

**THE DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD OF COLLIER COUNTY**  
***Preliminary 2019 Florida Legislative Platform***

**GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

- Increase in the Base Student Allocation and state categorical programs to cover enrollment increases, workload changes and inflation
- At least one-year lead time for effective date and implementation of new programs or program changes
- Provide local control and flexibility for constitutionally elected school boards to meet local community needs and expectations through an agreement with the State Board of Education

**LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES**

- Allow instructional personnel to volunteer and/or to be employed as substitute teachers after 30 days from FRS retirement without penalty to their pension
- Apply “Best and Brightest” requirements and eligibility to all instructional personnel or eliminate the program and return the monies to school districts for use towards salaries or incentive programs for highly effective teachers and other instructional personnel or hiring bonuses to fill vacancies in critical shortage areas or high needs schools
- Apply the tuition and fee waivers granted private school students in 2018 for dual enrollment to public school students so that students can continue to access college courses without financially penalizing school districts
- Restore funding for courses beyond a base 6-period/1.0 FTE day and continue access to virtual education without financially penalizing school districts
- Expand options for individuals to obtain temporary teacher certification and, subsequently, full professional certification who demonstrate their work to be effective or highly effective
- Create an “innovative school district” program that a district, state-rated “B” or higher, may apply to the State Board of Education as a 5-year agreement for fiscal and program flexibility in meeting state standards in return for improved student performance and use of fiscal resources

Potentially add pending outcome of HB1091

- Establish uniform high quality early childhood education indicators for public and private providers

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## **RATIONALE FOR LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES**

### **Teacher Recruitment and Retention Efforts**

Teacher recruitment and retention continues to be a challenge. Adjustments should be made in order to aid each district's hiring efforts that can include flexibility in allowing instruction personnel to return to the school district to serve after only 30 days of retirement from the Florida Retirement System without incurring any penalties. Such was law prior to 2011. These valuable professionals are able to support teaching and learning through acting as volunteers and/or substitute teachers.

Additionally, criteria for the "Best and Brightest" monies should be inclusive of all instructional personnel or eliminated entirely. The current requirements outlined for "Best and Brightest" do not provide equitable access to the opportunity for those not in a traditional classroom. If the program is eliminated, the monies could be reallocated to school districts to recruit or incentivize teachers to work in areas of high need.

### **Dual Enrollment Waivers**

The 2018 Legislature approved dual enrollment tuition fee waivers for students attending private schools. To provide equity among public and private school students who are choosing to take advantage of the program, the waivers should be extended to public school students on an equal basis.

### **FTE Funding for Courses Beyond a 6-period/1.0 FTE Day**

The 2013 Legislature limited funding for all courses to 1.0 FTE, even for students taking additional courses beyond the regular school day. When a student takes a virtual education or dual enrollment course beyond the regular school day, Collier now loses a prorated portion of its FTE funding for that student as a result of this legislative change. This cost Collier approximately \$3,000,000 for FY14, \$3,000,000 for FY15, \$2,800,000 for FY16, and \$3,100,000 for FY17. School districts should not be financially penalized for students that pursue and benefit from additional learning opportunities beyond the regular school day.

### **Teacher Certification**

The 2017 Legislature provided a year's extension for temporary certification and waiver of the professional education exam if a beginning teacher is rated "highly effective." This is a good start. It should be continued to allow an "effective" or "highly effective" teacher, after three years, to move from temporary to permanent professional certification as s/he will have demonstrated competency. This is especially important for recruiting those individuals wishing to come into teaching from outside professions.

### **Uniform High Quality Early Childhood Education**

- Concerns have been expressed by providers and at legislative committee meetings that the current school readiness test is not adequately measuring readiness for kindergarten.
- A current legislative review is underway to be completed in December with possible recommendations on requirements for teacher training and competency and revision of the current readiness measurement system.
- As the state's prekindergarten program is voluntary over 100,000 children remain unenrolled annually which creates a significant disparity in readiness. Parents need encouragement to enroll their children.
- Suggestions in the Florida Chamber of Commerce "Florida 2030" plan and efforts by the Florida Council of 100 should be reviewed for strengthening the state's PreK-3 programs.

### **Create "Innovative School District" Program**

Proposal 93 of the Constitutional Revision Commission would have allowed a high performing district to waive specific statutory requirements similar to the authority allowed charter schools in s.1002.33(16). It did not require constitutional authority as a similar legislative pilot program existed in four districts from 2001-2010. The proposal would be similar to laws in Georgia and Texas that allow for up to a five-year agreement of flexibility in return for increased student performance and sharing of innovative practices a participating district may develop.