

GREATER FLORIDA CONSORTIUM
OF
SCHOOL BOARDS'
~~2011~~ 2012 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 EXCEL IN THE GLOBAL MARKET PLACE.

PRIORITY ISSUES

FUNDING

In order to accomplish this goal:

Allocate sufficient state dollars with flexibility to enable school districts (traditional public schools) 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 including those mandated by SB 736. **Use state revenue to provide for this continuation budget as opposed to the state using increases in local property tax revenues as the source of additional funds.**

- Conduct an impartial third-party study of the Florida Price Level Index to reflect the cost of housing, insurance, poverty and transportation costs rather than wages.
- Guarantee, at least, the same dollars per FTE in total potential funds appropriated for FY 2006-07 adjusted for the three-year average of inflation, as this was the benchmark for eligibility for receipt of federal stimulus funds.
- The state should absorb the anticipated any increase to and, pending the fiduciary study, reduce the FRS costs for employers and employees.
- Pending the fiduciary study, absorb any increase and/or reduce the FRS costs for employers and employees.
- Establish a pupil poverty index in the FEFP.
- Develop a state plan to reinvest a specific percentage of state growth revenue to the FEFP.

- Continue to authorize co-enrollment funding for high school students taking adult education courses who need credits for graduation or improved grade point average.
- Increase funding for Safe Schools, Transportation, Instructional Materials, and Supplemental Academic Instruction to accommodate higher enrollment and higher costs, and maintain these programs as categoricals with maximum flexibility.
- Lower the 90 percent rule to 80 percent or 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.
- Restore the program weights for Exceptional Student Education (ESE), English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), and all secondary (middle and high school) career education programs to pre-2001 levels.
- Replace federal funds (Edujobs) put into the base funding with state funds rather than local sources. (FSBA)

Stable Funding for Public Education

- ~~Establish a financially stable and expanding source of state revenue for Prek-12 that includes plans to replace the phase-out of America's Recovery and Reinvestment State Stabilization Funds and funds public schools to at least the 2006-07 level adjusted for the three-year average of inflation.~~
- Provide Commit to long-term funding stability for teacher performance pay and teacher evaluation systems, the cost of end-of-course exam development/implementation and differentiated accountability. (FSBA)
- Identify alternative revenue sources, including efforts to enforce the existing state sales tax on all internet sales made in Florida and study a phase-out of exemptions on non-essential goods.

Local Discretionary Millage (LDM)

- Oppose further equalization of the LDM until the basic education program is funded to the 2006-07 level adjusted for the three-year average of inflation.
- Extend the voter-approved operating millage authority from four (4) years to ten (10) years and allow for voter approval of the half-cent sales tax for operational as well as capital construction purposes.

Funding

- Reinststate the funding for 251, 252, 253, and gifted students on a per student basis.
- Hold funding in abeyance for the School Recognition Program.
- Reject any new funded or unfunded mandates or new programs.
- Public School Funding should follow the student when the student's educational enrollment location changes between a non- traditional school and a traditional public school. district and non-district within the public school system.
- returns to a traditional public school from a charter school and vice versa.
- Restore pre-k-12 funding to the FY 2010 level to eliminate waiting lists.
- Give school boards local options by January 2011 to develop programs for increased instructional time (i.e., longer school day, week or year) supported by corresponding additional state funds for full implementation. by the 2013-14 school year.
- Preserve Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate Programs and other advanced academic programs by restoring funding to the 2006-2007 levels (.24 factor).
- Return the rate of local tax roll collections from 96 percent to 95 percent for FEFP calculation purposes.

HURRICANE/DISASTER RELIEF

Establish permanent provisions 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 operational costs associated with shelter operations; and,
- including shelters in concurrency requirements.

CLASS SIZE

- Fully fund the class size constitutional mandate and distribute all funds on a per student basis and eliminate all monetary penalties.
- Make compliance be at the school and not the classroom level.
- Give traditional public schools the same exemptions provided charter schools.

- ~~Place a constitutional amendment on the 2012 ballot to repeal the class size requirement and redirect the savings to direct classroom instruction.~~

GOVERNANCE

Voucher Programs

Oppose any further expansion of the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship, and John McKay Scholarship Programs.

Charter Schools

- ~~Restore school boards' final authority for the governance of~~
- ~~Provide traditional schools the same laws, rules, and regulations as charter schools. and~~
- Allow school boards to serve as the Board of Directors to establish their own charter schools within each district.
- ~~and re-establish appropriate administrative fees authority.~~
- Maintain school boards' authority regarding the disposition of local capital outlay funds and impact fees; and authorize school boards to collect administrative fees for all students served by the charter school.

School Board Structure

Oppose any provisions impacting ~~only one any~~ school board's governance without local school board and community input. (Included and sent to FSBA)

Expenditure Requirements

Oppose any legislation that dictates a specific percentage of a district's operating budget that must be allocated to "direct classroom instruction." (FSBA)

Waiver of Statutes

- Provide the authority for the governor ~~and or~~ Commissioner of Education to waive statutes, except for those dealing with life safety issues, upon request of the school board for up to three years.
- ~~Give school boards authority similar to the governor's to waive statutes.~~

Articulation Programs and Agreements

- Allow local or regional determination in the operation of post-secondary and adult education articulation programs and dual delivery systems.

- Provide for statewide articulation agreements for school districts, community and state colleges and universities so that dual enrollment credit will transfer to and among all state higher education institutions.

Workforce Development

Maintain the current dual delivery system and fund FTEs at 1.0.

School Board Calendar

Abolish the portion of Florida Statute xxxx that requires the first day of school to be no more than 14 days before Labor Day of each year, and allow each district the authority to set its own start date.

Allow school boards to waive the start of the school year or eliminate the waiver for “high-performing districts.”

Pay for Performance/Teacher Evaluation Systems

Provide reasonable time frames for implementation to ensure maximum local flexibility to work with local employee groups in the design and implementation of teacher evaluation levels.

Provide the authority for school boards to design local evaluation and performance systems rather than impose a one size fits all mandate.

Constitutional Authority and Home Rule

Preserve school board constitutional and home rule authority.

- Establish no new programs/reforms and allow Promote a collaborative approach at the local level for those in place
- for those requirements already in place, establish a method of collaboration between the legislature and local school districts

School Board Members’ Duties and Salaries

Oppose any restrictions to school board members’ duties or salaries. (FSBA)

CAPITAL OUTLAY

School Construction

Provide adequate 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.

Optional Capital Outlay Levy (2.0 mills)

- Restore the full optional 2.0 mill levy for capital purposes and r~~Reject any further reduction of the capital outlay levy (1.5 mills)~~ and continue the flexibility to use this revenue to pay property and casualty insurance premiums; to purchase equipment to implement on-line testing; and, to purchase software required to run equipment purchased with capital funding.
- Restore the Local Discretionary Millage to 1.75 mills for capital outlay purposes.
- Oppose any mandatory diversion of Local Discretionary Capital Outlay levy revenue from traditional public schools to non-traditional public schools.

Impact Fees

- Define school boards as “infrastructure”-- not “developers.”
- Maintain fees and reinstate local capital outlay funding for the purposes that they were collected.

Relocatables

Allow, but do not require, local governments and school boards to include the capacity of temporary relocatable facilities in the level of service calculation.

Critical Needs .25 Mill Levy

Allow the critical needs .25 mill levy without a referendum.

Student Station Costs

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

PECO Funds

Appropriate ~~Reinstate~~ PECO funds for traditional public schools to no less than one third of the total dollars available. (FSBA)

Technology Infrastructure

Provide funding for the completion of the technology infrastructure (internet/hardware connectivity) within and among districts and provide for equitable access to virtual and online resources. (FSBA)

General Obligation Bonds

Extend the **maximum** term for GOBs from 20 to 30 years and allow school boards to schedule the maturities.

Local Sales Tax

Expand the allowable use of locally-voted sales tax to include operating expenses that maintain, renovate, or repair existing school facilities and maintain, secure, or upgrade school technology equipment.

PROPERTY APPRAISAL

- ~~Impose a deadline for local property appraisers to certify final valuation of the roll by June 30th of each year.~~
- ~~Increase the fees paid by appellants of property tax assessments to cover the cost of the Value Adjustment Board operations, particularly legal fees mandated by the 2008 Florida Legislature.~~

ACCOUNTABILITY AND STATE TESTING PROGRAM

- Establish and fund better systems to develop, implement and audit valid and reliable state tests and expedite the scanning and scoring to provide better, more reliable student data.
- Develop and fund the teacher/administrator evaluation and performance pay system and provide maximum local flexibility for local collaboration and negotiations for the implementation.
- ~~Provide that Fully fund end-of-course exams and provide that EOCs should not be the determining factor in receiving credit; should not exceed 30 percent of a student's total grade; and, allow students **allowed should be** to retake the exams.~~
- **Eliminate the requirement that middle school students must pass Civics (EOC exam) to be promoted to high school. (FSBA)**
- Modify the state's criteria for "intervene status" to ensure clarity, consistency, and fairness.
- **Do not count FCAT scores for English Language Learners only after for at least two years after enrollment.**

- High school graduation requirements should accommodate diploma options for students entering the workforce, technical or career education programs, or military, national or international study. (FSBA)
- Provide for the same level of student and educator accountability for all state providers. (Included and sent to FSBA)

OTHER ISSUES

Virtual Education

Allow virtual education reporting of FTE in all reporting periods for total 12-month FTE limit of 1.0 and open virtual enrollment to any Florida student entering kindergarten and ensure the Florida virtual school charges no more than the BSA. (FSBA)

Student Safety

Prohibit reading, writing or sending text messages on an electronic device while operating a motor vehicle in a school zone.

Best Practices of Assessment Programs

Require the state DOE to conduct a “Global Best Practices” review of professional and student assessment programs.

Residency Requirement

Remove the one-year residency requirement before attending post-secondary programs at an in-state tuition level. (FSBA)

DJJ Funding

- Ensure that any additional funding for Juvenile Justice centers supplements rather than supplants funds available for the basic education program. (Included and sent to FSBA)
- Allow districts to waive the \$45 fee for adult education basic or GED courses offered to students in jails, stockades, or DJJ facilities. (Included and sent to FSBA)

Oppose any legislation that would prevent Preserve a school board’s authority to serve as the management company for charter schools.

Remove from platform and place in position statement

Provide state funding to offset the major increases in transportation costs that result from the requirements necessary to implement Public School Opportunity Scholarships. (FSBA)