

**MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
2019 STATE LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM**

**MISSION/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.*

**2019 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES**

**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 by implementing the following strategies:

- Discontinue the policy of rolling back the Required Local Effort rate;
- Reinvest current state funding for Best and Brightest in the BSA; and
- Ensure the Funding Compression established during the 2018 legislative session sunsets on June 30, 2019.

Ensure that any changes to the District Cost Differential take into account cost differences integral to educational institutions' operations reflecting such costs as average teacher salaries, health insurance for employees, property insurance per FTE, housing and transportation costs per FTE.

Oppose any further compression of the Discretionary Millage.

Fully fund the cost of requiring a School Resource Officer at each public school as required by law.

Increase funding for mental health services for students and safety infrastructure needs.

Provide school districts with greater flexibility of its use of Title I funds by separating the indirect cost from the 10 percent allowable administrative set-aside and increasing the allowable educational services set-aside to 10 percent.

Extend the authorization of the locally-voted levy for operating purposes from four years to 10 years.

**GOVERNANCE:**

Oppose legislation that subverts district governance of constitutionally-elected local school boards and elected or appointed superintendents to supervise all public schools.

**CAPITAL FUNDING:**

Support the state fully funding charter school capital outlay.

Ensure that sharing school board's Local Discretionary Capital Outlay levy revenue with charter schools is permissible and not required for school districts.

Protect taxpayers' interest by attaching a proprietary interest equal to the value of the allocation from the local discretionary capital outlay levy revenue provided to charter schools, and prohibit charter operators from personal enrichment from public funds.

## **TEACHER/PERSONNEL SHORTAGE:**

Implement and fund strategies such as teacher fellowships and loan forgiveness programs to encourage and attract talented students to enter the field of education.

Allow school districts to re-employ teachers, other instructional personnel, substitute teachers, and school police officers after one month of retirement without penalty to the employee's pension.

Include Pre-K teachers in the list of instructional personnel eligible to extend the Deferred Retirement Option Program to 96 months.

Recommend the State absorb the cost of candidates taking the Florida Teacher Certification Exam (FTCE).

## **ADDITIONAL ISSUES**

### **FUNDING**

Require advertising a tax increase only when the cumulative tax millage is greater than the prior levy and not simply because the ad valorem tax basis generates more proceeds.

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.

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.

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

Provide supplemental funding to create community-based networks that develop, coordinate and provide 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 pre-recessionary levels.

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

Allocate funds directed to provide supplemental services and support to at-risk students.

### **ACCOUNTABILITY AND ASSESSMENT REFORM:**

Revise the current accountability assessment system to:

- Provide Florida's statewide assessment in multiple languages to English Language Learners (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;
- Include the performance of ELL students enrolled in school for more than two years for accountability on the Florida Standards Assessment (FSA); and
- Define goals for ELL and Exceptional Student Education (ESE) subgroups based on achieving learning gains on state assessments as opposed to achieving proficiency.

Establish required credentials and regulations for Education Advocates who charge fees for their service.

Ensure that the General Equivalency Diploma (GED) test is offered in Haitian Creole.

Support amending F.S. 1003.4285, relating the high school Scholar designation, to allow for more rigorous mathematics course work to replace Algebra II.

### **SCHOOL READINESS:**

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

Replace the current VPK assessment with a developmentally appropriate on-going assessment tool to timely measure children's progress and development, to inform the teachers and parents, and to 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.

### **CHARTER SCHOOLS:**

Allow school boards with at least 15 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.

Require charter schools to submit facility occupancy and use documentation by the 30<sup>th</sup> 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.

Support legislation that:

- prohibits applicants with existing schools under academic or financial corrective action plans, investigation, or some other kind of sanction to apply for an additional charter; and
- strengthens accountability, protects taxpayers' investment and ensures compliance with charter school fiduciary responsibilities.

### **SAFETY:**

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

Support legislation that establishes penalties for the unsupervised possession of a firearm by a minor.

Support legislation amending F.S. 316.305 making it a primary offense to use a cell phone while operating a motor vehicle.

Support legislation that prohibits the sale of e-cigarettes in misleading forms such as pens and USBs.

Support legislation and state funding to increase awareness of opioid drug use and its impact.

Support HB 259/SB 982 requiring health education to include human trafficking.

### **FACILITIES:**

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

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

Secure funding from Section 16 lands sale/exchange for the purchase of the Young Women's Preparatory Academy.

**WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT:**

Restore performance-based incentive funding for postsecondary CAPE Industry Credentials.

**VIRTUAL EDUCATION:**

Eliminate the "written" notification requirement to parents regarding open enrollment in virtual programs allowing for electronic notification to parents.

**CHOICE:**

Amend the Hope Scholarships to apply only to "substantiated" incidents of harassment, bullying, battery, etc.

**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.

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.

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 employers' contribution.

Support state funding for the administration of college entrance exams, SAT or ACT, during school days.

### **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 ensures 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.

### **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.

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.

Oppose any legislation that reduces school board authority over charter schools, such as alternate authorizers or the establishment of charter school systems to serve as Local Educational Agencies.

Support legislation that promotes transparent student recruitment strategies, application processes and enrollment lotteries, and supports enrollment equity of educationally disadvantaged students and underserved/underrepresented students.

### **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.

Ensure that the sale of low-THC edibles is precluded within 1,000 feet of a school.

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.

Support efforts to limit navigation apps from directing traffic to neighborhoods away from major highways or streets.

### **Cybersecurity**

Establish a statewide taskforce to share best practices and guidelines to protect student, parent, and employee information.

### **Public Meetings**

Amend state statutes to clarify that meeting with legislators to advocate for the Board's legislative priorities is not a violation of the Sunshine.