

2011 BROWARD SCHOOL BOARD LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

FUNDING

According to the state constitution, the education of children is a “fundamental value of the people of the State of Florida” therefore a “paramount duty” of the State is to make adequate provision for the education of all children. Despite this constitutional mandate, for the past three years public school programs have experienced unprecedented revenue reductions which would have been exacerbated had there not been an influx of federal stimulus funds which are not expected to be available for the 2011/12 school year. Further, the State continually has reduced its share of funding for districts and relied more heavily on local property taxes.

It is time for the bleeding to cease and for the 2011 Legislature to establish a new and stable source of funding for public education that will generate sufficient revenue to:

- Provide, at a minimum, the same level of funding that was provided before the series of 2007/08 and 2009/10 budget cuts;
- Prevent any further funding cuts to public education;
- Insure that new revenue will be available for the 2011 Legislature to fill the funding hole that will result from the scheduled demise of federal stimulus funds;
- Allow school districts to restore some of the programs and services they have had to eliminate because of budget shortfalls;
- Fund Class Size Reduction but *not* at the expense of the basic education program, and
- Support the additional costs of operating magnet schools (specialized training and instructional materials, increased transportation and program costs, authorization fees).

FUNDING PENALTIES: Eliminate funding penalties tied to meeting Class Size Reduction requirements and Differentiated Accountability requirements.

FEFP CALCULATIONS: Return the rate of local property tax roll collections from 96 percent to 95 percent for purposes of FEFP calculations, especially during a period of continuing tax roll declines statewide.

TRANSPORTATION AND INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS: Remove these categoricals from the base FEFP and fund them separately so that they do not falsely inflate the total amount of the basic funding program.

SCHOOL RECOGNITION PROGRAM: Hold the School Recognition Program in abeyance until the economy improves (\$130 million in state funds allocated to this program in 2010/11; 13.5 million to Broward).

BECON FUNDING: Amend the statute providing a definition of public television stations to include “non-commercial stations licensed solely for educational programming” to allow BECON to be eligible for a portion of the state funds annually allocated to public television and radio stations.

EDUCATION REFORMS: Refrain from any additional reforms other than those already in the pipeline (high school graduation/RTTT) and use a collaborative approach that involves all the stakeholders (school board, teachers, administrators, etc.) to those reforms which already must be implemented.

PERFORMANCE PAY: Insure that any legislation requiring implementation of performance pay plans for instructional personnel is based on:

- Additional funding and does not divert funds from the basic salary schedule;
- Maintains the local decision-making authority of school boards and preserves their constitutional authority;
- Is based on a collaborative approach to designing a plan and meets the statutory requirements of F.S. Chapter 447 which requires that the terms, hours and conditions of employment be collectively bargained.

CHARTER SCHOOLS: Prohibit charter school sponsors who have existing schools that are either in a financial emergency or academic failure status or both from submitting and receiving approval for an additional school in the same district until the status of their existing school is corrected.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS AND ASSESSMENTS

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION: Provide alternative options that lead to a regular high school diploma for all students including those who are going on to college as well as those who plan on entering a career immediately after high school graduation.

END-OF-COURSE EXAMS: Award course credit based on a course grade which counts EOC exams as a percentage of the grade, not to exceed 30 percent, rather than the pass-fail "mini-FCAT" requirement which will be in full effect by 2014/15, and authorize more frequent EOC retakes rather than only once a semester.

NORM REFERENCED TESTS (NRT): Bring back the NRT which provides comparisons to students across the nation and can be used to confirm the results of the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT).

ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENTS: Give school boards the options of using the American College Test (ACT), Scholastic Achievement Test (SAT) or the College Placement Test (CPT) as an alternative to the FCAT, as the assessment standard for high school graduation.

CAPITAL OUTLAY AND TECHNOLOGY

OPTIONAL LOCAL 2-MILL LEVY: Restore school boards' authority to levy up to 2 mills for capital outlay and oppose any further reduction to this millage; and authorize school boards, by a majority vote, to use a portion of this local millage to support their operating budgets if necessary.

STATE FUNDING FOR CAPITAL OUTLAY: Provide state funding for capital outlay needs, including building replacement, renovation and remodeling and maintenance, and replacing worn, inefficient ventilation systems and aging school buses.

TECHNOLOGY: Provide state funding for technology to enable school districts to meet the critical demands for sufficient computers needed to implement on-line End-of-Course testing which the state is mandating.

PUBLIC MEETING NOTIFICATIONS: Permit school boards to satisfy the state law that requires notices of regular and special school board meetings, of meetings of advisory committees, and of proposed and

amended school board policies by posting such notices on school district websites as an alternative to posting notices in newspapers.

STUDENT SAFETY:

- Allocate the additional funds that are derived from the doubling of fines for speeding violations in school zones to the support of the School Resource Officer Program;
- Require that any legislation prohibiting the use of cell phones in school zones stipulate that the additional revenue generated from violations of this law be used to support the School Crossing Guard Program;
- Require charter school facilities to meet the same safety code standards that currently are mandated for regular public schools under the State Requirements for Educational Facilities (SREF) Rule 6A.

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF BROWARD COUNTY OPPOSES:

- Implementing any new programs, whether funded or unfunded, until there is sufficient revenue to adequately fund the basic program;
- Legislation that subverts or bypasses the constitutional authority of school boards and superintendents;
- Further equalizing the Local Discretionary Millage;
- Expanding any type of voucher program including the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship Program which is a form of a voucher program;
- Dividing large school districts into smaller ones;
- Imposing any minimum level of operating fund expenditures on direct classroom instruction;
- Further reducing Advanced Placement /International Baccalaureate funding;
- Eliminating impact fees;
- Further reducing funding for teachers who earn National Board Certification status.

Adopted October 19th, 2010