

**GREATER FLORIDA CONSORTIUM
OF
SCHOOL BOARDS'
2017 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.

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

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, including those mandated by SB 736.

Increase **Base Student Allocation** (BSA) for FY 2017-18 by at least \$200 per student in total potential state and local dollars, exclusive of categorical programs, and by five (5) percent, for each of the next three years. Increase to at least the national average.

- Conduct an impartial third-party study of the Florida Price Level Index to reflect the costs of housing, insurance, poverty, and transportation, rather than wages.
- Oppose further equalization of the **Local Discretionary Millage**.
- 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.

- Establish a salary allocation within the FEFP for teacher salaries.
- Implement and fund strategies, such as teacher fellowship and loan forgiveness programs, to recruit talented students to the teaching profession.
- Fund **tuition, instructional materials or administrative fees** to state and community colleges and universities for dual enrollment.
- Protect district projections on student enrollment by funding a contingency appropriation from the state reserve each year to avoid mid-year FEFP hold backs.
- Fund the infrastructure cost and acquisition of **computers/technology** for the expansion of digital instruction and mandated testing.
- 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 schools.
- Increase funding for Transportation, Instructional Materials, and Supplemental Academic Instruction to accommodate higher enrollment and higher costs, and maintain these programs as categoricals with maximum flexibility.
- Increase Safe Schools funding to provide for the actual expenditures for school resource officers and other related expenses.
- Eliminate the wealth adjustment from the sparsity formula.
- Oppose the automatic increase each year for the Tax Credit Scholarship Program.

OPTIONAL CAPITAL OUTLAY LEVY (2.0 MILLS)

- Oppose any mandatory diversion of **Local Discretionary Capital Outlay levy** revenue from traditional public schools to non-traditional public schools.
- 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.
- 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 operational needs.

- Increase the cap for **vehicle purchases** and **property and casualty insurance** from \$100 to \$150.

ACCOUNTABILITY AND STATE TESTING PROGRAM

District Flexibility with Assessments and Personnel Evaluation

- Delay implementation of computer-based testing and continue to provide for paper exams until such time when all districts have sufficient infrastructure and equipment.
- 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.
- Authorize alternate methods for evaluating ESE and ELL students.
- Allow district flexibility on use of assessment data for evaluation purposes.
- Provide flexibility to school districts in the development of local personnel evaluation systems.

Changes to the State of Florida Assessment/Accountability Systems

- Change A to F grading to categories such as Excellent, Satisfactory, or Needs Improvement
- Rename *Lowest 300* to something positive, such as “Extra Hour of Reading.”
- Disaggregate FSA /ELA scores into Writing and Reading.
- Reinstate middle school acceleration language which allows for banking of EOC passing scores for high schools.

Changes in Requirements for Promotion and Graduation

- Reduce impact of state End of Course (EOC) student grade weights from 30 percent to 20 percent.
- Provide a waiver from the ELA graduation requirement for ELLs enrolled in U.S. schools for less than two years who have passed all other high school graduation requirements.
- Allow the use of alternative concordant scores from PERT, ACT and SAT for both Algebra 1 and ELA graduation requirements.
- Reinstate funding for PERT when used to meet graduation requirement.
- Repeal current statute for mandatory 3rd grade retention and allow district discretion and flexibility when determining 3rd grade promotion.
- Students with a current diagnosis of a speech and/or language disorder should be exempted from the foreign language requirement for the Bright Futures scholarships and entry requirement for the Florida college system.

ESSA

- Within the intent and scope of the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), provide flexibility to school districts that includes an alternative, state-approved, locally-developed student and educator (instructional personnel and school-based administrators) evaluation system that measures state standards of proficiency and is correlated to Florida’s accountability system. Such flexibility must include the valid and appropriate use of the new state and local student assessment results for

personnel evaluations, performance pay, and school grading. Such flexibility may include alternative assessments, alternative methods of testing, including paper-based exams, and/or elimination of Florida's Value-Added Model [VAM data as required component of teacher and school administrator evaluations] (1012.34, F.S.).

- Use one of the existing components of the state accountability system as the school quality indicator for example:
 - Use graduation or career readiness rates for the additional Accountability Indicator for high school and growth in the lowest 25 performing as school quality indicator, pursuant to ESSA for elementary and middle grades.
- Goals for sub-groups should be based on learning gains and not proficiency.

CHARTER SCHOOLS

Clarify statutes that school boards have final authority and oversight of charter schools in accordance with Article IX, Section 3 of the Florida Constitution.

- 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.
- Maintain **school boards' authority** over local capital outlay funds.
- Grant final authority to approve or reject **charter school applications**.
- Require the same accountability for student performance, assessment, class size reduction, school grading and adherence to state curriculum and fiscal standards, including minimum balance reserves, and facilities for both traditional public schools and charter schools.
- Require charter schools to weight low-income and economically-disadvantaged applicants in admissions lotteries as recommended by the U.S. Department of Education guidance to create more integrated schools.
- Allow school districts to negotiate an appropriate usage fee based on market comparables for the use of their educational facilities.
- Exempt school districts from paying ad valorem tax for leased properties similar to charter schools.
- Require charter schools to declare the location at the time of contract.
- 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.
- Require a charter governing board's request for hearing to be accompanied by a cost bond in the amount of \$50,000 to pay taxable costs pertaining to the hearing including, without limitation, fees of the Division of Administrative Hearings and court reporter's fees in the event the sponsor prevails.

- Support legislation that closes statutory loopholes in Florida Statutes and provide school districts with greater authority in closing charters that are failing to meet their legal or contractual terms.

ADDITIONAL ISSUES

GOVERNANCE

Mandates/Reforms

Oppose additional reforms and mandates and require at least one-year lead-time for all new provisions.

School Board Structure

Oppose any provisions impacting the school board's governance without local school board and community input.

Parent Choice for School Attendance

Allow districts the flexibility to waive the provisions of 1002.31(2)(f), F.S., to give priority to students living within their zoned home school.

Waiver of Statutes

Provide the authority for the governor or the commissioner of education to waive statutes, except for those dealing with life safety issues, upon request of the school board, for up to three (3) years.

Facilities

Require local government agencies to consult with the local school district when considering zoning or land use changes relating to educational use.

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 state funding to cover the cost of fees for adult basic and GED programs and testing.

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.
- Support the expansion of the apprenticeship training through \$3 million in grants to assist employers throughout the State of Florida meet their immediate needs for a highly-skilled and professional workforce.

- Increase the current funding level of \$4.5 million to \$7 million to fully fund the attainment of industry credentials that are included in the Postsecondary CAPE funding list.

FUNDING

- Provide state funding for any increased costs to the employer's contribution to the **Florida Retirement System**.
- Develop a state plan to reinvest a specific percentage of state **growth revenue** in the FEFP.
- Provide funding for summer immersion programs for English Language Learners (ELLs).
- Restore the program weights for **Exceptional Student Education (ESE)**, **English-for-Language-Learners (ELL)**, and all secondary (middle and high school) career education programs to pre-2001 levels.
- Restore Adults with Disabilities (AWD) program statewide funding.
- 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.
- Allow for **voter approval of the half-cent sales tax** for operational as well as capital construction purposes.
- Reinstated the funding for **251, 252, 253 on a per student basis, and eliminate the arbitrary cap on gifted students**.
- Hold funding in abeyance for the **School Recognition Program** and reject any new funded or unfunded mandates or new programs.
- Provide that public school **funding follow the student** when the student's educational enrollment location changes between a non-traditional school and a traditional public school.
- **Restore a school readiness funding** to the FY 2010 level to eliminate waiting lists and recognize space requirements in state facilities specifications (SREF).
- Restore **Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate Programs**, and other advanced academic programs by restoring funding to the 2006-07 levels (.24 factor).
- Establish a **five-year adoption cycle** for required college and university instructional materials for dual enrollment.
- Provide state funding to support all **technology and digital requirements** that the legislature has mandated districts must meet by 2015 or delay that deadline.
- Support state funding for a **high quality optional full-day voluntary pre-K (VPK) program** for all students.
- Allow districts to waive the \$38 ACT fee as an alternate to the Florida Standards Assessments for students within the first twelve (12) months of the cohort's graduation.
- Provide **maximum flexibility** with the funds appropriated.
- Adjust the rate of **local tax roll collections** from 96 percent to 94 percent for FEFP calculation purposes.

CAPITAL OUTLAY

Public Education and Capital Outlay (PECO)

Enhance funding for all public schools on a per student basis.

State Requirements for Educational Facilities (SREF)

Provide school districts flexibility to use the Florida Building code in lieu of SREF.

Impact Fees

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

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.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Restore the special diploma for the benefit of a limited percentage of students with disabilities.

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; and,
- Funding all costs associated with shelter operations.

OTHER ISSUES

PIP/School Buses

Reaffirm that school buses are not commercial vehicles and not subject to PIP.

Student Safety

- Increase penalties for firing a gun within 1000 feet of a school.
- Provide for traffic violation for any unauthorized vehicle, moving or parked in a school bus zone, when buses are loading and unloading.
- Include funding to reimburse school district costs related to Zika prevention and other public health emergencies.

Best Practices of Assessment Programs

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

Certification Endorsement - Biliteracy

Create a K-5 foreign language endorsement for teacher certification in a foreign language to generate more linguistically-qualified teachers to support the new state seal of biliteracy.

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.

Career Academies

Create rigorous industry certificates and increase the program weights.

Child Depositions

Prohibit child victims of criminal acts from the requirement to give live depositions.

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