

THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF LEE COUNTY

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES – FY21



Accountability

- Continue State Assessments in order to gauge progress monitoring for students while modeling grace and compassion by suspending school grades, suspending VAM, and eliminating the requirement that an End of Course (EOC) exam count as 30% of the final course grade. The time frame is a period of one year.
- Implement a one-year moratorium on the new Benchmarks for Excellent Student Thinking (BEST) Standards so teachers and district personnel can focus on supporting current student needs.

Safety and Security

- Seek an increase in the Safe Schools Allocation to fund the total cost of a School Resource Officer at each school in the District, including charter schools, with the ultimate goal of one SRO per 1,000 students.
- Seek "School Guardian" funding, separate from the Safe Schools Allocation, to hire Guardians supplemental to SROs, to provide an increased level of protection in schools.
- Establish statewide student data privacy laws and certification program that would apply to all vendors that provide software and services to educational entities within the state of Florida. Regulations should include, at a minimum, restrictions on commercial use of student data, data handling, and data protection requirements.
- Advocate for cybersecurity threat mitigation services, including SETA (Security Education, Training and Awareness) programs, to be funded by the federal E-Rate program. In the interim, as a stop-gap measure, state funding should be allocated to compensate for increased threat exposure associated with E-Rate expenditures.

Budget & Finance

- Update the calculation for the Required Local Effort (RLE) millage rate to capture the increase in residential and commercial property values and revenue gained from new construction.
- Change the language in Section 1013.64(6)(b)1., F.S. to allow Districts to use existing Capital Outlay, Surtax Revenue and Impact Fees rather than Certificates of Participation when the total cost per student station exceeds the cost per student station as provided in the law.

Career and Technical Education

- Authorize a statewide adjunct instructor model for secondary CTE instructors that allows for flexibility in compensation to fill instructional vacancies in high demand programs in Lee County such as healthcare and construction trades.

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Teacher Certification & Retention

- Allow districts to have local authority over teacher evaluations and pay for performance.
- Modify the General Knowledge Exam requirements to allow for "Professional Performance Points". The proposal recommends that a new teacher who receives a District rating of "Highly Effective" or "Effective" during their first three years of employment, earns 3 - 5 "Professional Performance Points" that would count toward their score on the General Knowledge Exam.

Early Childhood

- Implement a pilot program to allow students deemed "not ready" for kindergarten to participate in summer VPK.
- Fully integrate early learning programs under the Florida Department of Education so there is clear ownership to ensure quality programs, appropriate funding and child outcomes.
- Offer State Certified Pre-Kindergarten teachers the same treatment, benefit and award opportunities as K - 12 teachers.

Facilities

- Convene a work group or task force to review and update the Size and Space and Occupant Design Criteria of SREF to better meet District needs.
- Due to industry standards for construction costs increasing 6.5% year over year for the past three years, provide flexibility in Section 1013.64(6)(b)1., F.S. on total cost per student station school construction requirements.
- Eliminate the impact that pre-kindergarten classrooms have on Florida Inventory of School Houses (FISH).

Transportation

- Rewrite Florida Statutes §627.732(3)(b) and §627.733(1)(a) to clearly delineate that school buses operated by county school boards are not subject to the requirement of obtaining personal injury protection insurance and that there has been no waiver of sovereign immunity for claims for reimbursement of paid PIP benefits by automobile insurance companies.

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Comprehensive Health

Develop a model program for implementation of a Comprehensive Health Education Policy to address mental and emotional health education, suicide prevention, substance use and abuse prevention, dating violence and abusive behavior, human trafficking, teenage pregnancy, injury prevention and safety, Internet safety, personal health, community health, consumer health, family life, nutrition, prevention and control of disease.

Tier 1 Proposal: A model program requiring all middle school students, grades 6-8, to take a minimum of one semester of health each year.

- Number of middle school students in grades 6-8: 20,000
- The district will need to hire an additional 34 teachers to teach the one-semester course annually – \$2,408,058
- Florida Department of Education subject area certification test fee (health) and training cost: \$5,100.00
- Subject Area Curriculum Text: \$131,661.60
- TOTAL: \$2,545,219.60
- APPROXIMATE COST PER STUDENT: \$127.26

Tier 2 Proposal: A model program requiring middle school students in grades 7 & 8 to take a minimum of one semester of health. (This option continues district-funded 6th grade health.)

- Number of middle school students in grades 7 and 8: 13,334
- The district will need to hire an additional 24 teachers to teach the one-semester course annually - \$1,700,088.00
- Florida Department of Education subject area certification test fee (health) and training cost: \$3,600.00
- Subject Area Curriculum Text: \$92,937.60
- TOTAL: \$1,796,625.60
- APPROXIMATE COST PER STUDENT: \$134.74

Tier 3 Proposal: A model program requiring middle school students in grade 8 to take a minimum of one semester of health. (This option continues district-funded 6th grade health.)

- Number of middle school students in grade 8: 6,666
- The district will need to hire an additional 12 teachers to teach the one-semester course annually - \$850,044.00
- Florida Department of Education subject area certification test fee (health) and training cost: \$1,800.00
- Subject Area Curriculum Text: \$46,468.80
- TOTAL: \$898,312.80
- APPROXIMATE COST PER STUDENT: \$134.76