

Ms. Luisa Santos, Board Member

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Dr. Dorothy Bendross-Mindingall  
Ms. Mary Blanco  
Ms. Monica Colucci  
Dr. Steve Gallon III

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**SUBJECT: PROPOSED 2024 LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM GREATER FLORIDA CONSORTIUM**

**COMMITTEE: FISCAL ACCOUNTABILITY & GOVERNMENT RELATIONS**

**LINK TO STRATEGIC PLAN: EFFECTIVE & SUSTAINABLE OPERATIONAL PRACTICES**

The Greater Florida Consortium of School Boards is a coalition of 11 School Boards that have joined to assist each other in advancing educational issues of mutual concern. The member districts include Broward, Charlotte, Collier, Martin, Manatee, 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 2024 legislative platform. On August 17 and 18, 2023, representatives of the Consortium met in Monroe County to finalize the draft of their proposed 2024 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 11 Consortium School Boards must review the draft program and take official action on it. The proposed 2024 Legislative Program is attached for reference. 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 school district votes to remove an issue from the proposed program, the issue is removed from the program. Since the 2024 legislative session is scheduled to begin on Tuesday, January 9, 2024, with Legislative Committee work to begin in mid-September, member boards were asked to review and adopt the Consortium's legislative program as soon as possible. Once all member boards have officially adopted the 2024 Legislative Program, the Consortium will print and distribute the document to the Governor, State Cabinet, all legislators, and interested citizen groups.

This item has been reviewed and approved by the Office of the General Counsel as to form and legal sufficiency.

**ACTION PROPOSED BY MS. LUISA SANTOS:**

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, adopt the proposed draft of the Greater Florida Consortium of School Boards 2024 Legislative Program.



# GREATER FLORIDA CONSORTIUM OF SCHOOL BOARDS' 2024 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 UNIVERSAL MARKETPLACE.**

**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.**

## **PRIORITY ISSUES**

### **GOVERNANCE**

Respect and adhere to the constitutional authority of School Boards.

“The school board shall operate, control and supervise all free public schools within the school district and determine the rate of school district taxes within the limits prescribed herein.” The Florida Constitution, Article IX, Section 4(b).

Require all schools that receive taxpayer dollars to have the same financial and academic accountability measures.

Provide all districts the same flexibility that high performing school districts currently receive.

Waive audit finding penalties for out-of-field teachers who are certified and teaching in related subject areas.

### **FUNDING**

Provide for an annual increase in the Base Student Allocation commensurate with the rate of inflation and cost of living increases (but no less than 5 percent new funding), to ensure school systems can meet the rising costs in every aspect of their business.

Maintain the full calculation of Required Local Effort (RLE) to include new construction and property reassessments.

Expand cost factors within the FEFP beyond the Comparative Wage Factor to include factors which disproportionately impact high-cost counties such as housing, transportation, health, and property insurance costs, which ultimately raise an educational institution’s operational cost per FTE.

Fully fund any new mandates, without transferring money from the Base Student Allocation (BSA) or Discretionary Local Effort (DLE).

Provide funding for an optional summer school program for all students.

Fully fund class size.

Recognize school board’s authority to control Local District Capital Outlay revenue without any required diversion and include students in Pre-K, Technical Colleges and On-the-Job Training in the calculation.

Restore the discretionary 2.0 mill levy for capital purposes such as school maintenance, property and casualty insurance premiums, technology needs (including online testing), or other critical capital or operational needs.

Establish that when distributing the 1.5 capital outlay funds to charter schools, the total discretionary millage revenue available for distribution shall be reduced by the school district’s annual debt service obligation incurred as of June 30<sup>th</sup> of each prior fiscal year.

Any proration for FY 2023-2024 should be covered by the Florida Legislature by maintaining the Education Enrollment Stabilization Program.

Increase the Safe Schools Categorical allocation by at least \$100 million to narrow the funding gap associated with the mandate to staff one “safe school officer” per school and ensure sustainable funding for school districts.

Increase the investment in mental health services by providing funding to enhance training for and increase the number of personnel providing services within schools (including but not limited to school counselors, mental health professionals, school social workers, school psychologists and school nurses and/or emergency medical personnel).

Continue funding for school safety infrastructure enhancements to schools.

Provide funding to school systems to upgrade and strengthen cybersecurity controls.

Provide funding to modernize critical databases to prevent cyberattacks and for secure and seamless reporting with the Department of Education.

Provide adequate funding to significantly increase mid-career teacher and support staff salaries, on a recurring basis and minimize the negative impacts of the current employee retention crisis, including dealing with the compression resulting from recent legislative increases to minimum salary levels.

Enhance the state investment in high quality Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK) full-day programs.

## **ACADEMICS AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

Expand Pre-K programs to provide options for 3 years old.

Enhance Florida’s commitment to early childhood education.

Revise School Readiness Pre-School application to permit funding for school-day and after-school wrap-around services for Pre-Kindergarten students.

Ensure that results from the FAST progress monitoring system are meaningful and can be exported to other student information systems within one week after the testing window has closed.

Remove the requirement for the State Board to automatically annually adjust the school grading scale.

Maintain choice and flexibility to provide maximum mechanisms for students to achieve concordance for graduation purposes, including PERT.

## **OPERATIONS**

Require the local offices of emergency management to first consider the use of non-K12 public facilities that meet hurricane-rated construction, to be utilized as hurricane shelters and post storm support.

Clarify that School Districts are not permitted to reimburse the insurer for personal injury protection.

Allow school districts the option to participate in the state health plan.

Remove restrictions for the disposal of surplus properties.

Minimize the vacancy crisis without the need for any additional monetary commitment by waiving or shortening the existing reemployment limitations for retirees.

Maintain the apprenticeship program that provides bonuses to experienced teachers (with at least 3 years teaching experience) for mentoring aspiring teacher candidates as they gain hands-on teaching experience.

Revise the education statute to include Pre-Kindergarten, allowing certified pre-school teachers to be included in salaries and retirement afforded only to K-12 instructional personnel.

\* New language underlined