



## Lake County Schools

### 2014 Legislative Priorities

#### **Capital Outlay**

- Restore the capital outlay tax to the 2007 level of 2 mills (changed to 1.50 mills in 2009) without impacting the operating millage.
- Provide adequate funding for the growing need for maintenance and repair of district operated public schools.
- Pass legislation that would allow each county in Florida the option of collecting school impact fees or, in the alternative, imposing an additional transaction fee/documentary stamp on real estate transactions.
- Respect the constitutional authority of local elected school board members to “supervise, operate and control” public schools in all areas, included, but not limited to, flexibility in categorical spending, instruction, performance pay, budget, personnel, charter schools, and school calendars.

#### **Funding Considerations**

- Prohibit the state from mandating or assigning any new, existing, expanded, or modified programs or responsibilities to any school district unless such programs or responsibilities are fully funded by the state.
- Recognize that the \$480 million set aside for teacher raises is not part of the base budget. Funding must continue by increasing the Base Student Allocation or continue the salary categorical.
- Establish a separate funding source for programs taken by students beyond the 1.0 FTE cap or 25 hours per week.
- Repeal the 2013 requirement that school districts pay college tuition fees and fully fund the school districts’ cost to provide dual enrollment programs.
- Begin addressing the gaps within the budget categories such as transportation, instructional materials and school safety.
- Amend F.S. 1006.23 – Hazardous Walking Conditions to include broader criteria in the definition of hazardous walking conditions, reflecting realistic pedestrian conditions that impede safe passage to school for various students, including those in middle and high school. In addition, review F.S. 1011.68 – Funds for Student Transportation to adjust the

parent responsibility zone (less than two miles) with regards to elementary, middle and high school aged students.

- Allocate sufficient state dollars to support guaranteed continuation budgets that provide for quality instruction programs, enrollment growth, inflationary increases, competitive salaries and benefits for effective personnel, and modern, safe, and secure facilities.
- Provide appropriate funding, in addition to the FEFP that will fully fund technology needs, including funds necessary for infrastructure, hardware, software, training, online testing, virtual instruction, digital textbooks, data management, and other technology needs as mandated by legislation.

### **Accountability and Instruction Considerations**

- Protect taxpayer dollars by ensuring all schools that receive state funds adhere to the same accountability measures as traditional public schools.
- The new statewide assessment must be timely, fair, transparent and aligned to the standards. The results should be used in accountability and teacher evaluations in a clear and fair manner and should assist teachers and parents. Consider use of the ACT and/or SAT since they are nationally recognized.
- Amend law to strategically phase-in standards and assessments to determine the impact on student achievement and preserve the integrity of the accountability system. Stability in the accountability system is vital. The school grading system has experienced multiple changes that include 34 changes in the 2011-12 school year alone.
- The development of valid, reliable and legally defensible EOC assessments linked to teacher evaluation within the current timeframe is not realistic. Provide adequate time and funding for legislatively mandated End of Course exams (EOC's) to be developed and provide districts with the flexibility to utilize national assessments, the reading and/or mathematics component of the statewide assessment, performance benchmarks and other measures, in lieu of a course and grade specific examination until such time the EOC has been developed.
- Full implementation of online assessments must occur only after the technology infrastructure, connectivity and capacity of all public schools and districts are ready for successful deployment and implementation. Paper and pencil must be available when technology is not sufficient or fails.
- ELL students should be expected to participate in statewide assessments; but their performance should not impact school grades when a student has only been receiving services for a year or less. It is unfair to expect a student to have performance on grade level, with only one year of participation in an ESOL program for language acquisition.
- Amend law to allow students to take state assessments on demand and retake only the portions not mastered.