

Governor Ron DeSantis Recommended K-12 Education Budget Highlights Fiscal Year 2021-2022

The total recommendation for the FY 2021-2022 budget is \$96.6 billion. This is an increase of \$4.3 billion over the current fiscal year, \$2.6 billion accounts for various expenditures related to the state's COVID-19 pandemic response.

Due to the remaining uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic, the budget recommends over \$1 billion in savings – including over \$400 million in administrative and operational efficiencies.

The budget places \$6.6 billion in total reserves, which is more than 6 percent of the total budget, leaving ample resources for unforeseen expenditures related to the COVID-19 pandemic and 2021 hurricane season.

K-12 Public Education

The budget invests a record \$22.8 billion in total funding for the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP). This is a per student funding amount of \$8,019, an increase of \$233 per student. The Base Student Allocation increases by \$132 per student.

To achieve the \$22.8 billion in total funding, the budget includes \$12.9 billion in state funding and \$9.9 billion in local funding. In total, the budget includes an increase of \$285.5 million in the FEFP, of which \$217.1 million is local funding.

Highlights of the FEFP increases include:

- \$132 increase in the Base Student Allocation (BSA);
- \$10 million increase, for a total of \$110 million for mental health initiatives;
- \$50 million increase, for a total of \$550 million, to continue increasing the minimum teacher salary for full-time public classroom teachers (\$47,500 goal) and to raise the salaries of other eligible teachers and instructional personnel.
- \$43.5 million to establish the Title I School Recognition Program to provide financial awards to Title I schools based on their student performance.

FEFP Maintains Current Funding Levels:

- \$180 million - Safe Schools
- \$130 million - Reading Instruction Allocation
- \$8 million - Digital Classrooms Allocation
- \$54.1 million - Teachers Classroom Supply Assistance Program

Greater than 10% FEFP Reductions:

- DJJ Supplemental - \$1.2 million (20%)
- Funding Compression/Hold Harmless Allocation - \$8.2 million reduction (12%)

Promoting Computer Science, Florida Civics and Debate

- The budget maintains \$10 million to get teachers certified to teach computer science courses, and to provide bonuses to teachers who hold educator certificates or industry certifications in computer science.
- Provides \$750,000 for the Florida Civics and Debate Initiative in recurring funding to support growing access for middle and high school speech and debate programs.

School Safety

The budget includes funding for the following school safety initiatives:

- \$180 million in recurring funding for the safe schools component of the FEFP.
- \$1 million in recurring funding for screening-related and training-related costs and to provide stipends of \$500 to school guardians who participate in the Coach Aaron Feis Guardian Program. This is a \$500,000 increase.
- \$5.5 million in recurring funding to continue the Youth Mental Health Awareness and Assistance Training.
- \$640,000 in recurring funding continues for the Florida Safe Schools Assessment Tool. The tool is used to assist school officials with identifying threats, vulnerabilities and appropriate safety controls.
- \$3 million in recurring funding to continue providing a centralized integrated data repository and data analytics resources to improve access to timely, complete and accurate information integrating data from: social media; Department of Children and Families; the Department of Law Enforcement; the Department of Juvenile Justice; and local law enforcement.
- \$42 million in funding for school safety grants.
- \$6.4 million in recurring funding for school districts to continue to implement a mobile panic alert system that is capable of connecting multiple first responder agencies.

Workforce Initiatives

The budget includes nearly \$510 million in state and federal funding to support workforce education programs to ensure Florida students are prepared to fill high-demand, high-wage jobs.

- This includes maintaining \$10 million for the Governor's Pathways to Career Opportunities Grant Program to establish or expand pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs for high school and college students.

In addition to the funding provided through the state budget, the following workforce initiatives received funding from the CARES Act:

- \$35 million for Rapid Credentials to enroll and complete students in in-demand, high-value, short term career and technical education credentialing programs.
- \$11 million for infrastructure and equipment grants for K-12 schools or technical colleges to support in-demand Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs of study for K-12 students.

Education Infrastructure

School Safety Grants

- \$42 million for school safety grants is provided to school districts to assist with costs associated with improving the physical security of K-12 school buildings.

Maintenance

- \$180 million for public charter school maintenance, funding the necessary infrastructure for public charter schools without utilizing any local funds from school districts.
- \$7.7 million for lab school maintenance.
- \$2.7 million for the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind maintenance.

Construction

- \$34.1 million for three Special Facility Construction projects, which funds critical infrastructure needs in Baker, Bradford, and Levy counties.

Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK)

The budget provides a total of more than \$405 million for Florida's VPK program; a quality, free education initiative, which serves more than 157,000 four and five-year olds. VPK prepares each child for kindergarten by focusing on developing early literary skills and building a strong foundation for school.

School Readiness

The budget includes \$100 million in federal funds to maintain the provider rate increases provided to early learning coalitions in Fiscal Year 2020-21.

In addition, the following initiatives that support early learning are included:

- T.E.A.C.H. – \$10 million for early childhood teacher scholarships;
- Help Me Grow – \$1.8 million to connect children and families with information, resources and developmental services to enhance health, behavior and learning in the development of young children;
- Teacher Training – \$3 million for statewide professional development to improve childcare instructor quality;
- Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters (HIPPO) – \$3.9 million to deliver high-quality School Readiness curriculum directly to parents so they may strengthen the cognitive and early literacy skills of at-risk children.

Florida Retirement System

Pension Unfunded Liability – The unfunded actuarial liability (UAL) of the Florida Retirement System (FRS) Defined Benefit Program amounted to \$36.0 billion on June 30, 2020. Based on an actuarial liability of \$200.3 billion and an actuarial value of assets of \$164.3 billion, the program is 82.0 percent funded as of June 30, 2020.

The Governor's Fiscal Year 2021-22 recommended budget includes \$52.9 million to implement the recommendations of the independent actuary and fully fund the recommended contributions to the UAL for state employees. This helps Florida continue to have one of the best funded pension plans of the largest states in the nation.

Sales Tax Holiday

- An 8-day Back-to-School Sales Tax Holiday to Save Florida Families \$56_Million – The holiday covers clothing up to \$60, school supplies up to \$15, and computers priced at \$1,000 or less.