



## Why does the district need the One Mill?

Since it was first approved by Alachua County voters in 2008, the One Mill has allowed Alachua County Public Schools to maintain critical programs and personnel that benefit ALL students—even through the Great Recession, inflation and, of course, the pandemic.

For many years Florida has been one of the lowest-ranked states in the nation for public school funding. That's why many districts in the state continue to ask their communities to support ballot initiatives like the One Mill to provide badly-needed resources.

This year, schools across the nation are also facing the loss of funds provided by the federal government to support students during the pandemic. Alachua County Public Schools has received a total of about \$84 million in federal dollars since the pandemic began, but that funding ends in September of this year.

That loss of funds makes the renewal of the One Mill for Schools this fall even more important. Without it, our schools and students will lose many of the people and educational programs that are so critical to their success.

## What does the One Mill fund?

Currently the One Mill pays all or part of the salaries of nearly 360 of Alachua County Public Schools teachers. That represents nearly 20% of all our teachers!

If approved, the One Mill will continue to fund art and music teachers (including those who teach band, chorus, the performing arts and visual arts), school counselors, school librarians, career-tech teachers, and those who teach in our academic magnet programs. It has also funded hundreds of thousands of dollars-worth of classroom technology and support.

Finally, the One Mill guarantees funding for school nurses, even if the current sources are eliminated.

## How do we know the One Mill is being spent the way it should be?

For the last 12 years, an independent citizens' oversight committee has been meeting regularly to review one mill expenditures. That committee is made up of local business and community leaders. The chairman makes a yearly report to the School Board and the public.

The oversight committee is again included in the ballot language and must, by law, continue to review and report on the expenditure of the one mill funds.

You can keep up with what is happening with the One Mill Oversight Committee at [www.sbac.edu/onemill](http://www.sbac.edu/onemill).

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## How is this different from the Half-Cent for Schools that voters approved in 2018?

The Half-Cent for Schools is a sales tax surtax that can **ONLY** be spent on improving our schools' facilities and constructing new facilities as they're needed. It ensures our students have high-quality **places** in which to learn. The One Mill is about making sure we have the **people** to serve our students and the **technology** they need to do it.

## What will the One Mill cost me?

One Mill equals \$1 for every \$1000 of the taxable value of your property, which means if you don't own taxable property in Alachua County, the One Mill won't cost you anything!

If you do own taxable property, voting YES for the One Mill for Schools **WILL NOT** increase your school property taxes. That's because it's a renewal, **NOT** a new tax.

## Why is it that schools in Florida never seem to have enough money?

A number of national reports show that Florida's record for funding public schools is very poor. For example, a report on K-12 spending released in March of this year shows that the increase in education spending in Florida between 2002 and 2020 was among the lowest in the nation. Another recent report from the National Education Association shows that average teacher pay in Florida ranks 48<sup>th</sup> in the nation. According to the Education Data Initiative, Florida also ranks 44<sup>th</sup> in spending and 43<sup>rd</sup> in funding for public education. Reports from many other sources echo these figures.

Traditional public schools in Florida face additional challenges, including inflation, unfunded and underfunded state mandates (transportation, safety/security and more), and the diversion of hundreds of millions of dollars to private and charter schools.

## What happened to the lottery?

Voters approved the Florida lottery based on the promise that its revenues would supplement existing education funding. In reality, revenues from the lottery have simply replaced other sources of funding that schools received from the state before the lottery took effect.

Most of the money raised through the lottery is used to fund the Bright Futures college scholarship program, not public schools. Another significant portion is used on jackpots and advertising the lottery.

Lottery dollars have always made up a very, very tiny portion of the district's discretionary budget, and many years local schools don't receive anything. That's been the case for at least the last three years in Alachua County Public Schools.

## I don't have children in schools. Why should I support the One Mill?

A strong, thriving community can't exist without strong, thriving schools. You may not have children in Alachua County Public Schools, but your future pharmacist, accountant, plumber and many of the other citizens you depend on each day are currently attending our schools. We all have a stake in ensuring that they are getting a good education.

The children in our schools will one day be the taxpayers who help support this community, and the better-prepared they are to be productive citizens, the better quality of life we will all enjoy.

From an economic standpoint, good schools are an important recruiting tool for any community. When businesses and individuals are looking to relocate, one of the first questions they ask is "How are the schools?" High quality schools that project an image of a community that values education help draw those businesses and professionals to Alachua County. That means more jobs, new programs and technologies, greater economic development and a higher standard of living for our citizens. An investment in schools is an investment in the future for all of us.

***For more information on the One Mill for Schools, visit [www.sbac.edu/onemill](http://www.sbac.edu/onemill)***