

School Board of Sarasota County, Florida
2017 Legislative Platform

1. Ensure constitutional authority of school boards

Locally elected school boards are keenly aware of the unique needs of the community that it serves and is best positioned to make the decisions necessary to ensure the greatest opportunities for students.

2. HB 7029 - cost of construction

Pursuant to the cost studies required in HB7029, adopt a fair and equitable cost cap for construction that also provide an option for exceptions without being subject to penalties listed in FS1013.64. Specifically, the cap should consider the following factors:

- Variation of commercial construction costs among Florida's counties and regions;
- Removal from consideration of costs for site purchase, site improvement (both on and off site) and attending infrastructure improvements that may be imposed by local government, water management districts, etcetera, including but not limited to those associated with environmental and mitigation efforts;
- Exempt upfront investments that minimize the overall cost of building ownership over its life through investment in green technologies, energy reduction technologies, selection of construction materials and construction techniques which decrease long term operational costs;
- Removal of costs of infrastructure for both technology and safety and security;
- Exempt construction requirements from non-life safety and federal requirements found in SREF (State Regulations for Educational Facilities);
- Costs associated with extended construction schedules on student occupied campuses;
- Adjust costs to account for decisions made by local School Boards in the interest of impacting learning;
- Other factors as may be determined in studies being conducted and due for reporting to the Legislature by the Office of Economic Demographic Research (EDR) and the Office for Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA).

3. Address shortage of substitute teachers by allowing recent retirees to work as substitutes

- Amend Florida Statute 238.181 to allow teachers to return to the classroom as substitutes within three months of retirement rather than being required to wait 12 months as mandated in the current statute.

4. **Support an accountability and evaluation system that is valid, fair, reliable and fully funded and provide school districts all possible flexibility in implementation and should not violate federal law by imposing requirements that are above and beyond the scope of the federal legislation. Key factors include:**

- Ensure that the assessment system can be supported by local infrastructure and does not have an unreasonable negative impact on instructional time.
- Follow ESSA law and provide for assessment in grades 3-8 and once in high school.
- Revise Florida statutes and related State Board of Education Rules regarding 3rd Grade promotion and retention to:
 - Provide clearly defined alternative pathways for student promotion and retention with a more balanced approach that considers both assessment results and local evidence of student performance;
 - Ensure that the final decision on student promotion or retention is made at the local level; and
 - Ensure that student promotion or retention is not dependent upon, or denied by, a single assessment result.
- Require the Department of Education to establish concordance scores between FSA and nationally normed assessments including ACT/SAT, AP, IB and others, for possible use by districts to substitute national exams in lieu of FSA for reading and/or mathematics. Consideration must include computer-based implementation logistics including ESE/504 accommodations and accurate measurement of ELL progress.

5. **Stabilize school funding and enhance local discretion in expenditures**

- Restore the FTE definition to provide for six periods and fund additional instructional time for dual enrollment and virtual programs and allow school districts and colleges to establish local agreement provisions that may include their own cost structure provisions related to the delivery of dual enrollment.
- Restore 7th period Advanced Placement programs, the International Baccalaureate program, the Advanced International Certificate of Education program and Certified Career and other Professional academy courses that require more than 24 credits to graduation.
- Restore grant funding for the Adults with Disabilities Program.

6. **Scholarships**

- Support modification of the Brightest and Best Teacher Scholarship as a means of placing high performing teachers to work with low performing students.

- For FY18, given projected financial constrictions, waive the automatic 25% tax credit increase for Corporate Income Tax Scholarships so that the \$136 million in potential state general revenue can be considered to meet essential state expenditures that may include education, healthcare, infrastructure and the environment.