The Florida Education Association advocates for the opportunities all of Florida’s public school students—from kindergarten through college—deserve. We believe the path to building an excellent education system that strengthens our state is grounded in three principles: providing the resources our neighborhood public schools need, creating the conditions that foster student success, and establishing policies that help us recruit and retain committed, qualified, and caring educators at every level. All three of these principles boil down to one underlying message: Fund Our Future.

**Student Success**

**Safe, Healthy and Effective Environment**

- Ensure campuses (Prekindergarten-12 through higher education) are secure, safe, and well maintained and equipped to provide support for students and their families, as well as appropriate behavioral and disciplinary interventions.
- Expand support services, such as nutritious meal programs, health care, and before- and after-school care for students in need; focus on providing “community schools” that bring together academics and health and social services under one roof.
- Create class sizes that enable educators to connect one-on-one with students, honoring the will of voters as expressed in our state’s 2000 constitutional amendment.
- Provide planning time and additional resources for all schools identified as in need of focused support, including funds for health care, before- and after-school programs, and other support services, and opportunities for community engagement.

**Supports for Learning**

- Maximize flexibility and support for instruction in schools with high populations of students and families in need.
- Emphasize teaching and learning instead of standardized tests and other assessments that do not measure students’ curiosity or their desire to learn.
- Provide timely and specific feedback on student learning and growth throughout the school year to teachers and parents and specific, action-oriented feedback on student growth before the subsequent school year.
- Ensure transparent teacher evaluation and feedback that provides teachers with resources and mentoring opportunities that will improve teaching and learning strategies.
- Provide education staff professionals with up-to-date training on the best practices for reaching, inspiring, and connecting with students and ensuring that our schools are safe and healthy places for learning.
Investment in Public Schools

Fairness in Funding

- Prioritize competitive salaries, benefits, and pay raises that count toward retirement, instead of shortsighted and discriminatory bonus schemes, such as the Best & Brightest scholarship, to attract and retain caring, qualified, and committed teachers and education staff professionals.
- Ensure that all students, regardless of where they live, have the opportunity for a great education in public schools by capturing increases in property value through the “Required Local Effort” and ending rollbacks that keep funding levels the same year after year, forcing local districts to try to make up the difference.
- Set Florida’s students off toward a great future by increasing our support for students and public schools to at least the national average.
- Ensure students and schools with the greatest needs receive the resources to provide opportunities for learning and discovery.
- Provide funding to meet our legislative mandates to create classes small enough for one-on-one attention, extend the school day and school year, improve all schools, ensure new educators have the mentoring and support professionals need, and safely transport our students.
- Make sure our schools are desirable places to be and to learn by aligning funding of capital projects with the needs in local districts for maintenance, renovation, and new construction.
- Make our schools safe for discovery and learning by increasing the Safe Schools allocation and fully funding security guards at every school, in addition to—not at the expense of—providing other crucial resources.
- Increase state funding for higher education institutions to keep up with demand and provide the resources that students on our public campuses need.

Public Trust

- Honor the constitutional authority of elected local school boards to supervise all schools in the school district.
- Provide opportunities for staff, parents, and community members to engage with all schools through representation on school advisory councils and school improvement teams; by holding open public hearings and meetings; and by observing open records laws.
- Hold all schools receiving public funds (including charter and private schools) to the same high standards for providing safe facilities, high-quality curriculum and instruction, and educators who are well qualified and able to reach, teach, and inspire students.
Retain and Recruit

Staff Quality

- Offer extended and multi-year contracts after a probationary period in order to encourage qualified, committed educators to remain in our schools.
- Provide incentives such as loan-forgiveness, grants, scholarships, and support for pre-service teacher programs to encourage more people to become educators and address student-loan debt.
- Encourage committed and caring educators to remain in our schools by protecting Florida’s existing retirement system and all current retirees and fully vested employee benefits and maintaining the defined benefit and defined contribution options for all education (regular class) employees.
- Ensure that anyone who becomes a teacher is prepared for the work and able to connect with students by strengthening alternative certification preparation to require instruction and supervised practice before a new educator starts teaching.
- Provide new teachers with the structured mentoring and support all professionals need.
- Design streamlined certification pathways and incentives for instructional aides to become teachers, ensuring that they are prepared to connect with and inspire students.
- Provide meaningful professional development for instructional and non-instructional professionals.
- Grant fee waivers along with tuition waivers to Graduate Assistants and university employees.