

DUVAL COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

1. **FLEXIBILITY ON THE MILLAGE RATE:** Restore the authority of district school boards to levy an additional 0.5 mills, up to 2.0 mills for capital funding purposes, to meet the needs of both traditional public schools as well as charter schools.

Explanation: 60% of our local district schools are at least 50 years old, which creates challenges with basic maintenance and facility upgrades, while limiting potential investment in new buildings for higher growth areas. State PECO funds previously available to districts has declined with larger shares going to higher education and charter schools.

2. **REQUIRED LOCAL EFFORT (RLE):** Maintain the current RLE statewide to assist with funding the Base Student Allocation (BSA)

Explanation: Funding has yet to be restored to the levels from the start of the 2007-2008 budget year. In addition, Florida taxpayers benefit from a constitutional amendment that limits annual increases on homesteaded property, which means the impact of RLE is minimal compared to the statewide loss in revenue to schools.

3. **FUNDING FOR HURRICANE SHELTERS:** Provide additional capital funding for district public schools that are designated as hurricane shelters.

Explanation: Recent events have highlighted the need for safe, dependable shelters in times of severe weather. The increased building requirements, along with the additional power sources and ancillary building specs to shelter special needs populations, creates an unfair burden on capital funding for school districts.

4. **SUSTAINED TEACHER SALARY INCREASES:** Provide necessary funding to significantly increase teacher salaries on a recurring basis, particularly in hard to staff schools.

Explanation: Recruitment and retention of great teachers remains a challenge, particularly in high demand certification areas and hard to staff schools. Best and Brightest performance bonuses are not considered wage increases and are not equivalent to an annual salary allocation. The average teacher salary in Florida ranks 36th nationally.

5. **CONCORDANT SCORES:** Maintain the current requirements for students to earn a concordant score to demonstrate proficiency on the Florida State Assessments.

Explanation: Currently, students can demonstrate proficiency on the FSA in third and tenth grade reading, and tenth grade mathematics through the use of alternate assessments and/or portfolios. The state is contemplating the elimination of some of those alternatives, such as PERT, and raising the qualifying score on others, such as ACT, above the established postsecondary readiness benchmark.