

Dr. Lawrence S. Feldman, Vice Chair

**SUBJECT: PROPOSED 2015 LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM OF THE  
GREATER FLORIDA CONSORTIUM OF SCHOOL BOARDS**

**COMMITTEE: INNOVATION, EFFICIENCY & GOVERNMENTAL  
RELATIONS**

**LINK TO STRATEGIC  
FRAMEWORK: STUDENT, PARENT, AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

The Greater Florida Consortium of School Boards is a coalition of eleven school boards that have joined to assist each other in advancing educational issues of mutual concern. The member districts include: Broward, Charlotte, Collier, Indian River, Lee, Miami-Dade, Monroe, Palm Beach, Pinellas, Sarasota, and St. Lucie counties.

In developing the Consortium's legislative platform, member districts submitted legislative proposals for consideration and inclusion in its 2015 legislative platform. On September 19-20, 2014, representatives of the Consortium met in Palm Beach, Florida to discuss issues and finalize the draft of their proposed 2015 Legislative Program. The draft program includes only those items which were approved by the school board representatives in attendance. Further, it adheres to the Consortium's policy of including only a select number of issues in order to ensure maximum cohesiveness in programmatic priorities and concentration of Consortium resources.

All eleven Consortium school boards are being asked to review the draft program and to take official action on it. Each issue must be supported by all Consortium members before inclusion in the final adopted program; only the issues that receive unanimous support will be included in the Consortium's legislative program. If a member district votes to remove an issue from the proposed program, the issue is removed from the program. The 2015 legislative session is scheduled to begin on March 3, 2014. Member boards must review and adopt the Consortium's legislative program by the end of November. Once all member boards have officially adopted the 2015 Legislative Program, the Consortium will print and distribute the document to the Governor, State Cabinet, all legislators, and interested citizen groups.

**ACTION PROPOSED BY VICE CHAIR  
DR. LAWRENCE S. FELDMAN:**

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida adopt the proposed draft 2015 Legislative Program.

MEMORANDUM

September 26, 2014

TO: Greater Florida Consortium of School Boards

FROM: Karen Brill, President

SUBJECT: **PROPOSED GFCSB 2015 LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM**

Thank you to everyone who participated in our 2014 Annual Legislative Conference that was held in West Palm Beach, Florida on September 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>. Attached you will find the resulting **proposed** 2015 Legislative Program **Priority Goals** of the Greater Florida Consortium of School Boards plus a copy of **Additional Issues** that will become a separate document.

We are asking that you approve the program (both parts) as soon as possible in order to begin the process of getting legislative sponsors.

Issues cannot be revised or amended. They must be accepted or rejected. Under the Consortium bylaws, if a single board rejects an issue, that issue automatically is removed from the program. The final program will reflect those issues unanimously approved by the 11-member districts. **Please send the results of your school board's action to [tomcerra@gmail.com](mailto:tomcerra@gmail.com).**

This is going to be a very important year for all of our school districts as we confront the issues before us. We have an opportunity to improve our collaboration and work better together. It is critical that we begin our efforts immediately and that we are responsive to the changing legislative environment.

Jeanne Dozier from Lee County will be chairing a committee to coordinate our efforts in Tallahassee and with our legislative delegations. I am requesting that each school board participate on this legislative planning/steering committee. You each may choose to serve on this committee or ask your school board to assign a designee. Please let me know your designee as soon as possible.

The next scheduled meeting of the GFCSB will be at the Grand Hyatt Tampa Bay on Wednesday, December 3, 2014, from 5:00-6:00 p.m. However, it is possible we may schedule some additional time during the FSBA conference, if necessary.

Thank you for your hard work. Together we ARE better!

KB:pw  
Attachments (2)

**GREATER FLORIDA CONSORTIUM  
OF  
SCHOOL BOARDS'  
2015 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 MARKET PLACE.**

**PRIORITY GOALS**

**CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY/GOVERNANCE/UNFUNDED MANDATES**

Ensure that, in all cases, legislation be evaluated to provide that it does not conflict with the constitutional and home rule authority of school boards to “operate, control, and supervise” all public schools within their school districts.

**FUNDING**

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, including those mandated by SB 736. 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.

- Increase Base Student Allocation (BSA) for FY 2015-16 by \$368.56 or more to truly restore funding to the FY 2007-08 appropriated per student level.
- Restore the ESE Guaranteed Categorical allocation to the pre-recession level of \$2,220.56 per student or greater.
- Restore the 0.50 mill capital outlay taxing authority to local school boards to meet the school maintenance and technology needs of their community.

- Fund the infrastructure cost and acquisition of computers/technology for the expansion of digital instruction and mandated testing.
- Collect and earmark the internet sales tax for public schools.
- Oppose further equalization of the local discretionary millage.
- Restore the FTE definition to provide for six periods and fund additional instructional time for dual enrollment and virtual programs.
- Fully fund a new categorical program for the 300 lowest performing elementary schools and allow the school districts the flexibility in providing the additional time.
- Base the class size requirement on the school-wide average for all public schools.

### **OPTIONAL CAPITAL OUTLAY LEVY (2.0 MILLS)**

- Restore the full optional 2.0 mill levy for capital purposes and reject any further reduction and continue the flexibility to use this revenue to pay property and casualty insurance premiums; to purchase equipment to implement on-line testing; and, to purchase software required to run equipment purchased with capital funding.
- Increase the cap for vehicle purchases and property and casualty insurance from \$100 to \$150.
- Oppose any mandatory diversion of Local Discretionary Capital Outlay levy revenue from traditional public schools to non-traditional public schools.
- Establish a long-term, stable, and recurring revenue source to provide increased 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.

### **CHARTER SCHOOLS**

- Require that all publicly funded schools have the same laws, rules, and regulations.
- Require a \$250,000 performance bond upon application.
- Maintain school boards’ authority to negotiate a performance contract with a charter school by repealing the standard contract.
- Maintain school boards’ authority over local capital outlay funds.

- Grant final authority to approve or reject charter school applications.

### **ACCOUNTABILITY AND STATE TESTING PROGRAM**

- Suspend high stakes testing.
- Create a workable accountability system, not to be implemented before July 1, 2017, that must include student, teacher, principal, school and school district assessment, and professional development.
- Provide that any accountability measure developed must be statistically reliable and validated in Florida.
- Reduce the number of state mandated tests and use the results solely for diagnostic purposes.
- Allow school districts to choose nationally normed tests as an alternative to state mandated tests.
- Repeal requirements for districts to adopt EOCs in every subject unless provided by and funded by the state assessment program.
- Allow alternative ways for Post-secondary Readiness Test compliance, such as Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, AICE, or Dual Enrollment programs.

## **ADDITIONAL ISSUES**

### **GOVERNANCE**

#### **Mandates/Reforms**

Oppose additional reforms and mandates and require at least one-year lead-time for all new provisions.

#### **Voucher Programs**

Oppose any further expansion of the Florida Tax Credit and John McKay Scholarship Programs and require the same accountability for students attending these programs as is required for students attending traditional public schools.

#### **School Board Structure**

Oppose any provisions impacting the school board's governance without local school board and community input.

#### **Waiver of Statutes**

Provide the authority for the governor or the commissioner of education to waive statutes, except for those dealing with life safety issues, upon request of the school board, for up to three years.

#### **Value Adjustment Board (VAB)**

- Allow school districts to levy the prior period adjustment millage.
- Modify the VAB appeals process to include:
  - requiring that the property owner sign/approve the appeal;
  - limiting rescheduling of appeals to no more than one (1);
  - tying the interest rate for refund to the market rate; and,
  - requiring the Property Appraiser to finalize the tax roll by a date certain.

#### **Legislative Session Dates**

Place a constitutional amendment on the 2016 ballot for the legislature to convene annually in January to allow adequate time for budget development and new legislative initiatives.

### **Articulation Programs and Agreements**

- Allow local or regional determination in the operation of post-secondary and adult education articulation programs and dual delivery systems.
- Provide for statewide articulation agreements for school districts, community and state colleges and universities so that dual enrollment credit will transfer to and among all state higher education institutions.

### **School Board Calendar**

Allow each district the authority to set its own start date for school opening.

### **Pay for Performance/Teacher Evaluation Systems**

Provide the authority for school boards to design local evaluation and performance systems rather than impose a one-size-fits-all mandate.

### **Workforce Development**

Maintain the dual education delivery system that allows both the local school district and community college to offer adult programs.

### **FUNDING**

- Conduct an impartial third-party study of the Florida Price Level Index to reflect the costs of housing, insurance, poverty, and transportation, rather than wages.
- Provide state funding for any increased costs to the employer's contribution to the Florida Retirement System.
- Develop a state plan to reinvest a specific percentage of state growth revenue in the FEFP.
- 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 with maximum flexibility.
- Uphold the 90 percent rule in the FEFP, and fund state mandates for Transportation and Instructional Materials entirely from state revenue and do not include this funding when calculating the 90 percent rule.
- Eliminate the wealth adjustment from the sparsity formula.
- Restore the program weights for Exceptional Student Education (ESE), English-for-Language-Learners (ELL), and all secondary (middle and high school) career education programs to pre-2001 levels.

- Identify alternative revenue sources, including efforts to enforce the existing state sales tax on all internet sales made in Florida, and study a phase-out of exemptions on non-essential goods.
- Allow for voter approval of the half-cent sales tax for operational as well as capital construction purposes.
- Reinstate the funding for 251, 252, 253, and gifted students on a per student basis and provide state funding for additional pupil personnel services.
- Hold funding in abeyance for the School Recognition Program and reject any new funded or unfunded mandates or new programs.
- Provide that public school funding follow the student when the student's educational enrollment location changes between a non-traditional school and a traditional public school.
- Restore pre-kindergarten funding to the FY 2010 level to eliminate waiting lists and recognize space requirements in state facilities specifications (SREF).
- Preserve Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate Programs and other advanced academic programs by restoring funding to the 2006-07 levels (.24 factor).
- Adjust the rate of local tax roll collections from 96 percent to 94 percent for FEFP calculation purposes.
- Provide state funding to support all technology and digital requirements that the legislature has mandated districts must meet by 2015 or delay that deadline.

## **CAPITAL OUTLAY**

### **Public Education and Capital Outlay (PECO)**

Restore and enhance funding to traditional public schools on a per student basis.

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

Restore the .50 mill levy by majority school board vote for critical operations or capital.

### **State Requirements for Educational Facilities (SREF)**

Provide school districts flexibility to use the Florida Building Code in lieu of SREF.



### **Impact Fees**

- Define school boards as “infrastructure,” not “developers.”
- Maintain fees and reinstate local capital outlay funding for the purposes that they were collected.

### **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**

Provide for a district or regional index for the per-student-station cost cap to keep pace with changing market place increases for labor, materials, and code requirements.

### **Local Sales Tax**

Expand the allowable use of locally-voted sales tax to include operating expenses.

### **ACCOUNTABILITY AND STATE TESTING PROGRAM**

- Provide statewide assessments in multiple languages for the first two years of testing.
- Reinstate 3.5 as the passing writing score.
- Establish and fund better systems to develop, implement, and audit valid and reliable state tests and expedite the scanning and scoring to provide better, more reliable student data.
- Develop and fund the teacher/administrator evaluation and performance pay system and provide maximum local flexibility for collaboration and negotiations for the implementation.
- Modify the state’s criteria for “intervene status” to ensure clarity, consistency, and fairness.
- Provide the same level of student and educator accountability for all state providers.
- Develop an alternative assessment model for measuring progress of students enrolled in ESE centers that appropriately measures student achievement and teacher performance, and establish statewide criteria for student placement.

## **HURRICANE/DISASTER RELIEF**

Establish permanent statutory authority 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; and,
- funding all costs associated with shelter operations.

## **OTHER ISSUES**

### **PIP/School Buses**

Reaffirm that school buses are not commercial vehicles and not subject to PIP.

### **Student Safety**

- Permit safety signage on school buses.
- Provide for traffic violation for any unauthorized vehicle, moving or parked in a school bus zone, when buses are loading and unloading.

### **Best Practices of Assessment Programs**

Require the state DOE to conduct a “Global Best Practices” review of professional and student assessment programs.

### **Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) Funding**

- Ensure that any additional funding for Juvenile Justice centers supplements rather than supplants funds available for the basic education program.
- Allow districts to waive the \$45 fee for adult education basic or GED courses offered to students in jails, stockades, or DJJ facilities.

### **Student Health**

Require the Florida High School Athletic Association to make literature available to parents on the importance of having a cardiovascular assessment, such as an EKG performed on student athletes, and pursue mandatory screening prior to participation in any organized sport.

### **Career Academies**

Create rigorous industry certificates and increase the program weights.