



THE SCHOOL BOARD OF BROWARD COUNTY, FLORIDA

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May 5, 2017

Robert W. Runcie
Superintendent of Schools

Proposed State Budget Does Not Prioritize Your Child's Education

As a father, community member and Superintendent of the second largest public school system in Florida, which proudly serves more than 270,000 students, I am compelled to speak out about the proposed state budget and its potential negative impact to our students and dedicated employees.

For the first time since the Great Recession, the Florida Legislature is preparing to vote on Monday, May 8, 2017, to cut education funding, specifically the Base Student Allocation. The Base Student Allocation is the amount of money the state provides per student and is the only source of flexible funding school districts receive, which is used to pay for new or continuing educational programs and salaries for our teachers and staff.

The proposed state budget slashes the Base Student Allocation for the upcoming fiscal year by \$27 per student, reducing funding from \$4,161 down to \$4,134 per student. This is a significant blow to public education, particularly when you consider that Florida's per student funding is already below the national average.

However, you will not learn about this proposed cut in education funding from the Florida Legislature. Instead, the legislature wants our families to believe it is increasing education spending by \$18 per student for Broward County students, which is approximately \$6.4 million. In actuality, the \$18 increase included specific categorical funds. These categorical funds can only be used for certain purposes.

Furthermore, once you take into account increases in inflationary costs for operating expenses, the legislature's proposed budget would result in our District having to cut over \$6 million from the District's budget. These cuts will impact our schools, our communities and, most importantly, our students.

At this point, you may be asking yourself why cuts are being made to education, while the legislature is poised to pass a historic total budget of \$83 billion and the state's economy is growing, unemployment rates are low, and property values are increasing? The answer is simple – the legislature has not prioritized public education in its budget.

Instead of prioritizing our schools, the state's budget actually provides taxpayer dollars for incentives to lure out-of-state charter school operators to set up shop in our communities. This is funding that could be used to support our state's students – whether they attend a local traditional school or current charter school (since both are funded by state dollars), and Florida's teachers.

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I implore you to join me in urging our legislators to NOT pass their proposed budget.

Ask legislators to make public education a priority and support a budget with a meaningful increase in funding for our schools, such as the budget originally proposed by our Governor, which included an increase to the Base Student Allocation of \$141 per student. You can share your message in support of our schools with legislators using our District's online advocacy tool, available at browardschools.com/leor.

Make your voices heard. These are our children and our schools. They deserve better.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert W. Runcie". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Robert W. Runcie