

**GREATER FLORIDA CONSORTIUM OF SCHOOL BOARDS**  
**2010 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 marketplace.

**PRIORITY ISSUES**

**FUNDING**

In order to accomplish this goal:

Allocate sufficient state dollars 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. **Use state revenue to provide for this continuation budget as opposed to the state using increases in local property tax revenues as the source of additional funds.**

- Conduct an impartial third-party study of the Florida Price Level Index to reflect the cost of housing, insurance, and transportation costs rather than wages.
- Guarantee, at least, the same dollars per FTE in total potential funds appropriated for FY 2006-07 adjusted for the three-year average of inflation, as this was the benchmark for eligibility for receipt of federal stimulus funds.
- Increase funding for Safe Schools, Transportation, Instructional Materials, and Supplemental Academic Instruction to accommodate higher enrollment and higher costs, and maintain these programs as categoricals.
- Uphold the 90 percent rule within the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP).
- Fund state mandates for transportation and instructional materials entirely from state revenue and do not include this funding when calculating the 90 percent rule.

- Restore the program weights for Exceptional Student Education (ESE), English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), and all secondary (middle and high school) career education programs to pre-2001 levels.

### **Federal Stimulus Funds**

Establish a financially stable and expanding source of state revenue for Prek-12 that includes plans to replace the phase-out of America's Recovery and Reinvestment State Stabilization Funds and that funds public schools to at least the 2006-07 level adjusted for the three-year average of inflation.

### **Local Discretionary Millage (LDM)**

Oppose further equalization of the LDM until the basic education program is funded to the 2006-07 level adjusted for the three-year average of inflation.

Extend the voter-approved operating millage authority from four (4) years to ten (10) years and allow for voter approval of the half-cent sales tax for operational as well as capital construction purposes.

### **Hurricane/Disaster Relief**

Establish permanent provisions to assist school districts with hurricane damage without negatively affecting resources for other districts including:

- providing an avenue for school boards to seek necessary waivers of state law for up to a year, such as shortening the school year, in order to resolve some of the immediate impact of hurricane damage;
- funding all operational costs associated with shelter operations; and
- including shelters in concurrency requirements.

### **Charter Schools**

Maintain school boards' authority regarding the disposition of local capital outlay funds and impact fees; and authorize school boards to collect administrative fees for all students served by the charter school.

### **Expenditure Requirements**

Oppose any legislation that dictates a specific percentage of a district's operating budget that must be allocated to "direct classroom instruction."

### **Waiver of Statutes**

Restore the authority of the Commissioner of Education to waive statutes, except for those dealing with life safety issues, upon request of the school board.

## **CAPITAL OUTLAY**

### **School Construction**

Provide adequate 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.

### **Optional Capital Outlay Levy (2.0 mills)**

Restore the full optional 2.0 mill levy for capital purposes, reject any further reduction, and continue the flexibility to use 2.0 mill revenue to pay property and casualty insurance premiums.

### **Impact Fees**

Define school boards as “infrastructure” – not “developers.”

### **Relocatables**

Allow, but do not require, local governments and school boards to include the capacity of temporary relocatable facilities in the level of service calculation.

### **Student Station Costs**

Revise the per-student-station cost cap to keep pace with changing marketplace increases for labor and materials.

## **PROPERTY APPRAISAL**

Establish a deadline of June 30<sup>th</sup> of each year for property appraisers to certify the tax roll for the upcoming year.

Increase the fees paid by appellants of property tax assessments to cover the cost of the Value Adjustment Board operations, particularly legal fees mandated by the 2008 Florida Legislature.

## **ACCOUNTABILITY**

Allow the exemption of certain specialized schools and centers such as, for hospital/home-bound students, from the penalties of federal and state accountability requirements.

Include district-operated lab charter schools in the state accountability program.

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