



Florida School Boards Association

The voice of education in Florida.

PROPOSED

FSBA 2018 Legislative Platform

[NOTE: An asterisk () indicates that the same or a similar item was included in the 2017 Platform]*

The Florida School Boards Association (FSBA) submits this 2018 Legislative Platform to assist the Legislature in fulfilling its paramount duty to provide for a uniform, efficient, safe, secure, and high quality system of free public schools that allows students to obtain a high quality education.

ASSESSMENTS & ACCOUNTABILITY

FSBA SUPPORTS statewide and local assessment and accountability measures that are designed to support and enhance student learning. Collaborative efforts that include education stakeholders such as parents, teachers, and district leaders must continue to ensure Florida's accountability system is aligned with the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), recognizes individual student learning styles, and accurately reflects student progress and achievement. Toward this end, FSBA urges the Legislature to:

- 1.* Revise Florida statutes and related rules regarding promotion and retention to provide clearly defined alternative pathways for student promotion and retention that includes consideration of both assessment results and local evidence of student performance and ensures that the final decision on student promotion or retention is made at the local level.
2. Continue to streamline and reduce the number of state required assessments to align with the requirements of ESSA, ensure that FDOE completes a review of alignment and concordance with national and other appropriate assessments – such as ACT/SAT, AP, IB, PERT, and industry certifications – and allow for districts to substitute national exams in lieu of statewide assessments.
3. Modify the waiver for certain special education students from state assessment requirements so that students enrolled in ESE programs, except gifted, are exempt unless the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP) provides for such assessment.

EDUCATION FUNDING

A strong and consistent financial investment in education is vital for the academic success of students and for the economic prosperity of all Floridians. Such an investment must include new revenue sources, must be stable and equitable, and must not shift state funding responsibilities to school districts. In support of these objectives, FSBA urges the Legislature to:

- 4.* Provide sufficient per student funding to place Florida in the upper quartile nationally, increase the Base Student Allocation by an amount sufficient to cover enrollment growth, workload, state programmatic changes, and inflation, and ensure that funding for each categorical allocation within the FEFP is sufficient to cover actual costs, growth, and inflation, and is not reduced by either enrollment or revenue changes during the fiscal year.
5. Retain, rather than roll-back, the Required Local Effort (RLE) millage rate or, at a minimum, calculate the RLE millage rate to reflect increases in property values attributable to improvements or new construction and use state funds to replace the loss of local revenue due to this partial rollback of the RLE millage rate.
6. Increase funding for student transportation.

7. Restore Workforce Education Funding to pre-recession levels, restore performance incentives, modify funding to reward institutions experiencing growth, and commit to annual increases thereafter for school districts to meet state and regional workforce needs as outlined by the Department of Economic Opportunity.
8. Support restoration of funding for courses taken by students beyond a base 6-period day (1.0 FTE), including virtual education and dual enrollment courses.
9. Support parity for district virtual programs by allowing them to operate with the same calendar freedom with regard to deadlines for enrollment and course completion as FLVS by ensuring consistency in funding throughout both the regular and summer terms.
10. Support additional funding and programmatic opportunities for VPK and early learning programs that include, at a minimum, funding at the same FTE level as K-3 for VPK programs offered on the campus of a Title 1 elementary school if the program is offered as part of a comprehensive school improvement effort tied to the National Campaign for Grade Level Reading, enhanced teacher training standards and curriculum for VPK programs, and uniform high quality early childhood education indicators for public and private VPK providers.
11. Repeal limitations that restrict a school district's ability to utilize Title I funds efficiently across schools with high poverty and low achievement.
12. Provide adequate funding systems to address increasing behavioral, mental and physical health needs of our students.
13. Extend from 4 years to up to 10 years the voter approved additional millage authorized in s. 1011.73(2), F.S.

PERSONNEL

FSBA recognizes that excellence in student achievement depends greatly upon having dedicated educators who are highly skilled, thoroughly trained, and fairly compensated. In order to attract and retain topnotch instructional, administrative, and support personnel, each school district must have the control and flexible use of adequate funds for professional development, competitive salaries, and programs to support and mentor personnel. In pursuit of these goals, FSBA urges the Legislature to:

14. Support a comprehensive recruitment and retention plan that, at a minimum, includes:
 - Fully funded strategies such as teacher fellowships and loan forgiveness programs to encourage and attract talented students to enter into the field of education;
 - Ongoing progress in the legislative effort to expand options for individuals to obtain temporary teacher certification and, subsequently, full professional certification for those who demonstrate their work to be effective or highly effective;
 - Fully funded scholarship program that encourages students to go into teacher training at accredited state supported schools of education, pays for their education expenses in full provided they agree to work up to five years in a district that struggles to attract teachers, and provides a bonus for those going into areas of critical need, math, science, or exceptional student education.
 - Authorization for school districts to re-employ teachers, substitute teachers, and other instructional and support personnel after one month of retirement without penalty to the employee's pension.
15. Expand opportunities for advanced degree supplements to be granted by school districts for a Master's degree earned in classroom oriented, student centered general education majors, such as Curriculum and Instruction or Teaching and Learning.

16. Increase funding for educator professional training on the Florida Standards, related assessments, and use of technology.
17. Support the inclusion of the Florida General Knowledge test for individuals pursuing a teaching certification on the CAPE Industry Certification funding list.

FACILITIES & PLANNING

Excellence in education cannot be accomplished without adequate funding for a sufficient number of well constructed and well equipped school facilities. Ample, equitable, and stable funding must be provided to ensure that school facilities offer environments that encourage and enhance teaching and learning and that support new technology. To achieve this, FSBA urges the legislature to:

- 18* Restore the authority for school districts to levy, by simple majority vote, up to 2.0 mills for capital purposes, and restore the authority of school districts to determine the use of local capital outlay millage revenue.
19. Support a comprehensive plan for the use of local capital outlay millage revenue that, at a minimum, includes:
 - Restoring the local discretionary capital outlay millage authority to 2 mills for all districts to meet facility, transportation, and charter school capital needs;
 - Establishing of a process and criteria by which all charter school capital outlay projects may be incorporated into the district state approved Capital Outlay Plan and require that local capital outlay funding may be expended only in accordance with the priority order of the Capital Outlay Plan;
 - Requiring that any charter school facilities that are funded by district capital outlay millage revenue are, or will become, a public asset that may be reclaimed and utilized by the school district and/or may be sold to recoup the investment made by local taxpayers;
 - Prohibiting personal financial enrichment of charter school owners, operators, real estate developers, managers, and other affiliated parties eligible for capital outlay funds;
 - Prohibiting any entitlement to public funds for privately owned charter school facilities.
20. Exclude local capital outlay revenue sources, including local millage revenue and half-cent revenue, from the statutory per student station cost caps.
21. Continue to provide state PECO funds to public schools.

SCHOOL CHOICE OPTIONS

Public school choice programs, such as charter schools, virtual schools, and magnet programs, can offer enhanced opportunities for students to excel. However, such programs must be subject to local authority and uniform accountability. To ensure that school choice options present academically sound opportunities for student success, FSBA urges the Legislature to:

22. Support a comprehensive plan to restore local school board authority over charter schools that, at a minimum, includes:
 - Repealing provisions relating to a standard charter school contract to ensure that districts and charter schools are able to fully negotiate a charter contract;
 - Providing for non-renewal or termination of charters based on the “academic welfare” of the students;
 - Repealing the reduction in charter school administrative fees if a district does not enter into a performance-based agreement within 60 days;
 - Authorizing a school district to reject a Hope operator and requiring a Hope operator to employ certified teachers.

23. Require that local governing authority relating to local zoning and land use requirements or restrictions apply to charter schools to the same extent as applied to traditional public schools.
24. Require charter schools that receive state tax dollars, either directly or indirectly, to operate under the same fiscal and academic accountability system as traditional public schools.
25. Provide equity between charter schools and regular public schools as it relates to corrective action requirements and timelines.
26. Require charter schools to comply with controlled open enrollment policies.
27. Support public school choices that are rigorous, engaging, and governed by local school boards so they are accountable to students, parents and the community.
28. Halt the escalating cost of further privatization of public education through such means as the corporate tax credit scholarships and end the use of public funds to support vouchers for private schools that are not held to the same educational and accountability standards as public schools.

LOCAL AUTHORITY & GOVERNANCE

Locally elected school boards are keenly aware of the unique needs of the community that it serves and is best positioned to make the decisions necessary to ensure the greatest opportunities for students. In support of the constitutional authority of school boards to operate, supervise and control public schools, FSBA urges the Legislature to:

29. Repeal those portions of HB 7069 which infringe on the authority of school boards to make decisions in the best interests of their communities, including the appropriate expenditure of 1.5 capital outlay millage revenues and Title 1 funds.
30. Give districts at least a full school-year implementation period in order to accommodate necessary planning and changes to state and local rules.
31. Give flexibility to school boards for a contract with the State Board of Education to improve student performance over a specified period of years in return for statutory waivers in chapters 1000-1013, F.S., that are not in conflict with life-safety or other federal requirements, can be demonstrated by the district to be unnecessary, ineffective or a hindrance, or where the district can be more effective in improving student performance.
32. Remove the existing statutory requirement of 150 minutes of physical education each week for students in kindergarten through grade 5 and for students in grade 6 who are enrolled in a school that contains one or more elementary grades, retain the new requirement for 100 minutes of unstructured, free-play recess each week for students in kindergarten through grade 5, and remove the exemption from the recess requirement for charter schools.
33. Preserve school board constitutional and home rule authority and oppose legislation that subvert, bypass, or undermine that authority.



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FSBA 2018 Federal Platform

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The Florida School Boards Association (FSBA) calls upon the U.S. Congress to fulfill its role in supporting and promoting a uniform, efficient, safe, secure, and high quality system of free public schools that allows students to obtain a high quality education. In pursuit of this goal, FSBA urges Congress to:

34. Provide sufficient federal funding to pursue and implement federal initiatives and mandates including, at a minimum, funding and related policies to:
 - Exempt K-12 and workforce education spending from cuts under sequestration, and, at a minimum, increase funding to meet increased costs due to inflation, increased enrollment, and critical unmet needs;
 - Increase the federal investment in IDEA to the level of 40% of the costs to meet special education mandates;
 - Support the existing Title I formula and distribution that provides local flexibility in determining the best use of federal funds for the planning of school improvement initiatives;
 - Oppose any change in law that would allow portability of Title I and/or IDEA funding;
 - Oppose any reduction in Title II funds for teacher and principal training and professional development;
 - Oppose any reduction in Title III funds for English Language Learners (ELL) and provide funding for the unreimbursed costs associated with educating immigrant students;
 - Protect the authority of local educational agencies (LEAs) under ESSA to exercise local control over the use of allocated entitlement funding without further federal or state restrictions;
 - Avoid any effort to divert substantial federal resources into competitive grant programs.
35. Support the implementation of ESSA including, at a minimum, policies to:
 - Provide maximum flexibility to local districts in determining school intervention and improvement activities;
 - Preclude current and future administrations from adopting rules that are not expressly required by law in ESSA;
 - Support the intent of ESSA to restore local authority and flexibility by opposing over-reaching federal mandates, imposing top-down directives, and one-size-fits-all requirements.
 - Ensure that the maximum amount of funding provided through ESSA flows directly to school districts;
36. Oppose policy revisions to Medicaid that would cap federal support without regard to the actual number of eligible children or would limit the increase of health service costs below the medical inflation rate.
37. Ensure all possible federal assistance (FEMA and other agencies) is made available in a rapid manner to school districts having facilities and related services impacted by Hurricane Irma.
38. Support educating all students regardless of immigration status and amend or enact federal legislation to resolve issues related to undocumented students who are long-term residents.

39. Continue to support and monitor the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) implementation of the “ConnectEd” plan for E-Rate, increase overall funding for E-Rate to keep pace with costs and inflation, and ensure that public educational uses are not prioritized behind paid commercial services.
40. Support reauthorization of the Perkins Career/Technical Education Act with flexibility to create or continue appropriate partnerships with postsecondary education institutions, workforce development boards, and local business/industry.
41. Support high-quality early education opportunities (including head start, Pre-K, early education, professional development for personnel, and more), with ample flexibility for local authority in implementation.
42. Support public school choices that are rigorous, engaging, and governed by local school boards so they are accountable to students, parents and the community.
43. Support an increase in USDA reimbursement for “free” lunch in order to pay for the escalating costs of healthy food, transportation and labor which has not kept pace with the current reimbursement.
44. Support legislation that would allow states to collect state sales tax due on remote and internet purchases of goods and services that are currently taxable offline.

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