teachers of disadvantaged students.

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