

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

2016 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.

2016 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITY POSITIONS

FUNDING:

Increase the state's investment in K-12 education by increasing the total per student funding by five percent annually.*

Revise the Value Adjustment Board (VAB) proceedings to include:*

- Proof of the property owner consent of an appeal;
- Limit appeal rescheduling to only one for good cause;
- Payment of interest at the market rate;
- Require the VAB to finish all appeals and certify the final tax roll to the property appraiser by June 1st of each year;
- Allow school districts to audit the VAB and the Property Appraiser (PA); and
- Require a review by the state of PA's process when the PA's estimate on July 1st is two percent or more than the state estimate for three or more consecutive years.

Amend state statutes to allow school districts to levy the Prior Period Funding Adjustment Millage based on the property appraiser's estimate of the prior year gross taxable value.*

Modify the penalty for non-compliance with the constitutional class size requirement to be based on the school-wide 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.

Increase Safe Schools funding to minimally pre-recessionary levels and revise allocation formula so that each district's allocation is equal to fifty percent of prior year eligible district expenditures.*

Fully fund the infrastructure cost and the acquisition of computers for the mandated expansion of computer-based administration of statewide testing, and digital content conversion required by 2016-2017.

*Denotes priority issue

Provide school districts funding to cover the full cost of offering dual enrollment courses through incentive funding to school districts/schools that offer such programs and have successful completion of dual enrollment courses by students.

Support funding to offer an extended school year beyond 180 days for all students.

Fully fund the extension of the school year by 25 instructional days for the lowest performing elementary schools in lieu of extending the school day.

Amend F.S. 1011.61 to fully fund programs taken by students beyond the 1.0 FTE cap or 25 hours a week such as virtual classes outside the traditional school day and year.*

Eliminate the statutory provision requiring the passage of end-of-course assessment for funding purposes.

ACCOUNTABILITY REFORM:

Revise the current assessment and accountability system to:

- Authorize alternate methods for assessing learning and achievement for special populations such as ESE and English Language Learners (ELL) students;
- Suspend accountability consequences for another year;
- Provide Florida's statewide assessments in multiple languages to English Language Learners that have received instruction for less than three years as allowed by federal regulations;
- Provide a waiver from the passage of the ELA requirement for ELL students that have passed all other high school graduation requirements and have been enrolled in school less than two consecutive years;
- Delay the implementation of computer based testing (CBT) until all districts have sufficient infrastructure and devices to ensure that testing windows can be reduced in half;
- Include the performance of ELL students enrolled in school for more than two years for accountability on the FSA, and if enrolled less than two years, the Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners (ACCESS) should be used; and
- Eliminate the practice of using student performance on a single standardized test as the sole basis of student and school performance.

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.

ACADEMICS

Establish a Seal of Biliteracy to recognize students who have attained proficiency in English and one or more other world languages.

Support legislation and funding that supports special education students' preparation and participation in post-secondary education programs.

CAPITAL FUNDING:

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.*

SCHOOL READINESS:

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

Amend F.S. 125.901 related to Children's Services Council governing boards to provide superintendent designee be a voting member.

CHARTER SCHOOLS:

Clarify that a charter school contract automatically terminates after a charter school has exhausted all of its administrative appeals after receiving two consecutive grades of F or upon voluntary closure.

Allow school districts with charter school enrollment exceeding 15 percent of total student population to limit approvals of charter school applications through a Request for Proposal (RFP) process to locate charter schools in areas of highest need or through the formation of district/charter collaborations.

Allow charter schools to weight low-income and educationally disadvantaged applicants in admissions lotteries as recommended by the U.S. Department of Education guidance to create more integrated 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 lotteries to 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;
- Establish financial disclosure standards and requirements for charter school officers and related parties involved in financial decision making, similar to traditional public school standards;
- Require the state to create a pre-qualification process for charter school applicants;
- Require a letter of intent and documentation of community support by July 1st for the submission of a charter application; and
- Require the same standards of governance, conduct and ethics for public officials to apply to charter school governing board members, charter school corporate officers and employees.

TEACHER PREPARATION/COMPENSATION:

Require the ability for instructional staff to be qualified in order to certify students in vocational areas for industry-certified programs.

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

- Only one annual evaluation is required for teachers;
- Provide for annual supplements in lieu of performance-based salary adjustments for teachers with Summative Performance Evaluation ratings of “Effective” and “Highly Effective;” and
- Eliminate mandated percentages for performance pay salary adjustments to be determined locally by the local school districts.

Provide a three-year transition for student growth measures to become part of the teacher evaluation system as the Florida State Assessment (FSA) and local end-of-course exams are developed and implemented.

SAFETY:

Amend F.S. 514.011 to include a portable pool used exclusively for the purpose of providing swimming lessons or related instruction in support of an educational program provided by the local school board as a “private pool” for purposes of the exemptions provided under s. 514.0113.*

FACILITIES:

Provide local school districts the flexibility to use the Florida Building Code in lieu of the State Requirements for Educational Facilities.

Modify the utilization factor for K-8 centers as follows: 100% of FISH for the elementary school student stations, and 95% for the middle school student stations.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT:

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

Include representatives from the secondary schools’ career and technical education programs in the state’s Articulation Coordinating Committee.

VIRTUAL EDUCATION:

Modify the requirement to offer two instead of three different virtual offerings to students in every grade level.

Eliminate the requirement for a student to have attended a public school in the state the prior year to be enrolled and reported by the school district for funding for virtual programs.

Modify the current virtual requirement of 1 credit to ½ credit for graduation.

*Denotes priority issue

POLICY STATEMENTS:

Funding

Fully fund the 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 and all funds appropriated.

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 compression of the Discretionary Millage.

Support equivalent supplemental funding for the participation and the attainment of a diploma for Advanced Placement, Cambridge (AICE) and International Baccalaureate programs.

Maintain the current required employers' contribution rate to the Florida Retirement System by absorbing any planned increase in local employer's contribution.

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.

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

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

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

Capital Funding

Provide adequate school construction funding to support new and existing facilities, technology, maintenance, land acquisition and class size reduction needs through the establishment of long-term, stable and recurring revenue sources to fulfill the state's educational facility needs.

Fully fund the Public Education Capital Outlay Program that involves construction and maintenance programs for public school districts and ensure that school districts receive their fair share.

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 fees unless replaced with another revenue source.

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.

Support capital funding for charter schools that:

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

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.

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.

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.

Choice

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

Oppose all publicly funded programs that lack equitable and sufficient accountability measures.

Oppose implementation of additional or any increases in funding of choice 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.

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

Maintain the current dual delivery system of post-secondary programs.

Support amending F.S. 1019.534 and 1019.535 adding the attainment of the Advanced Placement Capstone diploma as one of the eligibility requirements for Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program.

Student Safety/Wellness

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.

Ensure any casino authorized in Florida is at least 1,000 feet from a school or land designated for school purpose.

Support legislation that precludes a child victim or witness to a crime be subjected to a discovery deposition in any criminal court proceeding.

Support telemedicine legislation that facilitates effective and efficient use of technology to provide health services to schools minimizing the length of time students are out of school due to illness.

*Denotes priority issue