



Florida School Boards Association

2026 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

FSBA, in partnership with parents, families, students and staff, supports the following legislative recommendations for increased student success.

1 Increase the Base Student Allocation by at least 5% and provide additional flexibility for school districts.

The Base Student Allocation should reflect the increased costs associated with educating students in Florida. Our proposed increase would ensure school districts' ability to address those costs, allowing for innovative academic strategies, teacher recruitment and retention, adequate insurance, and protect against cybersecurity threats.

2 Increase Funding for Allocations and Cost Factors

Ensure the true cost of Transportation Services is provided.

School districts spend more than the amount allocated in the Transportation categorical to cover this critical service for our students. Increasing this categorical would ensure all students have access to safe and reliable transportation.

Fully Fund the Safe Schools Allocation.

In order for school districts to use the latest proven school safety resources, including armed School Resource Officers at every school, school districts are forced to utilize district funds for safety measures that would otherwise have funded student educational needs. Districts report the actual cost of a certified equipped law enforcement officer cost between \$80,000 and \$140,000, while the per school allocation is between \$35,000 and \$50,000. Adequate funding of all school safety measures is crucial.

Adjust the program cost for Exceptional Student Education (ESE) in the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP) to align with the actual costs.

Increasingly complex student needs and the specialized services required to support students with disabilities effectively has dramatically increased since the pandemic. The formula used to fund ESE programs does not reflect the true costs spent by school districts. Districts need realistic funding to adequately address the needs of our ESE populations so that they can excel in life.

3 Reform Schools of Hope or any Co-Location Requirements to Protect School District Resources and Local Governance

Amend the Schools of Hope statute to:

Ensure co-location requirements neither jeopardize safety and security nor create unfunded operational or administrative burdens for school districts.

- Refine eligibility criteria, so they accurately identify underperforming schools;
- Update facility utilization metrics to reflect current classroom and building use, instructional models, and student enrollment patterns;
- Preserve the authority of locally elected school boards to manage district property and resources in fulfilling their constitutional responsibilities; and
- Clarify statutory definitions to provide consistent guidance for both districts and charter operators.



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4 Implement an Enhanced Student Attendance Strategy

Students will not achieve academic excellence unless they are in school daily. Chronic absenteeism has become one of the greatest obstacles faced by school administrators. We ask that the legislature amend Florida Statute 1003.26(1)(b) to allow school districts to initiate chronic absenteeism strategies immediately upon the 5th unexcused student absence. Currently, districts are limited to initiating intervention processes only after 10 unexcused absences occur within a 90-day period. Earlier intervention will lead to more successful student outcomes.

5 Allow Flexible Graduation Requirements for Career and Technical (CTE) Diploma Students

School districts need increased flexibility for students pursuing technical college and/or career opportunities through the CTE Diploma. Allow flexibility for students pursuing the CTE Diploma by permitting successful completion of alternate tests or industry certifications to replace the requirement of a passing score on the Algebra I End of Course Exam (EOC) and 10th-grade English Language Arts (ELA) EOC.

6 Require Kindergarten for All Students

To better prepare our youngest learners for the rigorous B.E.S.T. kindergarten standards, we recommend compulsory kindergarten for all students in Florida before enrolling in first grade. By amending Florida Statute 1003.21 to require kindergarten for all students, we will be giving our students in Florida a pathway to educational success.

7 Fund VPK Programs in Public Schools

Fully fund Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK) programs to ensure equitable access to high-quality early learning for all children.

8 Create a Dedicated Categorical Fund for Family Empowerment Scholarships

Separate scholarship funding from traditional public school funding to ensure transparency and accountability in the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP). Create a dedicated funding mechanism for Family Empowerment Scholarships.