



2021



Legislative Program

“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 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...”

Florida Constitution, Article 9, Section 1

More than fifty years ago, Florida’s citizens voted to enshrine the concept of Home Rule in the state’s Constitution. They understood that the best government is that which is closest to the people it represents. Since at least 1983, it has been recognized that only general law and state constitutional law may limit a School Board’s exercise of Home Rule power.

In keeping with this important element of Florida’s Constitution, the School Board of Alachua County requests that lawmakers halt and reverse the trend of using general law to restrict the power of local School Boards to meet the unique needs of the communities they serve and the citizens who elected them. The Board also requests that lawmakers provide for a ‘high quality system of free public schools’ as called for in Article 9, Section 1 of the Constitution by taking the steps listed on this document.

Legislative Priorities for 2021:

- Hold the current Required Local Effort (RLE) constant rather than imposing the roll-back rate, which will allow school funding to benefit from increasing property values
- Allocate sufficient funding to support meaningful pay increases for veteran teachers and support staff; fully fund the voter-approved \$15/hr. minimum wage
- Increase funding for mental health services to support such vital resources as counselors, psychologists, social workers, etc.
- Reduce the required contribution to the Florida Retirement System
- For the 2020-21 school year, eliminate the use of state standardized testing for calculating school grades and for teacher evaluations; in light of COVID, eliminate the penalty for testing fewer than 95% of students at a school
- Support the authority of school boards to make decisions in the best interests of their communities, including the appropriate expenditure of revenues and the evaluation of teachers



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