



### FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION'S 2020 SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

#### ***Major Investments in Education***

- A total commitment of \$21.6 billion for early learners through postsecondary students.
- Florida Education Finance Program total increase of \$641 million for K-12.
- Giving districts greater spending flexibility with a \$137 total per student funding increase that includes a significant increase of \$40 per student in the Base Student Allocation (BSA).
- \$9.9 million increase for Voluntary Prekindergarten, the highest BSA since 2011-12 and first increase since 2014-15.

#### ***Elevating and Celebrating Educators***

- Marking 2020 as “The Year of the Teacher” with a bold step to move Florida to #5 in the nation in terms of minimum teacher pay with a \$500 million pay increase for teachers ([HB 641](#) and [HB 5001](#)).
- Following Governor DeSantis’ request to eliminate Common Core from our classrooms, \$2.7 million is allocated for teacher professional development to help our educators become experts in Florida’s new Benchmarks for Excellent Student Thinking (B.E.S.T.) Standards for English Language Arts (ELA) and Math.
- Covered the \$850,000 cost to provide all educators with liability insurance to allow them to focus on doing what matters most – educating and inspiring their students to succeed in life.

#### ***Increasing Educational Choice Options for Florida’s Families and Students***

- Expanded access while continuing to prioritize low-income families to ensure a world-class education is in reach for every student regardless of race, zip code or socio-economic status for school choice programs like the Family Empowerment Scholarship and Florida Tax Credit Scholarship ([HB 7067](#)).
- Increased the Family Empowerment Scholarship maximum enrollment cap to allow 28,000 additional students to benefit from Florida’s world-class school choice options ([HB 7067](#)).
- A considerable commitment to our most vulnerable students with unique needs by fully funding the Gardiner Scholarship Program and its waitlist of 3,000 students at \$190 million.
- Provided 15,000 public school students in grades 3-5 with access to Reading Scholarship Accounts with \$7.6 million to improve their literacy skills and ensure they read on grade level as they matriculate through middle and high school.

#### ***Aligning Education to the Goals of Lifelong Learning, Civic Literacy and Support for our Military***



## 2020 LEGISLATIVE REVIEW

- The Early Childhood Music Education Incentive Pilot Program will assist selected school districts in implementing comprehensive music education programs for students in kindergarten through grade 2 ([SB 156](#)).
- Helping to create informed and knowledgeable citizens, the statewide Florida Civics and Debate Initiative will expand speech and debate programs throughout the state and engage students in civil discussions with the Legislature's support of \$925,000 and a \$5 million multi-year commitment from the Marcus Foundation ([HB 5001](#)).
- Created the Florida Institute of Politics within Florida State University to provide the southeastern region of the United States with a world class, bipartisan, nationally renowned institute of politics ([SB 72](#)).
- Ensured that service members and veterans are able to earn a degree conveniently and efficiently by implementing a process to award postsecondary credit for training and education acquired during their military career at each of Florida's public colleges and universities will help our heroes transition back to civilian life ([HB 171](#)).
- Modified school district residency requirements to accommodate military families with greater flexibility to enroll in school will give families peace of mind and make their transition to Florida easier ([SB 662](#)).

### ***Increasing Safe and Healthy Learning Environments***

- Increased the Mental Health Assistance Allocation by \$25 million to put more counselors and mental health professionals in our schools and to ensure more students have direct access to the care they need ([HB 5001](#)).
- Helped schools identify signs of emotional disturbance, mental illness and substance abuse with \$5.5 million for Youth Mental Health Awareness, providing educators with the skills to help students experiencing or overcoming these issues ([HB 945](#)).
- Allowed private and charter schools to receive Medicaid reimbursements for services provided to students that are currently eligible for Medicaid ([HB 81](#)).
- Enhanced school safety measures with \$180 million and \$42 million for school hardening grants to improve the physical security of school buildings.
- Created Alyssa's Law, requiring the Florida Department of Education to utilize \$8 million and work with each public school to implement a panic alert system capable of connecting diverse emergency services technologies to ensure real-time coordination between multiple first responders ([SB 70 & HB 5001](#)).
- Increased the penalties for reckless individuals who endanger the lives of students by violating laws relating to stopping for a school bus ([HB 37](#)).

### ***Expanding Opportunities for Students in Workforce Education***

- For three years, Florida has earned the distinction of being the #1 state for higher education in the country (U.S. News & World Report); Florida colleges were awarded \$23 million in tiered funding to help ensure our world-class ranked colleges continues their national dominance ([HB 5001](#)).
- A continued investment of \$10 million for the Pathways to Career Opportunities Grant to provide high-quality pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship opportunities to students



## 2020 LEGISLATIVE REVIEW

by providing them with an avenue to help meet the needs of Florida's rapidly growing workforce (HB 5001).

- Provided \$20.5 million to school districts and colleges to offer industry certifications programs and to educate and train a skilled workforce in Florida's diverse labor market, allowing students to obtain high-paying jobs in high-demand fields (HB 5001).
- Allowed students who complete career certificate dual enrollment courses to be engaged in workforce learning opportunities and included in the school grading calculation ([SB 434](#)).
- Protected Floridians who may have fallen on hard times the ability to remain in the workforce by preventing the state from denying, suspending or refusing to renew certain occupational licenses solely because of late or delinquent student loan payments ([HB 115](#)).
- Continued investment of \$10 million for computer science professional development to provide skills and training to those educating future computer programmers.
- Starting in the 2021-2022 school year, students receiving the Florida Bright Futures Medallion Scholarship will receive 100% of their tuition and fees paid for if they select to attend a Florida College System institution, creating an affordable alternative for students to finance a higher education and enter the workforce ([SB 72](#)).
- Provided heightened governance and collaboration opportunities for ABLE Trust to support job exploration and workforce readiness training to students with disabilities ([HB 901](#)).