SCHOOL BOARD OF BREvard COUNTY - 2015 Legislative Platform

The School Board of Brevard County, along with the citizens we represent, offer to Florida Legislators the following recommendations as they enter the 2015 legislative session. Attached are recommended changes to statutory language that could support and strengthen public education in Florida while striking the right balance between state and local control of educational programming and accountability decisions.

1. Revise Legislation to Create a Thoughtful, Quality, and Sustainable Assessment and Accountability System in Florida.

Multiple years of changes to state tests, proficiency cut scores, and testing rules have wrought confusion and disillusionment in school districts and in the communities they serve. The community at-large has simply lost faith in Florida’s accountability plan. The current legislated path, not supported by thoughtful analyses of assessment outcomes or by adequate DOE support in the development of legislatively required statewide assessments, will accentuate this confusion and bring challenges in the court of public opinion and the courts themselves. It also takes more local control from School Boards. We strongly recommend the following:

• Make the first year of administering the new state assessment a field test year providing data that allows Florida to move forward in a thoughtful manner. Accordingly, hold in abeyance the calculation of school grades, student retention and remediation decisions and educator evaluation designations based on student assessment results.

• While measured student performance should be a component of teacher evaluation, 50% should not be anchored on the results of one test. Legislate that the DOE work with school districts to strike an appropriate, research-based balance between valid and reliable state assessment results, local measures of student achievement and local evaluation of professional practice.

• Allow local School Boards to determine placement, retention, remediation and grading decisions for students based on a multi-metric approach to determining proficiency.

2. Create a Stable and Adequate Source of Funding for Public Schools.

During the recession, state support of public schools declined. While operating budgets were cut, capital funding declined even more significantly. We strongly recommend the following:

• Establish a dedicated funding source for PECO to assist K-12 school districts.

• Re-evaluate the FTE shift to virtual providers and dual enrollment tuition.

• Develop a capital supplement to districts that are well below the average state property value per student amount due to significant tracts of land utilized for federal installations (Analysis and recommended methodology is attached).

• Fully fund legislatively mandated educational technology hardware and infrastructure.

Legislative Priorities

Informing and Mobilizing Stakeholders

Video segments will be created to share vital information to vested interests and shared via digital media that includes the district website, Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter to capitalize on the 6,000+ individuals that visit us in one or more of these forums; many of which are re-tweeted or shared by local media. Topics may include:

• Episode 1: Assessment’s impact on remediation and retention.
• Episode 2: Assessment’s impact on the District’s ability to set its own annual calendar.
• Episode 3: Assessment’s impact on teacher evaluation and compensation.
• Episode 4: EOC’s impact on course passage and graduation.
• Episode 5: How technology is impacted by legislative requirements such as digital testing, digital textbooks, and virtual education. Why instructional technology better prepares students for the 21st Century.
• Episode 6: The need to reinstate the half mil for capital projects.
• Episode 7: How dual enrollment and paying beyond the full school day impacts public education.

Each episode listed above will also have companion articles that will be published in:

• edConnect
• StoryBoard
• The Bridge (one page newsletter sent to legislative delegation and members on the education committee)

Keeping information front and center with our influential and leadership organizations is essential. To accomplish this task, we will deliver legislative information in either written, oral, or video to:

✓ BPS Leadership Team
✓ Parent Leadership Team
✓ Superintendent’s Advisory Council
✓ BFT
✓ Local 1010
✓ BASA

Each companion article will be distributed to our media list. In addition, we will encourage local media to re-tweet and share videos via social media.

We will host regular legislative meetings with our delegation to provide face to face dialogue regarding these issues. The first is scheduled tentatively for December, 2014.