

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

2014 STATE LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

GOAL STATEMENT

The Florida Legislature should establish a five-year strategic plan to restore, stabilize, and increase funding through the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP) to achieve at least the national average in per pupil expenditures to provide the highest quality education and to enable all of our students to be empowered to lead productive and fulfilling lives as lifelong learners and responsible citizens.

2014 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITY POSITIONS

FUNDING:

Restore the state's investment in K-12 education by increasing the Base Student Allocation (BSA) by at least \$200 per student multiplied by the annual inflationary rate until the per pupil funding is at pre-recession levels by designating a percentage of economic growth dollars to education as the state's economy recovers and grows.

Provide maximum flexibility with the funds appropriated.

Modify the penalty for non-compliance with the constitutional class size requirement to be based on the schoolwide average for **all** public schools.

Conduct an impartial third-party study to develop a Cost of Education Index which focuses on cost differences integral to K-12 public school district operations reflecting such costs as average teacher salaries, health insurance for employees, property insurance per FTE, and transportation costs per FTE.

Adjust school districts' funding by an index derived from the amount of instructional salaries per weighted FTE multiplied by each district's FTE.

Increase funding for Safe Schools to implement and expand interventions that focus on reducing disruptive and aggressive behaviors and strengthen emotional and behavioral competencies of students inclusive of early detection of mental health concerns and increased intervention and wrap around services.

Fully fund both the infrastructure cost and the acquisition of computers for the mandated expansion of computer-based administration of statewide testing earmarking funds from the Internet sales tax.

Allow local school districts to locally establish contract provisions inclusive of cost structures with postsecondary institutions related to the delivery of dual enrollment.

Revise the Safe School Allocation formula so that each district's allocation is equal to fifty percent of prior year eligible district expenditures.

Adjust the rate of local tax roll collections from 96 percent to 94 percent for the FEFP calculation.

Support grant funding to create new and innovative programs and academies.

Increase ESE per pupil funding to account for student growth and inflationary cost particularly in level 254 and 255 to provide early identification and intervention services for students with autism.

ACCOUNTABILITY REFORM:

Fully fund the development of end-of-course (EOC) exams specifically related to computer-based testing.

Ensure charter and private schools receiving public monies adhere to the same teacher certification, student placement, and progression policies to ensure compliance with federal and state accountability requirements.

Revise the current assessment system and accountability system to:

- provide the inclusion of data from multiple forms of assessments;
- eliminate the practice of using student performance on a standardized test as the sole basis for student and school performance;
- authorize alternate methods for assessing learning and achievement for special populations such as ESE and English Language Learners (ELL) students; and
- Provide the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT), and other statewide assessments in multiple languages as allowed by federal regulations.

Ensure that the state assessments and the state's accountability system are valid, reliable and aligned to the state standards.

Amend state statutes to ensure that the passage of the AP US History exam is equivalent to the passage of the US History EOC and therefore qualifies a student for the Scholars designation diploma.

CAPITAL FUNDING:

Establish a long-term, stable, and recurring revenue source sufficient to fulfill the state's educational facilities needs.

Restore the allowable discretionary voted capital outlay millage by .10 mills annually until restoration of the full 2 mills.

Oppose any diversion of Local Discretionary Capital Outlay levy revenue from traditional public schools to charter schools.

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

Fully fund the Public Education Capital Outlay Program that involves construction and maintenance programs for public school districts.

SCHOOL READINESS:

Support state funding for a high-quality, full-day Voluntary Pre-K (VPK) program.

CHARTER SCHOOLS:

Oppose any changes to current requirements regarding charter conversion of traditional public schools that dilute the role of parents, teachers, and community stakeholders.

Support capital funding for charter schools that:

- Creates neither a reduction of funding to traditional public schools either in operating or capital funding nor a requirement for additional taxing mandate on the local school district;
- Requires public input; and
- Protects the taxpayers' investment ensuring that capital funding be spent only on assets that can be returned to the public school district.

Establish a level playing field for traditional public schools by extending the current statutory flexibility such as the exemption from State Education Required Facilities (SREF), categorical funding, accountability, class size reduction compliance and related penalties assessed on charter schools.

Include local school boards as allowable entities to operate charter schools including virtual charter schools.

Improve safeguards of tax payer investments and transparency between traditional public schools and charter schools, including, but not limited to, implementing the following safeguards:

- Require charter school applications and lottery be monitored by the local school board, or an appropriate independent entity, to ensure a fair, equitable, and transparent process for all students;
- Allow local school districts to negotiate an appropriate usage fee based on market comparables;
- Require funding to follow the student when transferring between charter and traditional public schools during the school year;
- Establish financial disclosure standards and requirements for charter school officers and related parties involved in financial decision making, similar to traditional public school standards; and
- Establish clear academic and financial standards for the purpose of distribution of charter school capital outlay funds as well as appropriate standards of review prior to review and distribution.

TEACHER PREPARATION/COMPENSATION:

Require teacher certification to meet the requirements of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and align state standards to ensure that teachers are highly qualified in content areas as well as in pedagogy.

Amend state statutes related to the Student Success Act to clarify that:

- Only one annual evaluation is required for teachers;
- Annual bonuses in lieu of base salary increases for only highly effective teachers should be provided; and
- Educational program needs must include the ability for instructional staff to be qualified in order to certify students in vocational areas for industry-certified programs.

Ensure that appropriate and adequate assessments aligned with teacher assignments have been developed and implemented prior to impacting human capital decisions.

SAFETY:

Require that the Florida High School Athletic Association make literature available to parents on the importance of having a cardiovascular assessment such as an EKG performed on student athletes and pursue mandatory screening prior to participation in any organized sports.

Amend Florida Statutes 790.22 requiring parents of children that take guns to schools to attend mandatory guns safety and parental education programs.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT:

Eliminate the one-year residency requirement prior to enrollment in adult education courses.

Support legislation that attempts to strengthens the role of technical centers in the development of a skilled workforce.

Maintain the current dual delivery system of post secondary programs.

VIRTUAL EDUCATION:

Amend state statutes to include a course in blended learning environment as counting towards the one course virtual graduation requirement.

Modify the requirement to offer three different virtual offerings to students.

POLICY STATEMENTS:

Funding

Fully fund class size reduction requirement while providing increases to the Base Student Allocation (BSA) and other components of the FEFP.

Examine Florida's tax structure and phase out sales tax exemptions for non-essential goods and services; ensure that internet sales remit necessary sales tax to Florida.

Oppose the imposition of unfunded, state-mandated expenditures.

Support maximum flexibility in the use of categorical funds.

Maintain the integrity of the FEFP and equity of funding among school districts.

Oppose any prescribed expenditure such as the "65 percent solution" as a mandate in the Florida Constitution and further oppose any such legislation, unless established as a spending goal with the definition of expenditures to include all instructional support expenditures.

Oppose further equalization of Discretionary Millage.

Preserve funding for Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate programs.

Support legislation that would allow in-state tuition for undocumented students if they meet high school attendance and graduation requirements.

Maintain the current required employers' contribution rate to the Florida Retirement System by absorbing any planned increase in local employer's contribution for the 2013-2014 fiscal year.

Oppose legislation that increases the sovereign immunity liability limits on governmental agencies.

Commit to long-term funding stability for teacher performance pay and teacher evaluation systems.

Capital Funding

Oppose any further reduction in capital millage available to school districts for the purpose of balancing the operating budget.

Oppose any attempt to equalize the capital outlay levy.

Oppose the deletion of impact fee unless replaced with another revenue source.

Governance

Oppose legislation that subverts district governance of constitutionally elected local school boards and elected or appointed superintendents.

Oppose legislation that modifies the governance structure of The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida.

Oppose legislation that breaks up large school districts.

Choice

Support increased accountability measures for all publicly funded school choice options.

Oppose voucher programs that lack equitable and sufficient accountability measures.

Oppose implementation of additional or any increases in funding for voucher programs while requiring more accountability from schools receiving Florida Tax Credit Scholarship (FTCS) funding.

Academics

Support legislation that will require high-quality training in reading and English language development for teachers responsible for instructing English Language Learners (ELL).

Support the development of high-quality English Language Proficiency (ELP) standards.

Oppose legislation that would limit offering gifted programs to eligible high school students.

Support legislation that delays Academic Scholarship Signing Day until May of each year.

Support legislation that ensures that FCAT testing not be administered during religious holidays.

Require the state to provide a minimum of one-year lead time on new state requirements for school districts.

Student Safety

Support legislation that proposes a "slowing down zone" within an area prior to entering a school zone.

Support funding to provide training for students, parents, teachers, school administrators, counseling staff, and volunteers to learn how to recognize behaviors that lead to bullying and harassment.