



2021 State Legislative Platform

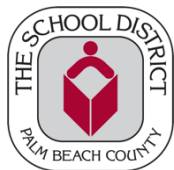
The School District of Palm Beach County recognizes that COVID-19 will have a long-lasting impact on the State of Florida's economy. The list below reflects specific priorities related to addressing the effects of COVID-19 as it relates to state level funding and statutory requirements for PreK-12 education.

Address the effects of COVID-19 by:

FDOE 2020-EO-07

- ✓ Holding the full time equivalent (FTE) harmless for the entire 2020-21 school year.
- ✓ Continuing to prioritize parent choice for the remainder of the 2020-21 school year by allowing parents to make the best instructional decision for their child as it relates to the choice of brick and mortar or distance learning.

- Increasing funding for academic programming to specifically accelerate student achievement and counteract the negative effects of COVID-19 on learning gains.
- Increasing funding for mental health services to specifically address the adverse impact of COVID-19 on the emotional well-being of students and staff.
- Providing waivers in FY21 so that teacher evaluations do not factor in student value-added model (VAM) scores given the uncertain impact COVID-19 may have on student achievement this school year.
- Administering the Florida Standards Assessments (FSA) and End of Course (EOC) exams this year, but refraining from tying them to school grade calculations or requiring school districts to use them for retention-related decisions (including 3rd grade promotion and high school graduation requirements for high school seniors).
- Providing alternative assessment options for students whose parents have chosen to keep them in distance learning due to ongoing concerns with COVID-19, instead of requiring them to return to a brick and mortar campus for testing.
- Supporting measures that empower local school districts to make their own decisions during emergency situations.
- Establishing a financial incentive to employers who provide space and, if necessary, supervision to children of employees for distance learning in the workplace.
- Pausing the creation of any new voucher/scholarship programs for FY22 and refraining from increasing funding to any existing programs given the uncertainty surrounding the state budget.
- As it relates to investments in technology specifically:
 1. Restoring the Digital Classrooms Allocation, which has fallen from \$3.5 million to \$147,000 in SDPBC over the past 3 years.
 2. Expanding eligible expenditures under the Local Government Infrastructure Surtax (LGIS) to include computer purchases.



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The School District of Palm Beach County (SDPBC) has also identified priorities that remain critical to ensuring the success of traditional public schools in the longer term. They can be seen below.

Secure adequate funding to provide a high quality education to all students, while identifying stable revenue sources to guarantee long term investments in Florida's education system by:

- Supporting any proposed rule which allows the Required Local Effort (RLE) to increase with economic growth rather than roll back.
- Maintaining the Mental Health Categorical at its current level.
- Maintaining the New Teacher Salary Categorical at its current level, while also addressing the salary compression issue all school districts now face with respect to salaries for veteran teachers.
- Supporting an increase to Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK) funding that covers full-day programming.
- Providing a proportionate increase to the Base Student Allocation (BSA) if a major increase to the Florida Retirement System (FRS) employer contribution rate is necessary again in FY22, so that school districts can cover these costs without jeopardizing critical funding for students, staff, and schools.
- Supporting state funding initiatives that would allow the School District of Palm Beach County to establish a SDPBC Tech Center entity.

Prioritize the meaningful assessment of student learning by:

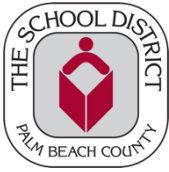
- Decreasing reliance on high stakes testing to make promotion/retention decisions.
- Elevating alternative assessment measures, such as portfolios, that allow students to demonstrate mastery of knowledge/understanding.
- Using a nationally-normed test to gauge student achievement instead of FSAs or EOCs.

Empower locally-elected school boards and allow for nuanced decision-making according to local needs by:

- Ensuring the "Home Rule" principle is prioritized.
- Clarifying the authority of local education agencies (LEAs) during a state of emergency.
- Enabling scheduling flexibility so that local school boards can determine the number of instructional hours required per semester.

Ensure charter schools and private schools receiving vouchers funded by tax-payer dollars are held to the same standard as traditional public schools in Florida by:

- Providing for greater school board oversight of local charter schools, including increased ability to hold a charter school's governing board accountable for contractual obligations.
- Requiring they follow the same basic mandates as traditional public schools, including those related to:
 - Required instruction outlined in Statute 1003.42.
 - Mental health (i.e., six hours of instruction to students in grades 6-12).
 - School safety and security (i.e., implementing all school hardening requirements as well as technology enhancements in accordance with guidance provided as part of the annual Florida Safe Schools Assessment Tool, or FSSAT, process).



2021 Issues of Continuing Concern

In addition to the adopted School Board Legislative Platform, the District continues to advocate for change to the following issues of continuing concern:

- Expand eligible expenditures under the School Capital 1/2 Cent Surtax to include school buses.
- Continue to monitor formula changes for the District Cost Differential (DCD).
 - An adjustment to a wage-level index vs a price index can impact funds received.
 - Support changes that would allow the DCD to increase proportionally with the cost of living.
- Oppose proposed increases to sovereign immunity caps or changes to the current claims bill process.
- Require claimants to be able to post reasonable and customary medical bill amounts, instead of billed charges (i.e., accuracy in charges).
- Work with the Florida Department of Education/Board of Education to address needed revisions to current regulatory requirements including:
 1. Increasing the Title I holdback allowance for District expenses.
 2. Repealing the Bureau of Federal Programs' arbitrary cap on consultant fees and eliminating the requirement to itemize purchases in grant applications.
 3. Repealing the additional Reading Endorsement requirement for teachers, or extending the current waiver beyond December 31, 2020.
 4. Changing assessment calendar/assessment windows to later in the spring given the delay to FY21 school year start date.
 5. Delaying the implementation of revised concordant scores until next year's incoming high school freshman class due to challenges associated with COVID-19.
 6. Extending waivers for FSA and EOC exams and suggesting the Legislature use FY19 school grades to calculate performance growth.
 7. Removing language that requires school districts to set the Title I eligibility determination threshold no higher than 2016-17 rates or the state's poverty average.
- Seek legislative appropriations for projects related to:
 - West Technical Education Center (West Tech)
 - African American Museum at Historic Roosevelt High School
 - Community based post-COVID acceleration initiative in partnership with the Urban League of Palm Beach County