

**MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
2017 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.

2017 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITY POSITIONS

FUNDING:

Increase the state's investment in K-12 education by increasing the Base Student Allocation (BSA) by five percent annually to allow school districts to enhance teacher salaries.* (Tri-county Position)

Conduct an impartial third-party study to develop a cost of education index which focuses on cost differences integral to educational institutions' operations reflecting such costs as average teacher salaries, health insurance for employees, property insurance per FTE, and transportation costs per FTE.* (Tri-county Position)(MDC)

Increase Safe Schools funding and revise allocation formula so that each district's allocation is equal to fifty percent of prior year eligible district expenditures.* (Tri-county Position)

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

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 dual enrollment or virtual classes outside the traditional school day and year. (Tri-county Position)

Provide school districts flexibility in the delivery of the additional 180 hours of instruction for the lowest 300 elementary schools to include summer school, Saturday school, afterschool or any combination of these strategies. (Tri-county Position)

Eliminate the arbitrary cap on the number of gifted high school students funded.

Provide funding for summer immersion programs for English Language Learners (ELL). (Tri-county position)

Provide supplemental funding to create community-based networks that develop, coordinate and provides quality education, parental training, accessible health care, housing, youth development programs, and employment opportunities to ensure safe neighborhoods for children and their families.

Restore school districts discretionary lottery to recessionary levels.

Oppose any legislation that eliminates funding that allows M-DCPS to assist refugee and immigrant students and their families or negatively impacts our students' ability to obtain an education in Florida.

ACCOUNTABILITY AND ASSESSMENT REFORM:

Revise the current accountability assessment system to:

- Authorize alternate methods for assessing learning and achievement for special populations such as Exceptional Student Education (ESE) and English Language Learners (ELL) students;
- Provide Florida's statewide assessments in multiple languages to ELL who have received instruction for less than three years as allowed by federal regulations;
- Provide a waiver from the passage of the English Language Arts (ELA) requirement for ELL students who 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 are reasonable, maximizing instruction time;
- Include the performance of ELL students enrolled in school for more than two years for accountability on the Florida Standards Assessment (FSA);
- Set goals for ELL and ESE subgroups based on achieving learning gains versus achieving proficiency;
- Disaggregate ELA writing and comprehension/reading scores;
- Eliminate the Value Added Model as part of a teacher's evaluation; and
- Use graduation or career readiness rates for the additional academic accountability indicator for high school and growth in the lowest 25 performing high schools as the school quality indicator pursuant to ESSA for elementary and middle grades.

ACADEMICS:

Amend F.S. 1007.271 to clarify that when dual enrollment takes place on the post-secondary campus, the college/university provides the special needs accommodations as part of the standard tuition that the school district pays.

Require Florida Department of Education to create a Spanish K-5 endorsement to support the implementation of Seal of Biliteracy and assist school districts in identifying qualified teachers in the area.

Eliminate the requirement for a public hearing on the adoption of instruction materials if the textbook selected is on the state-adopted list.

Provide the lowest 300 performing elementary schools a year of planning prior to the requirement of the additional hour of instruction.

Streamline the use of district-approved 504 plans for students taking the SAT and PSAT, as well as other standardized testing such as AP/IB/AICE.

CAPITAL FUNDING:

Oppose any diversion of Local Discretionary Capital Outlay levy revenue from traditional public schools to charter schools.* (Tri-county position)

SCHOOL READINESS:

Support state funding for a high-quality, full-day Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK) program for all eligible students.* (Tri-county position)

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

Support the reinstatement of state funding to implement a developmentally appropriate on-going assessment tool to timely measure children's progress and development, inform the teachers and parents, and evaluate the program's effectiveness.

Streamline registration, certification of attendance and transfers of students to maximize operational efficiency and facilitate appropriate funding for students served in VPK.

Amend F.S. 1002.69 to require a pre- and post-assessment tool to timely assess the VPK Provider Kindergarten Readiness Rates.

CHARTER SCHOOLS:

Amend Florida statutes to allow school boards with at least 10 percent of student enrollment in charter schools to analyze the need for additional charter schools and/or require new charters to locate in areas to address overcrowding, provide choice opportunities to students/parents zoned to failing schools, or meet a specific academic need the school district is not addressing.
(Tri-county Position)

Allow local school districts to negotiate an appropriate usage fee based on market comparables for the use of public educational facilities.

Require charter school applicants to submit a letter of intent to the school district prior to submission of the charter application identifying the educational program, inclusive of grade levels and number of students; evidence of community support, need and demand; impact analysis on surrounding community(ies), inclusive of public and non-public educational institutions; description of actual physical location of the proposed school; and completed background verification at the expense of the applicant.

Require charter schools to submit facility occupancy and use documentation by the 30th day prior to the first day of the school year. If unable to meet the deadline, the school may default to an automatic deferral and planning year. (Tri-County Position)

Clarify 1002.33 (9)(n)4., F.S. to ensure no additional action is required by the school board to terminate charter contracts and close charter schools that are automatically terminated for academic performance, after all applicable school grade appeals and exceptions are exhausted.

Clarify the use and permissible transfers/loans of FEFP funds and establish prohibition of transferring FEFP funds outside the county in which those funds are generated in.

Support legislation that prohibits applicants that have existing schools under academic or financial corrective action plans, investigation, investigation or some other kind of sanction to apply for an additional charter.

TEACHER SHORTAGE:

Implement and fund strategies such as teacher fellowships and loan forgiveness programs to encourage and attract talented students to enter into the field of education.* (Tri-county Position) (MDC)

Allow school districts to re-employ teachers, other instructional personnel and substitute teachers who are certified in a “critical shortage” field after one month of retirement without penalty to the employee’s pension. (Tri-county Position)

SAFETY:

Increase penalties for firing a gun within 1,000 feet of a school.

Establish penalties for the unsupervised possession of a firearm by a minor.

Support legislation that provides exemption from public records requirements for personal information of a witness to a murder.

Provide safety measures in the development of implementing legislation related to the passage of Amendment 2: (1) medical marijuana dispensaries within 2,500 feet of a school excluding dispensaries where the sole product is medical marijuana, (2) medical marijuana products that look like and are packaged as candy or other enticing food or drink items, and (3) medical marijuana products on school property without administrative supervision as deemed appropriate by the Superintendent of Schools.

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.

Provide school districts flexibility to use the Florida Building Code in lieu of the State Required Education Facilities (SREF).

Require local government agencies to consult with the local school district when considering a variance for educational use.

Exempt school districts from paying ad valorem tax for leased properties similar to charter schools.

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 of virtual programs.

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

Amend F.S. 1002.45(1)(b)(b) and eliminate the “written” notification requirement to parents regarding open enrollment in virtual programs.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT:

Amend F.S. 97.041 to allow citizens who will be 18 years old by the time of the November general election to vote in the Florida Primary Elections.

*Denotes priority issue

Tri-county Position – supported by Miami-Dade, Broward and Palm Beach county school districts
MDC- supported by Miami Dade College

POLICY STATEMENTS:

Funding

Fully fund the class size reduction requirement while providing increases to the 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.

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.

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

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.

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

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

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

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.

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.

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

Tri-county Position – supported by Miami-Dade, Broward and Palm Beach county school districts