

GREATER FLORIDA CONSORTIUM OF SCHOOL BOARDS' 2026 LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM



Constitution of the State of Florida, Article IX - - Section I.

“The education of children is a fundamental value of the people of the State of Florida. It is therefore a paramount duty of the State to make adequate provision for the education of all the children residing within its borders. Adequate provision shall be made by law for a uniform, efficient, safe, secure, and high-quality system of free public schools that allows students to obtain a high-quality education....”

GOAL: TO INCREASE, ON A PHASED-IN BASIS, THE AVERAGE PER STUDENT FUNDING TO ENSURE THAT FLORIDA IS IN THE TOP HALF OF THE STATES AND CAN PROVIDE A WORLD CLASS EDUCATION TO ENABLE ITS STUDENTS TO COMPETE AND EXCEL IN THE UNIVERSAL MARKETPLACE.

ENSURE THAT, IN ALL CASES, LEGISLATION BE EVALUATED TO PROVIDE THAT IT DOES NOT CONFLICT WITH THE CONSTITUTIONAL AND HOME RULE AUTHORITY OF SCHOOL BOARDS TO “OPERATE, CONTROL, AND SUPERVISE” ALL PUBLIC SCHOOLS WITHIN THEIR SCHOOL DISTRICTS.

PRIORITY ISSUES

GOVERNANCE

Respect and adhere to the **Constitutional Authority** of School Boards.

*“The school board shall **Operate, Control and Supervise** all free public schools within the school district and determine the rate of school district taxes within the limits prescribed herein.”* The Florida Constitution, Article IX, Section 4(b).

Waive audit finding penalties for **Out-Of-Field Teachers** who are certified and teaching in related subject areas.

Clarify that school districts are exempt from lawsuits against charter schools by amending 1002.33, Florida Statutes, to stipulate that a sponsor is not liable for civil damages under state law for personal injury, property damage, or death, or **any other civil claim** resulting from an act or omission of an officer, employee, agent, or governing body of the charter school.

Increase educational **innovation** and continue to reduce **regulations** for public school districts to better align with other K-12 charter, home school and private institutions that also receive state and/or federal funding.

Ensure School Board control of **Board-owned property**.

Caprice Edmond
President
Pinellas County

Roberto Alonso
President-Elect
Miami-Dade County

Edwin Ferguson
Secretary/Treasurer
Palm Beach County

FUNDING

Provide for an annual increase in the **Base Student Allocation** commensurate with the rate of inflation and cost of living increases (but no less than 5 percent new flexible funding), to ensure school systems can meet the rising costs in every aspect of their business.

Simplify the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP) and ensure transparency by creating a separate “district” for scholarships or creating a **Family Empowerment Scholarship** categorical.

Maintain the full calculation of **Required Local Effort** (RLE) the .748 Mill (LDM) and the 1.5 Mill (Capital Outlay).

Minimize impact to school districts from any **proposed property tax reform**.

Fully fund any **New Mandates**, without transferring money from the Base Student Allocation (BSA) or Discretionary Local Effort (DLE).

Provide funding for an **Optional Summer School** program for all students.

Align the rules and guidelines for **district-operated virtual programs** regarding the ability to report FTE beyond the 180-day school year with those already in place for Florida Virtual School.

Any proration to school districts for FY 2026-2027 should be covered by the Florida Legislature by maintaining the **Education Enrollment Stabilization Program**.

Increase the **Safe Schools** Categorical allocation to narrow the funding gap associated with the mandate to staff one “safe school officer” per school and ensure sustainable funding for school districts.

Increase the investment in **Mental Health Services** by providing funding to enhance training for and increase the number of personnel providing services within schools (including but not limited to school counselors, mental health professionals, school social workers, school psychologists and school nurses and/or emergency medical personnel).

Fully fund academically and developmentally appropriate high quality full day **Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten** (VPK) programs.

Increase per pupil funding for **Exceptional Student Education (ESE)**.

Modernize the FEFP by updating factors within the formula to reflect current costs.

Increase the **Academic Acceleration Options Supplement** to expand access to advanced and accelerated courses.

Increase the **Transportation Categorical** to reflect operational and capital costs.

CAPITAL OUTLAY/FACILITIES

Restore **faculty voice** in any vote to convert a traditional public school to a charter.

Establish a parental choice opportunity to **restore a conversion charter** to traditional public school.

Prohibit conversion **charter schools from transitioning to a private school** in a public owned facility **without school board approval**.

Permit school districts to **renew voter-approved millage** for a period of up to 8 years.

Establish that when distributing of **1.5 Capital Outlay Funds to Charter Schools**, the total discretionary millage revenue available for distribution shall be reduced by the school district’s annual debt service obligation incurred as of June 30th of each prior fiscal year.

Calculate **Capital Outlay FTE** to include all students – including Charter, Adult Ed, Early Childhood Pre-K, and Virtual Programs.

Establish a **state level disaster recovery trust fund** for Florida Public Schools to ensure the recovery and restoration of educational facilities in the aftermath of a hurricane or other catastrophic event covering losses both above and below any collectable property insurance limits.

Fully reflect program utilization rates in Florida Inventory of School Houses (**FISH**) **reports** to include ESE, daytime adult education, and class size maximums.

Amend Statute to state a school which has not received an accountability grade lower than a “B” in the preceding three years is not eligible for conversion to a “**job engine charter school**”.

A school receiving an accountability grade of “A” or “B” within the last three years is not eligible for automatic co-location by a **School of Hope**.

Clarify that a district school board may elect to construct or renovate a new educational facility in compliance with the **Florida Building Code**, provided that all applicable life-safety and fire codes are met. A district school board electing this option is exempt from the additional requirements contained within the State Requirements for Educational Facilities.

Require the Florida Department of Education to include a cost-effectiveness analysis in its recommendations on school modernization and replacement and stipulate that the department must prioritize the most financially prudent outcome for the taxpayer when making a final recommendation on the action to be taken based on a district submitted **Castaldi Study**.

ACADEMICS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Remove the requirement for the State Board to automatically annually adjust the **School Grading Scale**.

Amend the **Florida Academic Scholars Award** to include student eligibility for the award for those recognized by the **College Board National Program** as a scholar recipient.

Expand the **workforce and testing concordance options** for high school graduation assessment requirements.

Tackle the soaring cost of **instructional materials** by lengthening textbook option cycles and deregulating purchasing methods for school districts.

Require all students who receive public education funding to participate in all required **state academic accountability assessments** and have those results reported to the FLDOE.

OPERATIONS

Clarify that School Districts are not permitted to reimburse the insurer for **Personal Injury Protection**.

Allow school districts the option to participate in the **State Health Plan**.

Include certified **Pre-Kindergarten** staff employed by charter and district operated public schools in the definition of **K-12 Instructional Personnel**.

Transition to a modern, transparent **Student Information System (SIS)** by implementing a statewide database to track all publicly funded students in real-time.

Continue funding for **School Safety Infrastructure** enhancements to include technology solutions, and to upgrade and strengthen **Cybersecurity** controls.