

Education

Under the Governor's leadership, Florida has continued to prioritize students, expand opportunities, and empower parents and educators. From workforce education and teacher quality to school safety and academic progress, Florida remains steadfast in delivering a world-class education system. Florida is still the national leader in education as demonstrated by being ranked #1 in education; #1 in education freedom for the third year in a row; and #1 in higher education for nearly a decade. The Governor's Floridians First Budget continues to drive Florida's education forward by investing in our students and families by providing them with choices that best fit their needs.

Key investments include:

- **\$1.56 billion, an increase of \$200 million**, in funding that must be used to provide salary increases for eligible teachers and other instructional personnel or other personnel compensation costs.
- A historic investment of **\$9,406** per student, an increase of **\$279** from the current year's funding model.
- Historic **\$30.6 billion** in funding, of which **\$16.6 billion** is record state funding for the K-12 public school system.
 - This covers the costs associated with the current projected enrollment of over 3.2 million students, including almost 476,000 students projected to participate in the Family Empowerment Scholarship Program.
- **\$1.71 billion** in funding for early child education, including a total of **\$483.4 million** for the Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK) program.
- **\$1.9 billion** in state operating funding for the Florida College System.
- **\$4 billion** in state operating funding for the State University System.
- **\$130 million** in total funding to reward quality nursing education programs to address nursing vacancies.
- **\$100 million** for the State University System for the recruitment and retention of highly qualified faculty.

Early Learning

Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten

The budget provides a total of **\$483.4 million** for Florida's VPK program, a program that provides a high-quality, free education initiative, which serves approximately **145,000** four- and young five-year-olds. This investment increases the base student allocation for the school year and summer programs to \$3,180 per student and \$2,715 per student, respectively. VPK prepares each child for kindergarten by building a strong foundation for school and focusing on early literacy skills.

School Readiness

The Governor's Budget provides **\$1.1 billion** in funding for the School Readiness program and continues the School Readiness Plus Program by providing an increase of **\$5.4 million** in funding that supports families who are transitioning out of being eligible to participate in the School Readiness Program.

The budget includes funding for the following initiatives that support early learning:

- **\$10 million** for the T.E.A.C.H. program to provide early childhood teacher scholarships;
- **\$4.5 million** for the Help Me Grow program to connect children and families with information, resources and developmental services to enhance health, behavior and learning in the development of young children;
- **\$3.5 million** to ensure quality childcare instruction; and
- **\$3.9 million** for the Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) to deliver high-quality School Readiness curriculum directly to parents so they may strengthen the cognitive and early literacy skills of at-risk children.

K-12 Public Education

Governor DeSantis continues his commitment to providing parents with the ability to choose the educational option that fits their children's individual needs. Under the Governor's leadership, Florida now offers a robust array of educational choices, which has solidified our state as a national leader in education freedom, parental power, and overall K-12 education.

The Floridians First Budget includes the highest per student investment of **\$9,406** in the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP), which is an increase of **\$279 per student** over Fiscal Year 2025-26. Governor DeSantis is continuing to acknowledge Florida's hard-working educators by providing funding for school districts to provide any eligible teacher and other instructional personnel with a salary increase.

The Governor's Budget includes **\$30.6 billion** in total funding for the FEFP, which includes the following increases:

- Increase of **\$100** in the Base Student Allocation (BSA);
- An increase of **\$200 million**, for a total of **\$1.5 billion**, that will be used for pay increases to eligible teachers and other instructional personnel or other personnel compensation costs; and
- An Increase of **\$10 million**, for a total of **\$576 million** for student transportation.

School Safety and Mental Health Initiatives

The Governor's Budget continues to invest in school safety initiatives, continuing Governor DeSantis' commitment to ensuring Florida's students and teachers are in a safe and secure learning environment.

- The budget includes the following school safety initiatives:
 - **\$300 million**, an increase of **\$10 million**, for the safe schools component of the FEFP;
 - **\$190 million**, an increase of **\$10 million**, for the mental health allocation in the FEFP;
 - **\$5.5 million** for Mental Health Awareness and Assistance Training;
 - **\$6.5 million** for the Guardian Program to certify and train school guardians and provide a one-time stipend of \$500;

- **\$6 million** for the expansion of the Guardian Program to state colleges and universities;
- **\$1.1 million**, an increase of **\$228,911**, for the Florida Safe Schools Assessment Tool;
- **\$3 million** to continue providing a centralized integrated data repository and data analytics resources to improve access to timely, complete and accurate information regarding school environment safety reports and applicable relevant data from partner state agencies;
- **\$6.4 million** to continue providing school districts access to a mobile panic alert system that is capable of connecting multiple first responder agencies;
- **\$450,000** for the Alyssa's Alert Panic Button, a centralization system that will be used by public emergency responders that will receive alerts from all panic alert alarm systems and integrate digital maps used by public schools, charter schools, and other educational institutions;
- **\$42 million**, an increase of **\$20 million**, for public school hardening grants;
- **\$64.3 million** for school hardening at state colleges and universities;
- **\$3.3 million** to continue the Florida Safe Schools Canine Program;
- **\$6.5 million** to implement safe school technology systems; and
- **\$5 million** for District Threat Management Coordinators.

K-12 Civics Engagement

Governor DeSantis has championed Florida becoming the national model for civics education. His efforts include the introduction of a civic literacy assessment in high school, requiring all postsecondary students to demonstrate competency in civic literacy, revising the Civics and Government standards and curriculum to ensure comprehensive civics instruction across all grades K-12, and providing districts civic literacy support through Regional Civics Literacy Directors and Coaches. The Governor's Budget provides funding for the following civic initiatives:

- **\$3 million** to support and continue expanding the Florida Civics and Debate Initiative (FCDI) and the Florida Debate Initiative (FDI). Programs provide support to public school districts to expand or establish speech and debate programs and/or expand access to competitive civics and debate competitions. Since its inception in 2020, speech and debate programs have expanded from 59 teams in 11 districts to 330 teams in every school district across the state.
- **\$3 million**, an increase of **\$2 million**, to provide support to school districts for the improvement of civic literacy for Florida's students using regional civics literacy captains and coaches.
- **\$1.5 million**, an increase of **\$1 million**, for the Civics Professional Development Initiative to support professional development focused on the new civics and government standards.
- **\$10 million**, an increase of **\$6.5 million**, for the Florida Civics Seal of Excellence Program that will allow approximately 2,700 educators to receive a \$3,000 stipend for completing the Florida Seal of Excellence endorsement coursework.

Higher Education

The Governor's Budget provides key investments to continue the mission of Florida's #1 ranked higher education system while moving towards becoming #1 in workforce education by 2030. Florida's higher education system includes seven universities in the top 100 public national universities rankings by U.S. News & World Report. Nearly 80 percent of Florida undergraduates have not taken out student loans, which is attributable to Florida's lowest tuition rates in the nation at an average cost of approximately \$6,300 compared to the national average of approximately \$12,000.

The Budget includes state operating funding for Florida's higher education system:

- **\$1.9 billion** for Florida's state colleges; and
- **\$4 billion** for Florida's state universities.

The Governor's Budget maintains **\$10.5 million** in total funding for two programs to support Law Enforcement Officers and First Responders.

- **\$10 million** for the First Responders Scholarship Program to provide financial assistance at approved training programs.
- **\$500,000** for the Out-of-State Law Enforcement Equivalency Reimbursement initiative to cover the cost of the State Officer Certification Exam fee and any necessary equivalency training for law enforcement officers who relocate to Florida.

Bright Futures

The Governor's Budget fully funds the projected student enrollment for the Bright Futures Scholarship Program at **\$692.5 million**.

Holding the Line on Tuition

For the 8th year in a row, Governor DeSantis' Budget does not include any tuition or fee increases for Florida students at our state colleges and universities. Our students and families should not face any additional financial burdens as they are completing their education.

Performance Funding

The Governor's Budget provides the following performance funding at career technical centers, state colleges, and state universities:

- **\$12.5 million** for students earning industry certifications in high-skill, high-demand areas at career technical centers;
- **\$20 million** for students earning industry certifications in high-skill, high-demand areas at Florida colleges;
- **\$30 million** in performance funding for state colleges through the 2+2 Student Success Incentive Fund and the Work Florida Student Success Incentive Fund;
- **\$645 million** in performance funding for state universities; and
- **\$100 million** increase for the recruitment and retention of highly qualified faculty at our state universities.

Workforce Initiatives

To meet the goal of becoming #1 in workforce education by 2030, Governor DeSantis has committed more than **\$12 billion** to workforce education programs spanning secondary to postsecondary since 2019, which has achieved the following:

- Florida is ranked #1, for the third consecutive year, for attracting and developing a skilled workforce.
- Since Fiscal Year 2017-18 there has been a 60% increase in career and technical education programs from 5,825 to 9,276.

To continue elevating Florida's workforce program, the Governor's Budget includes **\$800 million** to support workforce education programs to ensure Florida students are prepared to fill high-demand, high-wage jobs, and help Florida meet its goal of becoming first in the nation for workforce education by 2030. Highlights include:

- **\$487.2 million** in operational funding for Florida's Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs;
- **\$20 million**, for the Governor's Pathways to Career Opportunities Grant Program to establish or expand pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs for high school and college students. Within the \$20 million, **\$5 million** is dedicated to the Teacher Registered Apprenticeship Program; and
- **\$100 million**, in the Workforce Development Capitalization Incentive Grant Program for the creation or expansion of CTE programs.

The Floridians First Budget continues to invest in Florida's nursing workforce by maintaining **\$130 million** to support two nursing education initiatives:

- **\$100 million** for the Prepping Institutions, Programs, Employers and Learners through Incentive for Nursing Education (PIPELINE) to reward excellence in nursing education programs.
- **\$30 million** for the Linking Industry to Nursing Education (LINE) fund to incentivize collaboration between nursing education programs and healthcare partners.

Historically Black Colleges and Universities

The Governor's Budget provides **\$146 million** for Florida's Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

- **\$17 million** in operating funds for Bethune-Cookman University.
- **\$7 million** in operating funds for Florida Memorial University.
- **\$7.5 million** in operating funds for Edward Waters University.
- **\$114 million** in operating funds for Florida A&M University.

Education Infrastructure

The Governor's Budget provides **over \$1 billion** in funding for education capital outlay initiatives, including:

- **Special Facility Construction**
 - **\$343 million** for Special Facility Construction projects for the districts of Bradford, Hardee, Holmes, Lafayette, Baker, Desoto, Union, Gilchrist, Hendry, and Wakulla.

- **Maintenance and Education Capital Projects**
 - **\$259.3 million** for public charter school maintenance;
 - **\$130 million** for maintenance at the state colleges;
 - **\$103.8 million** for maintenance at the state universities;
 - **\$46.7 million** for state university construction;
 - **\$10.7 million** for lab school maintenance;
 - **\$11.9 million** for the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind maintenance;
 - **\$820,000** for the Division of Blind Services; and
 - **\$106 million** for school hardening at public schools, state colleges, and universities.