



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 in order to provide the highest quality education to enable all of our students to be empowered to lead productive and fulfilling lives as lifelong learners and responsible citizens.

2011 State Legislative Program

Legislative Priorities

Provide level funding to hold school district operational and capital funding harmless from declines in property values and state budget shortfalls; **Replace** America's Recovery and Reinvestment Act – State Stabilization Funds embedded in the Florida Education Finance Program with state revenue; **Extend** the voter-approved operating millage authority from four (4) years to ten (10) years; **Eliminate** penalties associated with non-compliance with the class size amendment until it is fully funded by the state; **Impose** a deadline for local property appraisers to certify final valuation of the tax roll prior to June 30th of each year; **Extend** the term of General Obligation bonds from 20 years to 30 years and allow the schedule of maturities to be determined by the School Board; **Expand** the allowable use of the locally voted sales tax to include operating expenses that maintain, renovate, or repair existing school facilities or maintain, secure, or upgrade technology equipment; **Establish** a pupil poverty index adjustment, in the FEFP, not to exceed 5 percent of the BSA.



The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida

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FUNDING FOR EDUCATION

Provide level funding to hold school district operational and capital funding harmless from declines in property values and state budget shortfalls.

Replace America's Recovery and Reinvestment Act – State Stabilization Funds embedded in the Florida Education Finance Program with state revenue.

Establish a long-term, stable and recurring revenue source sufficient to fulfill the state's constitutional requirement of providing adequate provisions for a uniform, efficient, safe, secure, and high quality system of free public schools that allows students to obtain a high quality education.

Extend the voter-approved operating millage authority from four (4) years to ten (10) years.

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

Eliminate penalties associated with non-compliance with the class size amendment until it is fully funded by the state.

Impose a deadline for local property appraisers to certify final valuation of the tax roll prior to June 30th of each year.

Examine Florida's tax structure and phase out sales tax exemptions for non-essential goods and services.

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

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

Establish a pupil poverty index adjustment, in the FEFP, not to exceed 5 percent of the BSA.

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

CAPITAL FUNDING

Restore the Local Discretionary Capital Outlay levy to 2 mills, while opposing any further reduction in capital millage available to school districts for the purpose of balancing the operating budget.

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

EDUCATION

Amend the high school graduation requirements to:

- accommodate students who may want to pursue a career track in high school and enter the job market immediately after graduation; and
- require that the end-of-course exam (EOC) count as a percentage, not to exceed 30 percent, of a student course grade rather than the current pass/fail requirement.

Require the use of the Florida Comprehensive English Language Learning Assessment (CELLA) scores while requiring proficiency in each of the components (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) for exit purposes.

Allow the districts' virtual school franchises to generate funding per student above the 1.0 cap for successful completion including those completed during the summer similar to the Florida Virtual School.

Eliminate the requirement that the student had to have attended a Florida public school and have been reported by a public school district for funding during the preceding October and February FEFP surveys to be eligible for the districts' virtual instruction programs.

Oppose legislation that allows for virtual charter schools.

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.

Support legislation that ensures the FCAT is not administered during religious holidays.

CHARTER SCHOOLS

Modify charter school legislation to ensure delivery of high-quality charter schools by enhancing language pertaining to authorization and application process; terminations and closures; appeals of application denials and terminations; governing board and school administration qualifications and requirements; and replication of educational program.

Require quarterly financial reporting requirement for charter schools and monthly financial reporting for charter schools in their first year of operation or charter schools with poor academic and/or financial performance.

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

PERSONNEL

Restore the ability of school districts to re-employ retired instructional and administrative personnel after one month of retirement subject to superintendent's approval.

FACILITIES

Provide traditional public schools exemption from ad valorem tax when leasing facilities.

TEACHER PREPARATION/ COMPENSATION

Require that legislation related to teacher/principal preparation and compensation:

- Fully funds the costs associated with establishing new, reliable, and valid testing programs in every subject not covered by a state accountability test;
- Allows for local control to create performance pay schedules to meet local needs, promote fairness among all instructional personnel, and allows buy-in from all stakeholders;
- Commits to long-term funding stability for teacher performance pay and teacher evaluation systems;
- Requires greater collaboration between institutions of higher education and school districts to ensure teacher preparation programs are effective in developing high-quality teachers;
- Requires timely and expedited scoring on state assessments and ensures maximum credibility and reliability on those results;
- Realigns teacher preparation programs to increase course work rigor in core academic content areas and analyzes accountability for program completers' impact on K-12 learners; and
- Revises and realigns statutes on student assessment accountability and performance evaluation so that data from state assessments result and performance evaluation and reappointment deadlines are in alignment.

BUSINESS OPERATIONS

Require the Auditor General to produce supporting documentation necessary to support findings in final audit reports and be made available to the auditee.

Include physician-dispensed, re-packaged pharmaceuticals within the reimbursement parameters of Average Wholesale Price (AWP) plus a dispensing fee and not a separate reimbursement amount for re-packaged, re-labeled pharmaceuticals.

Establish, fund, and administer a statewide medical insurance program for eligible state and local retirees, until Medicare eligibility, participating in the Florida Retirement System (FRS) and funded through the FRS.

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 the enactment of a "Slowing Down Zone" as proposed in the Shaye Patrick Martin Safety Act developed by students of the Miami-Lakes Middle School Project Citizen Class.

Support legislation prohibiting reading, writing, or sending text messages on an electronic communications device while operating a motor vehicle in a school zone.

POLICY STATEMENTS

Oppose legislation that subverts district governance of local school boards and superintendents.

Support maximum flexibility in the use of categorical funds.

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

Oppose the imposition of unfunded, state-mandated expenditures.

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

Oppose voucher programs that lack equitable and sufficient accountability measures.

Oppose further expansion of the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship (FTCS) program or any other new voucher program that siphons funding from public school education.

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

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

Oppose legislation that breaks up large school districts.

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

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

Oppose any attempt to equalize the capital outlay levy.

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

Oppose further equalization of Discretionary Millage.

Preserve funding for Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate Programs.

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

