



THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF LEE COUNTY

2855 COLONIAL BLVD. ♦ FORT MYERS, FLORIDA 33966 ♦ WWW.LEESCHOOLS.NET

December 19, 2016

The Honorable Matt Caldwell, Chairman
Lee County Legislative Delegation
15191 Homestead Road, Building A
Lehigh Acres, FL 33971

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DISTRICT 7
GREGORY K. ADKINS, ED. D.
SUPERINTENDENT
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BOARD ATTORNEY

Dear Representative Caldwell:

On behalf of The School Board of Lee County, I respectfully request that we be afforded a fifteen minute presentation during the January 19, 2017 Lee County Legislative Delegation Meeting to confirm the legislative priorities for the Lee County School District. I will lead off our presentation, and will be assisted by Dr. Greg Adkins, Superintendent, and Mr. Bob Cerra, legislative consultant. Our top priority relates to providing high quality instruction. We will also note our other concerns. We will be prepared to answer any questions or concerns raised by the delegation members.

We have enclosed a copy of our materials, by electronic mail, for the delegation per the instructions in the November 9th memorandum.

On behalf of each of our School Board Members, I thank you and the other members of the Lee County Legislative Delegation for your service to the citizens of Lee County. While both challenges and opportunities face our community and our state, we have faith in the good efforts and intentions of our delegation members as we all work together to make Lee County an even better place for our citizens.

Sincerely,

Mary Fischer

School Board Legislative Liaison

Enclosures

c: Lee County Delegation Members
School Board Members
Dr. Gregory K. Adkins, Superintendent
Mr. Robert Cerra, Legislative Consultant



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District 2

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2017 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Invest in High Quality Instruction

Many of the reforms adopted over the past seventeen years rely on a strong supply of high quality professional educators being available to meet the needs of students and communities. We are now facing a huge teacher shortage. Enacting performance pay, using strong evaluation systems, retraining or removing poor performing teachers, and supporting a strong school accountability system will all fall flat if we do not have a pipeline of high quality personnel to serve our students.

- Provide resources for recruiting, retaining and training the highest quality educators.
- Enhance flexibility in teacher certification.
- Support a community project in Lee County to model recruitment and training strategies that will supply the needed educators.

Protect Public Assets/Provide Needed Student Stations

Transferring one-half mill from district capital outlay to the state FEFP helped the Legislature bridge its funding shortfall during the crisis budgets caused by the real estate value collapse. Since that time, more than a half mill of property taxes used for operations has been retired for tax relief while the funding transferred from the capital budget to temporarily to shore up operations was NOT restored to the capital budget. Establish a long term plan to make Florida's public education system world class to include a long range plan to provide for adequate, predictable, and stable funding.

- Restore the 2.0 mill cap for capital outlay purposes.
- Enhance PECO revenue sources to restore the PECO program as the primary state support for public school capital outlay needs.

Respect Local Constitutional Authority of School Boards

Article IX, Section 4 (b), Florida Constitution: "The school board shall operate, control and supervise all free public schools within the school district..."

- Provide for local school boards to make the final decision to grant or reject a charter school application, regulate a charter school that is having problems meeting local expectations, share or not share capital outlay funding, and the ability to terminate a charter.
- Repeal the recent mandate for school districts to pay higher education tuition for dual enrollment students.
- Remove the restriction for districts from demanding printed copies for the evaluation of instructional materials.
- Reject any new unfunded mandates.

Support Fair Competition

- Re-establish charter school administrative fees designed to fully cover the costs for all mandated district services to the charter schools and provide adequate funding for school boards to provide their required oversight to "operate, control and supervise" as established by the Florida Constitution.
- Provide regulatory equity between charter schools and traditional public schools by expanding flexibility for public schools, and maintain class size reduction penalties for all public schools of choice on the same formula.

Restore Smart Accountability

- Review state assessment requirements with an eye toward reducing the total instructional time lost both by students being assessed and those who are displaced because of test scheduling requirements.
- Allow paper and pencil exams to be offered if selected by local districts to reduce overall testing time, improve test scheduling or provide better measurements of actual learning for certain grades, schools or students.

- Allow the use of **alternative concordant scores** from PERT, ACT and SAT for both Algebra 1 and ELA graduation requirements.
- Reinstate funding for **PERT** when used to meet graduation requirement.
- Repeal current statute for **mandatory 3rd grade retention** and allow district discretion and flexibility when determining 3rd grade promotion.
- Students with a current diagnosis of a speech and/or language disorder should be **exempted from the foreign language requirement** for the Bright Futures scholarships and entry requirement for the Florida college system.

ESSA

- Within the intent and scope of the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), provide flexibility to school districts that includes an alternative, state-approved, locally-developed student and educator (instructional personnel and school-based administrators) evaluation system that measures state standards of proficiency and is correlated to Florida’s accountability system. Such flexibility must include the valid and appropriate use of the new state and local student assessment results for personnel evaluations, performance pay, and school grading. Such flexibility may include alternative assessments, alternative methods of testing, including paper-based exams, and/or elimination of Florida’s Value-Added Model [VAM data as required component of teacher and school administrator evaluations] (1012.34, F.S.).
- Use one of the existing components of the state accountability system as the school quality indicator for example:
 - Use graduation or career readiness rates for the additional Accountability Indicator for high school and growth in the lowest 25 performing as school quality indicator, pursuant to ESSA for elementary and middle grades.
- Goals for sub-groups should be based on learning gains and not proficiency.

CHARTER SCHOOLS

- Clarify statutes that school boards have **final authority** and oversight of charter schools in accordance with Article IX, Section 3 of the Florida Constitution.
- Focus the **approval of charter applications** to a specific academic or space need which the local district does not or cannot meet or if the district determines the application is in the best interest of the student.
- Maintain **school boards’ authority** over local capital outlay funds.
- Grant final authority to approve or reject **charter school applications**.

- Require the **same accountability** for student performance; assessment; class size reduction; school grading and adherence to state curriculum and fiscal standards, including minimum balance reserves and facilities for both traditional public schools and charter schools.
- Require **charter schools to weight** low-income and economically-disadvantaged applicants in admissions lotteries, as recommended by the U.S. Department of Education guidance, to create more integrated schools.
- Allow school districts to negotiate an appropriate **usage fee** based on market comparables for the use of their educational facilities.
- Exempt school districts from paying ad valorem tax for **leased properties** similar to charter schools.
- Require charter schools to **declare the location** at the time of contract.
- Require a charter school to return any and all **public funds**, excluding the Charter School Planning Grant funds, to the sponsor upon the charter school’s election of any deferral of opening the charter school.
- Require a charter governing board’s request for hearing to be accompanied by a **cost bond** in the amount of \$50,000 to pay taxable costs pertaining to the hearing including, without limitation, fees of the Division of Administrative Hearings and court reporter’s fees in the event the sponsor prevails.
- Support legislation that closes statutory loopholes in Florida Statutes and provide school districts with greater **authority in closing charters** that are failing to meet their legal or contractual terms.

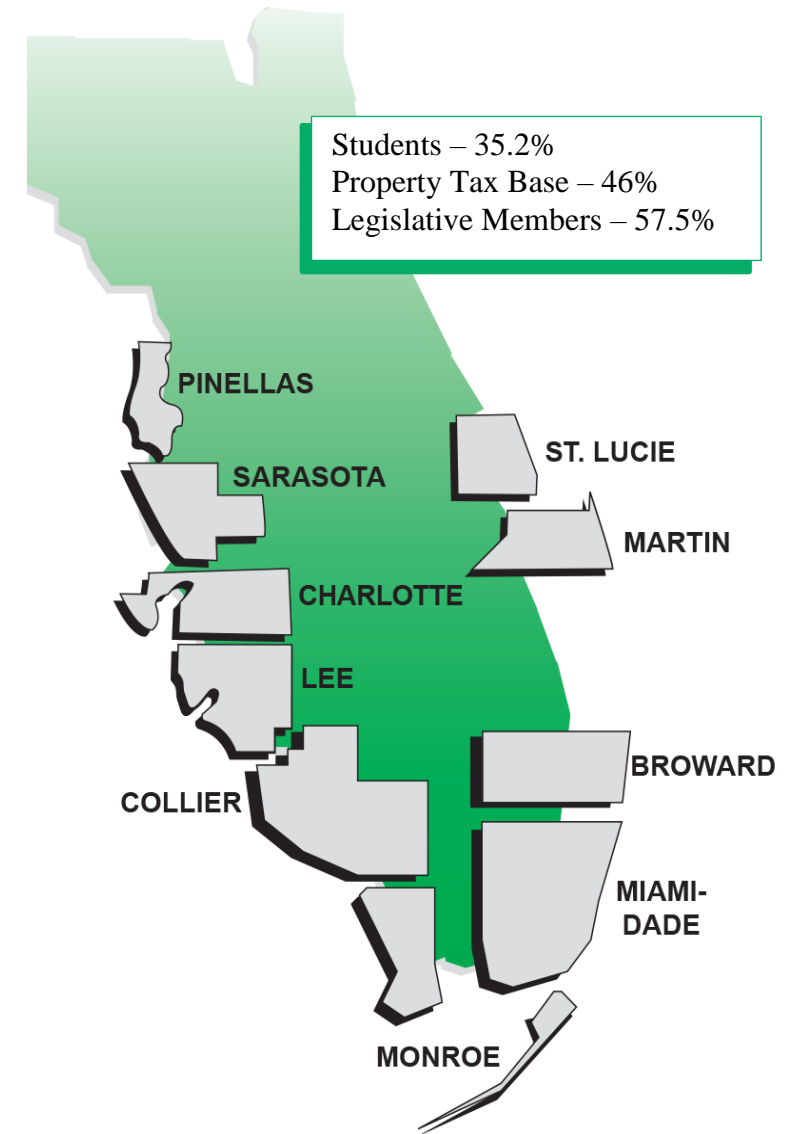
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GREATER FLORIDA CONSORTIUM OF SCHOOL BOARDS’ 2017 LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM



**GREATER FLORIDA CONSORTIUM
OF
SCHOOL BOARDS’
2017 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 GLOBAL MARKET PLACE.

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

FUNDING

Allocate **sufficient total funds** with flexibility to enable school districts to support: guaranteed continuation budgets that provide for enrollment changes, inflationary increases, competitive salaries and benefits for teachers and other personnel and quality program improvements, including those mandated by SB 736.

Increase Base Student Allocation (BSA) for FY 2017-18 by at least \$200 per student in total potential state and local dollars, exclusive of categorical programs, and by five (5) percent, for each of the next three years. Increase to at least the national average.

- Conduct an impartial third-party study of the **Florida Price Level Index** to reflect the costs of housing, insurance, poverty, and transportation, rather than wages.

- Oppose further equalization of the **Local Discretionary Millage**.
- Uphold the **90 percent rule** in the FEFP, and fund state mandates for Transportation and Instructional Materials entirely from state revenue and do not include this funding when calculating the 90 percent rule.
- Establish a **salary allocation** within the FEFP for **teacher salaries**.
- Implement and fund strategies, such as teacher fellowship and loan forgiveness programs, to recruit talented students to the teaching profession.
- Fund **tuition, instructional materials or administrative fees** to state and community colleges and universities for dual enrollment.
- Protect **district projections** on student enrollment by funding a contingency appropriation from the state reserve each year to avoid mid-year FEFP hold backs.
- Fund the infrastructure cost and acquisition of **computers/technology** for the expansion of digital instruction and mandated testing.
- Collect and earmark the **internet sales tax** for public schools.
- Restore the FTE definition to provide for **six (6) periods** and fund additional instructional time for **dual enrollment, IB, AICE, and virtual programs** up to a maximum of **eight (8) classes** per student.
- Fully fund and provide the flexibility in providing the **additional time** during summer school or a combination to meet the additional 180-hour reading instruction requirement at the lowest performing elementary schools.
- Increase funding for **Transportation, Instructional Materials, and Supplemental Academic Instruction** to accommodate higher enrollment and higher costs, and maintain these programs as categoricals with maximum flexibility.
- Increase **Safe Schools** funding to provide for the actual expenditures for school resource officers and other related expenses.
- Eliminate the **wealth adjustment** from the sparsity formula.
- Oppose the automatic increase each year for the **Tax Credit Scholarship Program**.

OPTIONAL CAPITAL OUTLAY LEVY (2.0 MILLS)

- Oppose any mandatory diversion of **Local Discretionary Capital Outlay levy** revenue from traditional public schools to non-traditional public schools.
- Establish a **long-term, stable, and recurring revenue source** to provide increased school construction funds to support new facilities, renovations, replacement schools, school maintenance, land acquisition, mandated class size reduction, hurricane shelter retrofitting, pre-kindergarten programs housed in public schools, and the additional costs of constructing environmentally-efficient “green” schools.

- Restore the full **optional 2.0 mill** levy for capital purposes to meet school maintenance and technology needs and reject any further reduction and continue the flexibility to use this capital revenue to pay property and casualty insurance premiums; to purchase equipment to implement on-line testing; and, to purchase software required to run equipment or other critical capital or operational needs.
- Increase the cap for **vehicle purchases and property and casualty insurance** from \$100 to \$150.

ACCOUNTABILITY AND STATE TESTING PROGRAM

District Flexibility with Assessments and Personnel Evaluation

- Delay implementation of **computer-based testing** and continue to provide for paper exams until such time when all districts have sufficient infrastructure and equipment.
- Require the Department of Education to establish **concordance scores** between FSA and nationally normed assessments, including ACT/SAT, AP, IB and others, for possible use by districts to substitute national exams in lieu of FSA for reading and/or mathematics.
- Authorize **alternate methods for evaluating** ESE and ELL students.
- Allow district flexibility on use of **assessment data** for evaluation purposes.
- Provide flexibility to school districts in the development of **local personnel evaluation systems**.

Changes to the State of Florida Assessment/Accountability Systems

- Change A to F **grading** to categories such as Excellent, Satisfactory, or Needs Improvement.
- Rename **Lowest 300** to something positive, such as “Extra Hour of Reading.”
- Disaggregate **FSA /ELA** scores into Writing and Reading.
- Reinstate **middle school acceleration language** which allows for banking of End of Course (EOC) passing scores for high schools.

Changes in Requirements for Promotion and Graduation

- Reduce impact of state EOC **student grade weights** from 30 percent to 20 percent.
- Provide a waiver from the ELA **graduation requirement** for ELLs enrolled in U.S. schools for less than two years who have passed all other high school graduation requirements.

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FSBA 2017 Legislative Platform

The Florida School Boards Association (FSBA) submits this 2017 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. With this paramount duty in mind, FSBA urges the Florida Legislature to:

- ✧ Restore the authority for school districts to levy, by simple majority vote, up to 2.0 mills for capital purposes, and maintain the current authority of school districts to determine the use of local capital outlay millage revenue.
- ✧ Provide sufficient per student funding to place Florida in the upper quartile nationally, increase the Base Student Allocation by at least five percent annually, 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.
- ✧ Revise Florida statutes and related State Board of Education Rules regarding 3rd Grade promotion and retention to:
 - Provide clearly defined alternative pathways for student promotion and retention with a more balanced approach that considers both assessment results and local evidence of student performance;
 - Ensure that the final decision on student promotion or retention is made at the local level; and
 - Ensure that student promotion or retention is not dependent upon, or denied by, a single assessment result.