

Governor Ron DeSantis Recommended K-12 Education Budget Highlights

Fiscal Year 2022-2023

Governor DeSantis' total recommended budget for the Fiscal Year (FY) 2022-2023 is \$99.7 billion. The budget is \$2 billion less than the current year's \$101.7 billion budget. The following excerpts were taken from the Governor's Freedom First Budget and accompanying Frequently Asked Questions document released by the Governor's Office on December 9, 2021.

The budget places \$15.3 billion in total reserves, \$10.6 billion in unallocated General Revenue, \$3.0 billion in the Budget Stabilization Fund, and \$1.7 billion in unallocated Trust Funds. Revenues exceeded pre-pandemic estimates by more than \$3 billion over FY 2020-2021 and FY 2021-2022, which is more than 15 percent of the total budget, leaving ample resources for unforeseen circumstances. \$36.3 billion, or 36.4 percent of the total budget, is in federal funds.

K-12 Public Education

Governor DeSantis understands that education is the foundation of our future workforce. That is why the budget provides a historic investment in our K-12 education system. The budget includes funding the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP) at \$8,000 per student, an increase of \$189 over Fiscal Year 2021-2022. Governor DeSantis is once again acknowledging our hardworking educators by providing classroom teachers and principals an additional \$1,000 payment (\$12.38 million), as well as additional funding to continue raising the minimum teacher salary for full-time public classroom teachers toward the goal of \$47,500.

The budget appropriates \$23.9 billion in total funding for the FEFP. The appropriated funding covers costs associated with the current projected enrollment of 2.98 million students.

Highlights of the FEFP increases include:

- Increase of \$124 in the Base Student Allocation (BSA)
- Increase of \$20 million, for a total of \$140 million for the mental health allocation
- Increase of \$50 million, for a total of \$600 million to continue increasing the minimum teacher salary for full-time public classroom teachers to the goal of \$47,500 and provide salary increases to Florida's veteran teachers and other instructional personnel
- Increase of \$30 million, for a total of \$210 million for safe school initiatives
- Increase of \$21 million, for a total of \$262.8 million for instructional materials
- Increase of \$30 million, for a total of \$210 million for safe school initiatives

FEFP Maintains Current Funding Levels:

- \$5.5 million is maintained for the Youth Mental Health Awareness Assistance Training
- \$3 million is maintained to continue providing a centralized, integrated data repository and data analytics resources to improve access to timely, complete, and accurate information
- \$42 million is maintained for public school hardening grants
- \$6.4 million is maintained to continue providing school districts with access to a mobile panic alert system capable of connecting multiple first responder agencies
- \$6.5 million is maintained for the Coach Aaron Feis Guardian Program to be used to certify and train school guardians and provide a one-time stipend of \$500

Promoting Computer Science, Florida Civics, and Debate

The budget maintains \$10 million to certify teachers in computer science course instruction and provide bonuses to teachers who hold educator certificates or industry certifications in computer science.

School Safety

The budget includes funding for the following school safety initiatives:

- \$210 million, an increase of \$30 million, for the safe schools component of the FEFP
- \$6.5 million is maintained for the Coach Aaron Feis Guardian Program used to certify and train school guardians and provide a one-time stipend of \$500
- \$5.5 million is maintained for the Youth Mental Health Awareness and Assistance Training
- \$4.15 million, an increase of \$3.5 million, is provided for the Florida Safe Schools Assessment Tool
- \$3 million is maintained to continue providing a centralized, integrated data repository and data analytics resources to improve access to timely, complete, and accurate information
- \$42 million is maintained for public school hardening grants
- \$6.4 million is maintained to continue providing school districts with access to a mobile panic alert system capable of connecting multiple first responder agencies

Protecting Florida's Jewish Day Schools

To continue to address safety concerns for Florida's Jewish communities, Governor DeSantis maintains funding of \$4 million to hire school safety officers, enhance safety measures, and upgrade safety equipment, facilities, and technology. Increased security services will help ensure children at Florida Jewish Day Schools can learn in a safe environment. This funding will be available to all eligible Florida Jewish Day Schools.

Closing K-12 Achievement Gaps

The budget includes \$15.5 million to continue the implementation of VPK-Grade 8 screening and progress monitoring tools aligned with the newly adopted B.E.S.T. Standards. Additionally, these funds will allow for the provision of consistent data reporting to help determine personalized interventions for struggling readers and focus areas for statewide professional learning for educators.

Workforce Initiatives

The budget includes over \$534 million to support workforce education programs to prepare Florida students to fill high-demand, high-wage jobs and help Florida meet its goal of becoming first in the nation for workforce education by 2030.

- The budget includes \$15 million, an increase of \$5 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.
- The budget also includes \$100 million for a workforce development capitalization incentive, grants to be used for instructional equipment, laboratory equipment, supplies, or other expenses associated with a workforce development program.

Education Infrastructure

The budget provides \$428.5 million in state funding for the following education capital outlay initiatives:

School Safety Grants

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

Special Facility Construction

- \$85 million in contingency funds to cover increasing costs related to Special Facility Construction projects for Baker, Bradford, Calhoun, Jackson, Levy, and Okeechobee counties to complete these critical projects regardless of rising costs from inflation.

Maintenance

- \$190.9 million for public charter school maintenance to fund the necessary infrastructure for charter schools without utilizing any school districts' local funds
- \$8.1 million for lab school maintenance

Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK)

The budget provides more than \$406 million for Florida's VPK program, a high-quality, free education initiative serving approximately 158,000 four and five-year-olds. VPK prepares each child for kindergarten by building a solid foundation for school and focusing on early literacy skills.

School Readiness

The budget maintains funding provided in the current FY 2021-2022, allowing additional children to be served in the School Readiness Program, and rewarding School Readiness providers who participate in program assessments and implement quality improvement strategies.

The budget also includes the following initiatives supporting early learning:

- \$72 million for the School Readiness Program to serve students
- \$100 million in federal funds to increase eligible early learning coalitions' provider reimbursement rates
- \$40 million for performance funding for all school readiness providers participating in program assessment and quality improvement strategies

The budget also provides \$36.4 million to serve approximately 36,000 at-risk School Readiness eligible four-year-olds through direct instructional support for reading.

In addition, the following initiatives supporting early learning are maintained at current year funding.

- 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 child care instructor quality

- Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) – \$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

Governor DeSantis recommends increasing the employer contribution portion of the investment accounts of employees participating in the Florida Retirement System (FRS) Investment Plan by three percent of the member's salary.

Pension Unfunded Liability – Based on the reduction of the investment return assumption from 7.0 percent to 6.8 percent by the FRS Actuarial Assumptions Estimating Conference on October 7, 2021, the unfunded actuarial liability (UAL) of the FRS Defined Benefit Program, known as the state's pension program, was \$34.7 billion on June 30, 2021. Based on an actuarial liability of \$209.6 billion and an actuarial value of assets of \$174.9 billion, the program is 83.4 percent funded as of June 30, 2021.

The budget includes funding to reduce the return assumption to a more fiscally prudent rate and implement an acceleration of the amortization of the unfunded liability, which will increase required annual employer contributions to the pension program by approximately \$176 million and protect the long-term solvency of retirement benefits for state employees, particularly our law enforcement officers.

Sales Tax Holiday

- **Fuel Tax Holiday to Save Florida Families**
\$1 billion – The holiday will reduce the tax on motor fuel by \$0.25 per gallon, reducing the financial burden of high gas prices on Florida families.
- **Seven-day Freedom Week Sales Tax Holiday to Save Florida Families**
\$57.4 million – The holiday covers certain outdoor recreation purchases, such as the first \$100 of the sale price of sunglasses, the first \$200 of the sale price of tents, and the first \$500 of the sale price of kayaks or canoes, as well as tickets for events, museums, the arts, and more.
- **Ten-day Back-to-School Sales Tax Holiday to Save Florida Families**
\$72.9 million – The holiday covers clothing up to \$60, school supplies up to \$15, and the first \$1,000 of personal computers and related accessories.
- **Ten-day Disaster Preparedness Sales Tax Holiday to Save Florida Families**
\$11 million – The holiday covers items needed during disasters, including generators priced at \$1,000 or less.
- **Permanent elimination of the fees charged for obtaining a Florida ID Card to Save Florida Families**
\$14.7 million – This will save individuals over the age of five wishing to obtain a Florida Identification (ID) Card \$25. Florida ID Cards issued by the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles are required to be accepted by any person accepting a driver's license as proof of identification. The Governor's FY 2022-2023 budget maintains local tax collector revenue by redistributing a portion of the Class E driver license fees.