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Superintendent of Schools



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Monroe County School Board

Legislative Priorities for the 2020 Regular Session of the Florida Legislature

The Monroe County School Board participates in and is supportive of the Florida School Boards Association, the Florida Association of District School Superintendents, the Greater Consortium of School Boards, and the Small School District Council Consortium, and support the Legislative Proposals of these organizations on issues of statewide significance. In addition, the Monroe County School Board has identified the following specific legislative priorities for the 2020 Regular Session of the Florida Legislature:

Local Control of Locally Generated Revenue: Distribution of locally generated revenue, millage and sales tax, should be determined by the local school board not the legislature.

- The one size fits all cost limitations for construction for educational facilities (aka "cost per student station") is unfair and inappropriate when applied to the Monroe County Schools and requires an enduring fix in light of future needs. All revenue is raised through a local voter approved ½ cent sales tax and a local .5 mil for capital improvements. Construction costs in Monroe County are higher than other geographic locations in Florida due to isolation and engineering costs associated with wind load requirements and sheltering/refuge uses.
- Eliminate the wealth adjustment. Currently the wealth adjustment results in a 100% loss of the sparsity supplement for the Monroe County Schools.
- With the Best & Brightest Teacher Scholarship program now being allocated as part of the FEP (resulting in 90% of this revenue coming from local Monroe County taxpayers) this program should be modified to allow the distribution of these resources, for the intended purpose of improving teacher compensation, to be locally determined. If Best & Brightest is eliminated, the resources allocated to the program should be re-allocated to support increased teacher compensation.

Critical Employee Shortages - Teacher/Bus Driver:

- Allow teachers who have been evaluated as highly effective for a period of three consecutive years or more to be offered a contract for more than the one year Annual Contract.
- Allow retired personnel to return to the workforce as substitute teachers and bus drivers without FRS pension penalty.
- Retain expanded 3-year option for individuals with temporary teacher certification to pass the General Knowledge Test and attain full professional certification.

School Safety/Security – Mental Health Resources: The Monroe County Schools have been fully compliant with all mandates and requirements established by the Florida Legislature with regard to school safety and security. It is imperative that the Florida Legislature provide the necessary resources to support these requirements. Specifically to include additional resources to address mental health services for students and staff.

Hurricane/Disaster Recovery: The following simple statutory changes can assist school districts impacted by unforeseen disasters in maintaining financial and academic stability during the recovery period;

- Set the declining enrollment supplement factor (Section 1011.62(8), F.S.) at 50% or greater, currently at 25% as specified in the General Appropriations Act.
- Increase to \$200 per FTE (currently \$100 per FTE) the limitation on the use of capital millage to pay premiums for property and casualty insurance (Section 1011.71(5), F.S.).
- Pre-determine excuse and/or accommodations to be implemented in the Florida Accountability System for school districts impacted by a hurricane/disaster event. This should not be left to the individual school districts to negotiate with the Florida Department of Education.