

DUVAL COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM



INVEST IN HIGH QUALITY EDUCATION FOR ALL STUDENTS

In many of our neighboring counties, when new homes are built there is an “impact fee” assessed, of which the funds are passed to the school system in that particular county to support building new schools. Because this fee is not assessed when new homes are built in Duval County, an alternative funding source is needed to ensure schools are maintained and school buildings are upgraded. \$27 to 30 million dollars are lost each year that could be used to ensure Jacksonville schools have the necessary facilities conducive to learning. The current residential property value is taxed at 1.5 mills to support schools in the area.

Action: *Support the Duval County School Board in levying an additional 0.5 mills to meet the needs of local schools.*

While the costs of healthcare, gas and everyday household necessities are on the rise, money that could be used to provide additional educational supports remains the same. The funds from property taxes are passed through to school districts to pay for educational supports for students. When home values increase, state legislative action ensures that property taxes do not. This legislative action causes a loss in unrealized revenue. In 2017, Duval County lost \$24.5 million in revenue without those funds.

For example, this year we were unable to fund Graduation Coaches/Testing Chairs (\$2.8 Million), Full Time Media Specialists (\$3.5 Million), Elementary Reading and Math Coaches (\$6.4 Million) as well as Elementary School Resource Officers (\$10 million).

Action: *Allow Florida school districts to receive the revenue from increased property values.*

INVEST IN THE RECRUITMENT & RETENTION OF HIGH QUALITY TEACHERS

Recruitment and retention of great teachers remains a challenge, particularly in high demand certification areas and hard to staff schools. Best and Brightest performance bonuses are not considered wage increases and are not equivalent to an annual salary allocation. The average teacher salary in Florida ranks 36th nationally.

Action: *Provide school districts with additional funding for recurring salary increases for teachers and support staff that count towards employee FRS contributions. Allocate funds for districts to pay supplements to teachers in hard to staff content areas and schools.*

PROVIDE A GRADUATION PATH FOR STUDENTS WHO ARE WORKFORCE AND CAREER READY.

In order to graduate from a public school in Florida, students can demonstrate proficiency on the Florida Standards Assessment (FSA) in tenth grade reading and mathematics through the use of alternate assessments and/or portfolios. Previously, the Postsecondary Education Readiness Test (PERT) was used as an alternate to the FSA, which is the postsecondary education readiness test that was created by the state for state colleges (community colleges) to determine if a student is ready for college-level work. The Florida Department of Education eliminated the PERT as an alternate method of demonstrating proficiency on the FSA. Beginning in 2022, students can no longer use the PERT to show proficiency. We estimate that 850 students per year to be unable to obtain their high school diploma. Median earnings which would have been \$37,024 as a high school graduate being reduced to \$27,040 as a non-graduate. Over a 30-year span this equates to over \$250,000,000 in lost potential earnings and taxable income for the local economy after just one graduation cohort.

Action: *Re-evaluate the PERT exam and establish a new passage score to demonstrate proficiency on the Florida State Assessments.*