



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.

2012 State Legislative Program

Legislative Priority Positions On:

Funding + Accountability
Capital Funding + School Readiness
Teacher Preparation and Compensation
Safety + Workforce Development

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FUNDING

Invest in education by designating a percentage of economic growth dollars to education as the state's economy recovers and grows.

Replace federal "Jobs for Education" funds embedded in the Florida Education Finance Program with state revenue.

Modify the penalty for non-compliance with the constitutional class size requirement to loss of the Class Size Reduction categorical allocation and not loss of the full Base Student Allocation.

Establish a weighted pupil poverty index adjustment in the FEFP ensuring that the funding formula is student-centric based on actual student demographic data.

Maintain the current required employers' contribution rate to the Florida Retirement System by absorbing the planned increase for the 2012-2013 fiscal year.

Explore funding methods within the FEFP to reward school districts for outcomes achieved by establishing business efficiency indices.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Ensure the criteria for placing schools on intervene status and the existing procedures under Differentiated Accountability are clear, consistent and fair.

Require that virtual instruction providers make accommodations for students with learning disabilities.

CAPITAL FUNDING

Extend the term of general obligation bonds from 20 years to 30 years and allow the schedule of maturities to be determined by the local School Board.

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 provisions of Florida Statute 1013.64 pertaining to funding of the Public Education Capital Outlay Program that involves construction and maintenance programs of public school districts.

SCHOOL READINESS

Support state funding for a high-quality, full-day Voluntary Pre-K (VPK) program under the Florida Department of Education.

Support legislation that requires early childhood providers to use evidenced-based/research-based curricula and require pre- and post-assessments to ensure children are kindergarten-ready.

CHARTER SCHOOLS

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

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

Enhance statutory language pertaining to marketing, enrollment and admissions to ensure fair, equitable and a transparent process for all students.

TEACHER PREPARATION/COMPENSATION

Require teacher certification to meet the requirements of NCLB and align state standards to ensure that teachers are highly skilled in content areas, as well as in pedagogy.

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

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

- + Only one annual evaluation is required for teachers;
- + Measurable learning growth is based on school-wide achievement data and not limited to the goals in the school improvement plan (SIP); and
- + Educational program needs must include the ability for instructional staff to be qualified to certify students in vocational areas for industry certified programs.

SAFETY

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.

Support legislation that implements harsher penalties for individuals deliberately placing pornographic or obscene materials in school zones.

Support House Bill 37 or similar legislation seeking to enhance penalties against caregivers of minor children who willfully fail to report a child missing within 48 hours. (Approved July 13, 2011)

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Continue to allow co-enrollment as a strategy for high school students who need credit recovery or improve their cumulative grade point average for graduation purposes.

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

Maintain the current dual delivery system of post secondary programs.