



SEMINOLE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

2013 Legislative Priorities



"A" Rated
Academically
High-Performing School District

I. Increase flexibility for high-performing school districts.

Issue: There are few advantages to school districts that earn "high-performing" designation.

Solutions:

- a. Districts that earn "high-performing" designation should be awarded greater flexibility in local decision-making.
- b. Amend F.S. 1003.621. Allow high-performing school districts the same class size averaging flexibility as is afforded to public charter schools.

II. Allow district operated virtual schools the same funding flexibility as Florida Virtual School.

III. Reduce excessive reliance on and over-administration of state-mandated testing.

Issue: The excessive testing requirements to satisfy the obligations of Florida Statutes 1008.22, 1012.22, 1012.34 are extremely burdensome to our students, negatively impact the amount of instructional time students receive, and create extensive fiscal and logistical challenges for schools and school districts.

Solutions:

- a. Amend F.S. 1008.22. Allow nationally normed tests (i.e. PSAT) to be used for multiple concordant purposes.
- b. Amend F.S. 1012.22. As the Department of Education has already indicated a potential delay in creating a test item data base due to RFP challenges and because of the significant challenges associated with restructuring salary schedules, amend the timeline for implementing Pay for Performance and the development of assessments to determine individual teacher value added metrics to at least 2016-17 or later.
- c. Amend F.S. 1012.34. Until valid, reliable, and legally defensible examinations have been developed with and vetted by the Florida Department of Education for all courses, reduce the Student Learning Growth component of a teacher's annual evaluation to no more than 25% of the overall evaluation score.

IV. Ensure that local school boards have final decision making authority over charter schools within the district and oppose any efforts to mandate that districts provide an initial application review or an opportunity for a charter applicant to make substantive corrections. Further, the deadline for submitting a charter application should remain August 1, with the exception that school board's could receive and review applications later than this date if it chooses.

V. End of Course Testing

Issue: The delay in receiving testing results is an unnecessary burden for our students, schools, and school district.

Solution: Ensure that students and schools have immediate results reported in such a format that provides specific benchmark information to more precisely detail the interventions necessary.

Issue: Students have only 3 opportunities per year to retest, thus limiting their ability to progress in their coursework.

Solution: Provide ongoing make-up opportunities and retest students only in the areas where they have yet to be successful.

VI. Instructional Materials Funding

Issue: Instructional materials funding is a relatively small amount when considered on a per-student basis. At about \$77 per student these funds are used for library media (AV, print, and e-books), science supplies, school flex funding (for non-core course needs), Dual enrollment materials, digital district resources (Plato, Discovery Streaming, Tumble Books, World Book, etc.) and most importantly standards based, curriculum related instructional materials in any form (print, digital or a blend) for student use in core courses of Language Arts, Reading, Math, Science, and Social Studies.

Solution: Increase dual enrollment funding as more students are taking advantage of this opportunity, increase instructional material funding to provide learning content in whatever format is best for student learning, and separate categorical funding for district technology and infrastructure needs to deliver digital content.

VII. Florida Inventory of School Houses (F.I.S.H.) Reporting

Issue: A public perception exists that we are underutilizing classroom spaces.

Solutions:

- a. Report the use of classroom space in multiple formats that differentiate “empty seats vs. unused classrooms”.
- b. Include students in VPK programs in the calculation of classroom utilization.
- c. Accommodate in the reporting process for classrooms that are used to provide intensive instruction to at-risk, high need students.